Towards a Framework for Quality Enhancement[1] in Teaching and Learning: An Exploratory Seminar

Preamble

Origin of the Event

The Second Multi-national[2] Forum of Teacher Scholars was held at the University of Prince Edward Island, in Charlottetown, PEI, Canada on Saturday, June 11, 2005, from 4:00 until 9:05 pm, immediately after the annual national conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

The First International Forum of Teacher Scholars was held in San Diego, CA, April 3, 2004, in conjunction with the annual conference of the American Association for Higher Education; it resulted from an initial meeting of members of the Institute for the Advancement of Teaching in Higher Education (Canada) and representatives of the AAHE (American Association for Higher Education). The first forum, which brought together teaching award recipients from the US, Canada and the UK, was convened by Barbara Cambridge, Vice President, Fields of Inquiry and Action, AAHE, and Director of the Carnegie Campus Academy Program. The event was supported by McGraw-Hill-Ryerson.

Shannon Murray, Chair of the Planning Committee for the 2005 Conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and Alex Fancy, Chair of the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows, invited participants in the first forum to come to Canada in 2005, on the occasion of the STLHE (Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education) conference.

Planning

The second forum was planned by an international group comprised of Arshad Ahmad (Coordinator, 3M Teaching Fellowships Program, Canada), Barbara Cambridge (US, see above), Don Cartwright (3M Teaching Fellow, Canada), Julia Christensen Hughes (President, STLHE, Canada, Co-chair), Alex Fancy (Canada, Co-chair), Barbara Gayle (Carnegie Scholar, US) and Rachel Segal (Senior Advisor, The Higher Education Academy, UK).

Funding to support the event was received from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. All participants are deeply indebted to the HRSDC for this generous support.

Whereas the participants in the first forum had identified four distinct subjects of reflection, it was agreed that the second such event should address one *theme* that would be articulated as a series of *topics*. (Only one of the four groups formed in San Diego is known to be still active, but four of its seven members -Margaret Johnson (UK), Rick Butler, Alex Fancy and Lee Gass (Canada) -attended the Charlottetown conference and gave a workshop on their project, "Students as Architects of their Learning." All four also attended the Second International Forum).

A second innovation was the exchange, prior to the event, of *position papers.* Fourteen papers, three of them jointly written, were circulated, first to six international teams (one for each of the six topics

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[1] The original title of the event, which referred to "quality assurance", has been changed, on the advice of participants, to "quality enhancement."

[2] "Multi-national" replaces "international" to give a clearer sense of the diversity of participation.

listed below) and then to the entire group via the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows website (http://www.mcmaster.ca/cll/3MCouncil/intlforum/teams.htm). This strategy prompted pre-forum reflection and dialogue, first by email and then during the conference that preceded the forum.

The UK papers were reviewed, before they were circulated, by Rachel Segal and Margaret Johnson (National Teaching Fellow, Higher Education Consultant, UK).

The third advance over the first forum was the decision to provide an *outcome*, a report which would contain *reflections* exchanged on June 11th as well as any *recommendations* coming out of the forum. The report would be given to the sponsor as well as to others. The event will be the subject of a workshop presentation at the October conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, at the University of British Columbia. At least one-third of the participants will attend that conference.

Participants

1.   Arshad Ahmad* (CAN; Planning Committee; Coordinator, 3M Teaching Fellowships Program; Executive, Council of 3M Teaching Fellows; Concordia).
2.   Viviane Anderson* (UK, Leeds Metropolitan University).
3.   Nigel Bax* (UK).
4.   Karen Birchard, (*Chronicle of Higher Education,* Canadian correspondent).
5.   Gary Bold* (NZ).
6.   Rick Butler* (CAN, McMaster).
7.   Virlene M. Carlson (US; President, POD [Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education]).
8.   Don Cartwright* (CAN, Planning Committee, Western Ontario).
9.   Julia Christensen Hughes (CAN; Planning Committee, Co-chair; President, Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Guelph).
10.   Michael Collins* (CAN, Memorial University of Newfoundland);
11.   Maureen Connolly* (CAN, Brock).
12.   Carol-Ann Courneya* (CAN, University of British Columbia).
13.   John Dearn* (AUS, President, HERDSA [Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia]).
14.   Lesley Eales-Reynolds* (UK).
15.   Peter Edwards* (UK, Bournemouth University).
16.   Alex Fancy* (CAN; Planning Committee, Co-chair; Chair, Council of 3M Teaching Fellows; Facilitator; Mount Allison).
17.   Lee Gass* (CAN, UBC).
18.   Barbara Gayle* (US, Planning Committee).
19.   Aline Germain-Rutherford* (CAN).
20.   Gloria Gordon* (UK, London South Bank University).
21.   Clarissa Green* (CAN; Vice-chair [Communications], Council of 3M Teaching Fellows; UBC).
22.   Len Gusthart* (CAN, Saskatchewan).
23.   Kirsten Hardie* (UK).
24.   John Hoddinott* (CAN, Alberta).
25.   Clive Holtham* (UK, Cass Business School, City of London).
26.   Margaret Johnson* (Planning Committee, UK);
27.   Claude Lamontagne* (CAN; Executive, Council of 3M Teaching Fellows).
28.   Brent MacLaine* (CAN, University of Prince Edward Island [Host institution]).
29.   Vi Maeers* (CAN, Regina).
30.   Michael Moore* (CAN, Wilfred Laurier).
31.   Shannon Murray* (CAN; Planning Committee; host university).
32.   Gary Poole* (CAN, Past-president, STLHE, UBC).
33.   Sylvia Riselay (CAN; Administrative Assistant, Council of 3M Teaching Fellows; Recording secretary).
34.   Anthony Rosie* (UK).
35.   Bob Rotheram* (UK).

36.	Gerard Rowe* (NZ).
37.	Phillip Smith* (CAN, Host university).
38.	Ron Smith* (CAN, Concordia).
39.	Robert Sauder, Learning Services Directorate, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.
40.	Alastair Summerlee* (CAN; President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Guelph).
41.	John Thompson* (CAN, Saskatchewan).
42.	Mark Weisburg* (CAN, Queen's).
43.	Olive Yonge* (CAN, University of Alberta).

*National teaching award recipient. Canadians are 3M Teaching Fellows. Not all university affiliations are available.

Format

The event was facilitated by Alex Fancy, and was structured as follows:

16:00 -16:20	Introduction
16:20 -17:20	Small Group Discussions
17: 25 -18:30	Working Dinner with Large Group Discussion
18:35 -20: 45	Continuation of Large Group Discussion
20:45 - 21:05	Conclusion

Synopsis of the Forum

Introduction

The facilitator welcomed participants who introduced themselves very briefly (*See* "Participants", *above*). He then thanked The Learning Services Directorate of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for their generous support and invited Robert Sauder to address the group.

Mr. Sauder spoke to the exceptional benefit to be gained by Canadian educators who can learn much from a dialogue engaging national teaching award recipients from five countries, as we can hear innovative ideas and creative approaches from colleagues outside Canada. He also thanked Julia Christensen Hughes (President, STLHE) and Gary Poole (Past President, STLHE) who spearheaded communications with HRSDC. He stated that the Canadian federal government is a very important player in educational initiatives, and explained that there is huge government interest in development of skills in the educational sector.

Small Group Discussions

Participants formed six multi-national teams, each of which discussed one of the following topics which had already been the subject of email and on-line position papers:

1.	What is the impact of faculty development on teaching and learning (teaching success and learning outcomes)? How do we know about this impact?

2.	What is the level of institutional commitment to teaching and learning centres? How is it measured? How is it supported?

3.	How do our institutions encourage the scholarship of teaching and learning?

4.	What work has been done around the design, nature and implementation of teaching and learning strategies?

5.   What support do institutions give to teaching and learning "champions"? How are they encouraged to share with colleagues their expertise and experience? What is the impact of this dialogue?

6.   What willingness is there in institutions to incorporate a teaching and learning course into PhD programs?

Groups were asked to identify commonalties and differences, to prepare for an eventual sharing of reflections and, where feasible, to make recommendations.

Large Group Discussion

Note: What follows is not a scientific or scholarly paper, but the transcript of a discussion, and the context for recommendations is subject to verification.

1.   **What is the impact of faculty development[3] on teaching and learning (teaching success and learning outcomes)? How do we know about this impact?**

   a) **Initial assumptions.** Individuals and society stand to benefit from education of high quality. They also stand to benefit from a sound program of quality assurance in teaching. Provision of support and resources to teachers with the goal of aiding dissemination and application of strategies for enhancing teaching and learning. Universities are accountable to these same people.

   b) **Need for a legitimacy structure.** Structures for providing accountability need to be based on a *legitimacy structure.* In other words, a scientific definition of 'scholarship of teaching and learning' that is widely accepted would legitimize and contextualize quality assurance, and would legitimize and aid reflection on teaching practice.

   There is a great need for widespread acceptance of the validity and value of teaching and learning about teaching and learning.

   c) **Faculty development as a human resource.** Articulated around organizing principles, scholarship of teaching and learning should be translated into delivery of assistance that is provided, as a human resource, to university teachers who, in turn, accept the legitimacy and value of what is being provided. Faculty development is a well-established profession that is both under funded and misunderstood.

   d) **Need for accountability structures.** The group identified a disconnect between teaching and learning centres and the public perception (within the academy and without) of their role and achievements. In some cases, faculty development staff do not formulate and communicate clear aims and objectives and, as a result, many faculty members do not really know the meaning of "faculty development", or how educational developers can help them to enhance their teaching. Some participants noted that the meaning of the term is not always clear to those who practice faculty development. Discussants wondered whether this disconnect helps to explain why many members of the general public do not understand the place of higher education in society.

   Accountability is an emerging expectation, and there a need for accountability structures that address both processes and outcomes.

   e) **Learning from other countries.** Where accountability structures are concerned we can learn from other countries: in Australia, baseline standards for teaching and learning are established by government, and universities are required to meet them in order to qualify for funding.

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[3] Provision of support and resources to teachers with the goal of aiding dissemination and application of strategies for enhancing teaching and learning.

Universities must place a teaching and learning strategy on a pubic website, establish policies for promotion and tenure that include assessment of performance, place student assessment of teaching on a public website, and provide 'staff development induction programs' for faculty and staff. In the United Kingdom future students and their parents can consult a website (www.tqi.ac.uk) which sets out a 'teaching quality indicator.'

f) **Accountability and transparency.** There was concern that faculty must be considered accountable for their teaching, that the process of quality review of teaching and learning must have the attention of an entire institution, that the quality of teaching in academic departments must be known to the institution at large, and that the accountability structures must be transparent: the results of quality assurance must be disseminated broadly to all stakeholders, including students, their parents and the public.

g) **Accountability and responsibility.** It is incumbent on university administrators to foster, in all academic departments, a climate where teaching and learning can flourish, and faculty development should be embedded in departments. Furthermore, faculty who document the impact of faculty development should be rewarded, as the lack of such documentation is ubiquitous across countries.

h) **The role of students.** Students, and student unions, can be a valuable ally in any effort to legitimize quality assurance in universities. Students have a key role to play in faculty development. This begs the question of terminology, "Is 'faculty development' the correct term, as there is an implied limitation to teaching, and the term does not make reference to learning?"

i) **Centrality of faculty development.** Faculty development should be considered a human resource that is not peripheral in any way to the central mission of universities. Faculty developers should be challenged to develop and articulate further their sense of their role in the academy. This would be a basis for evaluation of the impact of their practice.

j) **Faculty developers and teacher formation.** Faculty developers should have a wider and more readily accepted role in all programs that claim to prepare teachers for postsecondary education.

k) **Impact of faculty development.** How can the impact of faculty development be measured? Those who studied this topic found that success of faculty development have not been extensively documented, which is surprising in view of the length of time since the profession was established. It is hoped that adoption of measures such as those recommended above would aid in the achievement of this objective.

2. **What is the level of institutional commitment to teaching and learning centres? How is it measured? How is it supported?**

a) **Learning and teaching.**   North Americans should consider adopting the terminology that is common in the United Kingdom and elsewhere: "learning and teaching" rather than "teaching and learning."

b) **Changing the paradigm**. Participants believed that centres for teaching and learning should bring together learners and teachers, take an active interest in how learning occurs, and be concerned for learning outcomes.

c) **External assessment.** In comparison with the US, more Canadian universities have teaching and learning centres. However, the two countries share a lack of external assessment of these centres. Scotland does have strategies for enhancing quality of teaching and learning centres.

d) **Competition.** Many American schools care about comparative success and impact of teaching and learning centres as they face competition with other institutions.

e) **Centres for Excellence.** Other countries would do well to investigate Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, a national UK initiative. CETLs are an outcome of the UK White Paper, "The Future of Higher Education" (2003), and are developed by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England). They are generously funded (£312 million over five years) on the basis of competition. See http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/TInits/cetl/

f) **Institutional uncertainty.** One participant related that the name of a centre for teaching and learning changed four times in four years, which is symptomatic of institutional failure to understand, and agree, on the role and objectives of such centres. (*See also* 1. c), *above*)

3. **How do our institutions encourage the scholarship[4] of teaching and learning?**

   a) **Commonalities across borders:**

      i. Promotion and other internal rewards systems privilege research.
      ii. There is a looming shortage of teachers due to the high incidence of retirements.

   b) **Striking differences:**

      i. In Canada there is no centralized federal funding and quality assurance as is the case in some other countries (NZ and UK).
      ii. Media attention celebrating teaching and learning is much more intense in other countries than in Canada, in part because exceptional teaching achievement is celebrated in a much more visible manner (For example, national teaching awards in New Zealand are presented to recipients by the Prime Minister).
      iii. In other countries national teaching awards are funded by governments, and are very generous (Awards in New Zealand, for example, are valued at 20,000 $NZ, and the premier winner receives 30,000 $NZ. There are stringent reporting and auditing requirements). Australian awards are even more generous, they have an extremely high profile, and there was some discussion of resulting fallout and marginalization of recipients.
      iv. Formal induction (training) of university teachers is practised in other countries, whereas in Canada it is encouraged but voluntary.

   c) **Celebration of teaching awards.** National teaching awards should be presented, and celebrated, at the highest level, and in Canada they could be presented by the Governor-General or the Prime Minister. (The Chair of the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows approached the Governor-General in this regard in 2004, but was unsuccessful).

   d) **Lobbying the media.** Public, private and government support for teaching and learning issues would be enhanced as a result of increased media attention. It was suggested that newspapers should routinely feature education in dedicated sections. Few reporters specialize in education issues; like the general public, most journalists have not been apprised of teaching and learning issues.

   e) **Jurisdiction.** Colleagues from other countries pointed out that provincial jurisdiction of education must lead to diffuse and uneven visibility and support.

   f) **Canada Teaching Chairs.** They also recommended a Canada Teaching Chairs program comparable to the Canada Research Chairs initiative. Given the primacy of teaching and learning, the Federal Government should stimulate these activities as they have stimulated research.

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[4] Research, reflection and communication of practices.

g) **Certificate in teaching and learning.** Our colleagues recommend a compulsory certificate in university teaching and learning that would help to orient new faculty.

h) **Linking awards and scholarship.** In the UK, National Teaching Fellows receive financial awards to support teaching and learning projects, a model that could be emulated in Canada.

i) **University teaching chairs.** Other universities would do well to emulate Queen's University (Canada) which has established three-year chairs in teaching and learning that bring with them an award to be spent on scholarship of teaching and learning projects.

j) **Impact study.** Colleagues in the UK have undertaken a study of the impact of receiving a National Teaching Fellow Award. A similar study could be made of the impact, in Canada, of receiving a 3M Teaching Fellowship.

k) **A Prime Minister's Award.** In Canada there is a prime minister's award for excellence in teaching at the school level; perhaps this recognition should be extended to the post-secondary level.

l) **The 3M National Teaching Fellowship?** Colleagues from other countries suggested that the 3M Teaching Fellowship should carry a "national" designation.

4. **What work has been done around the design, nature and implementation of teaching and learning strategies?**

a) **Incentives.** Discussion of this question was focused on incentives for the design and implementation of teaching and learning strategies.

b) **A UK model: CETLs.** Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are supported by massive public funding. Strategies developed as a result of this incentive are published on a public website (*See* 1.e), *above*). One UK participant reported that his institution will receive more than £10 million over the nest five years from all sources in support of learning and teaching initiatives.

c) **External audits**. A participant with considerable Hong Kong experience explained that Hong Kong conducts external audits of teaching and learning in institutions of higher education. An Australian participant reported that all thirty-eight Australian universities must meet four quality assurance criteria.

d) **Community awareness.** There was discussion of the fact that review of the implementation and success of teaching and learning strategies should be brought to the attention of the wider community.

e) **Meaningful implementation.** Our colleagues from other countries stressed the importance of:

   i. placing an institutional learning and teaching strategy on a public website;
   ii. ensuring faculty and staff induction in support of the strategy;
   iii. assessment of teaching, with reference to the institutional learning and teaching strategy, that will affect high-stakes decisions such as tenure and promotion;
   iv. entering student assessments of teaching and learning on a public website. (*See also* discussions of Questions 1 and 2).

5. **What support do institutions give to teaching and learning "champions"? How are they encouraged to share with colleagues their expertise and experience? What is the impact of this dialogue?**

   a) **The value of collaboration.** Whereas the impact of "champions" (recipients of teaching awards who advocate the enhancement of learning and teaching) tends not to change institutional norms, working with champions outside our institutions can have considerable effect. "Champions Without Borders"—a collaboration across borders can have considerable value, and recipients of national teaching awards should go where they are "valued and invited", to share and extend experience, visions and strategies.

   b) **An international retreat.** The group who studied Topic 5 advocated international retreats, of three days or so, that would intensify and extend the kind of dialogue that was happening in Charlottetown over a period of five hours.

   c) **Harnessing energies for positive change.** Participants stressed the value of positive discussion and planning with others who are of a similar mind, rather than highlighting barriers and constraints that impede positive change. It is a matter of harnessing energies, as we have done in planning for this forum, and during our discussions.

   d) **Benefiting from existing structures.** As we move forward with discussion of issues such as those which have been on our agenda, we should not circumvent existing structures. We should remember that ICED (the International Conference on Educational Development) includes CIDA (Canada), HERDSA (Australia), POD (US) and STLHE (Canada).

   e) **Associations of teaching fellows.** Discussion and action can also be facilitated by the formation of organizations such as the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows, which was created two years ago and, with support from the STLHE (the umbrella organization) convened today's Second Multi-national Forum of Teacher Scholars. Our colleagues in the UK have, even more recently, formed an organization of National Teaching Fellows.

   f) **A Third forum.** Plans are being made to host a Third Multi-national Forum in the UK in July 2006. The planning committee for that event will have to decide whether to convene a new cohort with a new subject. Discussion of this year's subject could possibly continue under the auspices of ICED.

   g) **Publication of results.** Results of discussions such as this one could possibly be published in a serial such as New Directions in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, "International Development in Higher Education" (Jossey-Bass).

   h) **Other forms of support:**

      i. An American delegate reported on the Carnegie Foundation's summer seminars which bring together teaching award recipients for intensive, scholarly discussions that extend over two weeks ("a gift of time").
      ii. ISSOTL (International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) would also be a possible forum for continued discussion of the important issues that have been raised today.
      iii. Possible sources of funding for sending delegates abroad are CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), the AUCC (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada) and the British Council.
      iv. The Carnegie Foundation supports cross-cultural networking at Harvard University.

   i) **Validation of teaching.** A participant reminded his colleagues that, above all, teaching awards validate teaching in the academic community.

6. **What willingness is there in institutions to incorporate a teaching and learning course into PhD programs?**

   a) **A common need**. This group reported that they identified one similarity across the three countries they represented: the need to provide teaching induction and support to people entering the academy. While such induction is available in Canada when future teachers are still in graduate school (unlike the UK), there are variations from province to province, and from one institution to another. (Participation in these programs tends to be voluntary, and is often discouraged by those who supervise and mentor graduate students).

   b) **Mentoring and enhancement of teaching.** It is very important to distinguish between mentoring, which can cover a wide range of issues, and instruction in teaching strategies.

   c) **Universal instruction.** Anyone who is doing any kind of teaching should have some teaching instruction.

   d) **Universal content.** It was suggested that courses in teaching and learning should be generalizable. Skills should also be transferable to non-academic environments where teaching also occurs. Presented in such a way, teaching is a life skill.

   e) **Student induction.** Participants pointed out that the quality of the students who had contributed to the STLHE conference, which had preceded this event, was outstanding. Students should also receive training in assessment, mentoring and provision of feedback. How does the curriculum prepare students for such valuable life skills? Students should acquire, in the course of their education, good professional behavioural patterns.

Conclusions

The facilitator suggested that, in view of the number and diversity of reflections and recommendations, the concluding discussion should focus on identification of commonalities and differences, as the former would be included in the final report and could be the subject of future discussions.

A. This "Charlottetown Forum on Teaching and Learning" had identified the need for universal understanding and clarity where faculty development is concerned.

B. Faculty development should also have a high, defensible profile in universities and in their constituencies; this important service to education should also receive adequate support and resources.

C. We need a cogent and comprehensive plan for removing barriers to the validation of the place of teaching and learning in higher education.

D. There is a need to provide other opportunities, like this one, for dialogue and comparative analysis across borders.

E. Teaching and learning strategies must be aligned with clear cases for funding. (It was pointed out that the UK provides generous funding despite an absence of strategies, while in Canada strategies depend on the private sector for support which is often lacking).

F. We must build on our strengths in order to give generously of our expertise and experience to the wider community which can, in turn, be extended.

G.   We were cautioned to be mindful of the voices that had not been heard. A dialogue such as ours should eventually also engage the voices and wisdom of people from countries that do not have national teaching fellows. This extended dialogue should respect other cultures and viewpoints.

The facilitator reminded participants that they would have an opportunity to help shape the final report on the discussions: collaborative from the beginning, the process would remain so during the reporting stage. One of the participants, Michael Moore from Canada, said that he would carry away the memory of a rich, good-humoured and engaging international dialogue. Julia Christensen Hughes thanked the sponsor of the event, HRSDC, on behalf of the STLHE, and also spoke to the quality of the dialogue. The facilitator was very generously thanked and he, in turn, expressed appreciation for the commitment and generosity of all the participants. The event ended with group photos and informal discussion that, for many people, extended far into the evening.

Facilitator's Epilogue

We are grateful to our colleagues from abroad for their invaluable insights. The benefit they derived from the event could only have been a fraction of what Canadians took away on that June evening in Charlottetown which was marked by good humour, concern and unflagging energy. We can all benefit from sharing experience and wisdom as we work together to raise the profile of teaching and learning—rather, learning and teaching—in Canada and abroad. As a theatre practitioner, I would like to note that our evening together had all the characteristics of an excellent rehearsal for future initiatives.

NOTE: Please consult http://www.mta.ca/3m/teams.html to read fourteen papers (three were jointly written) and two covering documents that were circulated prior to the event.

Alex Fancy
July 2005