

CTE NOTEBOOK

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“Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)”

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Reinert CTE Mission Statement

The mission of the Paul C. Reinert, S.J. Center for Teaching Excellence is to support Saint Louis University faculty and graduate students so that they can better serve the intellectual, spiritual, and social needs of all learners.

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Assessment, Rubrics, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Dr. Jay Hammond
Department of Theological Studies

Next semester the Department of Theological Studies (DTS) will be concluding its three year Wabash Center grant entitled, “Assessment as Proactive Pedagogy,” which has reviewed the DTS undergraduate and graduate programs. What follows is a reflection on how the grant activities contribute to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

What is SoTL?

Simply stated, SoTL is “the systematic reflection or study of teaching and learning made public” [Kathleen McKinny, *Enhancing Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco: Anker, 2007), p. 12]. For the past two and one-half years the DTS has pursued two goals: (1) embed clear assessment rubrics in DTS that make the reciprocity between learning outcomes and teaching methods more visible and practical; and (2) advance a departmental culture of assessment through critical, creative, careful and collaborative reflection about the practices of teaching and learning. Three questions have guided our conversation about teaching: Why are we doing what we are doing? What are we doing? How do we know how we are doing? The findings of the DTS extended conversation will be published in the journal *Teaching Theology and Religion*.

Why do SoTL?

While there are many reasons, the DTS agreed to participate in the grant for one basic reason: to create an assessment model that is learning-centered, pedagogically driven, and practically actionable. We want assessment to be pedagogically useful to make sure that our teaching actually fosters student learning, and to know how such learning occurs. Any and all reporting for accreditation purposes is a byproduct of this primary concern.



From the Director

September 28 marked the Center for Teaching Excellence's first symposium on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Kathleen McKinney, Ph.D., Cross Chair in SoTL at Illinois State University offered a workshop on "Conducting and Applying the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Informing Our Practice as Teachers." The workshop was followed by the presentation of the Center's James Korn SoTL Award to Jay Hammond, Ph.D., Department of Theological Studies. We were particularly delighted to have Professor Emeritus Jim Korn present the award.

The word "problem" tends to convey very different meanings when used in relation to scholarly research as opposed to teaching. In scholarly research, a *problem* is viewed as a basis for discovery, publication and academic success, while in teaching it is often considered a cause for remediation. Randy Bass from Georgetown University raises the question "How might we think of teaching practice, and the evidence of student learning, as problems to be investigated, analyzed, represented and debated?" The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) attempts to do that. In her workshop, Dr. McKinney pointed out that SoTL can be defined in many ways often depending on disciplinary nuances and institutional contexts. The definition of SoTL adopted by faculty at Illinois State is "systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public." Just as there is no one definition of SoTL, there is no one way of doing research on teaching and learning. Any of many research methodologies might be used. Benefits of having faculty conduct research on teaching and learning are many. The most important of these benefits is improved teaching and student learning. SoTL can also assist with assessment and help revitalize faculty experiencing teaching fatigue.

This issue of *The Notebook* contains lists of resources and publication sources for articles on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. One resource that I recommend is Kathleen McKinney's book (available in library), *Enhancing Learning Through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*.

As a result of the September 28 SoTL workshop a group of faculty interested in meeting to support each other in developing, implementing and publishing SoTL projects is being hosted by the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact me at Stephen@slu.edu.



For a list of pedagogical journals go to:

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/cft/resources/cft_library/index.htm#journals

CTE Certificate Ceremony Awards for Excellence in Teaching

Friday, December 7, 2007

DuBourg 157

3:30-5:00pm

How to do SoTL?

Of all things learned during the grant period, one development is particularly intriguing. Like other departments, the DTS is faced with the question, how to measure student learning according to SLU's 5 dimensions? One answer is to construct pre/post tests that measure "a baseline of course-specific information" on the 100-300 levels, which instructors construct using the 5 dimensions. On the positive side, this allows every teacher to measure the baseline according to what is specifically taught in each individual class. Thus, the student learning outcome can be measured with a rather high degree of specificity. On the negative side, the 5 dimensions are presented as "conceptual categories" rather than "performance indicators." For example, for SLU Dimension 3: Community, a question may relate to the fact that "rituals form the identity and activity of any community," rather than an indicator that measures "working collaboratively" or "advocating diversity." The purpose of the pre/post test is to measure the baseline learning in a course; other indicators that measure the 5 dimensions are not excluded. Even with its limitations, the pre/post test will: (1) connect student learning with the 5 dimensions, (2) connect instructor teaching with the five dimensions, while (3) assessing the success of the teaching and learning against an explicit baseline. In sum, the "conceptual categories" of the 5 dimensions aids the DTS in the pedagogical activity of shaping habits of mind. With one semester to go, I look forward to the rubrics the DTS devises to evaluate student writing, reading, speaking and research beyond baseline proficiency.

SOTL CONFERENCES 2008

January 18-21:

3rd annual Teaching and Learning for Empowerment:

A Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference for Minority Serving Institutions and Institutions

Serving "Minorities"

Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia

www.caucetlinfo.org

March 26-28:

SoTL 2008:

On The Subject, a Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

<http://www.sotlconference.org>

April 3-5:

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference

"Fostering the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through Student and Faculty Partnerships"

Missouri State University

Springfield, Missouri

<http://adc.missouristate.edu/conference.htm>

April 11:

The Ninth Annual Midwest Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Indiana University South Bend

South Bend, Indiana

http://www.iusb.edu/~ucet/sotl_2008.shtml

May 15-16:

The London Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL)

7th International Conference

The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists

Regent's Park London, UK

<http://www.city.ac.uk/ceap/sotlconference/index.html>

October 16-19:

International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

"Celebrating Connections: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship"

The ISSOTL 5th Annual Conference

Edmonton Alberta Canada

<http://www.indiana.edu/~issotl08/>

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning as Faculty Agenda

Faculty Describe Their Experiences with SoTL



Robert Cropf, PhD,
Associate Professor,
Public Policy Studies

Jennifer Kohler, PhD, Director,
School of Professional Studies



Student written case studies bridge the gap between theory and practice by applying course concepts to a real-life experience. The assignment requires the student to investigate and critically analyze a course relevant issue in an organization or their work place. The student then synthesizes the research into a compelling case including teaching questions and possible instructor responses. Subsequently, cases can and should be presented, discussed, and/or completed in the classroom to promote peer learning. While our experience and preliminary research indicate that students enjoy and benefit from the case assignment, the novelty of it challenges and, at times, frustrates the students. Success is contingent on devoting in- and out-of-class time to assisting students and providing multiple examples and ongoing feedback.

Chammie Austin, PhD, Assistant Professor,
Psychology

Role expectations students possess change with every new course. While some students embrace the challenges associated with shifting expectations, others experience a great deal of anxiety, worry, and apprehension (particularly as it relates to being evaluated). These experiences have been linked to the impostor phenomenon. Impostor sufferers often worry that, despite contrary evidence, others will view them as unintelligent. One way students who experience impostor feelings attempt to cope is by avoiding (e.g., not addressing) how they feel or what they believe. This way of coping has serious consequences for the individual's academic (and life) functioning. This research informs my pedagogy. Taking this knowledge into consideration, I regularly elicit students' examples and interpretations of relevant constructs and normalize their difficulties in attempting to comprehend what is being taught. By attending to (aspects of) the process (and not just product) and creating a safe,

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SERVICE LEARNING

Integrative Learning

Faculty, are you using these?

Service learning is an experiential tool attached to a credit bearing course. It engages a community site as another text for students to use their learning process, determine their personal values, and develop civic responsibility.

Integrative learning pulls together different, even contradictory ideas, subject areas, skills and experiences to provide a more integrated, unified view of knowledge.

If you've used service learning or integrative learning in your class, we want to know about your experiences (we may feature you in an upcoming issue of the CTE notebook).

For Service Learning, contact Mark Pousson at poussonj@slu.edu

For Integrated Courses, contact Beth Hill at bhill7@slu.edu

respectful climate, I have observed that students are more engaged in the learning process and are less likely to harbor impostor beliefs.



**Karen A. Myers, PhD,
Associate Professor, Educational
Leadership and Higher Education**

“Have I excluded any student in my class today?” This question continually plays in my head as I facilitate in-class and online courses. Unintentional actions such as providing a handout in 10-point font, turning my back to the class as I simultaneously talk and write on the board, and requiring an assignment on Blackboard without providing Blackboard operation instructions may have excluded students with various backgrounds, learning styles, language skills, abilities and disabilities. To enhance inclusion, I do my best to teach and model the principles of Universal Instructional Design (UID) by developing curriculum that ensures equal access to all students. Through writing, research, training, committee work, conferences and workshops with colleagues at SLU (including the CTE and UID Community of

Practice) and across the country, my intention is to spread the word by asking, “Is your curriculum UID-friendly?”



**Paaige Turner, PhD,
Associate Professor,
Communication Interim Director,
Women’s Studies**

I developed a module for my organizational communication course that covered a new of area of study, organizational spirituality. Organizational spirituality is a high growth area in the field of communication, but there is almost no literature on how to integrate it into topics that are traditionally covered in an organizational communication course. My module integrated the emerging research in organizational spirituality with current course topics of diversity in the workplace, work/life balance, communication ethics, and communication professions. The lesson plan, including references and assessments, was presented at the Central States Communication Conference for review and to help others integrate this new area into their courses. (Funded by the VOICES Project at SLU).

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**The Newsletter of the Centre for Teaching,
Learning, and Assessment at the University
of Edinburgh**

Download the current issue:

*“The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning—
No One Way”*

[http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/interchangefolder/
interchange1.pdf](http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/interchangefolder/interchange1.pdf)

**International Journal for the
Scholarship of Teaching & Learning**

*International Journal for the Scholarship
of Teaching & Learning* is an open, peer-
reviewed, international electronic journal
published twice a year by the Center for
Excellence in Teaching at Georgia
Southern University.

[http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/
current.htm](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/current.htm)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2008

The Ninth Annual Midwest Conference on The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Friday, April 11, 2008
Indiana University South Bend.

Cultivating Excellence through Mentoring and Collaboration

To submit a proposal, please send the following information *for each presenter* to:
The University Center for Excellence in Teaching, Indiana University South Bend-ucet@iusb.edu
(Electronic submission only, please).

For more instructions, visit our website at:

http://www.iusb.edu/~ucet/sotl_2008.shtml

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**Gregory S. Yablonsky, PhD,
Professor, Department of Chemistry**

“My favorite discovery is discovery of diamonds... I like how something elegant and amazing can come from something so unattractive” (M.E.).

“I have always specially admired Planck. He is not so recognized, but still...he made one of the greatest theories in science” (M.Z).

These fragments are taken from two students' essays. Students had to present such essays (1 page) within my Chemistry courses. Science, particularly Chemistry, is an adventure in the sea of boring facts and amazing discoveries, deep concepts and unexpected applications. We, lecturers and instructors, are going to present students such a Science. Typically, we don't pay enough attention to the development of skills of verbal reasoning and writing on scientific or engineering topics. Preparing these essays, students have been provided with links to Internet resources. Some essays are touching,

some funny, some even strange. However not less than 30% students wrote texts in which they expressed the real admiration and growing motivation in science and engineering. Moreover, in few essays it can be found seeds of the passion, which could not be considered as a fake.

This experiment gave me more than I expected. Such a method can be used as an additional tool for different purposes:

- 1) to develop student skills in verbal reasoning on professional topics related to science and engineering;
- 2) to promote panoramic thinking on the future science and technology;
- 3) to enhance student motivation.

The group of students with best essays (“essayists) is generally not a group of A-students (“problem solvers”). However, there are about 5 students (from 125!) which are belonging to both groups. I consider it makes sense to develop a methodology of early distinguishing such young people who are able to “think by two hemispheres.”

SOTL RESOURCES

Congratulations to this year's recipient of the Jim Korn Award for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning



Dr. Jim Korn (left) presenting Dr. Jay Hammond (right) with Jim Korn Award

The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (JoSoTL) is a forum for the dissemination of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in higher education for the community of teacher-scholars.

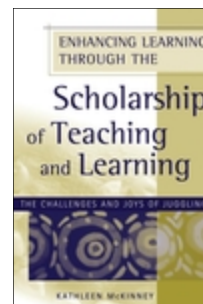


<http://www.iupui.edu/~josotl/index.htm>



Kathleen McKinney on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Kathleen McKinney, Ph.D., Cross Endowed Chair of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University, presented the workshop "Conducting and Applying the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Informing Our Practice as Teachers" at SLU in September. Her new book, entitled "**Enhancing Learning Through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Challenges and Joys of Juggling**" addresses the following topics:



- Defining SoTL
- The functions, value, rewards, and standards for SoTL work
- Working with colleagues, involving students, writing grants, integrating SoTL into your professional life, and finding useful resources
- Practical and ethical issues associated with SoTL work
- Making your SoTL public and documenting your work
- The status of SoTL in disciplinary and Institutional contexts
- Applying the goals of SoTL to enhance student learning and development.



The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is an independent policy and research center with a primary mission "to do and perform all things necessary to encourage, uphold, and dignify the profession of the teacher and the cause of higher education."

<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/programs>

**Is your research human
subjects research?
Are you IRB exempt?
What are the IRB guidelines
for your department?**

**To find out, contact your IRB
or visit the website at:**

**[http://www.slu.edu/research/irb/?
D=1](http://www.slu.edu/research/irb/?D=1)**

MountainRise is an open, peer-reviewed, international electronic journal published twice a year for the purpose of being an international vehicle for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

For more information, go to:

[http://facctr.wcu.edu/mountainrise/
submitting.html](http://facctr.wcu.edu/mountainrise/submitting.html)



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