

# 2017 EDC Grants Program Application Form

## 1. Title

Learning Models for Advancing Educational Developers' SoTL Competencies

## 2. Contact Information

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## 3. Project Mini-Description (50/50)

SoTL is a critical pathway to improvements in student learning and educational quality.

Educational developers are well positioned to support SoTL but may need to expand upon this kind of expertise. This project examines the SoTL competencies we need to learn and the models by which we can develop them.

## 4. Project Description (300-1000 word full description of the project including intended outcomes/deliverables; 941/1000)

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is described as a critical pathway to improvements in post-secondary education (Kong et al., 2017) and as a mechanism to enhance student learning and educational quality (Poole & Simmons, 2013). This acknowledgment has significant implications for educational developers. While SoTL is part of the growing expectations of our work (McDonald et al., 2016), we may not have significant experience in SoTL or evolved a culture of evaluating our practice in order to identify our own learning gaps. Development of the developer is becoming increasingly important with the decentralization of teaching support into academic units (Gibbs, 2013). In honing our expertise in educational research, we can extend our support and also further the skills that can help us study our own practice. In developing our SoTL skills, we can gather evidence on the impact of teaching and learning centres, support individual instructors and cross-campus units engaged in SoTL investigations, and even extend our institutional role to the study of teaching within quality assurance processes (Openo et al., 2017).

How do developers advance their SoTL skills? This question was prompted by scenarios at our own institution where large-scale SoTL projects required a team approach which included a developer and an instructional designer. Developers at the Faculty of Law are leading educational research to create an intelligent simulation platform. The Faculty of Arts & Science is studying how multidisciplinary project teams support instructors designing online courses. In both cases, developers from the central teaching centre are invited to design the research program and evaluate the impact of each innovation. These are examples of investigations where developers are playing a central role in the research design and implementation of each study. This role is relatively new for them but it may become more commonplace with the growing university focus on accountability and evidence-based practice. Given our own institutional context, we are especially interested in how cognitive apprenticeship, where learning is scaffolded with a more experienced person through modelling, coaching, observation, practice, and reflection (Dennen, 2008), could support developers.

This project will address the following research questions:

- How can developers help one another to improve their SoTL abilities?
- What learning models best suit the work of educational developers?
- What role could the Educational Developers' Caucus and the POD Network play in developing SoTL skills?

Using a mixed methods approach, we will gather survey and collaborative interview data. Drawing on the international population of developers attending the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network annual conference in October 2017, we will distribute a short survey via their listserv and also promote to attendees at the conference. During the conference, we will offer a face-to-face session with the goal of gathering participant responses during group conversations in a roundtable format. This session addresses the POD themes of gathering evidence on the impact of our work and on making it matter at deeper levels through educational research. Outcomes for the roundtable will be to engage participants in discussion of the SoTL skills for which they would appreciate support, the learning models that could provide that support (given their specific institutional context and experience), and involvement of our professional associations in sustaining that support. Data collection during the roundtable will include polling for shared practices and use of guiding questions where group work will be recorded on flip charts. Prompts will be used to capture diverse experiences and perspectives on how best to develop SoTL capabilities.

In posing these research questions, the facilitator-researchers intend to capture participant ideas to help teaching centres strategize on their SoTL role and the ways in which developers can learn from one another and improve their SoTL capabilities. Ethics approval at the home institution will be sought before the conference to facilitate a brief survey and the capture of live responses and written work with those individuals who agree to participate in the study.

This research connects explicitly to Growth Area 5 - Emerging Areas in the EDC Living Plan. It addresses the need to develop and enhance essential skills in the area of educational research. The intended outcomes for this research are to:

- Identify specific educational research skills where developers would like more support. Examples might include: applying for ethics, research approaches, selection of methods, survey design, considerations for interviews and focus groups, and techniques for managing team research projects.

- Propose several different learning models that would support developers working in different contexts. For example, some developers may be working alone in an academic department while others work together in a centre that provides campus-wide teaching and learning support.
- Describe how two professional associations currently support the development of SoTL skills and how these might evolve in the future.

These outcomes will reinforce the desired learning outcomes associated with SoTL as described in the EDC Living Plan.

- a. Individual SoTL development: Facilitate and support faculty and instructor engagement in SoTL by identifying resources, communicating across disciplines, providing guidance & collaborating (or modeling if an instructor) on ethical systematic inquiry & dissemination.
- b. Institutional SoTL Leadership: Support the role of SoTL in institutional analysis and change; and advocate for recognition and reward of the SoTL in academic careers.

Findings from this inquiry will be disseminated through the following channels:

- Article publication in the Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Conference presentations (POD 2017 conference, EDC 2018)
- Contributing to the SoTL Canada Blog: <https://sotlcanada.wordpress.com/>
- EDC webinar to share models and learn about those from other universities
- Report for EDC

### **Study Timeline:**

#### *June-August 2017*

- Recruit an Educational Developer Associate
- Conduct a literature review
- Design the survey
- Submit ethics application

#### *September-December 2015*

- Collect data at the POD Network Conference during a survey and roundtable session in October
- Prepare and submit interim report to EDC

#### *January 2016*

- Conduct a preliminary analysis of the data
- Start a thematic analysis of the artefacts

#### *February 2016*

- Present preliminary results to the EDC annual conference

#### *March-May 2016*

- Complete data analysis

#### *June 2016*

- Use the findings to facilitate an EDC webinar
- Submit EDC report

### **5. Budget**

Item (including any applicable taxes)	Cost
<b>Salaries</b>	2750.00
One Educational Development Associate (EDA)	233.00
110 hours at \$25 per hour	
plus	
<b>Benefits</b>	
\$25 per hour x 8.5%= 2.12 x 110 hours	
<b>Travel to collect data</b>	350.00
	3333.00
<b>Total Costs</b>	
Less matching funding obtained from other sources (e.g. Department/Dean)	333.00
	0.00
Less in-kind contributions	
<b>Total amount requested from the EDC Grant Program</b>	<b>3000.00</b>

## 6. Agreements

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).

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

## References

Dennen, V. P. (2008). The cognitive apprenticeship model in educational practice. In Spector, J. M. (Ed.), *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 425–439). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gibbs, G. (2013). Reflections on the changing nature of educational development. *The International Journal for Academic Development*, 18(1), 4-14.

Kong, S. C., Lai, M., & Wong, T. L. (2017). Toward a framework of studying Scholarship of Learning and Teaching in higher education in a digital technology era. In S. C. Kong, T. L. Wong, M. Yang, C. F. Chow, & K. H. Tse, (Eds.), *Emerging practices in Scholarship of Learning and Teaching in a digital Era* (pp. 1-16). Singapore: Springer.

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- Openo, J., Laverty, C., Kolomitro, K., Borin, P., Goff, L., Stranach, M., & Goma, N. (2017). Bridging the divide: Leveraging the scholarship of teaching and learning for quality enhancement. *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (accepted).
- Poole, G., & Simmons, N. (2013). The contributions of the scholarship of teaching and learning to quality enhancement in Canada. In R. Land & G. Gordon (Eds.), *Enhancing quality in higher education* (pp. 118–128). London: Routledge.