

Study and Development Fellowship Report
Statement of Scholarly Activity
2022-2023

1

Caroline Fabbruzzo Ed.D., MA ECS, BA ECE, RECE
Early Childhood Studies
University of Guelph-Humber

The purpose of the Study and Development fellowship is to further foster a culture of collaboration among faculty of the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) program by awakening them to the benefits of collaboration in a higher education setting. Collaboration is defined as a multidimensional, evolving process that includes interaction, time commitment, and the exchange of different forms of knowledge. Additionally, collaboration entails maintaining a professional working relationship with stakeholders in order to foster best outcomes (Masin & Valle-Riestra, 2007; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010; Thistlethwaite, 2012).

Fellowship Goals

The three goals of this Study and Development Fellowship include

- To apply the learning gained from researching and writing an [Organizational Improvement Plan](#) (OIP) focussed on interprofessional collaboration in higher education.
- To better understand faculty views on collaboration.
- To promote and enhance faculty collaboration within the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) program.

Summary of Activities and Outputs

The following outlines the awakening and reflection activities utilized in this Study and Development Fellowship.

Awakening

Study and Development Fellowship activities began with awakening, using a participative approach that will engage and change attitudes towards a proposed initiative of further fostering a culture of collaboration among faculty of the ECS program (Cawsey et al., 2016). Awakening activities aimed to better understand faculty views on collaboration.

Awakening activities included using the *Faculty Chat and Share* forum to

- Digitally distribute a confidential survey adapted from Seonghee and Boryung (2008) to collect confidential views on faculty attitudes towards knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- Post an interactive activity that asked colleagues to introduce themselves and share their professional and/or academic background.
- Post an interactive activity asking colleagues to brainstorm professions that benefit from interprofessional collaboration.
- Facilitate a discussion forum that asked colleagues the following
 - What would motivate/encourage you to engage in the Faculty Chat and Share forum?
 - What hinders your participation in the Faculty Chat and Share forum?
- Post an article by Seonghee and Boryung (2008) with the following prompts for discussion and reflection.
 - Take a few minutes to reflect on your practices.
 - How willing are you to share instructional materials, resources, ideas that you developed, with your colleagues?
 - How willing are you to connect with a colleague, to develop a course outline, and assessments?

Study and Development Fellowship Report
Statement of Scholarly Activity
2022-2023

3

- What makes you willing to do so? Are there factors that contribute to your hesitancy?
- Share a list of professionals who have spoken to Interprofessional Collaboration classes and invited colleagues to reach out if interested in them.

Reflection

Reflection activities included using the *Faculty Chat and Share* forum to

- Post the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) [Practice Guideline on Communication and Collaboration Section 3](#), [Communication and Collaboration with Colleagues \(CECE, 2021\)](#) with the following prompts for reflection
 - How often throughout the day do you communicate with your colleagues?
 - In what ways does communication take place?
 - Are there some methods that work better than others?
 - Is communication strictly about work, or do you try to get to know your colleagues?
 - Do you know about their past professional experiences?
 - Do you know their practice strengths and challenges?
 - In what ways does collaboration take place in your practice setting?
 - Do you try to collaborate with colleagues you don't directly work with?
 - Are there strategies you find more effective for collaboration than others?
 - Are there aspects of the collaboration process that you enjoy more than others?
Why might this be?
 - Are there areas of your overall collaboration strategies that you would like to strengthen?

Study and Development Fellowship Report
Statement of Scholarly Activity
2022-2023

4

- Post the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) [Practice Guideline on Communication and Collaboration Section 3](#), Communication and Collaboration with Colleagues (CECE, 2021) with the following prompts for reflection (*If you tend to work by yourself... .*)
 - Who are the educators in your network that you connect with regularly or that you can reach out to if needed?
 - What are your strengths in communicating and collaborating with other educators?
 - What are some areas you would like to improve in?
 - What resources do you have that support you in these practices? What resources could you seek out to support you?
 - How can you support others in these areas?
 - Are there systemic barriers preventing you from communicating and collaborating with other educators (For example, the facility is not set up accordingly or team meetings are infrequent)? ◦ What are ways you can work around these barriers
 - Are there technological solutions that could help improve your communication and collaboration? How so? to ensure effective communication and collaboration with other educators?

Reflection on Process and Outcomes

The following presents a brief reflection on the process and outcomes of the Study and Development Fellowship.

Reflection on Process

The process of applying the learning gained from researching and writing an [Organizational Improvement Plan](#) (OIP) focussed on interprofessional collaboration in higher education was gratifying. I had the opportunity to reflect on ideas and concepts developed for the OIP and reflect on how to best present them to my colleagues. The process demonstrated that theoretical ideas do not necessarily translate to best practice.

The process also encouraged personal reflection on my role in the inconsistent culture of interprofessional collaboration. Buller (2015) states “you can’t change an organization without being changed yourself” (p. 90). Reflection on this statement encouraged me to critically reflect on my own practices and biases and how they may be contributing to the culture. I hope that the reflection activities posted and emailed to colleagues also promoted self-reflection on their views of faculty collaboration and their role within.

Reflection on Outcomes

Reflection on colleague engagement with the *Faculty Chat and Share* forum and informal communication with colleagues indicates that colleagues do value collaborating with one another. However, the *Faculty Chat and Share* forum may not be the ideal medium for awakening colleagues to the benefits of interprofessional collaboration, or to better understand colleague views on faculty collaboration. Despite consistent email announcements and notifications, engagement in the material was limited. Informal discussion with colleagues suggested that establishing set dates and times to meet virtually or in person may result in better outcomes as colleagues may be more likely to dedicate time within their schedules to participating (Personal communication, Feb 3, 2023).

Study and Development Fellowship Report
Statement of Scholarly Activity
2022-2023

6

Time, or lack thereof, presents itself as a common theme to not engaging in interprofessional collaboration, as supported by a personal communication, “What hinders my participation, and the participation in general with shared forums is the lack of time. We are living in a world with constant information being directed towards us. Hard to keep up sometimes and it can easily become overwhelming” (Oct 28, 2022). As a team of sessional faculty, with many of us employed at one or more institutions in addition to U of GH, the challenge of time is difficult to address.

However, despite the challenge of time and limited engagement, overall, I do feel that the Study and Development Fellowship was successful. Engagement in the process provided me with new insight as to what works and what does not, as well as how some colleagues viewed the process. In closing I would like to share a personal communication received, "Personally, I enjoyed it. Being a part time faculty can feel very isolating, therefore, I really enjoyed connecting and getting to know the team" (Dec 16, 2022).

Next Steps

I would like to conclude with reflection on content from the Narrative Epilogue of my OIP (Fabbruzzo, 2022, pp. 103-104).

Reflection on this Study and Development Fellowship has reinforced Burnes’s (1996) view that organizational change is most often an open-ended and continuous process that can be driven from the bottom up. The process and outcomes reinforced the need to ensure my colleagues believe that the change they are engaged in is valuable for themselves and the organization (Moran & Brightman, 2001). Further reflection on the Study and Development Fellowship reinforces my most critical role as a change agent. Aspects of this role include taking care of the people involved in the change process, communicating, and providing guidance and support to aid in the transition to and adoption of the change, while

Study and Development Fellowship Report
Statement of Scholarly Activity
2022-2023

7

acknowledging my colleagues' concerns and emotions (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Cawsey et al., 2016; Kang, 2015). Reflection on the literature has strengthened the importance of facilitating a culture of collaboration among ECS faculty. Meaningful engagement and sharing of knowledge, skills, and expertise with one another promotes additional opportunities to engage in cooperative activities, thereby maximizing our performance and contribution to the success of our students (Seonghee & Boryung, 2008). As discussed in the OIP, leadership and faculty of the ECS program have an ethical obligation to engage in a culture of collaboration to promote skills, knowledge and pedagogical practices that will produce graduates of the highest quality. An outcome of this change is that graduates will be better prepared to make the greatest possible difference in children's lives by supporting children and their families to achieve equal outcomes and well-being (Sykes, 2014). I aspire to this goal by nurturing future early childhood professionals to develop the skills necessary to best support children and families and role modelling collaboration with my colleagues.

In Appreciation

I would like to thank the Study and Development Fellowship committee for providing the opportunity to engage in this project. In addition, I would like to thank ECS Program Head and Assistant Program heads for their unwavering support and guidance. In no particular order they are Dr. Nikki Martyn, Carri-Ann Scott and Dr. Elena Merenda. I view this fellowship as a work in progress. I will continue to work towards my goal of promoting and enhancing faculty collaboration within the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) program through role modelling and promoting interprofessional collaboration within our diverse and talented team.

References

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*.

JohnWiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119281856>

Buller, J. (2015). Change leadership in higher education. A practical guide to academic

transformation. Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119210825>

Burnes, B. (1996). No such thing as a “one best way” to manage organizational change.

Management Decision, 34(10), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251749610150649>

Cawsey, T. F., Deszca, G., & Ingols, C. (2016). *Organizational change: An action-oriented*

toolkit (3rd ed.). Sage.

College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario. (2021). *Practice Guideline on*

Communication and Collaboration Section 3.

<https://www.college-ece.ca/practice-guideline-on-communication-and-collaboration-section-3-2/>

Fabbruzzo, C. (2022). Fostering a Culture of Collaboration Among Early Childhood

Professionals in Higher Education. *The Organizational Improvement Plan at Western*

University, 276. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/oip/276>

Kang, S. (2015). Change management: Term confusion and new classifications. *Performance*

Improvement, 54(3), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21466>

Study and Development Fellowship Report
Statement of Scholarly Activity
2022-2023

9

- Masin, H. L., & Valle-Riestra, D. M. (2007). Interprofessional collaboration between physical therapy and special education faculty: A pilot study in early childhood special education. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education*, 21(3), 53-58.
[doi:10.1097/00001416-200710000-00008](https://doi.org/10.1097/00001416-200710000-00008)
- Moran, J. W., & Brightman, B. K. (2001). Leading organizational change. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 12(2), 66–74. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13665620010316226>
- Pritchard, A., & Woollard, J. (2010). *Psychology for the Classroom: Constructivism and Social Learning*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203855171>
- Seonghee, & Boryung, J. (2008). An analysis of faculty perceptions: Attitudes toward knowledge sharing and collaboration in an academic institution. *Library & Information Science Research*, 30(4), 282–290.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2008.04.003>
- Sykes, M. (2014). *Doing the right thing for children: Eight qualities of leadership*. Redleaf Press.
- Thistlethwaite, J. (2012). Interprofessional education: a review of context, learning and the research agenda. *Medical Education* 46, 58–70.
[doi:10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04143.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04143.x)