**Session Title - Using the 4Cs Strategy to increase your influence as an educator**

**Introduction**

As educators, influencing students is often a daily activity. We often innovate or discover new ways of working with our students or delivering our materials as a matter of practice, with our classrooms becoming ‘studies in the wild’ (Rogers, 2011). Our students benefit and their learning is improved. However, good practice in one classroom changes little institutionally. As strategic educational influencers, we can seek to have more impact and effect greater change. However, influencing colleagues more broadly requires the dissemination of innovative and good practice, which requires us to leave (physically or virtually) the confines of our classrooms. To share our innovative and effective practices, we must consciously connect with colleagues who can consider our practices and innovations, and perhaps adopt these to give their students better experiences.

This connection process can be challenging, and often ‘hit or miss’. To influence beyond our classrooms thus requires a strategic approach. Typically, educators disseminate practices through conferences, professional development workshops, publications and similar. However, in this workshop we argue that influence as a deliberate practice requires planning. We have codified a strategic and empowering dissemination approach that enables individual educators to take their practices from their Classrooms, through the Corridors, across Campus and out into the Community. The 4Cs Dissemination Strategy (Gribble & Beckman, 2023, in press) guides educators to think consciously about their connections to their students, colleagues, institution and broader networks in all these spheres of influence, facilitating opportunities for them to structure explanations and disseminate their innovations to the right people at the right time. In taking this strategic approach, we argue educators can increase their spheres of influence and impact, changing teaching practices beyond their classroom and supporting peers and colleagues to do so also.

This roundtable discussion will explore ways of expanding influence in a strategic manner to increase impact measurably and sustainably. Applying the 4Cs Strategy to their own context, participants will design their own pathways to increase their influence. As management and organisational behaviour teachers and educators, this roundtable will enable participants to move from the inputs of education (activity) to the outputs (measurable impacts) of influence in their daily activities.

**Measuring influence and impact: a brief consideration of the literature**

Educators are faced with many competing and conflicting demands during the daily activities of teaching. Consequently, when asked about influence or impact, educators often grapple with metrics such as numbers taught, student satisfaction ratings, or revenue earned for our schools. Some may be able to identify benefits to disadvantaged learners or measure social change by students’ employment outcomes or increases in earning capability. However, impact beyond the activity of teaching may be much harder to quantify or describe. Yet innovation and positive changes to educational practice occur frequently in physical or virtual classrooms. To have impact, these changes need to be adopted and adapted by others. Just telling people to adopt new practices is not helpful: Liu et al. (2020) showed the adoption of learning technologies by academics to be complex, unpredictable, highly subject to contextual influence, and rarely achieving an institution’s aspirational goals. To be accepted, the new technology must align with academics’ pedagogical beliefs, practices and capabilities, and must be considered to be within a personal level of control (Liu et al., 2020). The social aspect of dissemination must thus be considered as an act of change (Mayer & Davidson, 2000). Nevertheless, the pandemic taught us much about how personal dissemination works quickly and efficiently: it put ‘influencers’ into the ‘driver’s seat’ and at the centre of change.

The highly cited Impact Management Planning and Evaluation Ladder (Hinton, 2016) presents dissemination simplistically as ‘spreading the word’ but offers little by way of how or what should be measured to show influence. Measurable ‘impact’ on students, colleagues and institutional practice requires evidence of evaluation, dissemination and uptake of innovations by others as a key criterion. However, much of this relevant evidence is often collected *ad hoc* at the instigation of the teacher and is (often unfairly) seen as ‘anecdotal’. Much of the work on research impact to date has focused on publication metrics, while teaching-focused academics may seek institutional or national awards as recognition of their work. Yet, as mentioned, educators are generally continually tweaking, often to the point of innovation. They solve teaching problems in real time in response to what is occurring in their classroom and for their students. These ‘discoveries’ of new practices risk remaining in the classroom: changes and innovations need to be scaled, adopted and adapted to lead to longer term change that creates wider impact. Trying to disseminate simple improvements in teaching practice through publications is very difficult, and risks losing the collegial interaction on which good teaching is based. Observational methods, such as summative peer review of teaching, may limit the scalability of teaching practice dissemination and require the observer to be focused on the ‘how’ while engaging in the ‘what’. Further, adopting or adapting a new approach to teaching requires a degree of risk-taking, which has been noted to adversely affect ratings in Student Evaluations of Teaching (Byrne & Richard, 2012; Darwin 2016).

Broad influence occurs when something is demonstrated to be effective and then proven. Southwell et al. (2005, p17) explored the experience of dissemination of higher education teaching practice and determined the process as requiring action “to embed and upscale”: the practice must move from its original context to be embedded in a new context. Too often, the dissemination and adoption of teaching practice appears more incidental than planned. Rogers’ (2003) noted that good ideas often fail to spread as quickly and broadly as expected. The rate at which any innovation is adopted is often not as much related to impact evidence (e.g. the published papers recommended by Hinton, 2016) but more commonly to “diffusion … a social change, a process … involving interpersonal communication and relationships” (Genlott et al., 2021, para. 17). Disseminating innovative practice through engagement with colleagues—reflecting Cialdini’s (2007) principles of influence around Authority, Liking and Reciprocity—can be employed in a systematic manner, with educators sharing innovative approaches being seen as authoritative, friendly and trusted sources.

**Innovation born in the classroom**

Teaching practice evolves, with each delivery and iteration. Even with the best preparation, classroom delivery dynamics, constraints and student needs require educators to adapt their plans and actions in real time. As both teaching and learning activities occur in dynamic settings, innovation is not only possible but probable in many interactions. However, getting other educators to adopt ‘new’ practices, or adapt them for a new context, requires the practices to be ‘exposed’ to our peers, which often only happens sporadically, for example in a peer review or a teaching showcase. The codification and impact of such changes may be observed by the innovative educator only through the practice of reflection or the use personal narrative as a sense making activity (Ford, 2021). Without dissemination, the practice stays isolated. The influence may remain limited to specific students, unless the students choose to become the very advocates who influence others to seek out our practices and in turn, change theirs. It is thus the responsibility of each educator to ensure their practices are indeed shared outside the classroom, to broaden our spheres of influence to our peers so that they too might benefit from what we have learned to do. Also provide peer review on our practices.

**Take it to the corridors**

The corridors (physical or virtual) are a great place for dialogic peer review through sharing what has been done while inviting our peers and colleagues to be openly sceptical and listen to our evidence as we discuss our practice. This kind of sharing is akin to ‘corridor conversations’ (Long et al., 2007) and ‘watercooler learning’ (Waring & Bishop, 2010), informal, natural occurrences whereby teaching problems, discoveries and practices are shared. While such corridor discussions may have reduced over the past two years under lockdown conditions, there are still ample opportunities to engage in this part of the dissemination strategy. Any debrief with a colleague about what problem arose and what you did to solve it is a moment of influence not to be lost. Despite busy workloads, as educators we must find the time and space to share our experiences: “when we open ourselves to others’ experiences, we in turn reflect on our own” (Ford, 2021:4). Our own influence can be expanded by two-way sharing—asking others what they have done. The sharing of practices in the corridors can then expand into your next sphere of influence and impact.

**The Campus is calling**

All too often the work of an academic is siloed. Our role as innovators is to ‘evangelise’ changes and possibilities. University education offices, teaching festivals, newsletters and showcases are all opportunities to influence and change teaching practices of others. Different, novel or uncovered practices can help others to develop their practices too. This creates more of a learning organisation (Senge, 2006). Sharing what you have done to improve learning or the student experience, and supporting others who might want to take up, or adapt, that practice themselves, moves you into the sphere of leadership and mentorship, developing others and yourself. Teaching festivals, showcases along with lunch and learn opportunities can be the start of a dissemination process which supports and encourages others to change their practice. More broadly, newsletters, discussion groups and communities of practice can also continue the ‘contagion effect’. As the sharing of practice occurs across campus, into new disciplines and new teaching contexts, peer review continues, allowing a refining, adoption and adaption of the original classroom innovation. In the process, your influence ripples into the broader community, identifying new launch points for your influence and impact.

**Communities – beyond our own nests**

Influencing another’s practice is an honour and a responsibility for all educators. While the more traditional form of dissemination through published papers is also available, many education/teaching focused academics may lack the efficacy to publish, or may struggle to publish papers that are not traditionally research-based. By contrast, academic teaching and learning conferences, and other professional development opportunities, are the perfect platform to look to influence your peers beyond your own walls. MOBTS conferences have created platforms for management educators to share our teaching practices, to receive peer review, and to influence others while we are ourselves being influenced. Beyond conference papers and presentations, consider podcasts, YouTube and even social media such as TikTok—they all provide spaces for educators to disseminate their ideas and solutions. It is through the sharing of teaching practices and innovations that we will continue to make our learning spaces transformative.

**Conclusion**

This roundtable will help participants move from ‘busy-ness’ to impact. The 4Cs approach gives educators a strategic way of taking their influence beyond the classroom. By enabling educators to consider who they influence, where, and when, the 4Cs enables individuals to disseminate their innovative teaching practices with the specific intent to influence others through a personalised approach to showing impact.

**Session Description**

This roundtable discussion will introduce the 4Cs Dissemination Strategy and facilitate opportunities for participants to explore a personalised way of using this strategic and sustainable approach to increase their influence and impact through measurable outcomes that focus on the business of impact and are suited to professional recognition and esteem (e.g. teaching awards, promotion applications)

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| What | Who | Activity | Time |
| Welcome; introduce 4Cs model | Facilitator-led | Presentation | 10 mins |
| Barriers and enablers to dissemination- strategising your disseminations | Whole-group discussion | Create and share strategies to disseminate practices and overcome barriers | 15 mins |
| Mini debrief | Facilitator |  | 5 mins |
| Who can you influence and when?  Discover possibilities for the campus and define your community | Break out groups | Being strategic about who and where - creating maps of influence to find sharing opportunities. How can participants create impact as a measure of activity in their context. | 20 mins |
| Debrief and plans for the future | Whole of group | Lessons learned | 10 mins |

Take away: At the conclusion of the workshop each participant will have developed a 4Cs individual plan of influence and impact, understanding previous constraints and barriers with a view to implement their own 4Cs strategy. Actions will be focused on the ‘why’ rather than the ‘what’ of action so that participants can see how they can personally effect change in our classrooms, with colleagues (in the corridors and campus), and beyond (as we go to communities). In doing this, educators will be able to see and measure the impact of their innovations, as well as supporting future development of the innovation as it is adapted in other contexts.

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