Tales of Teaching and Learning

Whose Stories Matter to You and Why?

ISSoTL Conference Workshop

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1

2

Context

- Building on Roxa & Martensson (2009; 2012)
  - instructors form small significant networks to discuss teaching; these networks influence practice.
  - when academic cultures support SoTL, more conversations occur.
- Building on our previous presentations (STLHE, ISSOTL, Singapore)

3

Terms

- SoTL: mechanism to improve an institution's ability to support student learning; evidence-based approach to teaching and learning.

4

Guiding Questions for Workshop

(1) How are educators using networks in their own contexts to expand, refute or build their stories of teaching and learning and of SoTL?

(2) Do instructors perceive greater similarity among network members than among randomly chosen colleagues?

(3) Are there relationships among perceived similarity, value of interactions, and impact of the network on one's teaching and research on teaching?

(4) What strategies can be employed to enhance the value of one's networks?

5

Workshop Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will have:

(1) Gained insights into their networks, the stories they share with their networks, and the ways that their participation in networks contributes to their growth as educators and SoTL scholars

(2) Examined their perceptions about the value of the interactions and the similarity of beliefs among those in the network

(3) Generated strategies to enhance the value of their network

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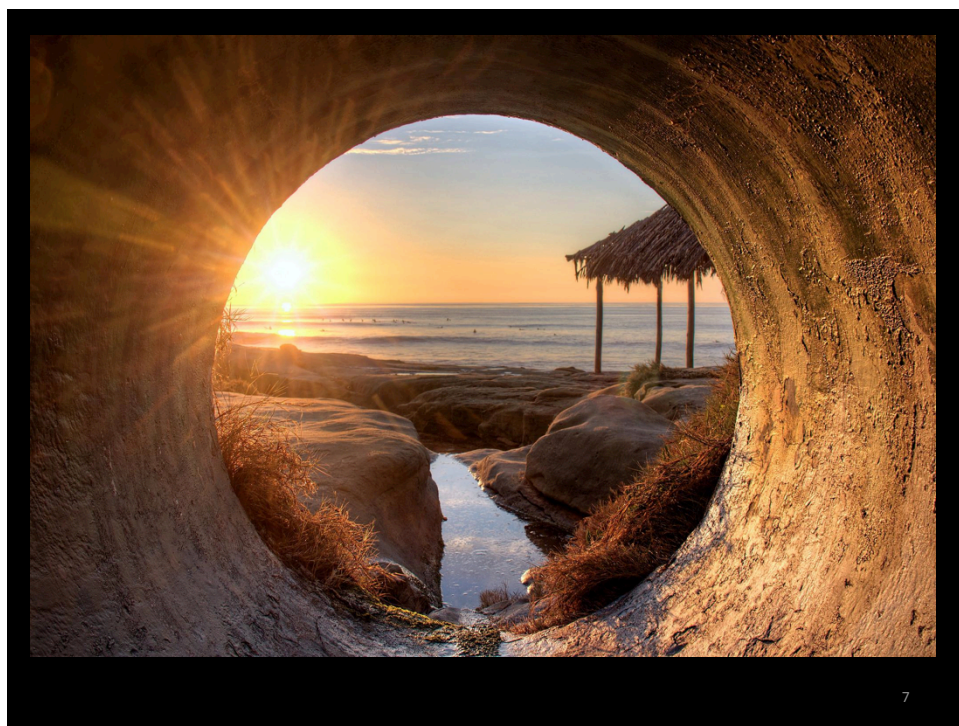
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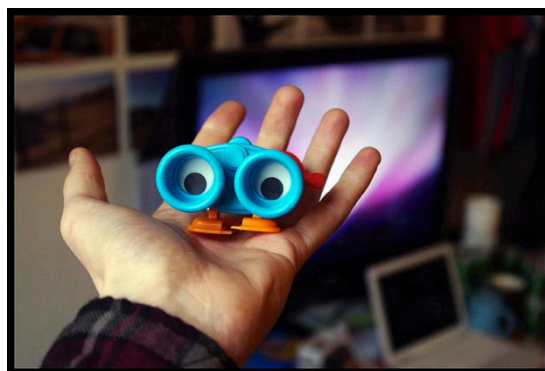
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Key Concepts

- Small significant networks

- Significant conversations

- Social network theory

- Williams et al. model for embedding SoTL

- Local leadership

9

Significant Networks

- A network consists of individuals and the interactional links between them.
- Network participants come together on a common objective
- Networks allow for the exchange of resources and for capacity building; they allow members to collaboratively develop knowledge

10

Significant Conversations
(Roxå & Mårtenssen)

- Private
- Trustful
- Intellectually intriguing

"It is likely that these conversations open up the possibility of constructing and maintaining–and perhaps partly changing–an understanding about the realities of teaching." (p.555)

11

Social Network Theory

- Is the study of how people, organizations or groups interact with others inside their network (Claywell, 2016)
- Can be applied to small groups as well as those that are global (Kadushin, 2004)
- Can be used to describe various forms of interactions, i.e., the exchange of advice, knowledge, materials, and resources (Pataraia et al., 2013).

12

Williams et al. model (2013)
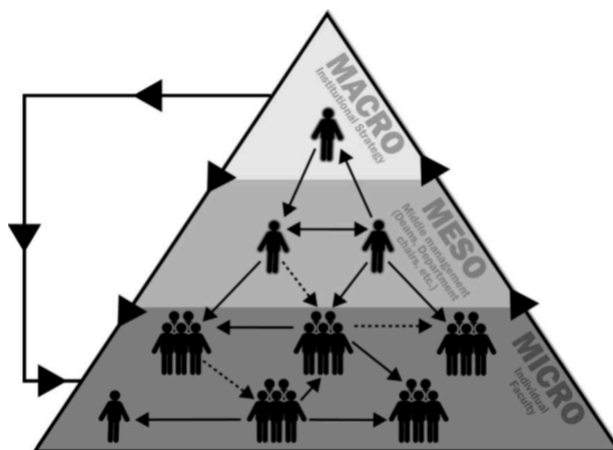
Macro Level: Sets the strategic direction
Meso Level: Interprets key issues and acts as conduit of information both upwards and down
**Micro Level:** Activities of communities of practice, individual faculty and students

13

Local Leadership

•Appointed or emergent (Hogan & Hogan, 2002)
  –Appointed: Assigned responsibility for supporting teaching and learning within a unit or institution
  –Emergent: able to champion SoTL via the informal support they provide for small networks

•Operating at the meso level

•Essential to success of networks at micro level
  (Mårtensson, 2014)

14

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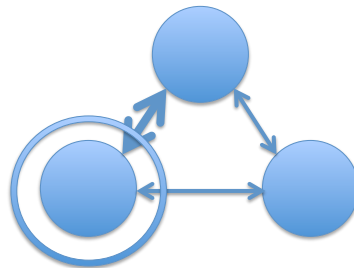# The workshop that draws together learns together

1. Less than once a month
2. Once or twice a month
3. Once or twice a week
4. About once a day
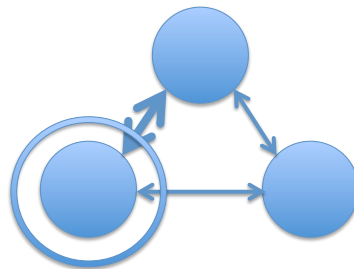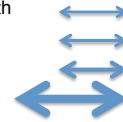
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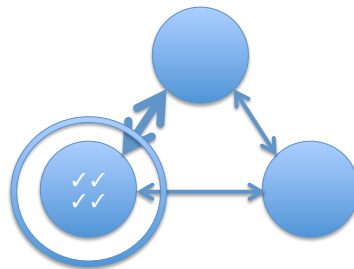# The workshop that draws together learns together

1. Minimal value   ✓
2. Moderate value   ✓ ✓
3. Quite high value   ✓ ✓ ✓
4. Very high value   ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

16

The workshop that draws together learns together

1. Minimal value   ✓
2. Moderate value   ✓✓
3. Quite high value   ✓✓✓
4. Very high value   ✓✓✓✓

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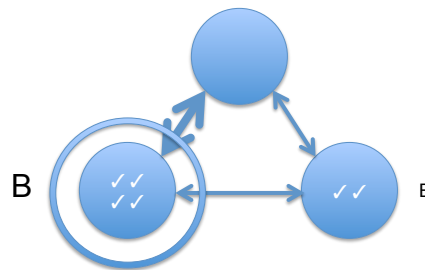
The workshop that draws together learns together

1. Minimal value   ✓
2. Moderate value   ✓✓
3. Quite high value   ✓✓✓
4. Very high value   ✓✓✓✓

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18

9

Discussing the map

1. How easy or difficult was it for you to create your map?
2. What insights, if any, did the map-drawing process yield for you regarding your conversations about teaching and learning?
3. In what ways are you a contributing member of the network?
4. How might you be a better contributor to the network?

19

Drawing Conclusions about Our Networks

- Our perceptions of our networks
  - When you determined the value of a given network relationship, how were you defining "value"?
  - When you were judging the similarity between you and other network members, what did you mean by similarity?
- Being a contributing member of a network
  - Are there explicit or implicit "ground rules for your network?
  - Can you think of a time when you made what you considered to be a good contribution to someone in the network? What made it so?

20

Ways of Thinking about Network Value

- Improvement in students'
  - understanding
  - skills
- improvements in teachers'
  - motivation
  - efficiency
  - sense of belonging
  - instructional strategies

Vangrieken et al, 2015 [from Van Waes et al, 2016]

21

Value Framework
(Wenger et al, 2011)

- **Immediate** -- in the moment value of interaction
- **Potential** -- value could be realized later
- **Applied** -- caused real changes in practice
- **Realized** -- real improvement resulted
- **Reframing** -- change in goals, values or approaches
- **Aspirational** -- expected or hoped for value

22

Written summary

On the flip side of the map, please respond to the following questions:

1. How prevalent do you think small significant networks are in your institution? Rare? Existent but not common? Common? Wide-spread? Why does this level of prevalence exist?
2. Please explain your choice in terms of the effect you think networks have on teaching in your unit.
3. How might the prevalence and impact of small networks be improved in your unit, if at all?

23

Next Steps & Closing

24

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25

Staying Connected

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26

27

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28