

SEDA Autumn Conference 2024



Session Title: Cultivating a Research Community: Integrative Approaches at a Canadian Polytechnic Institution

Session Type: Practice Papers (20 minutes)

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Session Summary: In May-June 2024, Humber Polytechnic in Toronto introduced an Applied Research Program for faculty and staff to enhance interdisciplinary research skills. The program launched two SEDA certificates, “Foundations of Applied Research” and “Enhancing Applied Research Practice,” fostering a collaborative and self-exploratory learning environment. This paper reviews the program’s strengths and suggests areas for future development within the polytechnic environment.

Session Outline: In May-June 2024, Research and Innovation at Humber Polytechnic (Toronto, Canada) launched an Applied Research Program (ARP) for faculty and staff. This intensive learning opportunity, offered in-person, invited inquisitive minds from across varying disciplines to learn and exchange a research skill set. Learners were asked to identify a research topic of interest and project that they would cultivate and implement within their home departments. The creation of an interdisciplinary micro-credential course or the identification of institutional problems that can be solved via quantum computing were a few of the dynamic initiatives supported by this inaugural cohort.

Inspired by Hutchings’ (2000) “vision of the possible”, our mission was to establish a shared community of polytechnic researchers and educators through a new instructional practice. Humber developed and received accreditation to administer two Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) certificates, our program covered foundational and applied research design through a variety of learning approaches. Roundtable guidance from specialized instructors, interactive project management exercises, auto-ethnography reflections, and collaborative course designing encouraged learners to immerse themselves into a world of research and pedagogy. An introduction to our SoTL funding initiatives and project mentorship opportunities were shared as an extension of our research community.

This paper explores the conception, implementation and reflexive processes in leading an institutional research program within the polytechnic environment. Auto-ethnographic reflections of facilitators will be shared. Referencing Frake-Mistak, Friberg and Hamilton’s (2023) proposed 4M Continua, a flexible offering to situate education development work across varying levels, we propose the development of an ARP is essential in making research a necessitate of the total learning environment.

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