Impacts of Scholarly Communities at Kwantlen and Beyond

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Abstract

We, at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, work collaboratively with others in our Carnegie Academy's Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) Leadership cluster to promote awareness and understandings of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. We share and promote experiences, processes, and products that are intended to create new understandings and to document both methods and results. In this paper, we look at the evolution of scholarly activities at Kwantlen and the ways scholars can communicate and share in a variety of informal and formal venues. This continuum of reflection and development of scholarly community is an ongoing effort that will thrive well past the end of the CASTL project. Through this continuum, we are able to provide the background and context of our work, present our initial proposal objectives for the Carnegie cluster and describe accomplishments and share our future aspirations. Our experience with the CASTL Leadership Cluster and how this project has provided the catalyst to advance scholarly activity and build scholarly communities at Kwantlen is the essence of what we have to comment on at this point in time.

Key Words:

Scholarly Community, dialogue, communication, scholarship of teaching and learning, teaching, learning.

Introduction

Teaching and Learning are the heart of faculty work. Historically, at Kwantlen College (created in 1981), we were hired to teach. In 1995, Kwantlen was legislated to university college status, and faculty began conversations about the potential of doing scholarship. It wasn't until 2004 that a group of faculty at Kwantlen began an inquiry to "understand the phenomena and express our (faculty) understandings of 'What is scholarship and what should it look like at our institution?'" (Gurm & Macpherson, et al, 2005, p.1) Since then, many changes related to scholarship and dissemination of scholarly activities have occurred including our affiliation with the CASTL leadership cluster, starting in November 2006 when our Cluster met and chose the name "Building Scholarly Communities" and we began our work. Over the past two and a half year, we have met three times face to face, and numerous times mediated by technology. This productive and supportive environment has nurtured our projects in ways that allowed us to move forward continually. We share our approaches for creating scholarly communities and our processes and accomplishments so that others may learn from our experience. As well, we share our thoughts on the sustainability challenges.

A Need for Scholarly Communities

What is a scholarly activity and why do even need it? This is the question we had to answer prior to entering this project. We looked to the literature for answers. There is some evidence that, as their career proceeds, faculty members become more stressed and dissatisfied. Faculty experience isolation, stress, loneliness, a lack of a work/life balance, and a lack of recognition and rewards (Johnsrud, 1994; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000; Sorcinelli, 1994, Gurm, 2004). This lack may be addressed through the development of communities of inquiry:

> A community of inquiry is based upon discourse and the security to explore and challenge ideas. It bridges the private reflective world of the individual and public shared world of society. A community of inquiry provides the opportunity to iterate between the reflective and shared worlds. The purpose and value is for learners to take responsibility for the construction of knowledge and learn to learn while being open to societal knowledge and the experiences of others. (University of Calgary, 2006).

There is a hunger for connection and conversation that permeates all physical and virtual spaces, as well as a declaration of a desire to share and encourage sharing of ideas, artifacts, and projects. As institutions of higher education strive to remake themselves in a constantly changing world of increased globalization coupled with local concerns and focuses, the older paradigms of isolation and 'ivory towers' need to give way to institutions of learning becoming 'learning institutions' themselves. The interplay of these globalizing forces does not exist so much in opposition but rather in a contradictory and "massive two-fold process involving the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism" (Robertson 1997 p.73) where the particular – situational decisions according to a group standard – are becoming more universal as information and connectivity expand exponentially via the internet and the ease of travel for many people. Meanwhile, the "global village" is becoming more particular. This complex interaction and synthesis of globalizing and

localizing tendencies has been called "glocalization" (Spybey, 1996; Appadurai, 1990; Scott, 1997) and is a key facet of the globalization of knowledge. Glocalization, particularly where a merging of global opportunities and local interests occurs, is at the heart of both engaging in good teaching practice as well as expanding and sharing it across disciplinary, institutional, and national boundaries.

This academic work of teaching is also deeply embedded in cultural and intercultural practice and reaches well beyond the 'halls of learning' and on into 'communities of learning' where academics have the opportunity to become transformational leaders through their ethical and moral applications within the scholarly teaching that they do. Supporting this view, Wilcox and Ebb, in *The Leadership Compass: Values and Ethics in Higher Education*, 1992 note that the various roles of an academic can cause conflict:

> Work in academic life, like any other kind of work, is laden with values and has a moral dimension that emerges from the ethical reflection characteristic of institutional self-scrutiny. … In responding to these problems, the scholar must balance individual with group realities and requirements. An important pedagogical conception to help achieve the balance is the learning community." (1992, p.1)

Further to this necessity of finding ways of balancing the myriad impacts of acting within the complex and changing structure of modern society and one's own local community, those who dedicate themselves and focus on teaching and learning need the critique and support of other like-minded individuals to build a framework to further and also share human knowledge:

> Both scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching are vital to the life of the academy. The purpose of scholarly teaching is to affect the activity of teaching and the resulting learning, while the scholarship of teaching results in a formal, peer-reviewed communication in appropriate media or venues, which then becomes part of the knowledge base of teaching and learning in higher education. (Laurie Richlin and Milton D. Cox, 2004. p. 127-128)

In real terms, Richlin and Cox's observation means that every member of the institution has a need to learn and develop in reflexive ways that support student learning. Sondra Patrick and James Fletcher (1998, p. 158) note "We believe that, because it is student centered, focusing learning offers great promise for colleges and universities as they attempt to address current challenges … In other words, colleges and universities must themselves become what Peter Senge (1990) calls a 'learning organization'. The key features of learning organizations are shared ideals, collaboration, flexibility, and reflection." Senge cautions us "All disciplines matter. … People discover that the best systemic insights don't get translated into action when people don't trust one another and cannot build genuinely shared aspirations and mental models." (1990 p. xviii).

The concept of shared vision starts with two people wanting a similar outcome coupled with the commitment that each will help the other to achieve it. For sharing to occur, there must be a dialogue (from the Greek dialogos – dia meaning through and logos being words) that leads to mutual understanding and what Gervais Bushe (2001) describes as "learning conversations" among those who engage in these dialogues. He

points out that we all have experiences and then try to make sense of them: "Experience is not what happens to you but the reactions you create out of what happens to you moment by moment" (p.8). It is only when we describe our observations, what we are thinking about them, how we feel, and what we want and then let others do the same, that we are able to get beyond our assumptions and learn from our dialogues. This fits well with Richard Tiberius' 1995 description of "individualized consultations." Tiberius notes that "the consultation process is described by Bergquist and Phillips (1975) as 'a systematic, confidential, structured exchange of ideas, perceptions and suggestions between a faculty development consultant … and an individual faculty member, the purpose of which is to identify and improve teaching strengths and weaknesses'" (p.69). The typical process includes four stages: gathering information about the instructor's teaching, analyzing that information, developing and implementing strategies for improvement, and evaluating the impact of those strategies through the collection and analysis of new information" (p. 192). These "exchanges of ideas, perceptions and suggestions" can be expanded across both small and large faculty communities of interest, and they are the type of conversation that builds relationships with others to foster the 'Team Learning' that Senge says is at the heart of the learning organizations, where two or more people, pursuing common goals, make meaning together, become aligned through dialogue , and critically analyze the systems in which the team functions with the intent of realizing a shared vision of a preferred future.

Context

Dr. Balbir Kaur Gurm is the Admissions Committees Chair for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program at Kwantlen Polytechnic University and an award winning educator. Dr. Gurm has been honoured with the Teaching Excellence Award from the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (2000) and the NISOD Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Texas (2000). Her doctoral dissertation was a social audit of Kwantlen. She currently teaches a fourth year course on social change. Her research interests include the social determinants of health, teaching and learning and change in organizations.

Alice Macpherson is a faculty member at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She is the Professional Development and Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator and works with employees at all levels to increase their strengths and harness their creativity to work with students and improve learning through the use of a variety of supporting good practices in adult education including a focus on Faculty Learning Communities and Communities of Practice, Appreciative Inquiry, and Appreciative Leadership processes. Alice holds Trades Qualification in two mechanical trades areas (Ontario & BC), the BC Instructors Diploma, an MA in Education (SFU), and is currently pursuing interdisciplinary doctoral studies at SFU combining Education and Leadership through an organizational development lens. She is engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning in ways that support her colleagues and their students, and is supported by her belief that learning is personally constructed, group informed, and instructor guided.

Kwantlen faculty members started a grass roots approach to making connections and building community connected with supportive administrators and began to look for

a vehicle that would allow us to build the communities that we desired. Through our research, we discovered the CASTL Leadership Program developed by the Carnegie Foundation. This, combined with our own internal Mission, Values, and Strategic Framework, became the basis for our application to this program. Our membership in the CASTL Leadership Program has been a catalyst within a time of institutional change and given us talking points and external referencing to support dialogue around the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

Kwantlen Background

Since our inception in 1981, Kwantlen has evolved from a Community College to a University College (1995) to a Polytechnic University (2008). This process has seen the legislation under which we are constituted change a number of times, and, in each case, we, as a community, have paused, reflected, and then refocused on our mandate, community, and students and have created opportunities for dialogue.

In January, 2009, Kwantlen's current President, Dr. David Atkinson, wrote about,

…teaching and learning, which, according to the University Act, are the cornerstone of Kwantlen's identity. We must therefore encourage good teaching and recognize it. We must look for new and innovative forms of pedagogy, and we must ensure that how we teach supports our commitment to accessibility. … We must support the excellent work done by the Centre for Academic Growth. … It is not enough, in other words, to say we are a teaching and learning institution; we need to demonstrate it repeatedly.

This ongoing commitment to searching for evidence fuels our work in the CASTL Project.

Kwantlen's CASTL Leadership Project

Kwantlen's membership in the CASTL Leadership Project Cluster – Building Scholarly Communities – is based on our understanding of how we can work with other institutions to support reflective practice in the field of teaching and learning with our colleagues at Kwantlen and beyond. In our application to join the CASTL program, we focused on what we felt was doable within our institutional and educational context with the intention of collaborating with other institutions "to draw on the strengths of diverse partners to develop a series of … projects." (Kwantlen's application to the CASTL Leadership Program, 2006)

In joining the CASTL Leadership Project, our intent was to document the transition in our changing culture as we develop and increase the number of employees and students engaged in scholarship activities. We wanted to have a place where people could step back, create a question to engage with, gather data, reflect on meaning, and share material with others. We wanted to develop new and innovative ways of assessing scholarship, student learning, and to document the community benefits of our participation. We also wanted to increase the number of scholars and scholarly activities around Teaching and Learning at Kwantlen in ways that connect us to a larger community of scholars interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Another intent was to collaborate with other universities, university colleges, colleges, technical

institutes, the private sector as well as public and volunteer agencies. This would allow us to share our work and to draw on the strengths of diverse partners to develop a series of research projects using both quantitative and qualitative methodology to develop an in-depth understanding of our projects and their potential impact on future student scholars and our greater community.

We believe that teaching is the heart of everything we do as educators. We have chosen to identify our evolving definition and public display of scholarly works as they are manifested within our collegiate environment. From our inquiry into scholarship in 2006, 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." (Gurm, Macpherson et al, 2006).

All of this led us to the desire and intention to broaden and deepen our contacts with others who are also involved in this work. It is only through engagement in discussion and reflection on scholarship that we will be able to enhance our ability to be a positive catalyst for student learning, and the advancement of higher education and our community. We wanted to document our processes and products of scholarship through the sharing of our actions among peers and through the publishing of our thoughts and conceptualizations in a number of ways and through a variety of products. We also wanted to develop ways of evaluating both the processes and products of our scholarship keeping in mind that these complex elements occur widely in multiple spaces and intersections across our institution and the larger community.

In 2006, Kwantlen was developing a Centre for Academic Growth, which formally opened June 1, 2006 with a mandate of supporting teaching for learning. This explicitly included the scholarship of teaching and learning, that we define as practitioner-initiated context--specific processes grounded in issues specific to a discipline or faculty and focusing on improving the practice of teaching and learning (rather than on publication in peer-reviewed journals or the amount of grant money received). University-based Teaching and Learning Centres often have a significant mandate that explicitly includes the scholarship of teaching and learning, so we were right on target as we began.

In our proposal for the CASTL project we identified a number of products that would result from participation and how they would be disseminated. We noted that "while products are important we believe that the process of scholarship and reflection on scholarship are equally important" (ibid) and then identified intended products and dissemination pathways that, from our research, we believed would support scholarly practices. These are:

1. Web Journal, with publication three times a year.

2. Events and Conferences to be held to share information both formally and informally. We currently hold, and will continue to hold, a conference showcasing the research of undergraduate students and faculty.

3. A website for students to begin web-publishing projects and research, to increase their confidence with publishing.

4. A centralized website of information dedicated to scholarship and research at Kwantlen.

5. Kwantlen course websites that celebrate and publicize student projects. (CASTL application, 2006)

We were accepted as a member of this project in 2006 and first met with our Cluster prior to the ISSoTL Conference in Washington, DC, USA in November, 2006. The members, as designated by the Carnegie Foundation were The Ohio State University (coordinating institution), Dartmouth College, Queen's University, Ryerson University, Southeast Missouri State University, University of Glasgow, and Kwantlen. Each institution had a team that moved the project forward and tracked the results.

Initiatives Undertaken during This Project – Process, Progress, and Products

After returning from the first meeting in Washington, DC in November 2006, the Kwantlen Team revisited the initial application outline and broke the initiatives and activities into two main and overlapping frameworks – Internal and External.

Connecting Internally at Kwantlen

The Centre for Academic Growth's Missions Statement is "Supporting Excellence and Innovation in Teaching and Learning," and it is the embodiment of our commitment to the CASTL Leadership Project. The Centre is staffed by one part time (.75) faculty member and a part time (.6) staff (clerical position). Other faculty members have joined as volunteers in this effort through personal interest and commitment. With their wide ranging skills and scholarly interests, this has allowed The Centre to reach out to many Kwantlen faculty members and encourage reflection and personal academic growth that positively affects student learning. The effort of these volunteers had enabled us to do far more than the available funding would suggest. There has been a synergistic effect as Kwantlen members have contributed their ideas and products within a supportive framework. Because of this synergy, we have been able to connect internally and with like-minded colleagues in other institutions. The connection and reinforcement of reflective scholarship has built energy and sparked dialogue that has been productive on both an individual and group basis at Kwantlen, in our Cluster, and in the wider educational community. In accordance with our initial CASTL Leadership Project application and plan, The Centre has implemented a variety of projects designed to build community for faculty at Kwantlen. Some of these are listed here.

The Teaching for Learning Program at Kwantlen

The Centre for Academic Growth at Kwantlen Polytechnic University offers initial and ongoing opportunities for professional development in the field of teaching and learning. The Faculty Teaching for Learning program consolidates, into a 70 hour program, a series of linked sessions that offer theory, research, and applied activities in a number of aspects of teaching for learning. This Program benefits individual instructors and supports the development of Faculty Learning Communities at Kwantlen. These learning opportunities are available to all faculty members and teaching associates at

Kwantlen. In the development of this program, we looked at how other institutions and Centres support faculty in their focus on sustainable teaching practices. The ability to sustain good teaching practice and good student learning over time is a result of using the principles of SoTL and scholarly practices. This outward analysis to produce an inward focus has allowed us to create a Kwantlen based program that is supported by research into teaching and learning.

The program contains three areas of contiguous, interactive learning experiences - Curriculum, Learners, and Institutional - designed to provide opportunities for faculty to develop and enhance their facility in teaching for learning. Personal and professional development are integral elements of the life-long learning that Kwantlen supports for students, community, and employees. Sessions are intended to provide a solid base for personal academic growth in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Faculty who choose to undertake professional development studies in education demonstrate a commitment to enhanced student learning and professional skills development. A Certificate of Completion is offered.

Faculty Learning Communities and Peer Mentoring Alliances

We have been told over and over that the chance to talk about teaching and learning with colleagues is the most valued activity that professional development at the university has to offer. By drawing on other institutions' experience with this type of project, Kwantlen began connecting faculty members in ways that transcended their disciplines. Alliances are one way that we encourage and support faculty to connect and have those collegial conversations. One key activity of Kwantlen's Peer Mentoring program has been Reading Circles. These are chances for faculty to read a good book about teaching and learning and then to discuss it with colleagues. Any individual faculty member can initiate a group by locating three or four colleagues who want to read with them. There is a list of suggested books and groups can request others. Reading Circles meet every few weeks for one hour, and each participant who signs up and attends the four sessions receives a copy of the book to read and keep. Each participant writes a reflective piece on the impact, the next steps of the readings and their interactions within the circle. This is shared with the circle members and posted on the Peer Mentoring Alliances Moodle site. The Centre hopes that the Reading Circles will result in projects being started that have an impact on both scholarly activities and student learning.

Reaching Out Externally

While it was important to work from the inside out, the project also has had a more public scholarly face. We wanted to collaboratively identify ways to document this process to support scholarly practice. We are now in the third year of the project. Some products and their current status are expanded on below.

Web Journal – Transformative Dialogues

Transformative Dialogues: *teaching and learning journal* mission statement, in 2007 stated that the journal was aiming at "Reflecting and sharing our teaching and learning processes to improve learning for our students and ourselves."(This was the first point in our CASTL proposal that the Kwantlen group put forward, and it has been the biggest

and, arguably, our most successful initiative. The journal started out by securing server space at Kwantlen and building an internal editorial board for the first issue in early 2007. A Call for Submissions went out in February and our first issue was published in May 2007 (http://kwantlen.ca/TD/TD.1.1/). The first issue was a forum for conversations intended to foster the improvement of adult teaching and learning. The issue attracted many favourable comments. We continued to grow so that *Transformative Dialogues* (*TD*) would facilitate the multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas, actions, and results of innovative and professional practice in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

This journal is co-edited by Balbir Gurm, Alice Macpherson, and Al Valleau – all Kwantlen Faculty members, and it continues to be published three times per year "off the sides of our desks" (which is the colloquial expression describing work that is not considered to be a part of our jobs). *TD* is an open access journal with a volunteer editorial board. Our intent was to start a grassroots journal that would value scholarship of teaching and learning and multiple formats of public display. Therefore, our journal accepts reflections, reports, book reviews and scholarly articles in all digital formats. These conversations are intended to span a wide range of reflections on the processes of teaching and learning ranging from the scholarly to scholarship. Reflections and shared understandings are focused on improving student and faculty learning, and critical thought processes. We understand that scholarship may play out differently in different disciplines, but the basic principles should be consistent.

Transformative Dialogues adopts the principle that strategies, techniques and methods of teaching and learning transcend the boundaries of specific subject fields. We welcome relevant contributions from diverse settings such as academia, vocational training, continuing professional development, workplace learning, selected commercial exemplars, and social networking via communications technologies.

The journal has become well read internationally. From August 2008 to Feb 26, 2009 *Transformative Dialogues* had a total of 13,369 page views. Of these, 6,114 were unique IP addresses, meaning some of the people visited the site a number of times. This indicates to us that our colleagues are happy with what we are producing because they are reading it. *Transformative Dialogues* is found at http://kwantlen.ca/TD. You too, are encouraged to join our dialogue.

Events and Conferences to be held to share information both formally and informally

We currently hold, and will continue to hold, symposia showcasing the research of undergraduate students and faculty. As we started to expand on the CASTL project, we held several half-day sessions on the scholarship of teaching and learning and then developed longer and more diverse events.

Forging our Own Path – August 23, 2007

Our first full day symposium with attendance from Kwantlen faculty and our regional counterparts focused on dialogues on teaching and learning. This event was supported internally and presented by Kwantlen's CASTL Leadership Program and The Centre for Academic Growth. The President of Kwantlen, Skip Triplett, noted in his welcome that: "Unlike other forms of scholarship that are discipline focused, the scholarship of teaching and learning can bring together faculty from all parts of Kwantlen in

collaborations leading to enhanced learning for our students, our graduates and ourselves. If we do this well, the scholarship of teaching and learning can make us a closer and a more effective learning community." This dynamic event brought together 70 faculty members who spent the day listening, sharing and dialoguing in 16 venues on Kwantlen's Surrey Campus.

Spanning the Career of an Educational Developer – February 21-22, 2008

This conference, for the Canadian Educational Developers Caucus of Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), was organized in partnership with Simon Fraser University. The main conference was held at Kwantlen with pre-conference sessions at SFU. We hosted 140+ Educational Developers from across Canada and beyond in a three day interactive conference focused on improving practice. This gathering of colleagues further broadened and deepened our ability to share information and to build community beyond Kwantlen. For information on this conference, please see http://www.sfu.ca/kwantlen-edcconf2008/ and http://www.mcmaster.ca/stlhe/edc.2008.html

Engaged Learning – June 10, 2009

We support and celebrate innovations in teaching by teaching in ways that welcome our students into the enterprise of knowledge creation. Undergraduate research, faculty-student collaborations in conferences, colloquia, presentations and publications are among the strategies being built into Kwantlen programs for students and for employees. We are inspired by this opportunity to be our professional best through collegial practice, scholarly activities, and ongoing faculty scholarly activity. Our Symposium on Engaged Learning showcased some of the best of this teaching that builds learning and learning communities at Kwantlen, in community, and beyond. We promote innovative strategies that assist us in rethinking our approaches to teaching and in developing our lectures, class activities, practice experiences, exams, and assignments to support learning using multicentric principles. More information is located at http://kwantlen.ca/academicgrowth/EngagedLearning.html

A website for students to begin web-publishing of projects and their research, to increase confidence with publishing.

In this area, the CASTL group has been encouraging, but most of the work has been done in various Faculties and Schools, and in specific courses. Some examples include

- Students in Kwantlen's Bachelor of Science in the Nursing Program, publishing their work at: http://www.nursing-informatics.com/N4111/mediaarchives.html and at http://www.virtualcurriculum.com/N3225/studentwork_archive.html
- Honours students in Psychology doing research and publishing through the School's internal publication, Synapse. These are archived at http://www.kwantlen.ca/socialsciences/psychology/news.html.
- Kwantlen's Office of Research and Scholarship also provides research opportunities for students in the areas of Education Literacy, Environment, Housing and Constructions, Community Services and Development, Aboriginal Studies, Children and family Development, and Children and Youth: http://www.kwantlen.ca/research/Student_Research_Opportunities.html. The Office also held an inclusive and comprehensive event, Celebrating

Research and Scholarship at Kwantlen on April 3, 2008 that saw presentation and posters from a significant number of students and faculty being shared with the whole institution:-
http://www.kwantlen.ca/__shared/assets/celebrate_research_poster6692.pdf.

Much more can be done, and this will be the next phase of the work.

A centralized website of information dedicated to scholarship and research at Kwantlen.

On The Centre for Academic Growth website, we have space for faculty to submit artefacts of their scholarly activities. We built this space as a repository for scholarly activities that was not filtered through peer review and was available internally to Kwantlen faculty. After the initial sharing by some faculty members, this initiative has not grown. We will be revisiting this concept in the future and looking at way to revitalize the effort.

Kwantlen's Office of Research and Scholarship's website provides this function through their website at: http://www.kwantlen.ca/research.html. The Centre for Academic Growth has partnered with them on select events and initiatives over the course of this project. These have included a monthly Brown Bag Series since the fall of 2008 that has offered a forum for faculty to discuss their scholarship (both complete and in progress) and scholarly activities and to share ideas.

Kwantlen course websites that celebrate and publicize student projects

It has become apparent over the past three years that the Building Scholarly Communities will be an ongoing process requiring the will and resources of all Faculties and Schools to achieve. While some of this has been documented above, there is more to do and to celebrate.

Assessing Impact and our Hopeful Future

It is a huge task to measure the impact of our efforts. Traditional measures of assessment count the number of participants and workshops. Another way of assessing the impact is proximal plus one, the idea that you share your thoughts with one person and that person shares it with another. This chain of sharing with one more person eventually spreads exponentially to the wider public. It is difficult to analyze the full impact of proximal plus one. Traditionally, citations have been the chief measurement tool, but these are not the only measurement. We believe proximal plus one is occurring with all of our dialogues in various places and formats. Some of these include

- *Transformative Dialogues'* philosophy of Open Source;
- Reviewer Board of *Transformative Dialogues* and the publication;
- Teaching for Learning Sessions;
- Faculty Alliances;
- SoTL Brown bags;
- Conferences and Open Houses;
- Hallway and copy room conversations, and
- Our sharing as a Scholarly Community with our CASTL Cluster.

It is even difficult to conceptualize the impact of an open access ejournal such as *Transformative Dialogues*. With today's technology, it is possible to count the number of times an article is accessed. This still does not account for the dissemination of downloaded articles or the impact of dialogues that happen about the ideas contained in an article. The total of 42,157 hits on the *Transformative Dialogues* site over the span of two issues (TD.2.0 and TD.2.2) and six months represents one of many possible measures so that we can begin to grasp the scope of impact. We do know that you can get an idea, reflect on it, and use it in every day practice without writing an article and citing sources. We hear from our readers that this is happening and that they can build on the ideas of others for their own practice. Currently, the journal also appears on the top of a Google search when you use the two words, 'Transformative Dialogues', and shows up third when the words 'teaching and learning journal' are entered without quotes. We see this as evidence that some impact has occurred and will build towards more measurements. It is difficult to measure the benefits because it is difficult to tell who is engaged. If it is educators who are accessing the articles in *TD*, then they may be using knowledge from their visits to the site to improve their classrooms and any space where education and or learning takes place.

Next Steps to Build and Maintain Scholarly Communities – Persistence, Sustainability, and Growth

Within the mandate and culture of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, we, as faculty members, are using the direction and aspirations of the institution to support scholarly activity and build scholarly communities. The Centre for Academic Growth actively forms partnerships with departments and faculties to build on Kwantlen's espoused values and further Kwantlen's vision for the future. We are fortunate to have supportive colleagues, collaborators, friends, and powerful allies within the institution who see the value in this work and who support us in a myriad of ways, not the least of which is their volunteer time, that solidify and grow our scholarly communities. Besides continuing the initiatives from the CASTL Leadership Project, we are now considering out next steps. We will continue to build scholarly communities. First, we intend to continue our current project, always with an eye to adaptation and melioration. We wish to further our connections with other individual scholars and with institutions. This will mean maintaining the project structures and processes that support scholarly communities. New initiatives will be chosen to enhance the current ones and to provide a more scholarly focus. Under consideration is a proposal to initiate the Queens' research project that will give us a chance to interview Deans and other administrators about their perceptions and roles that have an impact on our work. By working in multiple frameworks – organizational, empirical, phenomenological, and hermeneutical – we will simultaneously build organizational networks and processes that will be part of an incremental approach to melioration and a proximal plus one impact.

Sustaining this Work - Questions and Challenges

Will Kwantlen continue to be committed to improving teaching in ways that provide resources and support to those doing this work? With the current economy, many post-secondary institutions are facing a number of challenges. Kwantlen is no different.

There are challenges with resources, program allocation, and time. When we think of challenges, we think of the following questions:

- Who will be our future champions within the institution?
- Where will the resources come from?
- How can we build partnerships that will support this work?
- How can we get others to join in this work?

Presently, we have taken up the challenge to be the champions, to keep the dialogue going. We cannot continue indefinitely on our own; we must encourage and involve others to become passionate. Those in the employ of an institution may place pressure on the institution to provide the resources, but we must not expect that it will be 'others' who will do this and must also be prepared to do the same. Our colleagues may volunteer time, and if everyone volunteers a few hours per month, it will add up and the projects can continue. Various faculty members and other employees may also write funding applications for support. As well, we can work with like-minded individuals from other institutions by networking through conferences, workshops and meetings. There is always strength in numbers for one plus one doesn't equal two, it may equal 11 when strengths are combined. Much synergy can be created by working together. We are grateful to our CASTL Cluster colleagues for their support, critique, and guidance as we do this work.

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