

Educational Developers Caucus (EDC)  
Grants Program Application Proposal. Spring Call, 30 April 2017

**Title:** Formative Feedback for Teaching Development: Resources, Strategies and Techniques

**Principal Investigator Contact Information**

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**Project Mini-description**

This project is designed to investigate formative feedback for teaching development practices in national and international teaching and learning centres. The pragmatic outcomes will benefit educational developers by (a) contributing to the scope and knowledge about formative feedback processes; and (b) providing an inventory of teaching development strategies and techniques.

**Project Full Description**

*Introduction and Background*

In September 2016, the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary, launched the Formative Feedback for Teaching Development initiative. I am the academic lead for the initiative and it has been the focus of my scholarship in teaching and learning. This initiative is filling a gap by focusing on formative feedback for teaching development and generating accessible and practical resources. To date I have contributed to this initiative with the establishment of a dedicated webpage to formative feedback resources, an open-access guide (Jeffs & Piera, 2016), conference presentations at CSSHE (Jeffs, 2016) and EDC (Jeffs & Piera, 2017), and a blog posting (Jeffs & Piera, 2017).

*Formative Feedback Definition and Purpose*

For the purpose of this initiative, formative feedback is defined as an intentional, voluntary, developmental strategy for instructors to receive feedback about their teaching with the goal

of better understanding and improving student learning. There is evidence that formative feedback strategies for teaching development are practical, doable, and that it does enhance teaching and student learning (Courneya, Pratt & Collins, 2008; Hubbal & Clarke, 2011; Shute, 2008; Smith, 2001). The key distinction in this initiative is the focus on the feedback process, which is to and for the instructor. Instructors receive feedback from students, colleagues, and through self-reflection and scholarship, with the goal to better understanding and improving student learning. Brookfield's (1995) four lenses of reflection are drawn upon to shape this focus of this study.

#### *Alignment with the EDC Living Plan*

This project is aligned with the Educational Developers Caucus (EDC) Living Plan 2016 in the identified areas of growth and engagement. As an EDC member, I will pursue an intentional connection with the EDC through the activities I will outline in this proposal, which are aligned with the Living Plan's identified growth areas of fundamental faculty and course development, and enhancing, supporting, and advocating for teaching and learning quality. I will contribute to the Living Plan 2016 initiative by being engaged in EDC (conference and networking), conducting survey research across Canadian institutions, and the dissemination of the knowledge gained, and producing practical and accessible resources of formative feedback processes for teaching development.

#### *Curiosities and Questions to Explore*

There are many examples and approaches to formative feedback processes. Hoon, Oliver, Szpakowska & Newton (2015) report on the common practice of student formative feedback to instructors, and Wessely (2002), provides an example of how a peer-to-peer feedback strategy, 'teaching square', can be a beneficial model for teaching development. Piccinin (2003) and Weimer (2002) provide practical guides, worksheets, and resources on feedback processes. In a study of six Ontario universities, the authors indicate how faculty engage in teaching development, including seeking feedback from students and peers (Britnell, Brockerhoff-Macdonald, Carter, Dawson, Doucet, Evers, Hall, Kerr, Liboiron-Brenier, McIntyre, Mighty, Siddall, & Wilson, 2010). In addition, Richardson (2005) provides a survey of the literature on student feedback for teaching development. Although relevant, some of these works are dated, and it is time to revisit this topic.

Based on the literature, and my observations of and conversations with colleagues at the University of Calgary, I believe that many, and perhaps most instructors utilize formative feedback strategies with the goal for their teaching development and enhanced student learning. What we don't know, in the Canadian and international context, how teaching and

learning centres support formative feedback strategies and techniques, or if they provide resources, and if so, what types.

### *Filling a Gap*

I have identified there is a knowledge gap about formative feedback processes for teaching development. Most of the literature is on the process of how instructors provide feedback to students, or student to student feedback, for the purpose of learning. The intent of this project is to investigate national and international teaching and learning centres about their current formative feedback practices, and document practical resources, strategies and techniques that will be accessible to educational developers. Furthermore, Gormally, Evans & Brickman (2014), advocate for feedback for teaching development and the leadership role teaching and learning centres can assume to provide resources. This project will advance their vision and enhance teaching and learning centres capacity.

The questions I intend to explore in this research study are:

1. How do Canadian and international teaching and learning centres describe and define formative feedback for teaching development processes?
2. What type of formative feedback resources, strategies or techniques are offered in these teaching and learning centres?

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This survey research (Andres, 2012), will begin in September 2017 with an expected completion by Spring 2018. The activities prior to the project will include a literature search, ethics approval (University of Calgary CFREB), survey instrument development and pilot testing. Following the survey, the data will be analyzed, documented and developed into practical and accessible resources (described in detail in the following outcomes section). I will invite participants from the following memberships (via the electronic listserves) to complete the survey:

1. Educational Development Caucus (EDC)
2. Professional and Organizational Development Network (PODS)
3. Higher Education Research and Development Society (HERDSA)

I expect the findings will produce a variation in how teaching and learning centres define and describe formative feedback processes, and what types of support of resources are provided. Through dissemination of this research, and the production of practical, assessable resources, it will inform both the discipline and practice of educational development. A timeline for this project and detailed activities are included in this proposal.

## **Outcomes and Dissemination**

At the completion of this project, the following deliverables will be completed:

1. A report on the survey findings (web based, open access)
2. Presentation at EDC 2018
3. A comprehensive documentation of formative feedback strategies and techniques (web based, open access)
4. An article submitted for publication co-authored with the RA. The identified journals at this time are: the International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD), and/or, To Improve the Academy

These deliverables will benefit EDC and all educational developers, instructors, faculty, teaching assistants, by providing knowledge, and practical, accessible, teaching development resources, strategies and techniques.

## **Proposed Timeline**

Jul 2017	Apply for research ethics approval Develop survey Instrument and pilot test
Aug 2017	Recruit a graduate student research assistant
Sep 2017	Distribute invitation to participate in survey
Oct 2017	Send reminder invitation to participate in survey Train and orient research assistant to the project
Nov 2017	Collect data and begin sorting and analyzing
Dec 2017	Start organizing data into document and begin writing article
Jan 2018	Submit interim report to EDC
Feb 2018	Present preliminary findings at EDC
Mar 2018	Prepare documents for website
Apr 2018	Write article
May 2018	Submit article for publication
June 2018	Submit final report to EDC

## Detailed Budget, Timeline and Activities

Item	Timeline & Activities	Amount
Graduate student Research Assistant (RA) salary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2017 to February 2018</li> <li>*15 weeks x 8 hrs per week</li> <li>120 hrs total @ \$25 hr (includes benefits)</li> </ul>	\$3,000
2018 EDC Conference Attendance and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 2018 Victoria BC (\$1,500)</li> <li>Registration, travel, accommodation, In kind contribution (University of Calgary)</li> <li>Presentation of project findings</li> </ul>	0.00
Taylor Institute In-kind contributions RA office space, computer, supplies, software RA supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2017 to February 2018 (12 hrs)</li> <li>Time sheet approval, administration, etc provided by the principle investigator (approx. 10%)</li> </ul>	0.00
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write interim report (6 months after funding received)</li> <li>Post findings, documents, resources on the Taylor Institute dedicated webpage</li> <li>Present at EDC 2018</li> <li>Submit article to selected journal</li> <li>Write final report (12 months after funding received)</li> </ul>	
<b>Total EDC Grant Requested</b>		<b>\$3,000</b>

\*The 15 week timeline for a research assistant is flexible to accommodate any scheduled holidays, leaves, university closures, and possible contingencies.

### Research Assistant duties

- Participate in an orientation to the Taylor Institute and the project
- Assist with the literature review
- Assist with the data collection
- Input data into the appropriate software (TBD)
- Assist with preparing documents and reports
- Webpage maintenance and uploading to the dedicated webpage
- Co-author article for journal submission

## Agreements

- X I 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.
- X I acknowledge that I will submit an interim report and a final deliverable (as described in the grant criteria).

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