The Wisdom of Informed Practice

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What is a Scholar-Practitioner?

What are some Pathways for Informed Practice?

What is Good Teaching?

What are the Four Dimensions that support Informed Practice?

What is Scholarly Teaching?

What is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?

What are the next steps for me?
UniSIM & RRU: Common Attributes

- 90% of faculty are part-time working professionals
- Core faculty have strong emphasis on academic management roles (recruiting, mentoring, assuring quality, liaising within industry)
- Entrepreneurial, nimble and flexible
- Non-traditional “models” in a conservative sector
- Strong alignment with needs of labour market
- Uni-cameral governance model
- Scholar-practitioner model
1. scholar-PRACTITIONER

2. SCHOLAR-practitioner
“The term scholar practitioner expresses an ideal of professional excellence grounded in theory and research, informed by experiential knowledge, and motivated by personal values, political commitments, and ethical conduct.”

-- Stefano (2004)
Promoting the Scholar-Practitioner

An important hallmark of a profession is the existence of strong bonds between its study and practice. To be current the science (study) of the profession must be serviced by sound scholarship. To be meaningful the art (practice) of the profession must be marked by the highest caliber of performance. Scholarship estranged from practice is irrelevant. Practice without scholarship is ineptitude. To be viable, a profession must be able to combine its art and science without depreciating either.

Educational Administration Quarterly (1967)
What is Informed Practice?

Knowing Ourselves as Professional Leaders

Knowing Ourselves as Educators

Knowing Ourselves as Learners

Knowing Ourselves
Pathways of Professionalism: Scholarly Mindsets on Informed Practice

1. Good Teaching
2. Scholarly Teaching
3. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)
What is Good Teaching?

• Achieving good learning outcomes and excellent student evaluations
• Implicitly embodying the principles of effective practice
• Improvement is based primarily on experience and trial-and-error processes

Also . . .

• “Good teaching” requires some understanding of what good teaching should look like.
Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

1. Contact between faculty and students
2. Cooperation among students
3. The use of active learning techniques
4. Prompt feedback
5. Time spent on task
6. High expectations, and
7. Respect for diverse ways of learning

-- Chickering & Gamson (1987)
What is Scholarly Teaching?

“Studying what others have done and linking them to your own practice”

“Practice Wisdom” (Allen and Field, 2005) – active reflection on practice and using scholarly sources of information to guide improvements in teaching

Sources:
(1) scholarly literature, research-informed practice of others, academic discussions with other faculty
(2) self-assessment data from teaching inventories, portfolios, peer observations, etc.
SoTL involves

- asking meaningful questions about student learning
- answering those questions by systematically gathering and analyzing evidence in your own classroom
- sharing the results of that analysis publicly to invite review and to contribute to the body of knowledge on student learning, and
- aiming to improve student learning by strengthening the practice of teaching (one’s own *and* others’).
(1) Reflecting on Practice
Borton’s Model of Reflection

What?
- Describing an event or process

So What?
- Indicating why it is important

Now What?
- Determining follow-up actions

Borton (1970)
## (2) Accessing New Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informed Practice Pathway</th>
<th>Most Helpful Information Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Teaching</td>
<td>Scholarship of Others (Consumer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Own Scholarship (Producer)</td>
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(3) Going Public

- Test waters with your question, methodology, and findings
- Find others who share your interests
- Enhance own learning
- Contribute to the development/advancement of your field/discipline
- Contribute to the development/advancement research on teaching and learning
(4) Taking Action

From

“Unconsciously Comfortable”

To

“Consciously Uncomfortable”
Why engage in SOTL work?

1. To inform and improve your teaching practice
2. To be part of a community of scholars
3. To improve your professional practice
4. To model inquiry processes for your students
How do I move forward?

(1) Good Teaching

• Start small, think big: Set a goal to learn one new thing about your students’ learning experiences and try out one new thing to support their learning.
• Develop your own philosophy of teaching – and philosophy of learning
• Do a “reflective audit” on your current teaching
• Ask questions of others—take a colleague out for a coffee
• Keep attending the UniSIM symposia and other events
How do I move forward?

(2) Scholarly Teaching

- Organize a ‘sharing session’ about a topic or a reading group about an important book re: Learning and Teaching
- Take a scholarly approach – read about other’s research and share it with a group of colleagues
- Sign up for an e-Newsletter, e.g. Tomorrow’s Professor
- Do a UniSim workshop!
- Write a synthesis of research on a topic and submit it to the UniSIM Journal . . . or even another journal
(3) The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

- Attend a SOTL conference
- Develop your own researchable question
- Do a synthesis of the data you already have on your students – draw some conclusions from the data
- Try out an approach – engage in your own research
- Pair up with a colleague to conduct a SOTL study
- Seek internal or external funding for innovation and research--apply for a Innovation Seed Grant or a Associate Faculty Champion research grant
In your deepest, fondest dreams, what kind of impact would you like to have on your students?
The work of wisdom for a scholar practitioner requires alternating between the abstract and the observable, questioning what is taken for granted and overlooked, complicating with unexpected findings, and simplifying with new interpretations.

Creating Community