U of S SoTL Cluster Charter, January 2020 V1

Title: Aligning Assessment and Experiential Learning
Date of application: September 2019
GMCTL contact person: Aditi Garg

Description/Background: Learning through experience positions personal interpretations, tangential connections, and culturally-nested ways of knowing as integral to post-secondary knowledge exchange. Authentic reflection, integration with prior mental schema, and application of new knowledge to real-time problem-solving scenarios are key outcomes of experiential learning activities alongside mastery of key concepts, new terminology, and other cumulative content requirements. In contrast, the logistics of large courses often make single answer multiple-choice exams the most feasible format for evaluation, with the result that mastery of content maintains prominence in terms of measuring student success. This SoTL Cluster will examine literature, engage in pedagogic reflection, and explore strategies that hold promise both to minimize dissonance between experiential learning and traditional post-secondary assessment and foster explicit appreciation for skills and competencies gained through experiential learning within our modes of examination and evaluation.

Connection to the *Learning Charter's* educator commitment to engage in lifelong learning and continuous enhancement of teaching practice. "*Honouring this commitment requires that educators seek out and participate in opportunities to build their knowledge of teaching within their discipline, learn about advances in effective pedagogies/andragogies and engage in meaningful conversations about their practices with others.*"

We will share ideas, best practices, and insights related to adaptation of traditional evaluation strategies within the context of experiential learning with one another. This SoTL group has a strength in that participants work across colleges and disciplines, allowing space for identification of shared student outcomes across a diversity of teaching and learning contexts. Conversation and praxis-driven adaptations within our own courses will contribute to the collaborative development of a tool that can be used to consider alignment of student experience with evaluation methods; fostering continued innovations and adjustment in examination alongside innovations in content delivery and student experience.

Cluster Lead:

Name:	Dr. Joyce McBeth	Dr. Sandy Bonny
Title:	Asst. Professor	ISAP Team Lead
Department:	Geological Sci.	Office Vice Dean Indigenous
Contact:	joyce.mcbeth@usask.ca	sandy.bonny@usask.ca

Members of the Cluster: (minimum of 4, including Cluster Lead)
Jay Wilson, Associate Professor & Department Head, Curriculum Studies
Tom Yates, Associate Professor, College of Agriculture and Bioresources
Karla Panchuk, Sessional Lecturer in Geological Sciences
Harold Bull, Faculty, Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology
Kirsten Fisher, Assistant Professor, Faculty Member in Political Studies
Sarah Gauthier, Assistant Professor, College of Engineering
Colleen Bell, Assistant Professor, Faculty Member in Political Studies
Kyle Anderson, Faculty, Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology
Paul Dick, Laboratory Coordinator, Department of Biology
Vince Bruni-Bossio, Associate Professor, Edwards School of Business

Goals, and Estimated Timeline. Over the next two years this research team will:

June – December 2019

· Inventory and reflection on alignment of evaluation strategies

· Comparison of current practices with literature on effective multiple choice question (MCQ) design

· Share relevant literature to Blackboard Open SoTL Cluster working site

· Select courses: initiate changes in evaluation strategy and/or experiential pedagogy; instructor to complete structured reflection in form of a praxis-informed logic model (problem identified; change initiated; outcomes observed; discussion of results with SoTL cluster in reference to group experience, literature, and expert resources; re-identification of problem and/or alternate change to initiate in future course iteration)

· Meet once per term for peer review/feedback on strategies

· Meet twice per year for longer 'retreat' style meeting to share and discuss results

· Compile list of strategies that minimize dissonance between experiential and content learning outcomes

· Compile list of 'evidence' that can be used to evaluate success of changes to evaluation and pedagogy

· Apply for Beh-REB exemption or certificate to permit collection of data from pilot exams with student permission

January-December 2020

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· Meet once per term for peer review/feedback on strategies

· Meet twice per year for longer 'retreat' style meeting to share and discuss results

· Begin drafting data-informed tool for instructors to gage alignment of experiential teaching, learning and evaluation strategies

· Members of the SoTL cluster to present course-specific strategies at GMCTL Celebrations and/or disciplinary pedagogic conferences

January-June 2021

· Meet once per term for peer review/feedback on strategies

· Meet twice per year for longer 'retreat' style meeting to share and discuss results

· Select courses: initiate changes in evaluation strategy and/or experiential pedagogy; instructor to complete structured reflection in form of a praxis-informed logic model (problem identified; change initiated; outcomes observed; discussion of results with SoTL cluster in reference to group experience, literature, and expert resources; re-identification of problem and/or alternate change to initiate in future course iteration)

· Draft and edit data-informed tool for instructors to gage alignment of experiential teaching, learning and evaluation strategies

· Submit proposal to conferences / workshop opportunities for feedback and continued development of the tool beyond the SoTL Cluster

· Begin drafting project paper for submission to SoTL journal or web publication

September-December 2021

· Meet once per term for peer review/feedback on strategies

· Meet twice per year for longer 'retreat' style meeting to share and discuss results

· Complete and submit co-authored manuscript

· Disseminate collaboratively developed tool with CC Copyright to this SoTL cluster

Financial:

- Hire graduate student to complete literature review of MCQ and experiential learning – posting papers and summaries to Blackboard Open working group
- Refreshments for working meetings
- Hosting costs (travel, hotel, other) to access relevant experts, elders, instructor focus groups —TBD
- Offset travel to share SoTL Cluster results at relevant conferences, conference registration
- Offset publication costs if applicable

Scope:

In Scope: Adaptations in teaching and evaluation strategy; connecting with expertise available in literature, colleagues, SoTL researchers and conferences; development of cognitive and graphic tools to guide informed instructional praxis; support for creative and collaborative learning among group members including travel, material, and refreshment costs as determined prudent; hiring of graduate assistant to compile literature, group data, support manuscript writing as needed to maintain momentum and estimated project timeline

Not In Scope: Costs associated with development of electronic tools, apps, or new technologies; travel or hosting costs that do not support collaborative project development; costs associated with acquisition of material items (teaching props, manipulatives, demonstration material, books etc.) that benefit only one member of the group and should be sourced through APEF funding.

Constraints, Assumptions, Risks, and Dependencies of Note:

This group will apply for Behavioural Ethics exemption as our intended scope of inquiry will be limited to within our own instructional practices.

If this SoTL cluster sprouts new directions for research (e.g. a project to expand an evaluation strategy across multiple course sections) the principal investigator(s)/instructors(s) shall re-apply for Behavioural Ethics permission, attentive to protection of student privacy and instructor autonomy.