



POD Network News

How Many Centers for Teaching and Learning Are There?

Mary C. Wright, Past President POD Network, 2018-19

The number of teaching and learning centers (CTLs) has been elusive for many years. For example, one recent Gates-funded report suggests that there is “there is no definitive ‘list’ of U.S. higher education teaching and learning centers” (Bishop & Keehn, 2015, p. 6), and it is a question that is asked of the POD Network relatively frequently. The challenges in identifying such a number are many, most centrally because it involves counting organizational units that are frequently being established, re-organized, renamed, or (less frequently) removed. However, to best research and understand the evolution of the field of educational development, it is clearly important to have an estimate.

Using membership records, the POD Network estimates that there are over 500 POD-affiliated centers and programs, largely – but not exclusively – located in the United States. Soon, a directory will be published on the POD Network website to display these units and to allow POD members to make updates to capture the changing nature of our field.

However, beyond POD Network members, what is the total population of centers and programs worldwide? For many years, the University of Kansas Center for Teaching Excellence has provided a great service to the profession by collecting the names and websites of many CTLs, and its [list](#) identifies nearly 400 units. However, a new analysis using POD Network membership lists, the University of Kansas list, and a web search* now finds nearly 1,800 across the globe, representing the dynamic nature of the educational development field.

This number represents 1,788 CTLs and programs, with:

- 1184 in the U.S. and U.S. territories
- 175 in Asia
- 135 in Europe
- 93 in the United Kingdom and Ireland
- 87 in Canada
- 51 in Australia and New Zealand
- 35 in South America and the Carribean
- 22 in Africa
- 6 in the Middle East

If using the Kansas list as a baseline, there has been dramatic growth in the number of CTLs in the United States, from 288 to over 1100. Much of this growth is driven by

significant increases in California, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Texas, states with large numbers of higher education institutions that appear to have made investments in educational development. Many of the new centers include those in community college, state college, and health science faculty development contexts.

The global number is less precise because it is largely dependent on member lists archived on the International Consortium for Educational Development's (ICED's) member network's [page](#), and not all associations have lists, nor may all centers be affiliated with their national or regional educational development association. However, with the CTLs identified thus far, worldwide, there also have been increases in all regions, most significantly Asia and South America. For example, China has added over 100 new centers (members of the Chinese Higher Education Development Network, or [CHED](#)) and Chile's National Network of Teaching Support Centers ([REDCAD](#)) lists 28 CTLs, with only one on previous lists. No African CTLs were previously counted but associations such as Kenya's Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching ([AFELT](#)) and the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa ([HELTASA](#)) indicate that over 20 centers have been established in this region.

Taken together with the dramatic [rise in educational development position postings](#), the substantial increase in CTLs and programs further documents that educational development is a dynamic and vibrant field. Additional faculty development work certainly also takes place outside of CTLs or in units not captured by these search terms, but centers and programs are an important hub of activity that merits enumeration. The POD Network interface, soon to be made publicly available at podnetwork.org, will further help to document the trajectory of our field.

*Programs and Centers for Teaching and Learning were identified by use of the University of Kansas Center for Teaching Excellence [list](#), with the addition of new units identified through: (1) POD Network members and conference attendees in the past two years, if the unit also involved faculty or educational development-related work, (2) a December 2018 web search of every U.S. state plus the keywords "faculty development" or "center for teaching," (3) a web search of the name of every accredited college and university in the United States plus "teaching center," (4) a December 2018 web search of "medical school" and "faculty affairs" or "faculty development," and (5) a December 2018 search of all networks listed on the International Consortium for Educational Development's member network's [page](#) for their member lists. To be included in the count, centers needed to have a web presence on a college or university site and to list some form of programs, events, or services that they offer (i.e., not just a listing of web resources or a staff bio).

Sources Cited:

Bishop, M.J., & Keehn, A. (2015). *Leading academic change: An early market scan of leading-edge postsecondary academic innovation centers*. William Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation. Available: <https://www.educause.edu/sites/default/files/library/presentations/E15/PS11/LeadingAcademicChangeProjectReport.pdf>