

# ***SEARCH Canada Faculty Development Strategy***

## **Introduction**

The success of SEARCH is, to a great extent, due to the quality of SEARCH faculty. SEARCH faculty have distinguished themselves through their capacity to provide quality teaching, develop exemplary curriculum and courseware resources and support SEARCH participants in their research and learning activities.

The success of SEARCH also presents a number of challenges. Faculty resources are stretched and, as busy academics, researchers and practitioners, SEARCH faculty face competing demands for their time and energy. The limit on faculty time is occurring while SEARCH Canada positions itself to respond to a number of growth opportunities. As well, faculty roles are shifting; the emergence of RDAs as faculty resources and the increasing level of managerial and oversight work provided by Lead Faculty has resulted in shifting roles and expectations. Finally, the emphasis on SEARCH, as a technology-enhanced learning program, raises new challenges for faculty and their role in the development and delivery of SEARCH learning programs.

*The future success of SEARCH Canada requires that the new organization dedicate efforts, resources and innovative ideas to support, strengthen and satisfy SEARCH Canada faculty.* In any organization, the ability to attract, employ and retain quality employees is a key consideration requiring the development of a human resources management strategy. This paper concentrates on one facet of a human resource management strategy - the creation of an integrated human resource (faculty) development strategy for SEARCH Canada.

## **SEARCH Canada Faculty Development**

Designing a SEARCH Canada Faculty Development Model must consider the need to model faculty development activities on the core principles and values of SEARCH Canada, develop an evidence-based model of faculty development and ensure that the model is innovative and responsive to the diverse needs of SEARCH Canada faculty, recognizing the inherent level of complexity of the new organization.

Based on these three considerations, it is suggested that the SEARCH Canada faculty development strategy be based on a model of workplace learning. (The concept of “workplace learning” is not often used in an academic context, however, as discussed in this paper, the underlying theories of workplace learning provide a number of useful approaches to develop a sustainable and comprehensive approach to faculty development.)

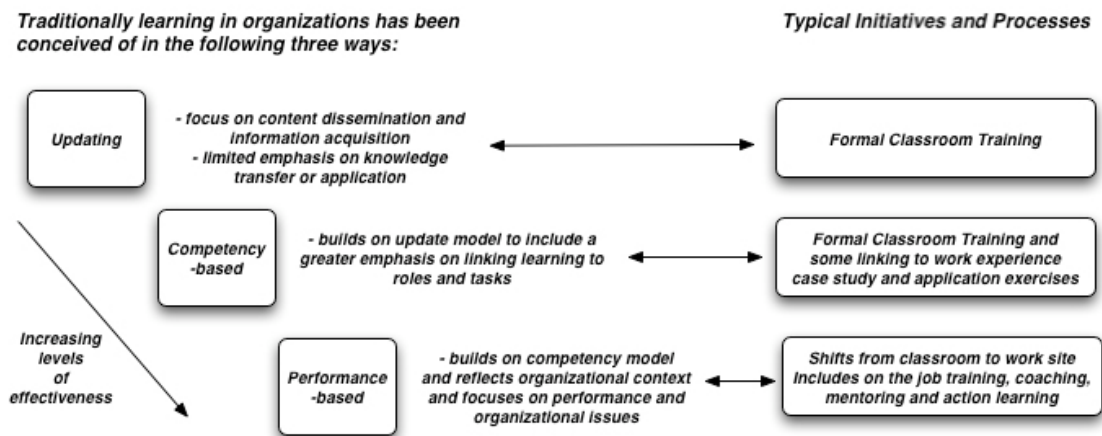
*Weaknesses in traditional faculty development approaches:* There are growing concerns about whether most training and development practices in many organizations are effective or sustainable. Pfeffer and Sutton (1999) found that every year more than \$60 billion is spent on training by organizations and that much of this training is ineffective. Shaw (1995) argued that of the billions invested on formal employee training as much as half of this expenditure is “utterly wasted –

squandered on training that's unnecessary, training that is aimed at non-training problems, and training that is doomed to fail by poor design" (p. 59). Schank (1997) stated "the way managers attempt to help people acquire knowledge and skills has absolutely nothing to do with the way people actually learn" (p. ix).

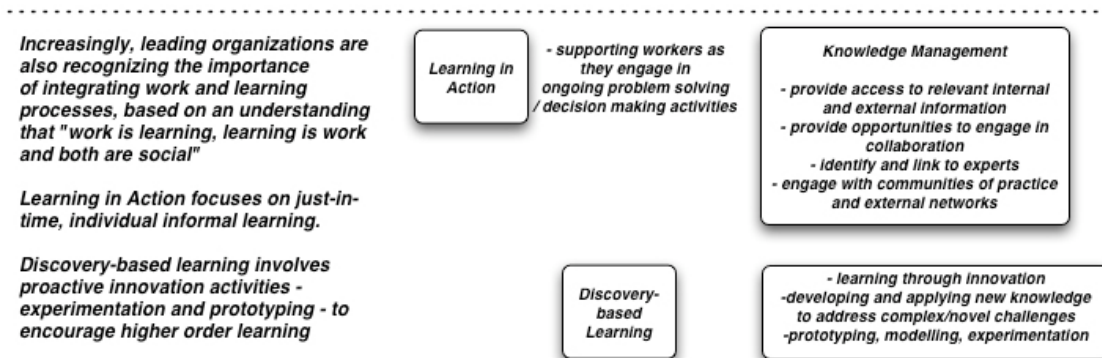
In practice, training is often ineffective because it tends to be episodic in nature, isolated from work and practice, generic (as opposed to customized to particular learner needs and contexts) and limited in the level of follow-up, practice and feedback that is provided.

When faculty development is examined in the context of workplace learning it is suggested that many faculty development initiatives provide very limited impact. Often, faculty development is considered as a supplemental and voluntary activity. In many institutions, faculty development is not considered as a pressing priority. At times, more attention is given the developing faculty research capabilities rather than teaching competencies.

The following graphic outlines a series of existing development models. For most organizations, faculty development is based on an *updating* model. A few organizations have attempted to shift to a *competency based* approach. Both of these approaches tend to be cursory and limited in their scope and effectiveness.



Research-based practice in workplace learning provides a number of alternatives to increase the effectiveness and impact of training and development initiatives.



Faculty development, in the context of SEARCH Canada should primarily focus on *learning in action* and *discovery-based learning* activities.

## SEARCH Canada Faculty Development

### Principles

The SEARCH Canada faculty development model should reflect a number of unique conditions, including

- Most SEARCH Faculty, including existing Lead and Adjunct Faculty as well as newly selected faculty members, are already highly experienced advanced / expert practitioners. Their selection to SEARCH Canada will be based on their proven abilities in teaching and practice in non-SEARCH contexts. Thus, for most faculty, faculty development activities should be designed to support more advanced and sophisticated learning needs.

[Note: the focus on “expert” workers does not assume that these practitioners do not benefit from ongoing developmental activities; only that the support provided to expert workers is very different than the approach taken to introduce newcomers into practice. Additionally, it is important to recognize that as experienced faculty enter the SEARCH domain they will need to learn about the SEARCH model and approach as well as the specific technological and operational dimensions of the program.]

- The first condition is impacted by the second. While SEARCH Canada recruitment and selection process will focus on attracting skilled and experienced faculty members (including RDAs), among the relatively small overall faculty grouping there will be many divergent developmental needs. Effective workplace learning is able to address the specific needs of individual workers, in the context of the larger SEARCH program, but primarily as a way to enhance personal performance.

- Time is considered as the most pressing challenge for SEARCH faculty development. As noted in the introduction, SEARCH faculty face many competing demands for their time and attention. Faculty development activities must accommodate time limitations.

### *Expert workers*

Based on the assumption that SEARCH Canada faculty are already experienced and expert practitioners, it is important to consider the unique work and learning practices of experts. This section will briefly explore the nature of expertise and specific learning approaches and needs of expert workers. Typically, the concept of expertise and, more specifically, how to support expert learning, is rarely examined or discussed. Experts are unique; they are more than workers with experience or seniority, more than a particular job title or role description. One's expertise is distinguished through practice and affirmed by one's peers. Further, typically expertise is highly focused and specialized. The particular knowledge and skills demonstrated by an expert are often very specific and contextual.

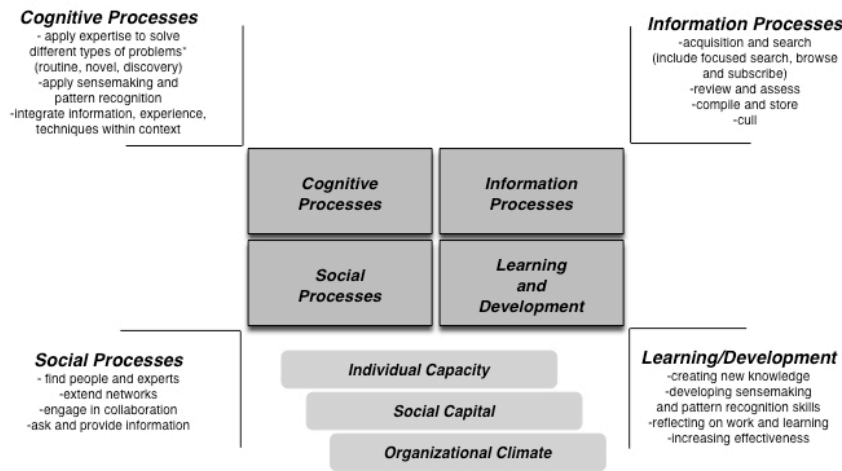
Leonard and Swap (2005) and Wright (2005) suggested that expert workers demonstrate a number of characteristics. Experts

- know more; they bring significant knowledge and experience to address work related problems
- bring speed to decisions; are able to quickly identify patterns in problems, particularly routine problems, and move to action
- are able to recognize and adapt to context; they understand how to react and distinguish between actions when facing different situations
- extrapolate; are able to generate and evaluate possible options and alternatives
- perceive fine distinctions and small differences in context that may cause them to adjust and refine activities
- recognize their limits; know what they don't know and when rules don't apply.

Expertise is based on the capacity to make sense and perceive patterns (sensemaking and pattern recognition) when encountering work related problems. Sensemaking and pattern recognition involves highly tacit knowledge practices where the practitioners understand context and apply intuition to understand and act on problems.

Research suggests that workers encounter different types of problems as they perform their work. Snowden (2004) differentiated between simple, complicated, complex and chaotic problems. Wright identified routine, novel, discovery-based and problems outside of expertise. Experts are able to apply different approaches to solve different types of problems.

Wright discussed the process of problem solving as the application of cognitive, information, social and learning processes, in the context of individual, social and organizational factors.

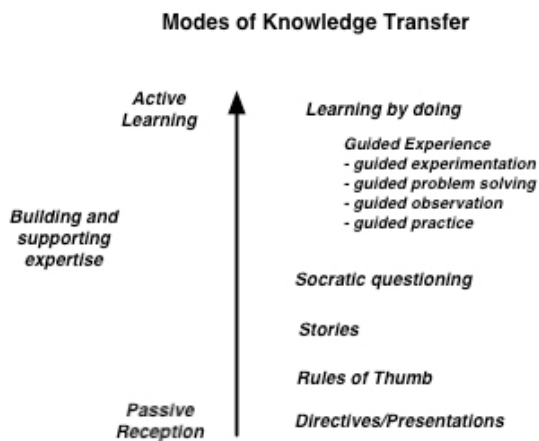


As skilled practitioners, experts have moved beyond the need to learn basic skills and work processes. Brown and Duguid (2000) found that expert learning involves creating, refining and adopting improvisations on the job in order to perform tasks more effectively and efficiently. As well, expert learners often assume additional roles and responsibilities, such as semi-formal activities (for example, serving as project manager or team leader) or informal functions (such as mentor, on-the-job coach or resident problem solver.) Experts may assume more challenging work or tackle problems that require innovative approaches. As experts perform these activities, they engage in continuous learning.

Research suggests, in many ways, expert workers are accomplished workplace learners. Through their work experiences they have been able to strengthen their problem solving abilities. In particular, they have gained experience in many different types of problems. As they reflect on their experiences they increase their sensemaking and pattern recognition skills. Leonard and Swap emphasized learning through experience is not sufficient; it is important to incorporate mindfulness and reflective dimensions into work activities.

The larger challenge is to find ways for less experienced and skillful workers to learn similar skills, knowledge and perspectives. In the context of SEARCH Canada, how can we find ways to support learning among our expert faculty and also support the learning needs of new faculty members?

Leonard and Swap proposed a process of transferring knowledge based on a hierarchy of learning processes



Adapted from Leonard and Swap (2005) *Deep Smarts*

They argued “there is no way to transfer... all the packets of knowledge, all the lightning fast associations, all the rich details that a single word or phrase calls up from long term memory in the brain of a person with deep smarts. Rather, wisdom must be recreated” (p. 204). To transfer/recreate knowledge the most effective approaches emphasize active learning processes, which Leonard and Swap refer to as forms of guided experience.

Their model of knowledge transfer is based on a series of elements

- guided experience (guided practice, observation, problem solving and experimentation) under the guidance of a knowledge coach can facilitate the development and transfer of deep smarts from expert to novice
- deliberate practice that is guided by a coach, includes identifying particular skills that need to be practiced, encouraging reflection and providing feedback that helps the learner chart progress
- feedback is particularly important for guided practice. While criticism is important for correcting errors, exclusively negative feedback does not identify steps for improvement. Positive feedback for good performance is an underutilized but essential tool for shaping knowledge
- observing is an effective way for one expert to transfer knowledge. But modeling becomes even more effective when the coach guides the protégé to reflect on what has been observed. Guided observation is particularly useful for focused unlearning
- guided problem solving recreates deep smarts because the protégé can develop know-how, know-who and know-what forms of knowledge as they work through problems, supported by a knowledge coach

- under conditions of high uncertainty, guided experimentation provides a way for learners to explore potential options while minimizing risk of failure

### **SEARCH Canada Faculty Development Elements**

Building on the model of expert problem solving and working, the SEARCH Canada faculty development model will include the following elements:

- **Focus on supporting the work of faculty members.** Emerging theories of workplace learning are shifting away from isolated, episodic learning to approaches that integrate work and learning. Based on the principles of situated learning and social constructivism, captured in the phrase “work is learning, learning is work and both are social”, the key dimension of SEARCH Canada faculty development is to view work and learning as integrated and complementary. Supporting optimal work and learning performance involves integrating learning into actual practice.

Work around the concept of Personal Knowledge Management (PKM) (Wright, 2005) addresses this need for integration of work and learning. Research has found that workers naturally develop their own informal knowledge management practices to support their day-to-day work activities. However, they rarely spend time reflecting on their work and consciously considering how to enhance work and learning practices. One approach to address this gap involves developing a personal knowledge management plan. The plan, focusing on four processes (cognitive, information, social and learning/ development) (shown in the graphic on page 5), allows individuals to assess their particular work practices and consider way to enhance their performance. The PKM plan expands on the more common personal learning (or development) plans that many organizations have adopted by also looking at the performance of work tasks and emphasizing the integration and interaction between work and learning.

A core element in the SEARCH faculty development plan involves faculty members developing a PKM plan, in consultation with a facilitator. It is proposed that the planning process and session would occur on an annual basis. The personal plans allow individual faculty members to develop a specific and customized developmental agenda. Additionally, when considered in aggregate, the synthesis of the various individual plans will allow SEARCH Canada to consider activities and initiatives that can support groups or the whole faculty cohort.

- **Focus first on individual faculty members followed by specific faculty groupings and the whole.** As noted, the SEARCH Canada faculty development approach is based on a bottom up model. Individual faculty complete PKM plans and these plans form the basis for the types of support provided by SEARCH Canada to support individual needs. As well, the aggregated individual plans provide guidance for organizational-wide

initiatives that support select groupings and the whole faculty group. The emphasis on individual planning also recognizes the level of diversity and specificity of needs. Different faculty groups (Lead Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, new faculty members, RDAs) have different needs and goals. By first focusing on individual plans and then considering how these plans link, SEARCH Canada can implement activities to support separate groupings.

- **Learning objects form a vital component of the Faculty Development model.** The learning object strategy, an approach to curriculum development and management designed to support the growth and evolution of various SEARCH programs, provides an important support for faculty development. One of the goals of the learning objects/ curriculum and knowledge assets development model is to ensure that individual faculty members both contribute to and use learning objects. Since curriculum and courseware development is an important part of the role of SEARCH Canada faculty the learning object repository and developmental processes is an essential work and learning tool.
- **The specific needs of developing new faculty require special considerations.** While many of the overall SEARCH Canada faculty development activities are linked to the PKM planning process and focus on supporting learning through work activities (and are therefore highly individualized and informal), the needs of orienting and developing new faculty are more structured and focused. As SEARCH Canada seeks to grow one of the key challenges is identifying and integrating new faculty into the SEARCH Canada faculty community. While new SEARCH Canada faculty will tend to be experienced faculty members (in other institutions and settings), it is important to consider ways to introduce new faculty members into SEARCH Canada. In addition to ensuring that new faculty members understand the culture, philosophy, values and dimensions of the SEARCH Canada vision and mission, it will be important for new faculty to understand the specific components of the learning program, how their particular role integrates with others and other parts of SEARCH Canada programs, the specific technology and operational components of the program.

It is proposed that new faculty will participate in a structured orientation program and systematic introduction (using an apprenticeship model) as they enter SEARCH. In addition, they would participate in the ongoing faculty development processes offered for all SEARCH Canada faculty members.

The orientation program is proposed as a two-day program (offered before a classic SEARCH classroom-based module). The orientation would be facilitated by a team of SEARCH Canada faculty and management staff and supported by other resources (for example, experts in teaching and curriculum development, as required.) Following the two-day program, new faculty members would participate in a number of ways in an

actual SEARCH module, beginning the process of observing practice and beginning to participate.

Using an apprenticeship model (in the context of situated learning this involves the concept of legitimate peripheral participation where the practitioner slowly enters into practice by assuming more and more responsibility), new faculty would enter into practice using the following sequence:

*Observe others, Team teach* with existing (expert) faculty, *Guided teaching* (with expert faculty supervising and observing) and, finally, *Independent practice* (where the faculty member assumes a full faculty role.)

[Note: a “full faculty role” may be quite focused and narrow, in the case of adjunct faculty used for their particular expertise, or more extended, in the case of new Lead Faculty or RDAs.]

For new RDAs, the apprenticeship process would be adapted to reflect the particular needs and work of RDAs. Ideally, the orientation would take place at the same time involving new RDA faculty and teaching faculty members.

- **Careful use of face-to-face faculty development sessions.** While the proposed faculty development model, excluding the previous section on orienting new faculty, emphasizes informal learning support, at times it will be important to bring faculty members together for face-to-face sessions. However, referring to the key challenge – lack of time – it will be important to carefully plan and structure these sessions. Experience in blended learning program suggests that face-to-face sessions should focus on higher order thinking and learning; that with time as a scarce resource any formal learning that can occur or be supported through the use of technology should use this approach, while higher level discussions and learning activities should be carefully woven into face-to-face meetings. Therefore, while it is important for faculty to meet periodically together, this time should be considered as highly valuable and used accordingly. It also may be useful to differentiate between faculty meetings that focus on curriculum adjustments (for example, meetings during a SEARCH module) and faculty development.
- **Supporting faculty development with a knowledge management system.** The PKM process tends to focus on personal knowledge processes and, often, does not involve significant use of technology. However, a number of KM processes and technologies can be used to support faculty work and learning. Based on the four PKM dimensions (cognitive, information, social and learning) the information and social dimensions can each benefit from the appropriate use of technology. The SEARCH desktop, providing access to an array of information/knowledge resources and collaboration/networking features, can serve as a key KM resource for faculty development.

Additionally, it is proposed to introduce a series of KM processes (modified from work done on integrating project management and knowledge management principles) into SEARCH Canada, in particular when work on new programs is occurring. The techniques – *learning before* (using an approach called Peer Assist to carefully assess new initiatives and ensure that all previous knowledge and experience is applied to new initiatives), *learning during* (using an approach called After Action Review to assess progress and issues during a developmental project) and *learning after* (using a structured post-project review process that identifies outcomes and project process learnings) – can support faculty development and ongoing SEARCH work. Finally, it is suggested that SEARCH Canada initiate a process of story and experience capture, using storytelling and narrative techniques, to begin to develop a story-based practice repository. Stories and story telling can provide a powerful knowledge transfer technique that can support the orientation of new faculty members.

- **Conducting research around faculty activities and innovations.** Increasingly, the concept of learning through research and innovation is becoming part of effective workplace learning practice. To support SEARCH Canada faculty development it is proposed that faculty, working collaborative, identify one or two specific innovations in practice to be researched each year. The research process could be expanded to include new faculty (further supporting them as they are introduced into the SEARCH faculty community) as well as graduate students (to provide a potential future pool of faculty.)
  
- **Develop approach metrics to assess faculty development practices.** As part of ongoing quality assurance and performance measurement processes with SEARCH Canada, faculty development activities should be assessed and evaluated. The individual PKM plans will include personal learning goals and outcomes and these can form the basis of the overall faculty development evaluation. Other metrics could include: use of learning objects (both adopting existing objects and contributing new objects), stories and narratives on practice and the level of use of other KM processes to support faculty.

### Potential Annual Faculty Development Activities

The following table summarizes a number of the potential faculty development activities that may be introduced as part of this new SEARCH Canada faculty development model:

New Faculty	Lead Faculty	RDAs
-intensive orientation (provided by Lead Faculty) to SEARCH; linked to classroom module (observe session; practice teaching)	-create individual PKM plan to outline performance and learning goals for year	-develop personal PKM plan
-Orientation process: Observe-Team Teach-Guided Teaching-Independent Teaching	-Peer Teaching – work with faculty peer mentor	-collaborative development of RDA competencies and skill sets
-work with Learning Object repository to understand curriculum and to develop other objects	-Supervise/Coaching of new faculty	-work with RDA mentor
-develop PKM plan	-engage in teaching-related research project	-develop learning objects
-participate in Faculty meetings	-provide presentation to other faculty members on technique	-collaboratively develop expert directory for RDAs
-work with expert mentor	-develop learning objects	
-participate in SEARCH faculty CoP	-participate in SEARCH faculty COP	-participate in RDA COP
-support using SEARCH technologies	-support using SEARCH technologies	-support using SEARCH technologies

### **SEARCH Canada Faculty Development Resources**

To provide support to faculty development, the following SEARCH Canada resources and activities are proposed:

- provide support to work with faculty as they develop learning objects (Instructional Design expertise)
- develop a guide for individual PKM/Learning plans; facilitate an annual personal planning session with each faculty member
- plan and deliver a New Faculty Orientation session (approximately 5 days; 2 days in-class session combined with 3 days observation/ participation in a SEARCH module)
- continue to support the development of the SEARCH Canada learning object repository
- create a KM space, to support faculty development, on the SEARCH desktop
- implement KM practices to support faculty development
- support the operation of a Faculty Cop and RDA CoP
- develop faculty development metrics and assess outcomes

In order to fully support both faculty development and object-oriented curriculum and courseware development, it is proposed that SEARCH Canada begin the process (for Year 3) to add one FTE resource within SEARCH Canada. This new position would need to combine faculty development and instructional design knowledge and expertise but would be a valuable resource to enable SEARCH Canada to fully address these important areas.