

Expanding the SoTL Landscape:

Using a study on mentoring for teaching to mobilize new research and practices



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Today's presentation:

1. Study Context
2. Our Inquiry Focus: Mentoring for Teaching and the Role of Knowledge Mobilization (KMb)
3. Literature Review
4. Study Overview
5. Conclusions and Next Steps
6. Q & A



CONTEXT

87,000+ students

3 city campuses

17 faculties/divisions



Canada's
LARGEST
university

COMPLEX &
decentralized
institutional model

14, 000+ faculty

Our Inquiry Focus

What role can Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) strategies, used by a teaching centre, play in providing a framework for faculty development focused on advancing the practice and impact of mentoring for teaching?



Mentoring for Teaching at U of T:

Previous Research

TWO U OF T INSTITUTIONAL SURVEYS:

1. Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE, 2012)
2. Speaking Up (2014)
3. Qualitative Follow-up Study (2016)



Goals:

- **To Review** the literature and situated mentoring for teaching within the broader faculty mentoring field
- **To Capture** current faculty mentoring for teaching initiatives and faculty experiences at U of T, especially personal stories
- **To Provide** U of T-specific context and data to inform an evidence-based series of resources for various stakeholders
- **To Guide** evidence-based programming for our T&L Centre

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“

... Canada's universities and Tri-Council Agencies are placing more emphasis on **knowledge mobilization** in order to generate research with a high social utility and to get research into the hands of decision-makers, policy-makers, and practitioners” (McKean, 2016, p.2)

LIKE MANY UNIVERSITIES
WORLDWIDE....

Knowledge Mobilization is ...



... how generated knowledge will be put to use, inform practice, or advance research.”

(SSHRC, 2016).

Related Literature

- Focused review: education realm (health and business have longer histories of work on KMb)
- Levin (2004); Cooper (2014): processes and context where KMb takes place – and the role of intermediaries (e.g., the role of Teaching Centres as a place to connect research producers and users, is one area of interest)
- ***“Intermediaries often play a significant role in interpreting, packaging, and distributing research evidence for policymakers and practitioners.”*** (Tseng, 2007, p. 18)



Literature Cont.

Cooper (2014, p. 46), in her study of 44 Canadian research brokerage organizations, whose mission is to mediate between knowledge producers and knowledge users, she identified at least **5 KMb strategies** (* *more frequently used*):

1. Research products*
2. Capacity-building and support
3. Events*
4. Networks*
5. Non-research based products



Literature Review



While having the capacity to strengthen research-practice linkage in higher education teaching and learning, **KMb as a framework for faculty development**, at this time, is a severely **underexplored area** of design and research.

CTSI 2016
PEER
MENTORING
QUALITATIVE
STUDY
FINDINGS
(ISSOTL,
2016)

THEME

TEACHING
CULTURE
AND
CLIMATE

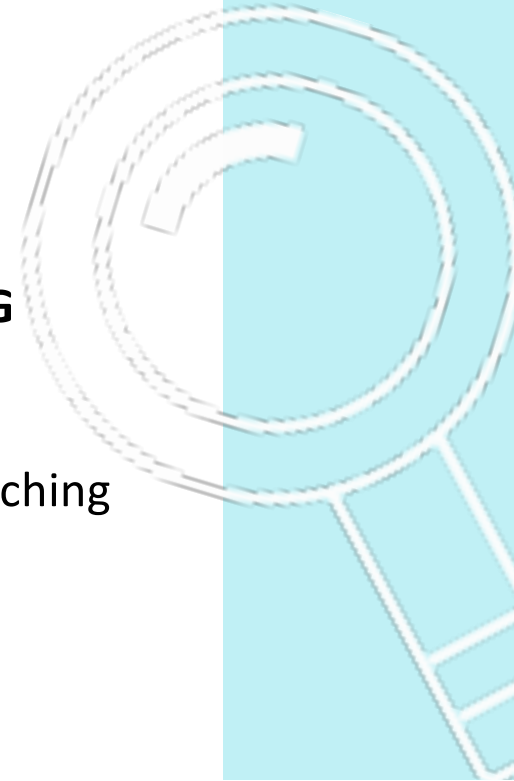
THEME

(A) ISOLATION: Exacerbated through these high-stakes activities

- Tenure and promotion guidelines for teaching (e.g., **summative** observations of teaching)
- Course evaluation data

(B) ENABLING POSITIVE TEACHING CLIMATES & CULTURES:

- Role of “**Places and Spaces**”
- Enhanced opportunities for teaching conversations at all levels



ISSOTL 2016: Next Steps



CTSI KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY:

- Full report released to stakeholders, presentation to senior administration, community roundtables/webinars, etc.
- Development of **evidence-based practical resources**
- CTSI to pilot evidence-based mentoring for teaching program: **Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Mentoring for Teaching at U of T**

Peer-2-Peer Faculty Mentoring for Teaching (P2P)



Description: CTSI Pilot, Dec 2016-May 2017

- Cohort of 32 U of T instructors
- Matched in dyads (by stream, campus, but cross-discipline)
- Focused on improving the quality of course & student learning experience



GOAL: to provide a supportive space for instructors to try new strategies, approaches and build confidence in their teaching through a range of support



Program structure/commitments:

Attend 3 facilitated cohort workshops and engage in regular partner interactions

- Recruitment and pairing
- Workshops
- Peer Observation
- Mid-course feedback with students
- Regular dyad interactions

KMb Approaches: P2P Pilot



1. Research products*:

Mentoring for Teaching Report (CTSI, 2016)



2. Capacity- Building and Support:

2 Webinars; Peer Mentor; New Resources (3 guides, 2 tip sheets, and a book); CTSI staff support; 2 external facilitators for Workshop #1 and “*When Mentoring meets Coaching*” published resource text



3. Events*

3 Workshops facilitated by CTSI staff



4. Networks*

P2P Cohort; other U of T networks that participants could connect to



5. Non-research based products

Promotional Materials

U of T Examples

Data Sources:



Post-pilot Survey

- 23 out 32 participants (72%)
- 12 mentor; 11 mentees

Focus Groups:

- Mentee groups (5 & 4 individuals) & 2 mentor groups (5 & 6 individuals)
- Facilitated by CTSI staff not involved in pilot



Analysis:



Post-pilot Survey

- Descriptive quantitative and qualitative analysis

Focus Groups:

- Transcribed and coded into initial codes and then clustered into common themes
(Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967)



FINDINGS:

5 Key Findings that address previous research findings:

1) Value of Relationships

2) Community-building (space and place to talk about teaching)

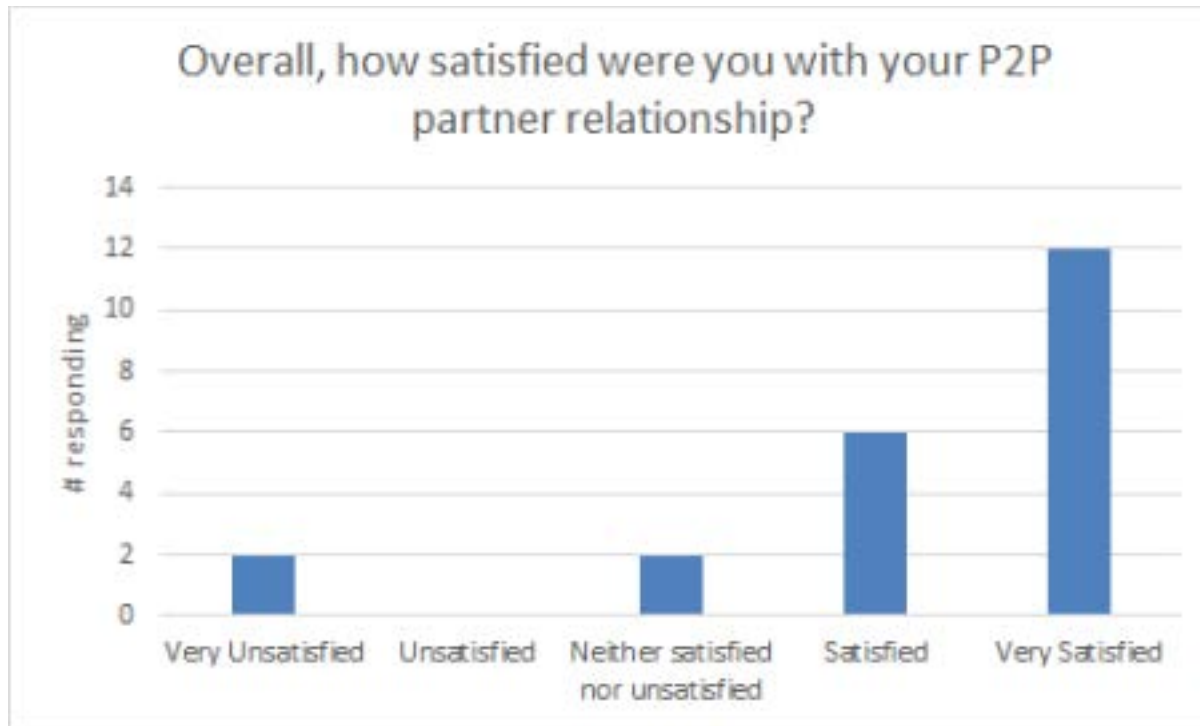
3) Resources to support teaching development

4) Program Structure (formalized)

5) Capacity-building and Influencing Broader Culture

FINDINGS:

1) Value of Relationships



FINDINGS:

1) Value of Relationships

“we will continue to work together. I hope to work with her in new course development this year.”

“One of the most eye-opening things...was **how much we have in common** even though we are in different departments and different faculties altogether”

FINDINGS:

2) Community-building (space and place to talk about teaching)

Psychological



“it gives you someone to talk to and a relationship where you can **feel comfortable** trying new things out. So it was kind of a **safe area...**”

“In one of our **Second Cup conversations** we we asked each other: “So, what’s the most brutal teaching evaluation you’ve received?”

Physical



FINDINGS:

2) Community-building (space and place to talk about teaching)

61.9%

have met since the end of the program

81.82%

plan to meet in the future

“

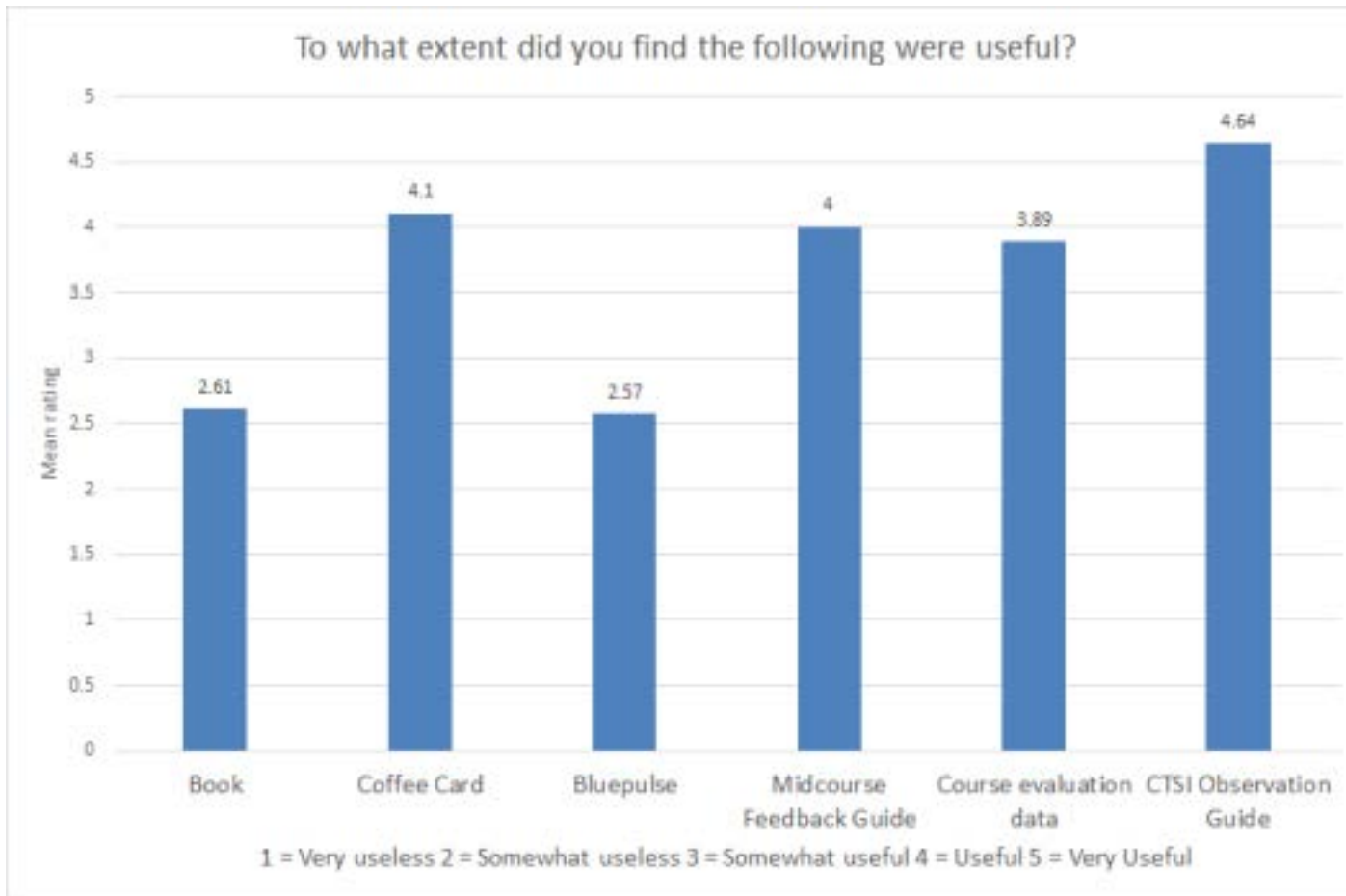
“We’d like to keep the connection going forward.”

“We plan to continue to meet indefinitely! We both teach online, and have been assisting one another with online teaching strategies and technology.”

”

FINDINGS:

3) Resources to support teaching development



FINDINGS:

“This was added on [Bluepulse tool], and we hadn’t anticipated or planned for it; also concerned about the glitches...”

“The most valuable thing for me was the... **peer observation**. This caused me to look at my teaching style from a different perspective and I gained a lot...”

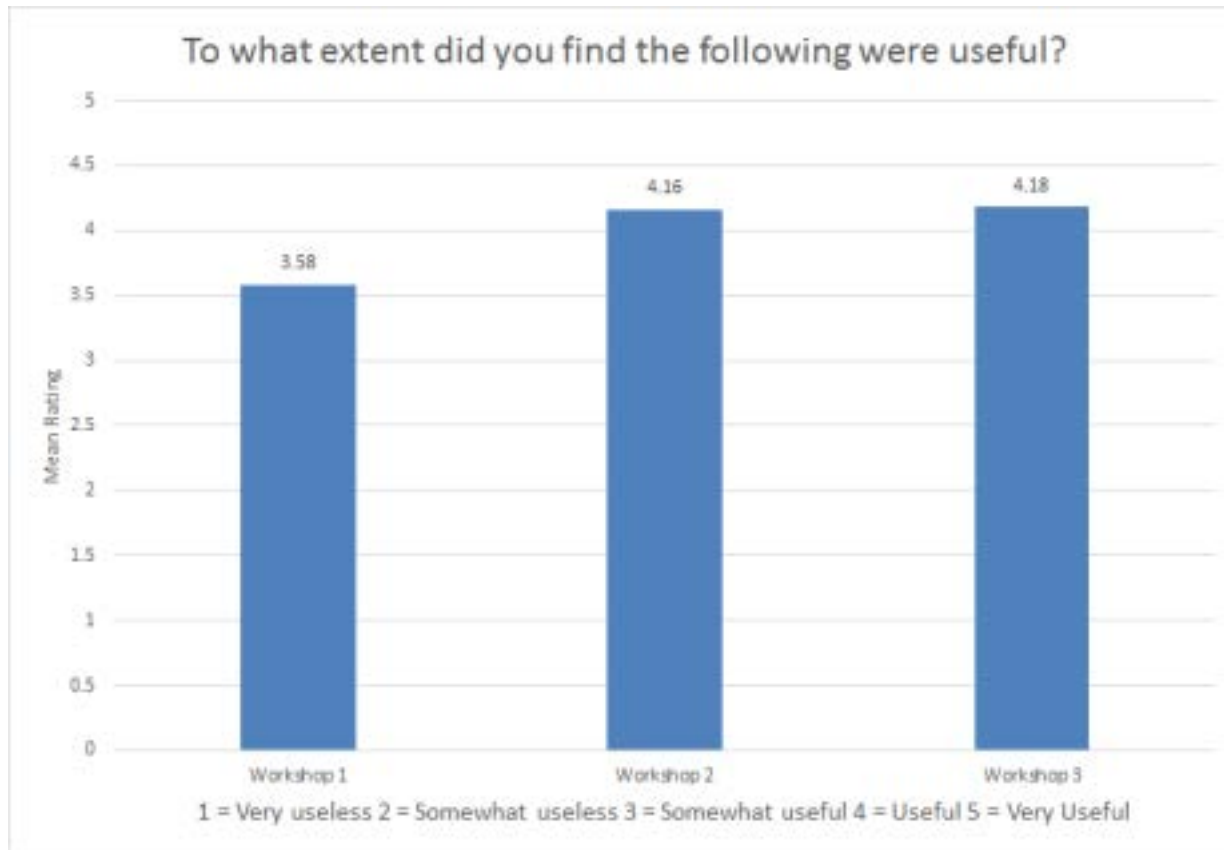
“**Coffee chat** is a good way to establish trust...through informal chatting and a relaxed environment out of office”

“It’s a bit disingenuous... to pretend it’s symmetric because I’ve been teaching for 24 years... there was a lot of pressure in a way to come up with new things” (**mentor-coach model**)

3) Resources to support teaching development

FINDINGS:

4) Program Structure (formalized)



FINDINGS:

4) Program Structure (formalized)

“I think there was a real advantage to the fact that we were in a formal mentorship project that gave it some credence”

“It was really good to have a framework”

“I was really happy that the workshops were focused and concrete”

“Loved it. Specifically, working with the mentor in an unscaffolded setting with the general context of encouraging high-quality learning and teaching.”

“Parts were interesting, but the parts where we were directed to communicate with our partner in a very specific way were awkward and felt inauthentic (workshop 1)”

FINDINGS:

✓ Pilot with strong long-term possibilities and potential outcomes

If there are future iterations of this program would you want to be involved again?

81.82%
(18/22) **'YES'**

✓ Overall Success

If there are future iterations of this program would you recommend it to others?

100%
(22/22) **'YES'**

5) Capacity-building and Influencing Broader Culture

FINDINGS:

The background image shows a man and a woman in a professional setting, likely a conference or meeting. The man, on the left, is wearing glasses and a blue checkered shirt, smiling broadly. The woman, on the right, is also wearing glasses and a patterned top, smiling. They appear to be engaged in a positive interaction. In the background, other people are visible, slightly out of focus, suggesting a busy event environment.

5) Capacity-building and Influencing Broader Culture

“Hope to use **this approach** to mentor instructors in my own **department**. Was interested to learn more about listening – has helped in my interactions with others.”

“Programs like this are vital to **developing a teaching community** at U of T.”

CONCLUSIONS

Our knowledge mobilization effort to:



1) REDUCE ISOLATION:

- **Formative opportunities to visibly engage in traditionally invisible high stakes activities** (e.g., observation, course evaluation) with peers supported capacity building and networking at multiple levels
- A positive culture around teaching and learning is being fostered by **pairs and cohort**



2) ENABLING POSITIVE TEACHING CLIMATES & CULTURES

- **CTSI (Teaching Centre) serves as a mediator between research/practice.** (e.g., development of resources). This was a major factor in relative success and adoption.
- CTSI models and **provides opportunities, places, and spaces** for development.

KMb Approaches: P2P Pilot



1. Research products*



2. Capacity- Building Support:



3. Events*



4. Networks*



5. Non-research based products

Examples

The attention to intentional KMb strategies can create synergy and make a direct link between findings from research and demonstrate ***“how generated knowledge will be put to use, inform practice, or advance research.”*** (SSHRC, 2016)

6)

(3 guides, 2 tip sheets, and a book);
r Workshop #1 and “When
ource text


P2P networks that participants could connect to

Promotional Materials



IMPLICATIONS

- Consideration of the role of KMb strategies that can be used to not only distribute knowledge, but to also help ensure such knowledge is accessible, relevant, and used.
- The potential for a greater mediation role that Teaching Centres could play in KMb



“Intermediaries (third party research brokering organizations that connect research producers and users).... and the impact these third parties do play, could play, or should play in educational improvement initiatives” (Cooper, 2014, p. 182)

Contact/Report

Contact:

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P2P Pilot Report:

<http://teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching-support/fmt/p2p>





THANK YOU