

## **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: From the Beginning**

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Transformative Dialogue is a journal that focuses on constructs, ideas, artifacts, reflections, and celebrations regarding the scholarship of teaching and learning. We will include scholarly teaching and teaching scholarship, and the scholarship of teaching and learning, and articulate our understandings of these concepts. This inaugural issue of our journal is about the beginnings of these understandings at Kwantlen University College and our scholarly connections. As primary editors of *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal*, we will start this journey with our own understandings and ask our community to help evolve further understandings.

We will first situate the scholarship of teaching and learning as we and others currently see it. Boyer's (1990) and Riley, Beal, Levy and McCausland's (2002) understandings of types of scholarships include: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. We further expand scholarship to include the areas of service and creativity as reflected in Kwantlen's internal organizational development documents (Centre for Academic Growth, Creating our Future, Office of Research and Scholarship Vision, and Kwantlen's Service Learning Plan).

Our current understandings of scholarship are that:

1. Discovery is what is often referred to as research by academics. It is the advancement of new 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" (ibid, p. 23).
4. Teaching is about "transforming and extending knowledge", it is about the "continuity of knowledge" (ibid, p. 24) and its transformation through critical analysis.
5. Service is about taking our understandings into the real world to improve society.
6. Creativity is not yet clearly defined but refers to the products and artifacts of art and design. It is an emerging scholarship at Kwantlen that needs to be defined through inquiry and practice. Each scholarship is unique, complex and multidimensional, as well as, all these scholarships are interrelated and overlapping.

Scholarship of teaching and learning is becoming recognized internationally, nationally, and within our own institution by a variety of groups and individuals who are all vitally focused on student learning. Growing communities of academics and administrators are beginning to recognize the benefits from the perspectives that

converge on this aim. Educators believe that 'teaching is the heart of everything we do' as we are mindful and engaged with students to facilitate their learning. Some administrators seem to believe that the students are consumers who will pick the best products thus educators need to provide quantifiable 'good teaching' in order for our institution to become the institution of choice for students. Other members of the administration embrace supporting the scholarship of teaching and learning to improve both. Administration at Kwantlen University College is currently revisiting faculty evaluation processes to benchmark educator effectiveness. Both lenses recognize the need to improve teaching.

Most educators are hired for content expertise rather than teaching expertise. A review of the job postings at our own institution and in the national advertisements for faculty confirms this. There are educators who are actively and consciously engaged in improving their classroom practices. If we really believe that we need to provide the best learning environment for students and provide superior learning experiences then we must support and encourage our colleagues to broaden their focus beyond discipline specific scholarship to include the scholarship of teaching and learning in ways that will bring ongoing benefits to student learning in their classrooms and in the wider educational community.

We define the scholarship of teaching and learning and differentiate between scholarly teachers, scholarly teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Scholarly teachers create a learning environment that challenges students to evolve their understandings. Scholarly teachers use current knowledge to monitor student progress, evaluate and improve their teaching. Scholarly teaching helps apply and move learners' new knowledge into 'real situations'. It is about evaluating and critiquing the classroom experience within the larger intent or aim of the discipline or program curriculum. Scholarly teaching can be a focus of faculty evaluations. While most faculty members strive to be scholarly teachers and are concerned about scholarly teaching, perhaps not all will want to be engaged in a more formal and public scholarship of teaching and learning.

The scholarship of teaching and learning begins when we extend beyond individual classroom performance to connect with others. This scholarship of teaching and learning is the act of going public through a variety of methods, including: case studies, presentations, discussions or technologies within the program, discipline, and beyond. It is a systematic inquiry into the good practices that support student learning and then disseminating one's findings and application beyond the classroom. This might begin as a collegial conversation within a discipline. It could progress to the sharing of understandings across disciplines and yet within one's own institution. It moves further along the continuum of scholarship as it goes beyond the curriculum and local program into the larger community and then across other institutions and continents to answer questions on how students learn. This is "going meta" according to Hutchings and Shulman (1999). It requires a public display of understandings through presentations and publications which are open to the community for analysis and application in context. It is a way of starting a dialogue on a global level about the understandings of student learning.

Thus, this first journal is a beginning of our dialogue on teaching and learning starting at Kwantlen University College and stretching beyond. Please listen, read and react, stretch your brains, and join the conversation.