

# A New Model of Scholarship at Kwantlen University College



## Primary Authors

Balbir Gurm

Alice Macpherson

## Co-authors

Alexandra Karapanos

Angela Kelleher

Anne MacGregor

Carol Hansen

Cherry Nettleton

Chris Burns

Dana Goedbloed

Deborah Dunn

Elly Morgan

Frances Johnson

Gary Jones

Gillian Gausboel

Gordon Lee

Grant Allan

Ihor Pona

John Sprung

Julie Kemble

Lynda Johnston

Maureen Shaw

Nancy Graham

Robert Adamoski

Robin Russell

Rose Doyle

Rosemary Henriksen

Sandra Carpenter

Suzanne Pearce

## **Executive Summary**

The action research process brings people together, tries to understand the phenomena and express that understanding. This action research process technique was used at Kwantlen University College to understand what is scholarship, what should it look like at our institution and to develop ways to communicate this process and the artifacts of scholarship that surround us. We conducted five employee groups, facilitated by the primary authors. Each group met three times separately and then together as larger groups. Each member came prepared for the sessions by reading *Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* and two other academic articles. Each person carefully listened, synthesized, and shared their understandings and reflections about the meaning of scholarship. The facilitators took notes during each session. They typed these notes, collected themes, and redistributed the created material to the members for continued reflection and comment. The emergent themes are the basis for this article and the action steps that the group has undertaken. Our emergent theory is that scholarship at our university college is diverse and goes well beyond the common understanding of discovery 'research' to encompass Boyer's other examples of scholarship: teaching, integration and application. Our groups came to understand the four types of scholarship as described by Boyer and then members reflected on their personal scholarship. We found that all employees in our groups engaged in scholarship but did not always create artifacts to share. So as a part of our collective scholarship we have collated the artifacts of scholarship that emerged to share with the larger community.

## **A New Model of Scholarship**

The primary intent of this qualitative action research project was to connect with groups of colleagues to explore the question of scholarship and what it might mean to us as faculty members and employees at Kwantlen University College, Surrey, BC. The 'action research' technique is a useful tool for understanding the process and production of the artifacts of research. The action research process brings people together, tries to understand the phenomena concerned and attempts to express that understanding. This process was used at Kwantlen University College to understand what is scholarship, what should it look like at our institution and to develop ways to communicate this process to colleagues.

### ***Research Situation***

Historically, Kwantlen University College has been a two year applied institution. It currently offers 14 undergraduate degrees in a variety of areas and has recently been mandated to offer more undergraduate and also graduate degrees. Kwantlen has a stated commitment to excellence in teaching and enhancing student learning in its Mission Statement and Strategic Framework. As employees, we are trying to identify and explore the attitudes, activities, and understanding of how scholarship impacts on our institution while in this transition period and in the future.

## **Methodology**

Qualitative methodology is an appropriate way to uncover and discover the interconnections, interactions and interdependencies of our instructional scholarship. As Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman (1992) point out “the unique strengths of this paradigm for research that is exploratory or descriptive, that assumes the value of context and setting, and that searches for a deeper understanding of the participants’ lived experiences...” (p. 39) and in this research on the scholarship of teaching, we intended to discover this richness and to uncover themes that arose from the group’s combined inquiry.

## **Process**

We started by reading Boyer (1992) *Scholarship Reconsidered*, and then sharing our understandings of the Boyer Model of Scholarship. The groups then read two other articles to support and expand our understanding and the application of various types of scholarship to our teaching practice. We conducted five employee reading groups, which were facilitated by the primary authors. Each group met three times separately and then together as larger groups. Members came prepared for each one-hour session. The facilitators took notes during each session. They typed these notes and collected themes and redistributed the material to the group members for continued reflection and comment. At each session we reflected on the readings from Boyer and other readings on scholarship. People shared their understandings and reflections about the meaning of scholarship. Each person carefully listened, reflected, commented, and synthesized. The themes that emerged are the basis for this article and the action steps that the group has undertaken.

The analysis of the data consisted of examining these themes and presenting as accurately as possible the group members’ opinions of scholarship. Emerging themes involved “working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what (we) will tell others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 145).

## **Boyer’s Model Briefly Defined**

The participants initially discussed and then accepted, as a framework, Boyer’s typography of four separate, though interrelated, scholarships: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The initial understandings of scholarship were: 1) Discovery is what is often referred to as research by academics. It is the advancement of knowledge. 2) Integration is putting together facts or perspectives to come to a new understanding. It is about “making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialists, too” (Boyer, 1990, p.18). 3) Application is about applying knowledge to solve problems, to help individuals and institutions. It includes acquiring “new intellectual understandings from the very act of application” (Boyer, 1990, p. 23). 4) Teaching is about “transforming and extending knowledge,” it is about the “continuity of knowledge” (p. 24). Since the scholarship of teaching is not clearly defined by Boyer (1990), part of the reading circle discussions became focused on defining the scholarship of teaching to come to an understanding beyond Boyer’s definition.

## ***Group Diversity***

There were 28 participants, including the facilitators, all of whom are employees of the institution. There were 22 women and 6 men, with 26 being faculty members and 2 working in administration. There was representation from each of the four campus locations – Langley – 3, Newton – 4, Surrey – 18, Richmond – 3.

The employees represented a total of 236 years of service at Kwantlen University College and ranged from four people with one year of service, 14 with two to ten years, eight with more than ten years, to one with 25 years and another with 28 years.

The largest representation for a department was five participants from Nursing, followed by three from English. All other departments represented had one or two participants. All but one of Kwantlen's Divisions were represented (numbers in brackets):

1. Applied Design and Communications (1)
2. Applied Technology, Trades and Career Technical (1)
3. Community and Health Studies (10)
4. Horticulture (1)
5. Humanities (3)
6. Learner Support (1)
7. Office of Research & Scholarship (1)
8. Preparatory (2)
9. School of Business (3)
10. Science, Mathematics and Technology (2)
11. Social Sciences (1)
12. Strategic Services (2)

Overall there was a wide range of background, experience, and service at Kwantlen University College among the participants.

## **Themes that Emerged**

Our emergent theory is that scholarship at our university college is diverse and goes well beyond the common understanding of research ("discovery" in Boyer's Model) to encompass Boyer's other examples of scholarship – teaching, integration and application. We derived this theory from the following themes that emerged through the group process.

### ***Beyond Mere Agreement with Boyer's Typologies***

There was general agreement with Boyer's typology and this grounded all further discussion. We saw the scholarship of teaching as a natural scholarship. "Teaching is the highest form of understanding" – Aristotle (quoted in Boyer, p.23). Questions emerged about understandings of how this might be manifested in practice, particularly the scholarship of teaching and all related implications.

Several questions emerged around the interaction of the scholarship of teaching with research and the place for new models of scholarship to take an equal position. Cultures are living things and change is part of growth and learning. Through the process of debate we wrestled with the question of whether the emerging model of multiple scholarships can be seen as having positive value and critical future implications in the minds of administrators and funding agencies that would translate into real support. We see a need, as a University College, to pay attention to the moral and intellectual development of citizens.

There is an incredible opportunity to work with the concepts of peer review and expand it to faculty/student review and beyond. The current norm of peer review has been seen as perpetuating the status quo. We believe that there needs to be an ongoing focus on scholarship that opens up thinking and theorizing that includes new reflections and understandings around the scholarship of teaching, integration and application.

### ***What is Happening at Kwantlen?***

Kwantlen is transitioning from being a comprehensive Community College to becoming a University College. This has raised many questions, as there is ambiguity around the definition of a University College and little history or models to help with this transition. Most of the programs at Kwantlen University College are applied and lead directly to employment and professions. In our roles as faculty, we exist in the interstices between and intersections of discovery, teaching, integration, and application. We perceive systemic barriers when we approach all forms of scholarship as equal.

The group members discussed a number of these barriers, including:

- ❖ The institution is funded through Full Time Equivalents (FTEs), not for scholarship.
- ❖ The language of academia that vaults discovery research to the top and the drive for publication by some disciplines.
- ❖ The perpetuation of quantitative research and discovery scholarship as the Gold standard. Both are also favoured by research granters and their dollars.
- ❖ A push toward hiring discovery scholars as noted in position descriptions for new hiring that have changed in some areas to emphasize research dollars. “Facilitating faculty and student research and scholarship and enhancing relations with national granting councils and other sources of research funding.”<sup>1</sup>

As we read through the final chapters of Boyer, there were a number of pointed comments that seemed to fit our experiences. “Often we recruit new faculty members as if we were Harvard. Seldom do we consciously try to seek out faculty members who want to be at the institutions they represent” (Boyer quoting Keith Lovin, VP, U of Southern Colorado. chapter 5, page 61). We want to inquire into the multiple ways that our practice can inform theory and all forms of scholarship.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Dean of Arts position for Kwantlen University College, March 2005. retrieved from <http://plaza.kwantlen.ca/sites/hr.nsf/pages/Job+Opportunities#arts>

## ***Desire for a New Model***

Given that faculty at Kwantlen have been hired to teach and not to produce publications to enhance their reputations and the reputation of their institution, we envision the opportunity for the development and promotion of a new model. “It is unacceptable to expect faculty to conduct consequential investigation and publish without the time and resources to do the job” (Boyer, 1992, p.60) and “especially disturbing is the way professional accrediting associations dictate detailed regulations and, in the process, violate the integrity of the campus, pushing institutions toward conformity” (Boyer, 1992, p. 79). We take heart in the excellence of Kwantlen’s programs such as Interior Design, which is setting the standards for the accrediting bodies. This new model that we are proposing will include scholarship integrated into instruction. Many faculty members have been doing this type of scholarship “off the sides of their desks” and deserve recognition for the work they do. The quality of life for faculty may be improved if a different definition of scholarship guides the University College. We are looking at a wider range of professional work and not lower standards.

Courage is required to be unique. As we develop a new model of scholarship it will require vigilance, maintenance, negotiation, and renewal to keep it alive and ensure that it doesn’t devolve into the “traditional” model. There is a pressure from the traditionalists within the academic community to sameness and a resistance to difference, which can lead to the stifling of new ideas and loss of the expanded understandings that come with theorizing and the promotion of varying visions and multiple perspectives. We must identify who values our scholarship. As Boyer points out, there must be recognition from the top, “Indeed, the president, more than any other person, can give shape and direction to a college and create a climate in which priorities of the professoriate can be appropriately considered” (Boyer, 1992, p. 78)

## **Emerging Concepts of Scholarship**

We also see that we must be explicit about what our scholarship is through clear and common principles, which we have begun to list. We understand that scholarship may play out differently in different disciplines, but the basic principles should be consistent as per Boyer’s comment that “Every college and university must clarify its own goals and seek to relate its own unique purposes more directly to the reward system”. (1992, p. 53) New models may vary from discipline to discipline but we have the opportunity to develop our own models of the scholarship of teaching. This will require engagement with faculty on all levels. “The challenge is to strengthen research, integration, application, and teaching. Such a broad, energetic view of scholarship will not emerge, however, without strong leadership at the top” (Boyer, 1992, p. 78)

Throughout the group meetings and discussions, certain concepts surfaced and were discussed at length by the members. Notes from the sessions were analyzed by the facilitators and then returned to members for comments and validation. The following list contains the main concepts that the groups identified.

- ❖ Scholarship is diverse and there is equity in the plurality of scholarly artifacts.
- ❖ We want to celebrate all types of scholarship.
- ❖ We need to define what different types of scholarship might look like.

- ❖ We need to define teaching excellence, and this can be done through our scholarly work on the scholarship of teaching.
- ❖ We want to create something different from the traditional discovery research institution and we need to discover how this could be done.
- ❖ Reviewers of scholarship need training.
- ❖ The institution needs ways to reward scholarship and teaching excellence.
- ❖ Resources are required for scholarly activities.
- ❖ The Kwantlen community needs to be informed about different types of scholarship.

### **Common Principles of Scholarship at Kwantlen**

This working list of principles forms a beginning of understanding of what Scholarship at Kwantlen might become. We believe that all members of the Kwantlen University College community should respectfully acknowledge and value:

- ❖ Diversity;
- ❖ Experience and knowledge as well as qualifications and credentials;
- ❖ All forms of scholarship as defined by Boyer: Teaching, Application, Integration and Discovery.

We see excellence in teaching as a primary skill at Kwantlen that should be recognized and celebrated in all forms. We further believe that:

- ❖ Search committees should place as primary the ability to teach, interest in teaching, and commitment to teaching when making recommendations for all faculty positions. “Each college or university should, of course, view teaching as a core requirement” (Boyer, 1992, p. 57).
- ❖ There should be wide support for improving instructional skills, including all forms of assessment, effective use of technology to improve student learning, and attention to authenticity of teaching (as defined by Cranton & Carusetta, 2004).
- ❖ Effective multi-dimensional communication with the Kwantlen community concerning the scholarship of teaching and learning should become a norm.
- ❖ We should celebrate our examples of scholarship and the artifacts that accompany them.

## Action Results

### ***Acknowledgement of scholarship being done by everyone in the participant groups***

At Kwantlen, faculty are hired to teach, and our Mission Statement (2003)<sup>2</sup> says, “We create an exceptional learning environment...” Teaching is a promotion of learning for students. Teaching is developing intellect, moral development and service, as well as, promoting the integration and application of the most current knowledge and analysis of current truths. At Kwantlen we are trying to create a value for teaching in order to preserve it. Teaching needs to be made public in a variety of ways. Right now, the written is privileged over the narrative.

Co-participants found their discussions inspiring as they spoke to what each of us are all confronting – the need to bring teaching and other forms of scholarship out from behind the shadow of discovery scholarship. To foster Boyer’s models of scholarship, we identified various types of scholarship at Kwantlen. Our intention is to find multiple ways and vehicles to recognize, showcase, and celebrate examples of scholarship to students, faculty, administration, and the public by using portfolios and other artifacts.

### ***Diversity in Artifacts of Scholarship***

The groups asked the questions: How do we assay our scholarship? What excites us the most about our scholarship? What story will we tell about our scholarship? How do we keep teaching experiential and local?

We answered:

- ❖ “It is thrilling watching students opening up.”
- ❖ “When students say – “this has turned my life around” – it is the reason I teach.”
- ❖ “The enormous added value that comes from Kwantlen and the students comes to us.”
- ❖ “As we reflect, we give a deep and wide image of us as a person.”
- ❖ “What kind of an article do we want to publish?”

This article by the facilitators and members of the groups is intended to:

- ❖ Stimulate our thinking and that of the reader on the writings of Boyer and others.
- ❖ Share our points of view on the many facets of scholarship.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> Kwantlen Strategic Implementation Plan (2003) Internal document, retrieved from: [http://plaza.kwantlen.ca/sites/ventures.nsf/files/ImplementationPlan-15-Sep-03.pdf/\\$FILE/ImplementationPlan-15-Sep-03.pdf](http://plaza.kwantlen.ca/sites/ventures.nsf/files/ImplementationPlan-15-Sep-03.pdf/$FILE/ImplementationPlan-15-Sep-03.pdf)

Collectively we have a philosophy of scholarship within the Kwantlen University College community. As one way of sharing our scholarship we have identified possible narratives that we might tell about our experiences of:

- ❖ Learning as much as I can about my department as department chair, to build and develop others' and my own capacity.
- ❖ Building networks to support faculty.
- ❖ Working with vulnerable students.
- ❖ Lifelong learning and growth.
- ❖ Helping students to maximize their potential and build self-esteem.

Each narrative is the one that was chosen by the teller and explains scholarship and their application from their perspective. This may consist of video, portfolio, poem, quilts, mindmaps, or any other method deemed suitable by the narrator.

We are collecting these artifacts and they can be found at the Scholarship@Kwantlen website located at:

[http://plaza.kwantlen.ca/sites/academic-growth.nsf/pages/Teaching\\_Scholarship](http://plaza.kwantlen.ca/sites/academic-growth.nsf/pages/Teaching_Scholarship)

## **Future Implications**

Given the co-participants' belief that scholarship in all forms is vital to education and service excellence and that this is the direction that is indicated in Kwantlen's Strategic Framework, our emerging model will provide the solid foundation for improving teaching and learning at Kwantlen.

Boyer does not clearly define the Scholarship of Teaching but does provide a starting place where we have chosen to insert our evolving definition and public display of scholarly works as they are manifested within our collegiate environment. From the artifacts collected, we theorize that one definition of the Scholarship of Teaching might be:

The public display of the individual understandings and truths that educators have around their roles and what they do with that knowledge. This includes what we know about our diverse disciplines, subject matter, and how students learn coupled with our reflections on how we utilize this knowledge within the educational process. A vital part of this scholarship of teaching is our reflections on our practice as we further our understanding of the interplay of both process and content.

We believe that teaching is the heart of everything we do as educators.

## **References**

- Bogdan, R. C. and Biklen, S. K. (1982) *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA, USA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Cranton, P & Carusetta, E. (2004). *Perspectives on authenticity in teaching*. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55(1), p. 5-22.
- Cunsolo, J., Elrick, M., Middleton, A. & Roy, D. (1996). The scholarship of teaching: A Canadian perspective with examples. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 26(1), pp. 35-56.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research*, California, USA: Sage Publications.

## **Appendix A**

### **Group members and what they hoped to gain**

Alexa: English Language Studies faculty. My main reason is to meet people outside my department and talk about something other than language learning.

Alice: Professional Development Support Services faculty. I have a self-interest in scholarship of teaching, and my goal is to work toward shared understandings, meanings, and shared differences. I hope to see all forms of scholarship valued at the same level.

Angela: Marketing faculty, contract instructor, started in September. I teach in a variety of places. I was interested in doing a PhD but not the research. I'm interested in teaching and want to craft a career that combines consulting and teaching.

Anne: Community Support Worker, faculty, and Psychologist. On my department committee on Scholarship.

Balbir: BSN faculty. I have a self-interest in scholarship of teaching, and my goal is to work toward shared understandings, meanings, shared differences. Also with the direction Kwantlen is taking, I want to be involved in defining scholarship rather than having it imposed on me. I have read Boyer before and other articles on scholarship.

Carol: Gerontology program coordinator and faculty. I resist academia in the traditional sense. Interested in action research. I appreciate discussion that open and change my thinking. Want to know how to do disciplined research into teaching. Part of it is how do we teach people to work together. I'm experimenting with that.

Cherry: Home Support, Resident Care Program faculty. Started looking through it and thought it would be fun to read. My real passion is how do people learn and how do I teach so people can learn.

Chris: Librarian, new and started in September to define and support the library's role in supporting research at Kwantlen. Finding it really interesting to find out about the politics and higher education and Kwantlen. I've read all the background documents and gone to meetings with the faculty and staff research committee and the minor research grants committee. I sense some distrust and am trying to be present. I want to get a better sense of what the options are and what people are wanting.

Dana: ABTY faculty, Chair of Ed Council. I want to come to the table with people from across the institution to talk about scholarship and broaden the understanding of scholarship.

Debbie: BSN faculty. I'm familiar with the traditional aspects of scholarship. I am very glad to talk interdisciplinary about this book. I learn best by talking things out. I like the idea of getting students involved in research.

Fran: BSN faculty, seconded from Douglas. Keen interest in hearing from and listening to others. We haven't always done enough of this in our institutions. In Bachelor of Science in Nursing we have been working with Boyer's model to define what we want to do in Scholarship.

Gary: Horticulture faculty in greenhouse production. Just finished my instructor diploma program and wanted to continue learning about learning. See that this could be part of the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture.

Gillian: English faculty. This is an important issue for faculty at Kwantlen. There is a need to give validity to teaching as one of the forms of scholarship given that there is an institutional push toward the scholarship of discovery.

Gordon: Strategic Services administration. Kwantlen is focusing on research and scholarship and starts from Boyer's definition. Don't want to do traditional research; action research is more like consulting with an eye to changing practice. It would be useful to have a dialogue amongst faculty about research. Scholarship in Boyer's terms is broad and is what we have been doing at Kwantlen from the beginning.

Grant: Research Grants administration. Kwantlen University College has adopted Boyer's definitions and wants to institutionalize this definition to distinguish us from the traditional Universities.

Ihor: Interior Design faculty. I was teaching in the 70's and then in practice. I have come full circle to teaching again and the joy of being with the students. Reading this book helps me to focus on Learning and the journey of learning and teaching. We end up teaching not content, but the whole person. If we are to truly strive for excellence, then there are larger dimensions to be aware of and take the opportunity of 'teaching moments' that look at curriculum content, the group as a dynamic, and the individual as a real person, not just an FTE.

John: Drafting faculty. I am interested in the comparison of types of research in applied areas, and of service and research. I am also interested in finding out what supports are available.

Julie: Gerontology-Based Recreation faculty, in the Division of Community & Health.

Lynda: BSN faculty, seconded from Douglas to observe culture and learn how to teach semesters 6-8. I needed to use Boyer Model for scholarly activity for self – had difficulty using. There is a devaluing of scholarship, slippage to traditional discovery research.

Maureen: English faculty. I want to bring sense to the system on both a provincial and local level. Both intrigued and inspired with action research and the idea that all of us are researchers.

Nancy: Resident Care faculty. Intellectual stimulation and a discussion of the types of research that we can do as instructors.

Robert: Criminology faculty. Our department is starting to discuss scholarship. The last few faculty hired have been those with a research focus. I see a potential in Boyer to reassess what we have been doing as scholarly activity.

Robin: ELS faculty. I'm interested in the topic and pragmatics of action research. This is a reasonable topic for my classroom and me. I want the interaction and the cross-fertilization. I see issues in privileging certain groups.

Rose: BSN faculty. Boyer is a foundation in our curriculum. I am on the scholarship committee internally and externally with 10 other nursing program sites. I want to be

able to articulate scholarship in a simplistic way so that colleagues can come out and share their work.

Rosemary: Accounting and a theorist: Interested in the book because I love the title. I don't understand the rhetoric around different types of scholarship and want to talk about it.

Sandra: English composition and literature faculty. I've been on long-term disability and wanted to see if I can still think. Does the institution support scholarship of teaching and do they care?

Suzanne: Chemistry faculty. I have concern over Kwantlen's push toward research. Most faculty think traditional science when they think about research. I want to learn about defining what scholarship is and want to explore different definitions of scholarship.