

Integrated work lives and identities: Coaching in support of “complete and connected scholars” [aka. *Scholar Whispering*]

Rationale

Faculty work is fundamentally integrative in nature; however, many of the ways faculty are asked to document their work ask them to place their work into discrete buckets [Boyer 1990; Colbeck 2003; O’Meara 2005]. As a result, faculty devote the least time to reflecting on the integrative dimensions of their work. The lack of intentional time devoted to reflection on integration becomes problematic when teaching, learning and research are construed as mutually exclusive roles and forms of work. Among individual faculty, this state can produce role conflict and a reduced sense of agency, the effect of which can lead to burnout, reduced productivity, and failure to advance or achieve tenure. Collectively, these experiences can reduce faculty retention, departmental productivity and the overall effectiveness of the institution [Colbeck & Weaver 2008; O’Meara 2016]. In departments and institutions where diverse scholarly practices are present but where there is a lack of shared understanding, there is a lack of what could be termed *scholarly congruence*. Scholarly congruence refers to a culture in which individuals perceive their beliefs about scholars and scholarship align with their department and/or institution. The presence or lack of scholarly congruence is felt by individuals but it is also a state that describes cultural groups. Faculty seeking tenure, promotion or advancement aren’t the only ones that may experience the present or absence of scholarly incongruence. Any faculty member in their role as department chair, P & T committee member, or mentor may also grapple with questions of scholarly congruence within or across departmental, disciplinary or institutional contexts. How faculty make and interpret policy, communicate values, suggest priorities and offer peer assessments of a colleague(s) reputation, scholarly products, etc. are examples of situations in which faculty members may experience or contribute to the relative degree of scholarly congruence in a unit or on campus.

Scholarly Congruence:

a culture in which individuals perceive their beliefs about scholars and scholarship align with their department and/or institution.

Adapted from M. Wright’s [2008] concept “instructional congruence”

The degree of scholarly congruence at work in a unit is particularly important for faculty engaged in emerging forms of scholarly practice. Those faculty most at risk of experiencing reduced agency and a sense of scholarly incongruence are those engaged in collaborative, digital and interdisciplinary modes of practice and scholarship. Faculty engaged in the continuum of practices encompassed by the term publicly-engaged scholarship [PES] [aka. community-engaged, translational, etc.] fall squarely into those groups of faculty most at risk [Ellison & Eatman 2008; Stanton 2007]. Products generated through publicly engaged scholarship span academic and community ways of producing knowledge, which often challenge traditional disciplinary norms. Departing from the norm as a junior faculty member adds to the burden that faculty face in explaining the nature, rigor and value of their work with peers and senior faculty. Women and faculty from underrepresented groups are most attracted to practices of PES; and thus, may experience the compound weight of “othering” based on their affinity and ascribed identities [O’Meara 2016].

While recent work [O'Meara 2012; Post et al. 2016] indicates that some faculty find ways to navigate extant systems to create meaningful careers that align with their identities and interests, many of us community engagement staff working in the trenches of our campuses observe a preponderance of faculty that continue to experience frustration, alienation and confusion. In addition, there are a significant number of faculty who project a public face of themselves that appears palatable to the university but does not represent their authentic professional self. For those faculty that persist on our campuses, some continue to do the work they care about, others shift into administrative roles or elect to limit their engagement 'until I'm safe' based on the well-intentioned guidance of senior peers.

The existing literature suggests that a mix of strategies are necessary to retain and support publicly-engaged faculty [e.g. Ellison & Eatman 2008; Gelmon & Agre-Kippenhan, 2002; Post et al. 2016; Franz 2009, Sandmann et al 2008; O'Meara 2012]. While not sufficient by themselves, domain specific mentoring and coaching, both formal and informal, are important elements of a comprehensive approach. Because of the counter-normative nature of PES, coaching and mentoring activities need to be strategic and tactical; however, the work of coaching and mentoring should attend to supporting exploration, examination and planning that supports a faculty member in connecting strategy and tactics with attention to faculty professional identity, individual as well as civic agency development. In addition to information sharing through readings, workshops and resources, for some faculty, it is time invested in conversation and wrestling with who they are or want to be, what they are [or wish they were] about, the grounds they can claim they produce scholarly products, why their contribution matters and how they can articulate all of this to their senior colleagues. It's also about knowing they aren't alone.

Scholar Whispering: Coaching in support of advancing publicly-engaged scholars

The coaching process and tools described below are being developed in response to ten years working with and listening to faculty share their anxieties, aspirations, histories and frustrations with engaged teaching and engaged scholarship. The tools draw on extant literature related to faculty development in service learning and community engagement, practical wisdom from colleagues in the IUPUI Faculty Learning Community on Public Scholarship and a dose of inspiration from community organizing. I've come to refer to the process as "scholar whispering" to evoke the sense that the role of the *whisperer* [i.e. the coach, mentor, staff member, etc.] is support and enable conditions for significant conversations and shared meaning-making about scholarship to occur and flourish.

Research notes that when faculty perceive high degrees of risk, they are less likely to take risks or express vulnerability in open networks. Rather, information is shared within closed networks characterized by high levels of trust [Roxå, Mårtensson, & Alveteg 2011]. Tenure, reappointment and advance are high risk activities for faculty. Because of the counter-normative nature of CES/PES, particularly the frequent lack of understanding among departmental colleagues, engaged scholars often complain of feeling isolated, misunderstood and uncertain of how to articulate the value of their work. Workshop models, facilitation guides, etc. The activities described below are part of developing set of coaching tools and an emergent conversational learning model, I currently refer to as "Scholar Whispering."

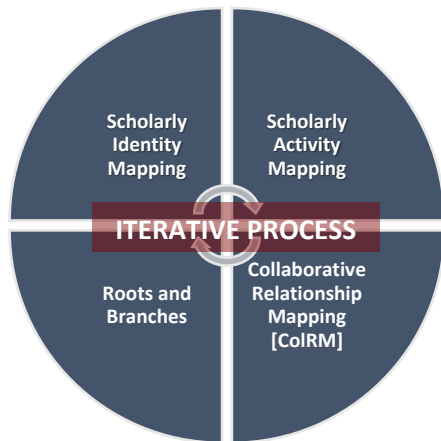
Perceived Benefits:

- Enhanced clarity of sense and purpose in the academy.
- Enhanced ability to communicate and advocate for one's work to peers, university administration, community partners and funders.
- Reflective products that can be resourced for inclusion in documenting one's work and for developing/refining a scholarly agenda.

Scholar Whispering as an emergent process:

- Begins with the scholar's felt need and grounded in an exploration of personal and professional identity and hence, is unique for each individual
- Prioritizes relationships first ["consulting" not viewed as just transactional]
- Focuses on building confidence and strengthening faculty professional agency through significant conversations, guided critical reflection and directed writing.
- Encourages boundary spanning behavior [connecting to and engaging with new bodies of scholarship, people, etc.]
- Views mentoring and coaching as a networked activity that contributes both to individual growth and well-being and supports collegiality and a civic ethos.
- Views faculty growth and development as a worthy end unto itself [faculty are not just means to an institutional goal].

Scholar Whispering Coaching Tools



Scholarly Identity Mapping: a sense making activity that invites faculty to describe, examine and graphically articulate who they are, what they value and the ends to which public engagement is a dimension of their professional identities. The activity, broken into two parts, includes a mix of readings, guided prompts and instructions that result in the creation of two kinds of identity maps: one dedicated to **values and purposes** and a second that showcases the **distribution and concentration of engaged work** across traditional domains of faculty work: teaching, research & creative activity and service.

Scholarly Activity Mapping: Provides a heuristic for faculty to identify and sort their activities to discern signature engaged projects. This heuristic is intended to assist faculty in distinguishing activities from products of scholarship and then to develop an action plan to strengthen scholarly production and documentation.

Collaborative Relationship Mapping [CoIRM]: [Originally developed for use in community-academic partnership planning and assessment]. CoIRM is a workshop-based mapping and reflection method, grounded in the SOFAR model of partnerships (Bringle, Clayton and Price, 2009) that supports individuals and groups to examine their relationships within collaborative projects to surface and address structural and operational issues that strengthen and weaken achieving project and partnership outcomes. CoIRM uses conventions from network analysis as a means to visually graph relationships and qualitatively assessment using color indicators. The produced map is both an artifact and reflective product that can be subjected to further evaluation. In the context of scholar

whispering, CoIRM is used with faculty to reflection on their partnership practice inside what they deem as “signature” work or partnerships.

Roots and Branches: This tool is currently under development. Focuses on the deeper exploration of personal history and social identities, pathways to the academy and its interrelationship with one’s professional identity and career goals.

Questions explored through Scholar Whispering

Scholarly Identity Mapping

- Who am I as a scholar and practitioner?
- What are the **public purposes** of my scholarly work?
- What are my values as a practitioner, teacher and scholar?
- How are my values expressed through my scholarly work?
- What outcomes guide my public work?
- What makes me distinctive?

Scholarly Activity Mapping

- What is my **scholarly agenda** and where does CES fit within it?
- How is my community-engaged scholarly agenda couched across my work in Teaching, Research, & Service?
- What is scholarship – to what degree is my CE work to date, CE activity as opposed to scholarship?
- How are scholarly products distributed across my engaged work? Are there points of integration worthy of in-depth documentation:
 - Geographically,
 - Issue-based
 - Strategic Partnerships

Collaborative Relationship Mapping [CoIRM]

- How extensive, deep and diverse are my ties/relationships in projects I identify as “publicly-engaged”?
- How “co” is the nature of my/our relationships in specific projects?
- How do I/we approach documenting the influence of process and relationships on the products and outcomes of my/our work?
- How might I/we improve?

Have questions or want to learn more?

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