“Walking the Talk”: A Scholarly Approach to Fostering the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Teaching Support Unit

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Outline

1. Institutional Context for SoTL
2. Vision for OESD and SoTL – Our Way Forward
3. Key Steps and Challenges
4. Accomplishments to Date
5. Evidence of Success
6. Future Plans
Institutional Context – University Level

- Central faculty development unit established in the 1980s (ie., TAG evolving into CTLT)
- Teaching & Learning Enhancement Fund grant program funded by tuition since 1991
- Faculty Certificate Program established in 1998, with increasing emphasis on SoTL
- Research track professorships in SoTL evident in past decade/Professor of Teaching rank established for instructor track in 2011 (Educational Leadership the focus; SoTL not required but encouraged).
Institutional Context – Faculty Level

- Legacy of teaching excellence and educational research
- Office of Educational Support & Development (OESD) established in 2009
- SoTL Research Stream established in 2012
- Operational review of OESD in 2012 (SoTL focus recommended)

David W. Fielding
Founder of OESD
Institutional Context – Faculty Level

• Dedicated OESD space in our new building

• New leadership of OESD in January 2013

• Recent staff changes in OESD have resulted in shifts in available expertise (from admin. support to proactive educational expertise)

• Faculty’s Strategic Plan 2012-2017 emphasizes our entry-to-practice program, PharmD development and the need for SoTL.
Where we are headed...

To ProD, SoTL and beyond...
And why...

- Maturation of the SoTL field since Boyer (1990)
- Emergence of educational research as a legitimate scholarly discipline in academic pharmacy (e.g. Kehrer & Svensson, 2012; Pearson & Albon, 2013)
- Need for understanding and context-specific, evidence-based curriculum decision-making in the “Blueprint” era (e.g., Regehr, 2010)

“The Time is Right”
“Closing the Loop” – Our Way Forward at OESD and for SoTL

We use an inquiry approach whenever possible, including reviewing the literature, thinking of our work as generating data, reflecting on process and outcome, and seeking opportunities for dissemination.
Key Steps & Challenges

• Rethinking the OESD – purpose, competing priorities and credibility ("What are we?" & "We can’t be all things to all people") (Duncan-Hewitt, Jungnickel & Evans, 2007)

• Establishing OESD as the “go to” unit for curricular and professional development ("Not just note-taking"; proactive instead of reactive support; balancing administrative and scholarly work)

• Strategic planning and conceptualizing OESD

“Where does SoTL fit?”
SoTL & Faculty Challenges

- credibility of SoTL in research-intensive institutions; SoTL often not rewarded
- limited expertise/confidence in SoTL or educational research
- methodological diversity and locating appropriate literature
- difficulties/barriers with ethics review processes
- identifying dissemination outlets (ie. conferences, journals etc.)
- community support (ie., discussion groups, collaboration, assistance) (Wright, Finelli, Meizlish & Bergom, 2011)
Accomplishments

• Strategic planning: mission, vision, values
• “SoTLology 101” workshop
• Mini-grant program for SoTL Research Stream
• Tenure and Promotion session for tenure-track Instructors
• Grants, presentations & publications
DESQ
People, Practices, Service.

Curriculum development
Student development
Assess + Eval.
Recognition
Faculty Dev.

Ed. Scholarship for faculty
Scholarship productivity of DESQ?
Grants (TLEP)
Support Services
Fielding list
Broudo list

Quality
Pub-review + evaluate peers review process
Today
- update
- mission, vision, values
- priorities
- communication

Future
develop a strategic plan
⇒ timeline/mapping against strategic plan

- Complete Strategic plan ⇒ 6 months
- New members/needs
New Mission of OESD

• Provision of leadership to the Faculty community to enhance teaching and learning, foster professional growth, and achieve the Faculty’s educational mandate.

• To have a positive impact on the educational experiences of faculty, staff and students in a way that is recognized within and beyond the Faculty.
“SoTLology” 101 Workshop

Presentations (Feb. 21, 2013; CHES experts):

• Kevin Eva: Exploring Educational Research

• Angela Towle: Pragmatics and Realities of Educational Research Design

Small Group Activity: “Rolling up our sleeves”

• Facilitated discussions of research project ideas
Mini-Grant Program

- $5,000 “Innovation Fund” from the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies
- ~$4,000 distributed to 9 members of the SoTL Research Stream through mini-grants for professional development activities, supplies, printing, conference fees, and other project costs
Evidence of Success

• 2 Teaching & Learning Enhancement Fund grants totalling ~$150,000 for 2 first-time applicants
• 1 presentation and 8 posters at CPERC
• 2 abstracts accepted for AACP conference
• 1 publication in AJPE (Pearson & Albon, 2013)
• 1 publication in ISSOTL’s Teaching & Learning Inquiry (Hubball, Pearson & Clarke, 2013)
• 1 manuscript in progress (Marchand, Pearson & Albon)
Future Plans

• Be small but mighty!

• Support and mentor the development of colleagues engaged in educational research

• Benchmark SoTL activity to 2011

• Showcase and advocate for faculty SoTL projects in the Faculty and beyond

• Contribute to the growth of pharmacy education research as a legitimate scholarly discipline
Questions/Discussion

• Do you currently have an OESD-like unit in your school/faculty? A university support unit?

• What approaches is your school taking to promoting scholarly approaches to and scholarship of teaching and learning?

• What successes and challenges are you finding?
Bibliography


Thank You!

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