Improving Access and Inclusion for VITAL Faculty in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through Sustained Professional Development Programs

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Declarations

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Abstract: Non-tenure track faculty make up the majority of faculty positions in the United States, and their role is primarily instruction. Yet they often face numerous barriers to participating in professional development and engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), activities that can support their instructional effectiveness. This study explores how campuses can facilitate participation of contingent faculty in sustained professional development programs and how these programs can foster their engagement in SoTL. Based on a sample of fourteen campuses that have successfully created professional development for adjuncts and other contingent faculty, we first present the four models of sustained professional development programs we found—faculty learning communities, certification/badge programs, course transformation/departmental action teams, and discussion groups—and highlight the modifications that were made to better meet the needs of contingent faculty. We then consider how various design and implementation choices can support higher-order engagement in SoTL using the multidimensional model of the scholarship of teaching (Trigwell et al., 2000). The results of our study emphasize the importance for campuses to address policy-related barriers that prevent access to sustained professional development for contingent faculty and reveal a number of good practices that instructional leaders can use to guide the design of such programs.

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Professional development and scholarship on teaching and learning frameworks were developed with tenure-track faculty as the normative model. Yet the professoriate has undergone a revolution with tenure-track faculty representing a small percentage of the faculty, and their roles being replaced by an assortment of faculty models that are contingent, unbundled, and reformulated in ways that require a major rethinking of assumptions in how we design, plan, and execute programs and policies to support faculty (Finkelstein et al., 2016). There has been limited attention to how we can better meet the needs of these non-tenure track faculty (both part-time and full-time), whom we refer to as VITAL (visiting, instructors, temporary, adjuncts, and lecturers) faculty (Levy, 2019) to emphasize their assets. In particular, more attention is needed to the professionalization of VITAL faculty as scholarly teachers; existing efforts have focused narrowly on altering the design of professional development without reconsidering the broader system within which VITAL faculty work, including the structural and cultural barriers they face.

Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) shows that in 2021, 67% of faculty positions at Title-IV degree granting institutions were contingent (19% full time and 48% part time), with 79% of all positions dedicated primarily to instruction (U. S. Department of Education, 2023). Part-time VITAL faculty, who are often called adjuncts, do a lot of instructional labor; in the two-year sector, adjuncts taught about 60% of all courses in 2013 (CCCSE, 2014). While VITAL faculty have varied titles, teaching abilities, and motivations (Bond, 2015), many are committed to creating effective learning environments for students (Vander Kloet et al., 2017). The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) offers a way to

create such environments, through a systematic process where faculty use existing literature to inform inquiry into their teaching (and the learning of their students) and then share the results of their inquiry with colleagues (Huber & Hutchings, 2005). However, the poor working conditions VITAL faculty often face (Kezar & Sam, 2010; Kezar & Maxey, 2016) affect their opportunities and motivation to engage in SoTL (Vander Kloet et al., 2017).

Nelson-Laird and Ribera (2011) identified that VITAL faculty were less likely to be involved in SoTL and that institutional support for SoTL was key in faculty's adoption. One way institutions can support engagement in SoTL is through faculty learning communities (FLCs) and other types of sustained professional development (SPD), as these programs can achieve many of the goals of SoTL (Cox, 2003). However, as with SoTL engagement, VITAL faculty often face barriers to participating in SPD; for instance, on many campuses, some SPD programs limit participation to faculty on the tenure track (Culver & Kezar, 2021). SoTL will not expand on campuses unless there is an effort to engage VITAL faculty, and so campuses must explore ways they can promote the involvement of VITAL faculty in SoTL through their participation in SPD.

In order to help campuses improve support for VITAL faculty, this study explores how campuses have modified SPD for VITAL faculty and engaged them in SoTL. We describe what we learned based on our analysis of fourteen campuses where instructional leaders have created SPD programs that facilitate VITAL faculty participation. By identifying best practices for the systematic design of SPD that promote the engagement of VITAL faculty in SoTL, including factors related to employment policies and the design and implementation of SPD programs, our findings help develop guidance for supporting VITAL faculty in comprehensive ways that promote their instructional effectiveness and ability to support student success and learning.

Background and Relevant Literature

In this section, we review literature about the challenging working conditions that limit the opportunity for VITAL faculty to be effective educators, including limited access to sustained professional development (SPD) programs that offer multiple benefits for VITAL faculty, including engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).

The Working Conditions of VITAL Faculty

Book-length summaries have documented the poor institutional policies and practices for VITAL faculty: limited or no access to needed resources and opportunities such as orientation and professional development; clear guidelines about work expectations, formal evaluation, and feedback; office space and administrative support; input to department decisions; and promotion opportunities (Kezar & Sam, 2010; Kezar & Maxey, 2016). Such policies and practices shape VITAL faculty's instructional performance and student outcomes. The lack of stability in their appointments, including the practice of hiring adjuncts days before a semester begins, do not permit effective course planning and preparation. At some institutions, VITAL faculty are also excluded from departmental-level decision-making. As a result, they may have limited understanding of how course goals relate to broader program or college objectives (Kezar, 2013a); further, the resulting courses may not fit their personal teaching styles (Kezar, 2013b). Hence, the lack of opportunity to be involved in course development may make VITAL faculty less likely to clearly connect course activities with course or program objectives and limit the effectiveness of the strategies they have available to meet students' diverse academic needs.

The lack of resources invested in VITAL faculty interferes with their ability to be excellent educators and academic community members. If VITAL faculty wish to become familiar with the campus, they must often take the initiative themselves. Without opportunities

for feedback and evaluation, VITAL faculty are often unable to place their own teaching and scholarship within the context of institutional priorities and identify aspects of their teaching that they should emphasize and others they should limit. The accumulation of poor working conditions and lack of supportive infrastructure has led to a phenomenon called "lack of opportunity to perform," essentially creating an environment in which VITAL faculty are barred from educating to their potential and frequently experience burnout (Kezar, 2013c). Certainly, every institution varies, but these generalized patterns speak to an overall need to rethink campus policies and practices to better support VITAL faculty.

Sustained Professional Development

One way that campuses can support the educational expertise of VITAL faculty is through sustained professional development (SPD) programs such as faculty learning communities (FLCs). The traditional model of FLCs developed at Miami University has been widely implemented in higher education. The topically-focused model engages 8-12 cross-disciplinary faculty in a participant-led, yearlong program focused on improving student learning that culminates in the execution of individual, scholarly projects, with results shared through presentations and/or publications to other audiences on campus or at professional conferences (Cox, 2003). Additional components of many FLCs include explicit dialogue on teaching, guidelines and opportunities for pedagogical experimentation, resources on teaching, labs for hands-on learning and experimentation with pedagogy, and a high degree of collaboration and discussion of successful strategies among participants (Nugent et al., 2008; Ward & Selvester, 2012). FLCs can also enhance instruction among online faculty, including by providing onboarding and ongoing training on pedagogy and learning technologies (Mohr, 2016).

Various studies have shown FLCs to be more effective than one-time workshops in equipping faculty to change their approach to teaching and for supporting their engagement in SoTL (Cox, 2003; Kezar, 2015). Faculty report gaining new teaching strategies, stronger collegial networks, and a deeper understanding of their students (Glowacki-Dudka & Brown, 2007). FLCs have also helped faculty understand the co-constructed nature of learning and develop inclusive pedagogies through enhanced use of digital technology and universal design principles (Nugent et al., 2008; Ward & Selvester, 2012).

The need to offer professional learning opportunities to VITAL faculty has been repeatedly identified in the literature, but there has been "limited attention towards developing systematic and strategic approaches for addressing this key issue" (Harvey, 2017, p. 1). One important consideration is that the traditional FLC model was designed when full-time tenure-line faculty positions were the norm. The expectation that participants determine program curriculum, lead meetings, and complete scholarly projects may not align well with the VITAL faculty role, creating a burden on their time. Further, the yearlong structure precludes the participation of part-time faculty hired on a semester basis and may inhibit the participation of full-time VITAL faculty whose heavy teaching schedules may make it difficult to schedule meetings with a group across multiple terms. Thus, there is a need to rethink SPD programs so that they align with institutional policies and practices related to VITAL faculty in order to meet their needs.

While limited research to date has specifically focused on ways to include VITAL faculty in SPD, Banasik and Dean (2016) conducted a review of literature on VITAL faculty and on FLCs, noting that research to date suggests the working conditions of VITAL faculty hinders their meaningful involvement. To increase the likelihood of VITAL faculty participating in

FLCs, they suggest that institutions should consider changing reward systems. Potential rewards include compensating VITAL faculty in recognition of the time commitment, counting participation as fulfilling service responsibilities, and ensuring consideration for institutional teaching awards (Banasik & Dean, 2016). For an FLC to be successful with VITAL faculty, campus leaders must also consider incentives related to evaluation and promotion opportunities. VITAL faculty are also more likely to participate when opportunities are communicated with explicit mention that they are open to this population; another consideration is offering meetings outside of regular working hours (Vander Kloet et al., 2017).

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Boyer's (1990) conception of the scholarship of teaching was intended to recognize the professional and intellectual contribution of faculty who apply to instruction the tools and approaches they have developed as scholars. From this conceptualization, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) has developed over the past three decades as a method of intellectual inquiry, as a movement, and as a means of quality assurance. Because of these varied purposes and conceptions, the definition of SoTL and means for assessing SoTL work have been ongoing areas of focus in the literature. For instance, Shulman (2000) emphasizes the outcomes of SoTL work: "We develop a scholarship of teaching when our work as teachers becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued, and exchanged with other members of our professional communities so they, in turn, can build on our work" (p. 50). In comparison, in articulating five principles of good practice in SoTL, Felten (2013) puts greater emphasis on the role of students in SoTL work: it is inquiry focused on student learning, grounded in scholarly and local context, methodologically sound, conducted with students as partners, and appropriately public (p. 123). In a study of how instructional staff view SoTL, Trigwell and colleagues (2000) argue that "a

more inclusive approach to the scholarship of teaching involves a focus on using the literature in an exploration of the teaching and learning environment of one' s own teaching, with the aims of improving teaching and student learning, and communicating information obtained to others" (p. 162).

SoTL has also developed into a community space for dialogue and debate, a field that Huber and Hutchings (2005) call "the big tent". A recent review of SoTL literature identifies the relatively disparate categories of focus related to SoTL: methods and processes for individual practice, the disciplines as key for adopting SoTL, institutional structures for recognizing and evaluating SoTL, the importance of institutional capacity-building through supporting faculty, and the influence of national and international contexts (Fanghanel et al., 2016). Additionally, SoTL scholars have been responsive to the changing academic landscape through a recent focus on the "sustained involvement of academics and the identity of SoTL scholars, who are often outside of traditional faculty positions" (Webb, 2020, p. 9).

Along with these recent developments in SoTL, there has also been renewed attention to flexibility and quality in the definition of SoTL and criteria used to assess it (Webb, 2020). One aspect of flexibility is the welcoming of similar approaches to pedagogical research, including disciplinary-based education research (called DBER) and teaching as research (Cruz et al., 2019). At the same time, some scholars have critiqued SoTL as an umbrella concept (Levander et al., 2020), including that many faculty consider reading literature about teaching and learning to be SoTL (Cotton et al., 2018) and that much of the work produced is not published or available to critical evaluation (Canning & Masika, 2022).

Thus, there is still a lack of agreement around the specific activities that should be recognized as SoTL, as well as how these activities should best be evaluated. At the same time,

there is generally consensus that scholars of teaching and learning should engage with existing literature, conduct rigorous inquiry into improving teaching and learning, and make the results of their inquiry available to colleagues in ways that allow for critique and adoption of effective practices. These qualities are highly aligned with the goals and activities included in sustained professional development programs, making these opportunities one avenue that campuses can use to engage VITAL faculty in SoTL.

VITAL Faculty and SoTL

Limited research exists on the engagement of VITAL faculty in SoTL, but Vander Kloet et al. (2017) and Simmons et al. (2021) identified several ways that working conditions of contingent faculty create widespread barriers and undermine the possibilities for them to engage in this work. While institutional leaders may present VITAL faculty with messages of encouragement related to SoTL, policies often hinder VITAL faculty from engaging in it (Vander Kloet et al., 2017); for instance, many institutions limit eligibility for institutional grants to support research work to tenure-line faculty (Simmons et al., 2021).

Isolation and invisibility in departments can also prevent involvement of VITAL faculty in SoTL (Vander Kloet et al., 2017). VITAL faculty note feeling invisible in departments, so they are not communicated with about SPD opportunities and included in curricular discussions and thus are unfamiliar with program learning outcomes and how the courses they teach support programmatic goals (Kezar, 2013b). Departmental isolation also hinders opportunities for SoTL collaborations, making the potential for networking through SPD even more important (Simmons et al., 2021).

Contingent contracts also impede SoTL work. With unpredictable hiring timelines and limited paid time for course preparation, VITAL faculty have little ability to craft a research

design and secure IRB for an empirical study of course experiences and outcomes (Vander Kloet et al., 2017). Lack of autonomy over which courses they teach also debilitates longitudinal efforts (Simmons et al., 2021). Even when these possibilities exist, many institutions restrict VITAL faculty from the role of principal investigator and deny eligibility to manage research funds, meaning VITAL faculty must find willing collaborators, argue for their status with a research ethics board, or rework the focus of their projects to exclude human participants (Vander Kloet et al., 2017). Because research efforts are usually not part of the job expectations, VITAL faculty also often feel overloaded when trying to integrate SoTL into their roles (Simmons et al., 2021).

In summary, the above research identifies several benefits for VITAL faculty of engagement in SPD and SoTL, their working conditions are not supportive of involvement in either. The challenges identified provide a starting point for understanding areas where changes can be made to better support VITAL faculty in SoTL engagement through SPD, including reward systems, career paths, and research-related campus policies. However, no research to date has specifically focused on ways to enable VITAL faculty's involvement in SoTL through SPD programs.

Conceptual Framework and Purpose

The reviewed literature identifies two mechanisms by which SoTL engagement can contribute to the success of VITAL faculty: promoting instructional effectiveness (and by extension students' course learning experiences) and providing opportunities for professionalization. However, VITAL faculty face a number of challenges related to SoTL engagement, including heavy course loads that require a significant commitment of time and energy. The structure and support provided by SPD can be particularly beneficial for overcoming

many of these challenges. At the same time, VITAL faculty also face a number of barriers to participating in SPD that is designed for faculty on the tenure track.

Thus, the foundation for our conceptual framework is derived from the above: for institutions to promote the engagement of VITAL faculty in SoTL, they must first make SPD available to and welcoming of VITAL faculty. Adding to this formulation, we employ Trigwell et al.'s (2000) multidimensional model of scholarship of teaching, which specifies four dimensions of SoTL practice based on their phenomenography:

1. The degree of engagement with existing literature on teaching and learning, including both education research and discipline-specific literature;

2. The degree that reflection and inquiry into teaching and how students learn are focused and specific;

3. The formality and scope of communication and dissemination about what is learned related to theories and practices of teaching and learning;

4. The degree that activities are focused on student learning and teaching rather than only on teaching (p. 163).

Two aspects of this model make it particularly useful for this study. First, Trigwell and colleagues conceptualize each dimension along a spectrum of lower-order and higher-order approaches, allowing for more nuanced analysis compared to criteria espoused in binary terms. Second, because the model is based on an inclusive definition of SoTL, it better reflects the working conditions and role expectations of VITAL faculty compared to criteria that implicitly privilege faculty on the tenure track.

Grounded in the above conceptualizations, this study addresses the following research question: How can campuses design SPD programs so that VITAL faculty can participate and engage in SoTL?

Methods

This study used case study methodology through an embedded multiple case study design, which is particularly applicable when studying issues and processes in context (Yin, 2018). Specifically, the study employed data from multiple campuses about the different types of professional development offered to understand how sustained programs can support engagement in SoTL among VITAL faculty. This design allowed us to explore how campuses designed and adapted different types of SPD while being mindful of how the institutional context (e.g., faculty population, institutional and state policies, institutional mission, etc.) also influenced opportunities for VITAL faculty to participate in SPD and engage in SoTL.

Data and Analysis

Selection criteria for our cases included evidence of successful SPD programs for VITAL faculty, varying institutional contexts, and different types of professional development programs. To identify campuses that met the first criteria, we sought recommendations from the POD Network, a national organization of professional and organizational developers that includes a special interest group for members who support adjuncts. Among other activities, the POD Network provides financial support to campuses to experiment with innovative professional development, including for VITAL faculty. Leaders of the adjunct SIG shared a list of campuses that had recently received awards. We also recruited some campuses using the POD discussion board and identified other campuses through snowball sampling based on the recommendations of study participants based on our other two criteria.

Fourteen campuses participated in this study (See Table 1), reflecting contexts varied in terms of control (public or private), sector (two-year or four-year), mission (research-focused, teaching-focused, or comprehensive), and location (rural, suburban, or urban). Further, the campuses offered a wide range of professional development programs, including some offered through a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)[4], some offered within specific colleges and programs (e.g., Engineering, Social Work), and others developed as part of STEM education research centers. We developed an interview protocol based on existing literature, asking interviewees about the types of initiatives they offered and focusing on programs that provided VITAL faculty opportunities for sustained engagement in learning. The protocol included questions about how initiatives originated, institutional and state contexts that influenced their design, and how institutional policies and practices might be altered for initiatives to be more successful.

On each campus, we interviewed the individual(s) leading professional development efforts, and, on many campuses, we also spoke with other organizers and stakeholders. Based on the campus context, the individuals who contributed to SPD program design and leadership were in a variety of roles, including educational developers (e.g., instructional consultant, online faculty technology specialist) and faculty affiliates of the CTL (e.g., faculty director of CTL, faculty fellow), VITAL faculty advocates (e.g., director of lecturer development in academic affairs, adjunct representative on faculty senate), academic administrators (e.g., assistant dean for faculty success, assistant vice president for teaching and learning), and educational researchers (e.g., director of discipline-based education research center). Other stakeholders included VITAL

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[4] We use the term CTL to refer to these centers even when specific campuses have named them differently.

faculty who previously participated in SPD; system-level professional development coordinators; and educational developers at independent organizations that provided programs to some campuses. In total, we interviewed 29 individuals. Interviews were recorded using Zoom and lasted approximately 90 minutes; we developed transcripts for analysis. The interview protocol is available as Online Resource 1.

We also collected data from campus websites and documents provided to us by professional development leaders. These data included institutional policies related to VITAL faculty, including definitions of faculty roles and promotion requirements; eligibility, requirements, and rewards for various PD opportunities; evaluation of SPD efforts; and various SPD program documents, including meeting agendas and notes, handouts and peer observation forms, and examples of participant deliverables.

Individual cases were analyzed through simultaneous deductive and inductive thematic coding (Boyatzis, 1998). Examples of deductive codes included SPD design specifics related to content and facilitation, and dimensions of SoTL engagement. Through inductive coding, we identified additional aspects that contributed to program success, such as policies such as eligibility and promotion opportunities that influenced participation of VITAL faculty. We then conducted cross-case analysis to develop an understanding of models across campuses, including how program activities engaged VITAL faculty in SoTL.

Trustworthiness and Limitations

We used several practices to establish trustworthiness. Using multiple forms of data across the fourteen campuses to deepen our understanding of professional development for VITAL faculty increased the confirmability and credibility of our findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We enhanced trustworthiness through triangulation via multiple investigators who vary in

social identity positionality and professional background (Jones et al., 2014). We engaged in memoing and met regularly throughout the data analysis process to develop a shared understanding of the data. Additionally, the research team was external to the campuses studied and not involved in their programs in any way. It is important to note that while we learned about professional development programs that support VITAL faculty's engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning, the study was not explicitly designed around SoTL projects. Additionally, formal professional development programs are only one of many ways for educational developers and institutional leaders to support the engagement of VITAL faculty in SoTL. Therefore, the interpretation of our findings are limited to how sustained professional development programs can foster SoTL engagement among this population of faculty.

Findings

Our research identified four models of sustained professional development (SPD) and a range of activities that engaged VITAL faculty in SoTL. The four models included faculty learning communities, certificate/badge programs, course transformation teams, and discussion groups, as shown in Table 2. Many campuses had made modifications to these models to enable VITAL faculty involvement; programs that had been designed specifically for VITAL faculty or adjuncts tended to have more modifications compared to programs designed for faculty across career tracks. Below we expand on each of the four models, highlighting how specific modifications and aspects of program design made them more accessible to and inclusive of VITAL faculty. In the following section, we provide examples of how program activities engaged participants in SoTL to varying degrees.

Faculty Learning Communities

One common model used to support VITAL faculty's engagement in SoTL was faculty learning communities (FLCs). Several campuses we studied had designed cohort-based FLCs specifically for VITAL faculty, and, in a few cases, exclusively for adjuncts. Most campuses using FLCs had made at least a few alterations to the traditional FLC model to better support VITAL faculty involvement. A critical component of altering FLCs for VITAL faculty engagement is compensation for their time to participate.

One common alteration was moving from a yearlong program to a semester since part-time faculty could not commit to a longer timeframe. They also moved the FLCs online or used a hybrid format so that part-time faculty who had other work obligations could participate. And many relaxed attendance requirements for FLC meetings, encouraging full attendance but allowing faculty to miss some sessions; at a few campuses, meeting notes/recordings were put online so that absent faculty could still engage in learning.

Content and facilitation were also altered to make SPD more amenable to VITAL faculty. Facilitators took a more active role, presenting information from SoTL literature during meetings to reduce the amount of reading and independent research faculty were expected to complete between meetings, showcasing more practice-based resources so that participants could easily implement changes in their teaching, and rethinking final projects so that they were less time-intensive than journal-like article projects. For instance, San Francisco State University and University of Colorado Boulder implemented collaborative project options so that colleagues could work together on a topic; final projects were published on the institution's website. IUPUI implemented shorter reflective projects compared to journal-like articles. Other campuses dropped projects altogether.

Faculty learning communities were generally designed by facilitators who had familiarity with literature on teaching and learning and used it to design the curriculum. These programs involved activities such as discussing the findings of literature and trying out new pedagogies, therefore involving VITAL faculty in inquiry about teaching, and expected participants to share their work related to teaching improvement with others, including within the cohort.

Certification/Badge Programs

Certification and badges are an increasingly popular model for involving VITAL faculty in SPD. The tangible, portable nature of a certification/badge is a major advantage of this model as it allows VITAL faculty to demonstrate expertise in a more formal way, which is especially important for adjuncts seeking a full-time position. The certification programs we studied also offered compensation for completion. Programs were also typically offered in online, asynchronous formats, providing geographic and time-based flexibility that made them very easily accessible for VITAL faculty.

Certification programs also demonstrated various modifications based on the specific campus population and program objectives. At Sinclair College and California State University San Bernardino, faculty participated in cohorts so that they could develop a professional network. At San Francisco State and IUPUI, certification programs allowed faculty to choose from among a number of offerings. This approach provided greater autonomy and agency for faculty to focus their learning but fewer opportunities for developing relationships and networks.

We found two certification programs specifically for part-time faculty that offered a promotion opportunity and increased per-course pay. Valencia College offered a certification program that combined the approaches described above. Half of the program was completed through a semester-long cohort-based hybrid "course" that combined two face-to-face meetings

with online learning and discussion. Participants could choose among various offerings to fulfill the other half of program requirements; they were encouraged to create an individualized learning plan in consultation with their department chair or another supervisor to create an intentional curriculum. At Sinclair, the Adjunct Faculty Certification Course combined a synchronous online workshop with asynchronous online learning and quizzes; then, participants completed peer observations of teaching, acting as observer for a full-time faculty member in their department and having their teaching observed by a CTL-trained faculty member.

Badges are also very amenable way to involve VITAL faculty in SoTL and some campuses have made alterations so that these can be easily adopted. Badge programs generally covered a variety of topics, with options for how participants could fulfill learning related to each topic. For instance, the CTL at IUPUI offered a badge program in partnership with their Institute for Engaged Learning where faculty chose among options such as synchronous workshops, recorded webinars, and readings for each of five topical modules. Portfolios were implemented as the final project, including development of course materials based on the modules and a written reflection. Participants received $50 for completing the badge.

The certification/badge programs we found were carefully designed based on existing SoTL research to inform their content, and they often involved faculty trying out new approaches to teaching and then writing reflections about their experiences. Because content was mostly predetermined and intended for a wide faculty audience, the literature and teaching practices included tended to be general rather than discipline-specific. Additionally, assessments such as reflections and quizzes were generally shared only with the facilitator. Our findings present key opportunities for rethinking certification in ways that might make them stronger vehicles of SoTL.

Course Transformation/Departmental Action Teams

Another newer form of SPD that seems to have particular advantages to involving VITAL faculty are course transformation teams. The models we found tended to be grant-funded but they could be institutionalized and connected to ongoing institutional improvement efforts. Additionally, these programs were typically aimed at being inclusive of full-time VITAL faculty; we did not find any examples of action teams that were modified to be inclusive of part-time faculty.

University of Colorado Boulder, University of Georgia (UGA), and Kennesaw State University (KSU) implemented action teams related to course or departmental transformation. In this model, groups of faculty work collaboratively to design and implement changes to improve specific courses or course sequences. At UGA, teams collaboratively redefined learning objectives for their courses and then members individually developed course activities that were aligned with these objectives. At KSU, teams of 4-6 faculty, usually within a single department, met about twice a month during the spring and summer to engage in course transformation planning; some teams met in the evenings or online. Participants also completed an intensive course transformation institute during the summer before implementing their redesigned coursed in the fall, with peer observations of teaching conducted to continue learning and growth. Teams shared their implementation plan, materials, and outcomes during a fall meeting, and participants were expected to disseminate their findings to other faculty in their department as well. Modifications including concentrating the bulk of work during the summer and allowing teams to schedule meetings separately provided needed flexibility for VITAL faculty to participate.

These models tended to engage participants with discipline-specific literature related to course design and pedagogy, as well as involve participants in data-driven inquiry related to

teaching effectiveness. Participants were also generally expected to disseminate results beyond their program peers. This is one way the college worked to integrate VITAL faculty and encourage a culture of SoTL through the sharing of best practices among colleagues.

Discussion Groups

Discussion groups, including book groups, lunch-and-learns, teaching circles, and faculty interest groups, tended to be more informal compared to the other SPD models we identified. Sinclair College hosted "incubators," self-designed and self-led topically-focused groups to foster conversations and collegiality. The Engineering-CTL at the University of Michigan scheduled monthly "drop ins" for topical discussions on different instructional approaches. We found that campuses sometimes used discussion groups to create a culture of professional development, especially because this model offers low barriers to entry for participants and requires few institutional resources. Other campuses used discussion groups as an alternative when institutional policies or privileging of tenure-track applicants excluded VITAL faculty participation in other SPD programs.

In general, discussion groups were highly informal, with flexibility in attendance and few requirements for participants, so they did not reflect modifications for VITAL faculty. Because of the lower commitment required, participation was not usually compensated. Discussion groups often offered an introduction to SoTL through engagement with literature and informal discussions about teaching and learning.

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Discussion

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The findings section outlined four models of sustained professional development (SPD), including ways they were modified for VITAL faculty and encouraged SoTL engagement. In this section, we begin by discussing modifications that are needed to facilitate participation of

VITAL faculty regardless of the model used and then consider how different program activities promoted SoTL engagement based on the multidimensional model of the scholarship of teaching (Trigwell et al., 2000). We also discuss the alignment of SoTL definitions and evaluations with the realities of VITAL faculty roles.

Accessibility of SPD

Our findings revealed some differences in how the models broadly shaped the ability of VITAL faculty to participate in SPD. However, how successful programs were in achieving this goal was more strongly correlated with how much campuses centered the needs and motivations of VITAL faculty in their program designs, as well as how much campus policies and practices conveyed that VITAL faculty are valued for their critical role in student success. The traditional model of faculty learning communities as yearlong, self-led groups who work on developing individual, research-focused inquiries (Cox, 2003) structurally limits access for VITAL faculty, and the cultural messages it conveys perpetuates the marginalization of VITAL faculty through its dissonance with their role expectations and professional responsibilities.

The campuses we studied employed intentional efforts to reduce such barriers, including modifying program designs and addressing larger policy issues. For instance, practices such as creating VITAL-specific email listservs to announce SPD opportunities, offering compensation for program completion, and allowing for both synchronous and asynchronous engagement addressed some of the challenges identified by Vander Kloet and colleagues (2017). Programs specifically designed for adjuncts generally reflected greater modification that also facilitated participation among full-time faculty. In contrast, programs that were less thoughtful and intentional about meeting the needs of VITAL faculty had fewer modifications and were less successful in engaging this group; this was often true among programs that were "open to all

faculty." Given the "paradigmatic shift" (Finkelstein et al., 2016, p. xxii) in faculty roles, campuses need to be willing to make more comprehensive changes to enable the engagement of part-time VITAL faculty especially in SPD.

Larger policy changes also needed to be made on many campuses to reach this goal, including changing evaluation structures and incorporating flex-time so that part-time faculty can engage in professional development. Institutions have a responsibility to support VITAL faculty in being effective instructors (Banasik & Dean, 2016), especially given the prevalence of part-time instructional positions.

SPD as a Vehicle for SoTL Engagement

Given that many VITAL faculty don't have time for reading, discussion, and reflection on teaching with colleagues (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011), SPD programs offer structured opportunities to support their instructional effectiveness. And on many campuses, CTLs have assumed responsibility for promoting engagement in SoTL (Cruz et al., 2019). The models we found also show alignment with Cox's (2003) conclusion that SPD can promote the scholarship of teaching and learning, supporting the professionalization of VITAL faculty. In this section, we consider lower-order and higher-order engagement evidenced based on each of the four dimensions of Trigwell et al.'s (2000) model.

Engagement with Literature on Teaching and Learning

The models we found all engaged participants with existing literature, with varied focus and depth. Discussion groups tended to reflect lower-order engagement, as participants generally read a single book or a few publications over the course of a semester; FLCs and certification programs generally engaged participants in greater depth through generalized education research, while action teams often focused deeply on discipline-specific literature. Across models, we

found a spectrum of engagement in terms of how explicitly existing literature was connected to other learning activities. Many programs included lower-order approaches such as practice-focused workshops or discussions that were informed by, but not explicitly connected to, existing literature. In other cases, facilitators acted as "literacy specialists" (Cruz et al., 2019, p. 6), sharing specific SoTL literature and guiding discussions to allow participants to reflect on the literature in the context of their disciplinary expertise and teaching practices, reflecting higher-order engagement in SoTL.

A similar pattern was found for the deliverables participants were expected to complete. Projects such as learning reflections and the creation of course materials were often relatively short and practice-focused, reflecting lower-engagement through informal knowledge of theories of teaching and learning. Projects where VITAL faculty presented new instructional approaches to their departmental colleagues or documented analysis of student learning across curricular sequences were more likely to foster the development of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), reflecting higher-order engagement.

Focused, Specific Inquiry and Reflection

Course transformation teams offered highly structured approaches to focused inquiry based on their goals; they also often incorporated analysis of student data (e.g., grades, course evaluations), reflecting higher-order engagement through "intentional and rigorous application of research tools that connect the question at the heart of a particular inquiry to student learning" (Felten, 2013, p. 123). Other program characteristics that promoted higher-order inquiry included a pre-determined topical focus that was sustained across the program and creating cohorts with strong disciplinary alignment (e.g., STEM); the use of individualized learning plans when faculty could choose among options to meet program requirements was another strategy that provided

the potential for VITAL faculty to be more focused in their inquiry. Another higher-order approach commonly found in interdisciplinary FLCs and certification/badge programs with active facilitation was what Trigwell and colleagues (2000) called "reflection-in-action", where participants tried new pedagogical approaches or tools in their classroom and then facilitators guided conversations about their own experiences doing so. The programs that included projects that were written reflections typically used the same format.

Compared to these higher-order approaches, discussion groups generally evidenced lower-order inquiry into teaching and learning where participants were positioned more as "consumers of SoTL" rather than as "producers of SoTL projects" (Chick, 2017, p. 10). Kern and colleagues (2015) use the term "sharing about teaching" (p. 6) to categorize less systematic inquiries that are shared with others. They argue that informal assessments and anecdotal evidence of success can be valuable for stimulating reflection and ideas among instructors but lack the necessary connection to existing literature and methodological rigor.

Communication and Dissemination

Trigwell et al.'s (2000) multidimensional model distinguishes among lower-order and higher-order communication and dissemination based on how formally and publicly results are communicated. Kern and colleagues (2015) similarly use these two dimensions as the foundation for their taxonomy of teaching activities, limiting the designation of SoTL to research that is literature-based, conducted systematically, and disseminated publicly through peer-reviewed processes to audiences external to the campus. However, Felten (2013) acknowledges that traditional scholarly journals often are not a realistic outlet for documenting the iterative and contextual nature of inquiry into student learning. Other scholars instead consider the impact of dissemination as the primary criteria for evaluation (Chick, 2017; Fanghanel et al., 2016), which

may be more appropriate given that many VITAL faculty are not expected to publish research in peer-reviewed publications.

All of the SPD models we found allowed for at least lower-order communication approaches, as most programs included meetings and/or discussion boards where participants shared their learning with program peers. Discussion groups were generally limited to these communication approaches. In other models, the modifications that were made to enable participation of VITAL faculty also tended to limit engagement in this dimension of SoTL work, both in terms of the audience and impact.

In particular, the modifications made to individual projects tended to limit one or both dimensions of dissemination. Some campuses eliminated projects altogether; on other campuses where participants communicated learning through written reflections or quizzes, the program facilitator was the only audience, reflecting limited scope and impact. A higher-order alternative used in other programs was to publish reports or instructional materials online for other campus faculty to read and use, slightly widening the scope and making the potential impact greater. Peer observations of teaching that included follow-up conversations between the observer and the instructor were another approach that extended conversations beyond the SPD program and had greater potential for changing practice.

Course transformation teams also tended to reflect higher-order dissemination approaches, as SPD participants often reported changes in department/college meetings and shared the revised course objectives and instructional materials they had developed. On one campus, the impact of teams was also assessed through a comparison of students' grades before and after course transformation. Further, because of their disciplinary focus, course redesign

teams have the potential to change departmental cultures through the diffusion of SoTL work (Reinholtz et al., 2017).

A Focus on Student Learning in Teaching

The extent to which SPD programs focused on student learning, rather than mainly on teaching (Trigwell et al., 2000), was largely dependent on the degree to which higher-order approaches were evident in the other three dimensions. For instance, hands-on workshops tended to emphasize teaching, while reading and discussing SoTL literature often focused on aspects of student learning such as cognitive processing and motivation. Similarly, lower-order reflective projects were often entirely focused on the instructor's perspectives, whereas course transformation teams that included analysis of student data offered a higher-order focus on how students' learning was shaped by different instructional practices and assessment approaches. Thus, the model used and program activities both influenced the degree to which the focus was on student learning rather than only on teaching.

Inclusive Approaches to Defining and Evaluating SoTL

Since Boyer's (1900) landmark publication, there has been an ongoing focus on defining SoTL as a field, including establishing criteria for evaluating SoTL work, in part to establish the value of these efforts (Fanghanel et. al, 2016; Kern et al., 2015). Some scholars distinguish scholarly teaching, which they characterize as literature-based, reflective practice, from the scholarship of teaching and learning, defined more narrowly in terms of systematic inquiry, peer review, and wide public dissemination (Cruz et al., 2019; Kern et al., 2015; Shulman, 2000). Yet the working conditions of VITAL faculty create significant barriers to conducting and publishing systematically-designed research, including limited opportunities for sabbatical, exclusionary IRB rules, and contract-dependent access to library resources (Simmons et al., 2021; Vander

Kloet et al., 2017). As evidence of this, a study of scholarly productivity among community college faculty found that fewer than fifteen percent had published peer-reviewed articles related to teaching in the past three years; however, more than fifty percent of community college faculty had developed 3–5 outcomes related to the scholarship of teaching, such as a presentation for colleagues about a new instructional technique, within the same time frame (Braxton & Lyken-Segosebe, 2015).

These issues highlight the importance for the field of SoTL to define and evaluate efforts in ways that are inclusive of VITAL faculty. VITAL faculty often feel deprofessionalized by their contingent status and the implicit privilege assigned to tenure-line faculty (Levin & Shaker, 2011), and SoTL frameworks can unintentionally perpetuate this privilege through criteria such as experimental methodologies and publications such as textbooks and meta-analysis.

Implications and Conclusions

Our study examined how campuses can create opportunities for VITAL faculty to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) through sustained professional development (SPD), presenting findings from fourteen campuses about the types of programs they offered, the modifications they made so that VITAL faculty could participate, and how different approaches influenced participants' engagement in SoTL. We recognize that SPD programs are developed by a range of institutional actors (e.g., educational developers, academic administrators, VITAL faculty) in different institutional contexts (e.g., CTL, college of engineering, online social work program) with the aim of achieving various goals (e.g., instructional effectiveness, institutional integration, SoTL work). As a result, we focus our recommendations on encouraging participation among VITAL faculty in SPD and on strengthening these programs to promote higher-order SoTL engagement.

Access to SPD

Many VITAL faculty are intrinsically motivated to participate in SPD, as these programs can help them develop stronger pedagogical skills and build community; such opportunities for socialization and professionalization enhance the working conditions VITAL faculty face and can benefit their performance (Banasik & Dean, 2015). Perhaps most importantly, then, campus leaders can ensure that policies do not create barriers that deter VITAL faculty from participating in SPD programs. Some supportive policies for administrators and shared governance leaders to consider include providing compensation or release time for professional development, tying SPD engagement to evaluation, and establishing career pathways that offer promotion opportunities and give preference to interested part-time faculty when full-time positions become available. These policies can strengthen the motivation of VITAL faculty to participate in SPD and improve instructional effectiveness. Addressing policy-related issues is a necessary first step; intentional SPD design choices that promote inclusion of VITAL faculty and their engagement in SoTL are meaningless when policies prevent access to these opportunities.

Design thinking that has been adapted for higher education is one approach campuses can implement that addresses both institutional context and program design; the design for equity framework has proven successful to help campuses improve the working conditions of VITAL faculty in particular (Culver et al., 2021). For instance, this framework highlights the importance for program designers to learn firsthand about the experiences, needs, and motivations of VITAL faculty in order to understand how the complex interplay of policies, practices, and cultures can result in barriers or opportunities for participating in professional development. In addition, the framework highlights the importance of intentional creation of cross-functional design teams. In particular, campuses should leverage the expertise of educational developers when planning

professional development programs, as many have expertise in both program design and SoTL literature.

The findings of this study also suggest some good practices related to the design and implementation of SPD programs that promote the inclusion of VITAL faculty. Program developers can consider offering one-term programs with opportunities for faculty to participate more than once, using a hybrid format that combines some on-campus events with online meetings, and offering both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for learning and community-building. These choices center the needs of adjuncts, who are often the most marginalized faculty on campus, but they can be beneficial for all faculty. Additionally, the role of SPD facilitators can also be more active, including to curate SoTL literature and guide discussions, so that VITAL faculty do not have to spend time finding and reading research articles on their own outside of meetings. Such choices build on the intrinsic motivation that many VITAL faculty have to participate in SPD programs by creating opportunities for learning and connections that are manageable given their other responsibilities; at the same time, designing programs so that the learning and work that VITAL faculty engage in can be connected or applied to evaluation and promotion processes can provide additional incentive to participate. Directly compensating or providing professional development funds to participants is another approach to recognizing and rewarding this work.

While the campuses we studied were successful in promoting participation in SPD among VITAL faculty, none of the campuses had taken a comprehensive approach that addressed policies, intentional design processes, and good practices for implementation. Therefore, to help campuses approach these challenges in a comprehensive way, we have developed a free

resource, the *Designing Accessible and Inclusive Professional Development for NTTF Toolkit* (Culver et al., 2022), which we encourage interested campuses to use to create SPD programs.

SoTL Engagement through SPD

Beyond making SPD available to VITAL faculty in ways that support their critical role in student success (Kezar, 2013c), program developers can also consider how programs can promote deeper, more meaningful engagement in SoTL. Higher-order approaches to SoTL can be integrated into all four of the SPD models we found; however, discussion groups were less likely to evidence these approaches. Therefore, while the choice of model will be shaped by the institutional context, program goals, and the VITAL faculty population of interest, we recommend that program developers also consider opportunities to amplify engagement in SoTL when designing SPD programs.

Program developers can also be intentional in thinking about how program activities can be revised to use higher-order approaches to SoTL engagement. One example is that many activities can be explicitly grounded in SOTL literature through the inclusion of articles or excerpts as part of program curriculum; even the inclusion of citations on handouts can establish the scientific knowledge underlying evidence-based instructional practice. These connections could also be made explicit in workshops, discussion board prompts, and peer observations of teaching.

Programs can also promote more focused inquiry into student learning through helping participants employ classroom assessment techniques (e.g., muddiest point, midsemester course evaluations) and analyze student data (e.g., grades, course management metadata). The design of projects can also foster higher-order engagement in inquiry, and program developers can extend the scope and impact of dissemination by designing projects that can be easily shared beyond the

SPD. Examples of these approaches that align with the professional responsibilities of VITAL faculty include publication of projects on campus websites or creation of an annual symposium with poster sessions and/or roundtables where participants share the results of their inquiry. These activities can also help shift the focus of instructional development from teaching to student learning.

Conclusions

VITAL faculty often have dual identities, seeing themselves as experts in the classroom but having diminished professional identity due to their contingent status and the hierarchical privilege assigned to tenured and tenure-track faculty (Levin & Shaker, 2011). And in a recent study of community college faculty, most respondents did not associate the development of pedagogical expertise with scholarship, based on the framing that faculty at community colleges are "not researchers" (Aguilar-Smith & Gonzales, 2021, p. 193). Having a professional identity inside and outside the classroom contributes significantly to the success and satisfaction of VITAL faculty.

This case study of fourteen campuses identified four types of sustained professional development programs that have been modified to make them accessible to and inclusive of VITAL faculty and that offer opportunities for engagement in SoTL. These efforts can also contribute to the ongoing work of institutionalizing SoTL, a goal espoused by Braxton et al. (2002), Hutchings et al. (2011), and others. Further, sustained professional development offers one example of the ways that the larger system of higher education can be rethought to better support VITAL faculty. When combined with other needed changes, such as providing access to needed resources, opportunities for regular evaluation and promotion, and creating inclusive

departmental cultures, engagement in SoTL through sustained professional development can promote the professional identities and effectiveness of VITAL faculty.

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Table 1. Campuses Included in the Study

Institution	Control	Location	Carnegie Classification
Boise State University	public	Boise, ID	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
California State University San Bernardino	public	San Bernardino, CA	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide Campus	private	online	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs
IUPUI	public	Indianapolis, IN	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
Kennesaw State University	public	Kennesaw, GA	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
Ohio State University	public	Columbus, OH	Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity
San Francisco State University	public	San Francisco, CA	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
Sinclair Community College	public	Dayton, OH	Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Career & Technical-High Nontraditional
Texas State University	public	San Marcos, TX	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
University of Colorado Boulder	public	Boulder, CO	Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity
University of Georgia	public	Athens, GA	Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity
University of Michigan	public	Ann Arbor, MI	Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity
University of North Carolina Charlotte	public	Charlotte, NC	Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity
Valencia College	public	Orlando, FL	Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associate's Dominant

Table 2. Sustained Professional Development Programs.

Institution	SPD Model	Participants		Length	Delivery Mode	Faculty Project	Compensated
		Career Track	Disciplines				
Boise State University	learning community	part-time	mixed	semester	virtual, synchronous with on-campus launch and conclusion	Mid-semester course assessment; reflection	yes
Boise State School of Social Work Online Program	discussion group	mixed (mostly part-time faculty)	social work	drop in	virtual, synchronous	none	no
Boise State First-Year Writing Program	discussion group	VITAL	writing program	semester	on campus	none	no
California State University San Bernardino	certification	VITAL	mixed	semester	virtual, asynchronous with on-campus launch and conclusion	requirements for each module	no

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide Campus	faculty learning community	mixed (mostly part-time faculty)	mixed	six weeks	virtual, asynchronous	discussions and culminating project	no
IUPUI	discussion group	mixed	mixed	drop in	on campus, each offered twice	none	no
Kennesaw State University	faculty learning community	mixed	mixed	yearlong	on campus	collaborative project	yes
Kennesaw State College of Math and Science	instructional action teams	mixed	STEM	yearlong	on campus	course redesign materials; peer observation;	no
Kennesaw State College of Humanities and Social Sciences	faculty learning community	mixed	Humanities; Social Sciences	yearlong	on campus	assessment of course redesign	yes
Ohio State University	faculty learning community	VITAL	mixed	semester	on campus	culminating project	yes
San Francisco State University	faculty learning community	VITAL	mixed	semester	on campus	group project	yes
	certification	mixed	mixed	multiyear; self-paced	on campus	several projects	yes
Sinclair Community College	certification	part-time	mixed	self-paced	virtual, asynchronous with on-	learning assessments;	yes

					campus intensive institute	peer observations	
Texas State University	discussion group	mixed	mixed	semester	on campus	none	no
University of Colorado Boulder	faculty learning community	mixed	STEM	semester	on campus	final project	no
University of Georgia	instructional action teams	mixed	STEM	yearlong	on campus	course redesign; teaching evaluation redesign	
University of Michigan	discussion group	VITAL	STEM	yearlong	hybrid	none	no
University of North Carolina Charlotte	faculty learning community	part-time	mixed	semester	on campus with virtual synchronous option		yes
Valencia College	certification	mixed (mostly part-time faculty)	mixed	self-paced	virtual with in-person orientation	syllabus; course materials	yes