

# Seven Voices, Seven Developers, Seven One Things that Guide Our Practice

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## Abstract

Educational development philosophy statements provide a framework to communicate the values and beliefs that guide the practices and approaches of individual educational developers across various career stages. This paper presents narratives to illustrate how seven educational developers conceptualize the one thing that guides our work through the process of reflecting on the beliefs that we articulate through our educational development philosophy statements. Although each narrative illustrates our diverse backgrounds and philosophies, common themes

are revealed relating to reflective practice, scholarly approaches, and facilitating change, which lead to improvements in student learning. This exploration suggests further opportunity to conduct research on how educational development philosophy statements illuminate implicit definitions and beliefs about this diverse and evolving field.

**Keywords:** faculty development, collaboration, teaching and learning, philosophy statements

## Background

The practice, leadership and scholarship of educational development (Kenny & Taylor, 2017; Taylor & Rege Colet, 2010) has evolved over time, with changes in focus from development at the micro level of individual teaching practice to the meso level of entire departments and programs and to the macro level of universities and even the sector as a whole (Fraser, Gosling, & Sorcinelli, 2010; Gibbs, 2013; Kenny, Popovic et al., 2017; Taylor & Rege Colet, 2010; Williams et al., 2013). This transformation has changed the perception of educational developers as service providers to seeing them as providing consultative and facilitative leadership and engaging in diverse forms of practice and scholarship as change agents (Gibbs, 2013; Kenny, Popovic et al., 2017; Knapper, 2016; McDonald et al., 2016; Taylor, 2005). One thing that has remained constant in educational development is the diversity in the disciplinary backgrounds and career pathways of educational developers (McDonald & Stockley, 2008; POD Network in Higher Education, 2017), creating an opportunity for diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives to influence our practice. This diversity extends to the values and beliefs that guide the work of educational developers, and these diverse beliefs form the premise for this paper.

This paper is a collaboration between seven educational developers within a single CTL. With different roles, titles, and responsibilities, we function as a unit for the purpose of capacity building while supporting evidence based approaches toward improving teaching and learning. In our practice, we provide facilitative and consultative leadership in diverse forms, including teaching development, curriculum review and development, supporting campus level organizational change, teaching award and grant adjudication, and engaging in the scholarship that supports the overall development of teaching and learning. Our diverse disciplinary backgrounds and approaches have taken us on different pathways toward convergence as educational developers (McDonald & Stockley, 2008). However, our life experiences shape our views and inform our practice, and beliefs that guide our everyday practice form the core of our educational development philosophies (Jenkins, 2011).

In writing this paper, we reflected on the beliefs we articulated in our individual educational development philosophy statements. Educational development philosophy statements provide a framework for communicating our beliefs, why we hold them, and how we translate these beliefs into our everyday practices as educational developers (McDonald et al., 2016). We quickly realized that our collective *one* thing was not *everything* that we do, nor even *the* thing. Nevertheless, our individual and contributing “one things” were inherently evident in our philosophy statements. Our philosophy statements demonstrate what we see as fundamental in our approach to educational development, an awareness that is regarded as central to being an effective educational developer (McDonald et al., 2016; POD, 2017). Based on these statements, we explore implicit definitions and beliefs, articulating what we feel are central to educational development within our practice and institutional context.

## Seven One Things

The members of our group of seven were each intrigued with the “one thing” project, and we came together to negotiate a plan for producing this paper. We hold academic positions at our institution and have each developed educational development dossiers for hiring, tenure, and promotion purposes. We realized that we could draw upon our philosophy statements to synthesize our thinking and to clarify and articulate our respective “one things,” which are collected in the sections of the paper. Our aim was to honor and give voice to our unique experiences and perspectives. We acknowledge that the “one things” articulated here are not definitive or necessarily permanent for any of us; however, they do resonate for each of us at this time. Also, at the micro level, this activity provided us with an opportunity to reflect on and revisit the work that we do. This process of metareflection is seen as a core benefit of critically

reflecting upon one's philosophy and approach to educational development practice (Kenny, Iqbal et al., 2017; Wright & Miller, 2000). At a macro level, as is argued by the editors of this edition, our "one things" come together to say something about the current state of affairs in the field of educational development more broadly.

These reflections on our philosophy statements search for a core and a foundation to our work. Our narratives illustrate how we enact our one thing in our work as educational developers and reflect on its importance. The first narrative considers the power of collaborative decision making in enabling and empowering participants while encouraging the social construction of knowledge. In a reflective tone, the second narrative continues the theme of collaboration and dialogue, using the metaphor of gathering around a subject to socially create meaning. Further elaborating on the role of the educational developer as a facilitator, the third narrative describes a space of possibilities within which different ideas are explored and decisions made. The fourth narrative introduces the notion of critical reflection as a methodology for creating an educational development environment that is conducive to growth and transformation. The fifth narrative emphasizes the ideas of engaging in educational development with curiosity, being open to inquiry and the wealth of ideas it brings through a systematic approach of action research. The sixth narrative proposes that caring drives intentionality in everyday practice. The final narrative draws us into the realm of evidence based practice as a means of augmenting our work as educational developers.

Our "one things," although different, are complementary: we are all working toward the same goals, interpreting our mission statement and strategic priorities of our unit and university within our individual practice.

*Narrative One: Collaborative Dialogue and Decision Making*

The one thing that guides my educational development practice is my belief in the importance of collaborative dialogue and decision making. Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Parker Palmer, Torgny Roxå, Katerina Mårtensson, and Peter Senge, this belief is articulated in the following excerpt from my philosophy of educational development.

My philosophy of educational development starts with a belief that change and inspiration happens through conversation, "...the kind of conversations that bring people closer to the heart of a shared concern, give them new eyes to see both the problems and possibilities, and set the stage for taking creative action" (Palmer, Zajonc, & Scribner, 2010, p. 21). I believe that educational developers possess the capacity and facilitative leadership skills necessary to bring people together to engage in authentic, meaningful, and productive conversations about enhancing teaching and learning in higher education.

As Roxå and Mårtensson (2009) state, "...communication is the driving force for development" (p. 549). It is through these conversations that we build upon the input and perspectives of others across the academic community to generate new insights and ideas that inspire further growth within ourselves and enable actionable change in our teaching and learning environments. This ability to discover new meaning is where the magic of conversation exists. It is here that something is created that would never have surfaced without the process of collaboratively exploring multiple points of view. Through authentic and meaningful dialogue, we develop an empathetic and compassionate understanding for others' points of view and a sense of trust that flows into our future conversations and interactions (Senge, 2006).

Whether I am facilitating a discussion in a teaching and learning workshop, global café, or focus group, supporting an institutional decision making process, adjudicating an awards committee, engaging in strategic planning, or working with a colleague in the Taylor Institute on a specific teaching and learning initiative, my intention is to consistently create the conditions and the space for meaningful conversations, open dialogue, and collaboration to occur amongst colleagues (Kenny, 2017, p. 2-3).

My one thing demonstrates the value I place in my belief that teaching and learning experiences and expertise are shared across the academic community. I am inspired by Shulman's (1993) work, which reinforces the value of teaching as visible, community property, where products and processes are "shared, discussed, critiqued, exchanged, and built upon" (p. 7). It is grounded in my recognition that, often, my most important role as an educational developer is to intentionally create space for dialogue to occur.

I use my role as Chair of our institution's Campus Mental Health Strategy Teaching and Learning Subcommittee to show how my one thing is enacted through my educational development practice. In establishing this committee, we included over 20 representatives from across our teaching and learning community, including students, postdoctoral scholars, staff, and faculty. To create space and processes for collaborative decision making and action planning, we established a clear focus on one key recommendation out of the university's mental health strategy: to "promote teaching and learning practices that integrate inclusive curriculum and pedagogy and that include concepts of mental health and wellness" (University of Calgary, 2015, p. 25). We established intentions for how we would work together. Before our first gathering, a survey was distributed to all subcommittee members to solicit their initial input regarding what was already happening in their area to support this recommendation and what else needed to be done. In subsequent meetings, I facilitated small group conversations and collaborative decision making processes to develop themes from their individual survey responses and to further prioritize key areas to focus our work together. Through further dialogue and conversation, we refined these themes, and nine actionable goals emerged to inform the work of three working groups.

What is most important about this process is that the committee members developed these goals as a group, determining where and how they would most like to contribute to advancing the university's mental health priorities. My role as chair was to provide a process and space that would help these goals emerge based on the committee members' experiences and expertise. Based on these goals, we were able to secure funding to support our work, and the committee has taken shared ownership and leadership in moving forward with the prioritized activities. The work of this committee has provided an example for other subcommittees, and I continue to create opportunities for collaborative dialogue, input, and decision making through our meetings and communications. The committee members have expressed their appreciation of the facilitation and decision making processes, acknowledging the value of being actively engaged in articulating our action plan and seeing themselves and their contributions within the broader context of the mental health strategy. This process has affirmed my beliefs in the importance of intentionally creating learning spaces and environments where collaborative dialogue becomes the driver of decision making and action.

#### *Narrative Two: Gathering as Communities of Learning*

Being relatively new to educational development, I often draw on my experiences as a classroom teacher and teacher educator as I navigate the practice and scholarship of supporting and enhancing teaching and learning in higher education. Moving from teacher education to educational development is somewhat like learning to speak a new dialect of a familiar language: we have slightly different ways of speaking about similar ideas. Through the process of developing a philosophy statement for my educational development portfolio, however, I have discovered that there are some foundational principles that continue to inform my work in all aspects of teaching and learning. For example, one thing that was transformational to my own teaching practice and has provided philosophical and practical guidance for how I envision my work as an educational developer is Palmer's (2007) description of subject centered education:

Palmer's model of collaborative knowing encourages teachers in every discipline to gather with their students around the important subjects and questions within their chosen academic fields. Educational developers, however, have the specific opportunity to gather with academic colleagues across disciplines around the important subjects of teaching and learning. Such an approach does not involve an abdication of leadership, rather it intentionally honours the

expertise and experiences of others in the processes of learning and teaching (Grant, 2017, p. 2).

Palmer presents a contrast between a traditional teacher centered model of learning and a community based, subject centered model of learning. In the traditional model, an Expert is positioned between the Object of study and the Amateurs (students). The implication is that all learning flows from the Expert to the Amateurs who have no direct access to the Object itself. In the subject centered model, Knowers gather around a Subject and form relationships with the Subject itself as well as with each other. The change from the first model to the second involves a fundamental shift in perspective about the role of the teacher or facilitator (Palmer, 2007). I am drawn to this idea of gathering around a subject in order to learn in community, and I have found it helpful in planning teaching and learning activities in my own courses. This model has also been useful in new contexts as I embark on educational development activities.

I recently had the challenging opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to design and implement a three month program for international professors who came to our university to develop their English language skills while also investigating Canadian educational philosophies and practices. We were crossing not only organizational levels, academic departments, and disciplines (Fraser et al., 2010) but also linguistic and cultural barriers. The academic participants came from a range of specializations under a broad disciplinary heading and arrived from different universities across a large and diverse nation. Some of them had extensive experience at the rank of professor, while others were just beginning their first academic posts. My particular assignment was to support their learning about pedagogical theories and evidence based teaching and learning practices.

I quickly found that Palmer's subject centered model was a fitting way to work with such a diverse set of academic colleagues. It would have been inappropriate and even disrespectful for me to position myself as the sole expert, disregarding the disciplinary and academic expertise of these colleagues. By intentionally putting the subject of pedagogy at the center of our activities and conversations, both figuratively and literally, I was able to support learning from within a community of knowers. Instead of always standing in front of the group, I often chose to position myself at the side of the room while we discussed a key quotation that was in the center of the largest wall on a screen. That way the focus was literally on the subject at hand rather than on me as the mediator between the subject and the participants. Although there were so many of us in the classroom space that we were unable to form a large circle, we were able to rearrange seats to form multiple small circles for conversations about key readings. When group representatives shared their learning, it was from within their smaller circle rather than from a podium or from the empty space that marked the front of the room. As Palmer puts it, "the knower is not the only active agent—the subject itself participates in the dialectic of knowing" (Palmer, 2007, p. 105). The result was that the participants were able to experience learning through collaboration—some said it was for the first time—and even collegial debate rather than through the more familiar modes of individualistic competition and professor pleasing. Having experienced this kind of learning environment themselves, many became keen to provide a similar experience for their students.

*Narrative Three: Creating a Space of Possibilities*

Throughout my work in various sectors, ranging from banking to teaching in the K 12 and postsecondary education and now as an educational developer, I have kept a constant paradigm. Creswell (2015) defines our paradigms as certain beliefs that we hold as true, which guide what we do. As I reflectively looked at my philosophy statement, a statement that has morphed and changed over the course of my career trajectory, to find what I could call the one thing that guides my work, I realized the core remained the same—a strong belief in doing the right thing.

Does this mean that I always have the knowledge of what is right and wrong in all contexts? Not at all. Still, I know that every educational developer runs the risk of being cast as an "expert" who knows the right thing, the right way (Yee, 2015). At this point, I look to examples within my practice to contextualize what I mean by the word "right." At a crossroad considering all that had to be done to develop a new program, I had to make a decision as a curriculum developer. Do I choose the easy way and adopt an

existing traditional curriculum or the right way and systematically develop a curriculum that integrates theory and practice? Developing a new academic program brings with it myriad questions, and the curriculum becomes just one piece of the puzzle. Amidst all the questions, when we had to decide on a specific curriculum, the easy way was to adopt an existing curriculum; the right way was to develop a curriculum to suit the needs of our learners. The existing curriculum was more traditional, with theory seen as distinct from practice. However, with advances in the field indicating that students learn better through opportunities to apply learning to real life (Bensimon, 2009), I believed an integrated curriculum would create meaningful learning experiences for our students, and we went on to develop an integrated curriculum.

But “rightness” for me is less about a particular outcome and more a means to engage in all possibilities. My work is guided by the philosophy that “my role is that of a facilitator, one who guides students, faculty or groups to see the possibilities that abound in adopting innovative practices through reflection” (Kalu, 2015, p. 1). The process of reflecting, sifting through the possibilities that exist, creates a space within which individuals can make a judgment, a space to choose the right course of action at any given time. As a curriculum development specialist providing consultative leadership to groups and faculties developing curriculum or undergoing the curriculum review process, this space of possibilities is manifested in different forms. This could mean my facilitating discussions on different approaches to include the students’ voice in curriculum reviews leading to a choice to actually include the student voice in the process. Adopting a reflective approach, my preparations for consultations require understanding the particular discipline, a scenario that Taylor (2005) terms to “know in” the discipline. I create time to learn from within the disciplinary literature about their approach to teaching and learning, fundamental values and best practices in order to support my understanding of the specific needs for the consultation. Opening myself to “knowing in the discipline” creates a space of possibilities wherein my knowledge of curriculum interacts with evidence within the discipline, equipping me with the knowledge to offer an array of strategies suitable for the discipline at the consultation. Being prepared to guide a discussion toward aligning needs with best practices at a consultation is not only right within my practice, it also creates opportunities for groups to make decisions based on evidence. During our consultation, groups will have the opportunity to reflect on best practices, align their needs with possible solutions, and make a choice on what to adopt to improve student learning. Reflections on how to implement evidence based practices within limitations in their context lead us to the right thing.

*Narrative Four: Critical Reflection as a Methodology*

One thing that guides my educational development practice is a commitment to facilitating critical reflection. Using critically reflective practice as a guiding perspective helps me know how to behave in various moments of my work—including the everyday routine activities, new situations, and novel challenges that I might face. While my roles and responsibilities as an educational developer are varied, broad, and evolving, critical reflection as a methodology suits many contexts of my work.

In my philosophy statement, I draw upon Taylor (2005) and Timmermans (2014) to frame educational development as primarily being about leading and facilitating change by “creating the conditions that make transformation (i.e., innovation and an ethos of continuous improvement) desirable, plausible, and possible—whether it occurs at the individual, departmental, faculty, institutional level, or beyond.” (Berenson, 2016, p. 3). I consider instructive Palmer’s (2007) discussion about leadership involving opening rather than occupying space (p. 166). Rather than occupying the space by stepping in as an expert with suggestions, I have come to appreciate that “transformative learning occurs in an environment of self reflection, inquiry and exploration” (Berenson, 2016, p. 3). This means that my work is not about being the expert and telling people what to do. Rather, creating opportunities and environments for critical reflection is a way to facilitate the growth and transformation that I understand to be at the heart of what educational development is all about.

According to Brookfield (1995), “critically reflective teaching happens when we identify and scrutinize the assumptions that underlie how we work” (p. xii). Brookfield talks about critical reflection as an iterative process of seeing one’s teaching self through the eyes of students, colleagues, our own history/experience, and the literature to which we have been exposed. Brookfield’s lenses provide a robust terrain for my

educational development practice. Occasionally, my role is to bring a resource, concept, or piece of research to the discussion. Sometimes, it is to create the conditions for colleagues and/or students to share their perspectives, and sometimes, it is to ask questions that bring one's own experience to the forefront for consideration. I am beginning to recognize evermore opportunities in my everyday practice to make these various lenses available to my colleagues and strive to facilitate deep reflection whenever I can.

The idea of critical reflection is fundamental in the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) program that I lead on our campus. This four day intensive program introduces participants to a learner focused, evidence based framework for teaching, which they implement through a peer feedback cycle process. The ISW offers many opportunities to critically reflect on teaching and learning through Brookfield's lenses. Initially, participants are exposed to elements of the literature when they learn about the framework (and reflect on its relevance for their own practice). They then teach a short class to their colleagues using the framework, which gives them an experiential lens (through which they reflect in a facilitated debrief following the lesson). Written and verbal feedback is subsequently provided to the instructor by participants who are encouraged to share their experiences as learners in the class. Not only is this student feedback lens useful for the instructor's critical reflection, it also sometimes invites very seasoned faculty to experience firsthand (and subsequently reflect on) what it means to be a student engaged in learning something new. Finally, end of day group discussions invite the perspectives and insights of participants as colleagues on the various aspects of their learning in the workshop. These opportunities to experience and reflect on teaching and learning through multiple lenses makes the ISW a transformative experience for many participants (Macpherson, 2011). Recognizing that various nuanced versions of Brookfield's lenses are at play throughout the ISW helps to guide me as an educational developer facilitating this program and as I train faculty members to become ISW facilitators on our campus.

Although critical reflection is not the only thing that underscores my work, facilitating the development of critically reflective practitioners can be a driver and shaper for a broad set of educational development tasks aimed at various levels of interaction. I am sometimes challenged to know when and what lens might be relevant or useful in a given situation; however, thinking about my work as making available and facilitating Brookfield's various complex lenses provides a foundation to stand on. As I recognize opportunities to invoke, support, and/or develop aspects of the lenses in my daily work, I have come to believe that facilitating the critical reflection of my colleagues is a powerful strategy in terms of creating and maintaining the environment of openness and growth that I aim to achieve in my educational development practice.

*Narrative Five: Curiosity and Inquiry*

Drawing from my educational development philosophy statement, the one thing that is most influential to orienting my practice is a belief that

educational development should be curiosity and inquiry driven. This means that the "development" work that we and our teaching colleagues participate in should not be heavily directed, dictated, or remedial. Instead, effective educational development happens when individuals, groups, departments, or faculties identify what they want to know, or the questions and curiosities they have about teaching and learning. Educational development processes are then designed in the spirit of inquiry to help colleagues answer their questions and to generate evidence that supports their ongoing teaching and learning practices (Mueller, 2017, pp. 4-5).

If this sounds a lot like research, it is because it is; in fact, the imperatives of research, such as understanding complexity, solving problems, and developing pragmatic applications, are naturally mirrored in educational development consultancy (McKay & Marshall, 2001). Furthermore, when I enact my educational development efforts in alignment with my beliefs about curiosity and inquiry, I witness genuine interest and commitment amongst my colleagues—which makes educational development not only engaging but also enjoyable for those involved.

Curiosity driven educational development does not happen on its own; despite the prominence of research in higher education, it often takes some persuasion to convince colleagues to engage in an inquiry based approach. After all, inquiry (or research, or learning) is complex and unpredictable and typically requires both a dedicated and sustained effort. As such, I feel that it is my responsibility to provide, adapt, or innovate models of inquiry to guide educational development practice for both myself and others. Indeed, as I describe further in my philosophy statement,

My overarching approach has been informed by an action research model. Action research is a kind of inquiry conducted by practitioners that is meant to directly influence and guide day to day practices (Baumfield, Hall, & Wall, 2013; Mertler, 2009). It is characterized by iterative phases of: (a) planning, (b) conducting inquiry, (c) observing and analyzing results, and (d) engaging in structured reflection (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). This model is typically used to inform formal inquiry, but I have adapted it to guide my day to day practices and approaches as an educational developer (Mueller, 2017, p. 12).

The iterative phases of action research correspond well with the typical “cycles” we observe in educational development practices.

In order to engage in consultation that is informed by an action research ethos, I begin by asking questions that encourage an inquiry mindset and empower colleagues to direct their own inquiry based educational development process:

- What is it that most interests you within the areas of teaching, learning, and/or educational development?
- What specific questions do you have about your area of interest?
- Why is it important to answer these questions? Who will the answers apply to?
- What kind of “data” would most effectively answer your questions?
- How could you go about collecting that data or answering your questions?

I have enacted this approach to inquiry driven educational development as part of many of the initiatives with which I have been involved. One example is the approach I took to consulting with a faculty level Teaching and Learning Forum on our campus. The Forum was a group of the faculty’s directors, managers, and coordinators; they enlisted my help to engage in what they referred to as “planning around teaching and learning.” In order to offer meaningful facilitative support, I participated in several preparatory meetings with the group to identify what they were most interested in learning as part of their strategic planning process: what was most important to focus on, what pressing questions they had, and how they thought they might answer those questions. Only then did I design a two stage planning process based on an action research model that would ensure the group was able to iteratively ask and answer their own questions and that they could recraft their inquiry agenda as they went along. I treated the information that was generated at each facilitated strategic planning session as data and worked collaboratively with the Forum’s members to interpret and apply it as the group moved forward.

When I pose these kinds of action research questions to my colleagues during educational development consultations, they often express surprise at being invited to craft their educational development effort in a thoughtful and meaningful manner. Using inquiry models and approaches in educational development helps participants ignite their own curiosity and design a process that maximizes the potential for future impact. Intentionally designed inquiry processes and tools, then, both compel and drive educational development and enable optimal engagement amongst those involved.

*Narrative Six: Caring About My Practice*

The one thing that guides me as an educational developer is that I care about my practice. As I was revising my educational development philosophy statement, I reflected on how much I care about my work, colleagues, students, institutional community, and myself and how this care is evident in my practice. With this realization, I began a multidisciplinary search that provided me with some perspectives



on the notion of caring and how this concept informs my practice and educational development philosophy. My hope is to share what I have learned in order to provide educational developers with some ideas for consideration and reflection on their own work.

My exploration started with the etymology of the meaning of “care,” and I was surprised to find that care is derived from the term “anxiety,” which holds negative connotations, even as our current usage of the term involves concern about someone or something (Reich, 1995). I have adopted Tronto’s view that caring is a “disposition” (Zembylas, Bozalek, & Shefer, 2014, p. 200), an intrinsic human trait that needs to be considered. Beck (1992), in her review of the caring ethic, writes about the challenges to define care, yet as she explores the practice of caring, she suggests it is evident in actions, such as the “...goals, practices, and conditions related to caring in education...” (p. 456). Inspired by Beck’s writing, I define care in my educational development practice as an intentional commitment to fostering teaching development, understanding and enhancing student learning, and disseminating knowledge. I demonstrate care in actions through the value of respect, which includes listening, appreciating, accepting, and encouraging my colleagues and students; attending to details; and developing and reflecting on my practice, scholarship, and goals. The concept and application of caring is implicit in our practice, and I think it is worthy of making it explicit. I care about my practice, and however difficult it is to quantify, I provide examples of what might demonstrate caring.

In considering care, I am reminded of Brookfield’s (1995) writings on becoming a reflective teacher and Bain’s (2004) book, *What the Best College Teachers Do*. It is the caring about teaching and caring about student learning that motivates individuals in their development. Brookfield boldly claims that “we teach to change the world” (p. 1), and this is done through the commitment of critical reflection—a process that helped me identify my philosophy of care. Shifting from a teacher’s perspective to a student’s perspective, Fink (2013) provides us with a *Taxonomy of Significant Learning*, which includes caring (p. 35). For example, he explains that the more students care, the more likely “...powerful things can happen educationally.” (p. 56). He suggests that this possibility is due to teachers caring about their students’ learning, helping students learn how to learn by focusing on simple elements of course design that will generate interest and excitement..

Care also directs my attention toward research. Evidence based teaching development informs my practice, and I ensure that it is explicit in my writing, presentations, and the documents I produce. Because I care about the outcome or product, I take the time to explore a topic, consult with colleagues, check facts and references, clarify goals, and consider the needs of my audience and/or purpose. Schwartz and Gurung (2012), Hutchings (2000), and others, write about the importance, value, and benefits of evidence produced in SoTL. I have found that consulting and engaging in scholarship supports and informs my day to day practice and enhances my philosophy of care.

Additional qualities of caring appear in the academic hospitality that is embedded in my institutional culture. Phipps and Barnett (2007) describe academic hospitality as having many forms, which can include hosting, welcoming, and generosity to our colleagues and visitors. I believe academic hospitality is an indicator of caring about my practice, and I am careful and intentional in taking the time for hospitality. This can be a small, yet significant, action, such as offering a cup of coffee or asking a colleague about their work, to a larger commitment, such as reviewing a paper or proposal. Academic hospitality is an avenue to demonstrate care through respect, appreciation, and encouragement.

In addition to caring about our practice, colleagues, and students, we should include caring about ourselves. Brookfield’s (2015) number one maxim of skillful teaching is to take care of yourself to manage the emotional demands of the profession (p. 265). Finn (2015) also reminds us about the intent of caring for ourselves. Both suggest that to care for ourselves is to focus on our development and self awareness, thus enhancing our ability to care about our practice. In my practice, I seek opportunities for this self awareness within workshops or retreats. When I find myself anxious before I teach, present, or consult, I return to my initial, curious discovery about the meaning of “caring” as “anxiety.” In recognizing the anxiety, I am poised to see it as drawing attention to my work. As P. Finn (personal communication,

August 23, 2017), performance researcher, shares his findings on this phenomenon: “The more you care about teaching, the more anxious you feel. Embrace the feeling, knowing you are not anxious, you are inspired.” Reframing the concept of anxiety to the notion of inspiration is a powerful example of self awareness and a way toward self care.

These perspectives and writings on caring about our educational development practice have important implications. Reflecting on our practice can be an act of caring about ourselves, and I leave you with this thought: What do you care about in your educational development practice, and what does it look like?  
*Narrative Seven: Evidence Based Approach*

One thing that guides me in my role as a curriculum development specialist is enacting an evidence based approach to the work. In much of that work, I facilitate groups through a process of curriculum review as they examine strengths and weaknesses of their programs, with the goal of improving student learning (University of Calgary, 2015). As I assert in my philosophy statement, “decisions about curriculum are sometimes made based on gut feeling rather than using a data informed method. A well rounded review will draw on several sources of evidence, such as curriculum data, student provided data, and instructors’ perceptions of the program” (Dyjur, 2017, p. 2). To achieve such a well rounded review, I encourage groups that are conducting a curriculum review to collect and analyze their own data from multiple sources to inform their inquiry questions. Discussing the data in a group setting within the context of the program can lead to a shared understanding about the curriculum: what is working well and aspects of the program that could benefit from revision (Sumsion & Goodfellow, 2007).

I also apply evidence based principles to the curriculum review itself. I read widely on curriculum review in higher education to learn the processes, challenges, successes, and results that others have experienced. Each group I work with comes from a different field and has subtle differences, but having many examples at hand allows for customizing the process for each group. I encourage groups to draw upon their disciplinary strengths to make the review process relevant to them.

A group I worked with in the Faculty of Arts illustrates the effectiveness of using an evidence based approach to review a curriculum. This group had not completed a full program review in over 20 years. Over time, they had made incremental changes to their curriculum, adding courses and configuring prerequisites based on perceived demand and perceived student learning needs. Decisions on things such as whether or not to offer a course were based on practicalities such as the number of enrollees, classroom space, and whether or not they had someone on staff who was interested in teaching that course. With the introduction of the quality assurance initiative from the Provost’s Office (University of Calgary, 2015), they were required to conduct a full curriculum review using at least three different types of data: curriculum mapping data, student engagement survey data, and demographic information such as number of students, time to completion, and attrition rates. Rather than completing the review in a perfunctory manner, I guided them to collect information from additional sources, resulting in a more robust group of data from which to base their discussions and decisions. Along with required data sources, they implemented a student survey, an instructor survey, conducted an environmental scan of similar programs at other Canadian institutions, and a literature review of pedagogical practices in the discipline. Data were used as the basis for informed discussions about how various components of the curriculum fit together to form a thoughtful, integrated student learning experience.

Adopting an evidence based approach has helped groups examine issues from perspectives that are different from their own, including student perspectives, which in turn strengthens the program. Using multiple sources of data can give groups the confidence that their decisions are in the best interest of student learning. Instructors can also learn about the richness of the program in which they teach.

In addition to the benefits provided in terms of student learning, I have found an evidence based approach to be valuable for me personally. Consulting the literature helps me to understand curriculum processes and be reflective about how I collaborate with and advise different groups, stretching and growing my abilities as an educational developer.

*Conclusion*

At first glance, the one thing that guides our practice might appear divergent, which illustrates our diverse backgrounds and philosophy. However, we also coalesce on themes threaded throughout our narratives. We demonstrate a commitment to reflective practice and transformation, within ourselves as well as amongst groups and the institution as a whole. Reflection is a means of enhancing the self and leading others toward their goals—not as experts but by demonstrating expertise in the process of meaning making through facilitative leadership (Timmermans, 2014). Thus, with an understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, we recognize that individuals bring unique strengths and contributions to a group, making the learning richer for everyone. Being a reflective practitioner (Brookfield, 1995) is critical to discovery, growth, and continuous improvement.

Our philosophies demonstrate intentionality toward our practice through the thoughtful and scholarly approaches we adopt (Kenny, Popovic et al., 2017; Taylor & Rege Colet, 2010). We value the use of evidence to inform what we do and how we facilitate growth and development by encouraging the adoption of evidence based approaches. We view the use of evidence as critical as it not only demonstrates our fundamental underpinnings but also provides a solid foundation for individual and group decision making processes in curriculum or teaching and learning. We are intentional about our work because it is meaningful; we have witnessed its impact on faculty and in student learning.

Although our disciplinary backgrounds inform our philosophies and guiding principles our statements reveal the implicit certainty of our commitment to facilitating change (McDonald et al., 2016; Taylor & Rege Colet, 2010), a common influence to how each of us as individuals engage in and enact our work of educational development. The process of change—change within the context of our institution, faculty, processes, and curriculum—leads to the improvement of the student learning experience. Through these statements, a narrative of hope and optimism emerges. Our one things, which are articulated in our philosophy statements and enacted in our practice, illustrate our dedication and passion for improving the student learning experience.

Each author's reflection on their philosophy statement contributes to the educational development discourse on diversity and innovation in teaching and learning while staying true to the call of educational developers as change agents (Taylor & Rege Colet, 2010) and the goals of our CTL. Future research related to how implicit definitions and beliefs about educational development emerge through the articulation of educational development philosophy statements from individuals across institutional and international contexts would strengthen scholarly discourse related to this evolving field of practice, leadership, and scholarship (Kenny & Taylor, 2017).

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