

The Canadian Context of Faculty Development Programs for Teaching Online in PSE: Recommendations and Resources

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Summary

This study examines the current state of post-secondary educational development programming in Canada aimed at preparing faculty to teach online. This will allow an assessment of strengths and gaps related to the five competencies identified by Farmer and Ramsdale (2016). Recommendations and an EDC Guide for program development will result.

Agreements

[X] I/We agree to provide the EDC community, who funds this grant, with access to resulting information and resources for which the copyright remains with the author(s).

[X] I/We acknowledge that I/we will submit an interim report and a final deliverable (as described below).

Full Description

Introduction and Rationale

Programming to support faculty and graduate students in developing their teaching practice has been growing in Canada (Ouellett, 2010). Teaching and learning centres at colleges and universities across the country have developed programs that are designed to prepare faculty to step into the classroom. Many of these programs focus on teaching in a face-to-face setting. At the same time, there has been an explosion in online course and program offerings with “about 1,000 online courses ... added every year for the past three years” at Canadian universities (Global Affairs Canada and EduConsillium, 2015). However, according to SSHRC (2016):

Canadian postsecondary institutions and workplace training lag behind in e-learning [which] ... is described as “loose, uncoordinated and fragmented.” ... Rapid technological changes are influencing the creation of new pedagogical approaches. Professional development for instructors is critical to build techno-pedagogical capacity and competencies, to support changing roles and expectations brought about by technology and optimizing new delivery models for authentic and collaborative learning. (p. 22)

Given the concerns raised in the SSHRC report, our study seeks to explore the current state of educational development programming aimed at preparing faculty to teach online. In Canada:

1. What programs exist to prepare faculty to teach in this environment?
2. What attributes and characteristics of an online educator do they support?
3. What recommendations could support educational developers in creating teaching development programs to meet the needs of online educators?

In 2016, Farmer and Ramsdale conducted a literature review to identify teaching competencies for online instructors. Their review of over 200 articles resulted in a competency matrix centred on five key areas; within each area, an instructor might be levelled as ‘emerging,’ ‘developing,’ or ‘proficient.’ Using this matrix as the foundation for our study, we will survey and assess the alignment of teaching development programs at the post-secondary level with these competencies, which are:

1. Community and Netiquette
2. Active Teaching
3. Instructional Design
4. Tools and Technology
5. Leadership and Instruction

Project Purpose

To analyse Canadian PSE teaching development programs that support or prepare faculty for teaching online.

Objectives

1. Assess the current state of educational development programming in Canada aimed at preparing faculty for teaching in a fully online environment (defined as a course offered in a fully online format whether synchronous or asynchronous).
2. Compare the current state of educational development programming to Farmer and Ramsdale's (2016) Online Teaching Competencies matrix.
3. Develop an EDC Guide of recommendations for preparing faculty to teach online including resources for supporting online teaching development and program creation aligned with the EDC Accreditation Program.

Methodology

A mixed methods survey will be sent to the STLHE and EDC email lists to collect baseline information about programs and content (both quantitative and qualitative). Following the survey, additional qualitative data may be collected through Focus Groups or Individual Interviews using open ended, guiding questions. Responses will be coded using an appropriate methodology such as narrative analysis or discourse analysis.

Significance and Outcomes

Our study will illustrate the current state of teaching development programming in Canada and assess strengths and gaps in preparing or supporting faculty for teaching online. From this analysis, we will create a Canadian Guide for Educational Developers that makes recommendations to address these gaps and build on known strengths in ways that support quality online teaching and learning.

This project aligns with the 2016 EDC Living Plan Priorities (<https://goo.gl/QMO8bu>), one of which focuses on Educational Developer Learning & Growth and Engaging Members. We will, "Focus on SoED (research on educational development) and development of resources that provide evidence-informed approaches for educational developers to develop their skills and knowledge in" (Educational Developers' Caucus, n.d.):

- faculty and course development;
- enhancing, supporting, and advocating for teaching and learning quality;
- and, the emerging area of online education.

Study Timelines: Activities and Products

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome	Product(s)
1.Design survey instrument	May – September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear understanding of the literature and methodologies associated with environmental scans - RDC Research Ethics Board Approval prior to survey release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey tool - Literature review - Research Ethics Board Approval
2.Scan for programming through Survey deployment (STLHE and EDC Lists)	September – November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear baseline understanding of programming in Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey data set - Parameters of scan
3.Data analysis	November 2017 – January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High integrity analysis of qualitative and quantitative data results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analytics
4.Mid-term review	February, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - validation of the project scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment of methodology and scan parameters -
5. Final Report	June, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - validation of project results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final Report to EDC on assessment of programs, competency gaps, program design, and creation of EDC Guide
6. Development of the EDC Guide	June, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation of resource for EDC Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDC Guide
Project Team			
Name	Organization	Project Role / Activities	Area of Expertise
Dr. Alison Jeppesen	RDC – CTL	Project Lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiates Research Ethics Board application - Initiates hiring of Research Assistant - Co-creates Survey Questions - Analysis of data and validation - Coding and theming of qualitative data - Co-creation of recommendations - EDC Guide Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - Research Methodologies - Online course development - Instructional Design, Backwards Design - Quality Standards
Kasey Fulton, M.Ed.	RDC - CTL	Co-Investigator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial investigation of Survey Questions - Co-creation of Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online course development - Instructional Design, Backwards Design

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions - Co-creation of recommendations - EDC Guide Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal Design - Quality Standards - Pedagogy of Online Teaching and Learning
Jennifer Thomas, MLIS	RDC - CTL	<p>Co-Investigator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial Literature Review - Co-creation of Survey Questions - Co-creation of recommendations - EDC Guide Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online course development - Instructional Design, Backwards Design - Quality Standards - Information Literacy - Digital Literacy - Research Strategies
Unknown	Student	<p>Research Assistant(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey results analysis and validation testing - EDC Guide Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis and validation - Software support

References

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Proposed Budget

Item	Anticipated Cost
Survey Subscription (Note: Canadian Hosted Survey Tool such as Simple Survey or Jitsutech)	\$500.00
Student Research Assistant (data collection & analysis, qualitative and quantitative with comparison to competencies)	\$1875 (\$25/hour including benefits for 75 hours from September to June)
Project Assistant (transcription of focus groups/interviews)	\$625 (\$25/hour including benefits for 25 hours from March to June)
Budget Total	\$3000.00
EDC Grant Request	\$3000.00