

## ***Integration within the Scholarship of Teaching:***

### ***When Teachers become Learners in Foreign Disciplines***

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Four years ago I was involved in a project on our campus to revise the promotion and tenure criteria for judging scholarship and teaching in our school of education. We had the usual differences of opinion on the scholarship of discovery, teaching, and application but since we were all faculty in a school of education we found common ground fairly easily compared to some of the discussions I have observed across campus. But when we moved to a discussion of the scholarship of integration we had trouble coming to a mutual definition and vision of how the scholarship of integration would be demonstrated in our field.

Boyer (1990) defines the scholarship of integration in the following way: "By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialists, too. " (p. 18) My understanding of the scholarship of integration envisioned colleagues who were doing interdisciplinary work which interpreted and integrated original research. My position in our discussions was that this was typically done by senior colleagues who were the renaissance men and women of the academy. I suggested that only someone with a very broad understanding of multiple disciplines could possibly pull together truly divergent content in significant ways. Some of my younger colleagues disagreed with me (perhaps it was an age discrimination issue) and we never really resolved the question. Now as the managing editor of the *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* the issue of integration has raised a number of important questions for me. During the past year I

have thought about integration not only as one of Boyer's four types of scholarship but also in light of the importance and challenge of integration within the scholarship of teaching.

Each spring the member of the Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET) of Indiana University meet for a professional development retreat to discuss, demonstrate, and learn new approaches to teaching. Each year I am impressed by the variety of teaching pedagogues used by expert teachers in every imaginable discipline. The following fall I try to integrate some of the new strategies I have learned into my classes. I value my weekend retreat with my faculty colleagues from the eight campuses of Indiana University because they all are passionate about teaching and they each have a slightly different view of how to facilitate learning. I have gained a great deal from professors of music, art, sociology, geology, information processing, and dozens of other disciplines and I have found the teaching approaches which are common to their discipline may be new to me. I appreciate their devotion to teaching and their expertise in part because I cannot find the time to review the teaching literature in their field and, since they are expert teachers, I willingly become their student.

I like to think **JoSoTL** affords a wider audience some of the same opportunities - - to make connections across the teaching disciplines, to place teaching our discipline in a broader context, and to educate all of us to approaches from disciplines in which we are not specialists. Conferences and other forums (such as **JoSoTL**) which invite colleagues to discuss teaching across disciplines are attempting to integrate pedagogies from diverse disciplines to improve teaching in all disciplines. But just as it is difficult to agree on a definition of the scholarship of integration it is also challenging to come to common ground on integrating the scholarship of teaching across disciplines.

During the past year I have sent out dozens of manuscripts for review. The reviewers for **JoSoTL** are all teaching award winners who are members of FACET. They come from many discipline with a wide variety of methodological expertise but a common passion for pursuing excellence in teaching and facilitating student learning. For the first issue of **JoSoTL** I sent each manuscript to two reviewers assuming I would receive similar feedback which would make my job as editor fairly simple. I was surprised to find broad discrepancies; it seemed that there was very little agreement by the reviewers as to the specific criteria to judge SoTL even though we all used the six standards of scholarly work presented in Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997). As a new field, the scholarship of teaching and learning is still somewhat elusive which makes assessment difficult but at the same time presents some interesting advantages. I realized from reading the feedback from the reviewers that we could learn from one another across disciplines.

As we publish the first issue of the second volume of the **JoSoTL** I would like to share what we have learned about the SoTL from those who have submitted manuscripts and from those who have reviewed these manuscripts. The most important lesson I have learned in my role as managing editor is how much I have to learn about how my colleagues teach and what they view as the scholarship of teaching and learning. Just as I have learned from my interactions with my colleagues at the FACET spring conference I can also learn from reading the scholarship of your teaching. When I focus solely on the pedagogies of experts in my discipline I may be missing innovative approaches which can be applied to my discipline. I have recently begun to implement case studies in my teaching which I learned from colleagues in law and medicine: expert teachers in these disciplines have been using these approaches for decades.

One of the important reasons for **JoSoTL** is it gives those of us who are committed to improving teaching the opportunity to integrate the learning we gain from colleagues in other fields into our own teaching, and to build on their work. The essence of scholarship is to create a knowledge base by making our work accessible to our colleagues for their review and learning. An important

benefit of the scholarship of teaching is it allows us to integrate knowledge of the teaching-learning process into our discipline from colleagues who may have a different perspective because of the pedagogical knowledge base from their field. What is common practice in some fields (e.g., case studies in medicine and law) may be rarely used in other fields, or at least unknown to some teachers in a different field. This infusion of established pedagogy from other disciplines into our classrooms is one of the missions of **JoSoTL** and we invite colleagues to submit manuscripts that educate all of us to these approaches. While case studies or problem based learning may be common practice in medicine it is valuable to read an article describing the application of case studies or problem based learning to another field. Broadening the knowledge base to include the assimilation of an approach into another field is an important contribution to integrating the scholarship of teaching.

We can learn a great deal by broadening our horizons beyond our own discipline but there are problems inherent when we venture beyond our field of specialization. Each of our fields has its own vocabulary and approaches to teaching and scholarship. Our students refer to this as jargon (for them, a very negative connotation) and our role is to educate them to the vocabulary of our world. We are comfortable living within the environment of our expertise and may find it awkward to venture into a field new to us - much like our students. Since the scholarship of teaching is a relatively new endeavor the vocabulary (dare we say jargon) and criteria is still being established and we find the amalgamation across fields difficult. For the first two issues of **JoSoTL** we based our criteria for the review process on the six standards of scholarly work presented in Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997). This was certainly a good place to begin but we found the review process difficult because of differences across disciplines in what was considered scholarship. I suppose this should have come as no surprise given the vast discrepancies that always occur during campus discussions of the Boyer model of scholarship. We assumed the six criteria would give our reviewers a common foundation that would minimize differences, but the differences across disciplines was more than expected. It seems many reviewers were holding the same standards for the scholarship of teaching that they held for the scholarship of discovery within their disciplines. This raises the important question: Should the standards be different?

As the editors of the *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* our mission is to encourage teachers to become involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning movement. Certainly an important aspect of this movement is to further excellence in SoTL but we also believe it is important to create a venue which educates our colleagues about SoTL and also invites them into the discussion on effective teaching. To further this mission we have modified the format for the second volume of **JoSoTL**. We are still using the six criteria of Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) but we have modified these criteria somewhat to match three different types of submissions we believe are appropriate for **JoSoTL**: traditional research, classroom action research, and essays on SoTL.

To assist authors in submitting their manuscripts, and facilitate the review process, we have devised a set of rubrics for each of the three formats ([click here for the reviewer's rubric](#)) and have included an article ([click here for Gwynn's article](#)) by Gwynn Mettetal, one of our co-editors, describing the differences between classroom action research (CAR) and traditional research. We hope the rubrics, and Dr. Mettetal's article, will not only assist authors and reviewers in the review process but also encourage more of our colleagues to be involved in SoTL. Scholarship of teaching and learning is not a spectator sport, it is a process which is learned best by active participation. Just as we are encouraging our students to be active learners we, at **JoSoTL**, want our readers to be active learners of SoTL. Let me start the active learning process rolling by giving some suggestion to help the spectators get into the game:

**Introductory Reflective Critique** - My own research examines metacognitive awareness in students and I have found my best students “know when they know.” Effective learners have a good sense of their mastery of the material they are studying. I have found good teachers possess this same metacognitive awareness of the effectiveness of their teaching. To begin the SoTL process begin to write down your reflections on your teaching and consider the effective and ineffective strategies you use in your teaching. You don’t *have* to share these with colleagues but making your reflections “public” is the first step in scholarship. These reflections inevitably lead to your teaching goals and help you to focus on what you want to change in your teaching to bring about changes in student learning.

**Connections to the Knowledge Base** - Scholarship is based on, and eventually builds on, the knowledge base of the field. To be a scholar in any field we must be aware of the work of those who have gone before us. To be a scholarly teacher one must be aware of the knowledge base of the pedagogue of teaching. Just as we began learning the knowledge base of our academic discipline with small steps, we should begin to learn about the knowledge base of the pedagogue of our field in small steps. As Dr. Mettetal points out in her article, the review of the literature in classroom action research is much less thorough than in traditional research. The first step in the scholarship of teaching and learning for many faculty may be classroom action research: you don’t need to be “the expert” to enter the discussion and begin to build your knowledge base.

**Methods and Results** - I suspect many faculty are hesitant to get involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning because they hold the same rigorous research standards for potential SoTL projects that they hold for their own traditional research. We believe classroom action research is a good place to begin SoTL because the methodology and analysis of results are less rigorous and more focused on practical significance than statistical significance. Once you find practical results that give direction to the research on your teaching you may become motivated to become more demanding in your standards. This does not dismiss the value of your classroom action research. Classroom action research is worthwhile but readers should be more cautious about the generalizability of the finding of CAR.

**Reflective Critique** - The editors of **JoSoTL** are putting a great deal of emphasis on reflective critique for traditional research, classroom action research, and essays on SoTL. We believe all SoTL should have practical applications and the most important analysis and commentary on those applications should come from the teachers involved in the research. It is not uncommon for basic researchers to be cautious about suggesting how their findings could be used in practice. We hope scholars of teaching and learning will go out on a limb and discuss: their unexpected finding and possible interpretations; the limitations of their study within and across classroom setting; potential implications for practice in similar classrooms and in diverse classrooms; and potential implications for theory and pedagogy.

What we are trying to do in the second volume of the *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* is to invite more of our colleagues into the discussion. The SoTL is a growing movement that we believe has room for many levels of expertise across all disciplines. Each spring I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with colleagues from many different disciplines at our FACET retreat. Their expertise and perspective on teaching has given me a new appreciation for the contributions of the many disciplines within a university. Unfortunately, not all faculty have the opportunity to spend an extended weekend with teaching colleagues from many disciplines. We hope the *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* gives our readers the chance to learn from other teachers and to teach other teachers.

In the academy we value diversity and we challenge our students to seek to understand diverse points of view and be open to the benefits of alternative interpretations of “the truth”. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for us to view the world through the eyes of our discipline *and*

the generally accepted approaches being used to teach our discipline. But the standard approach to teach psychology today is different than it was twenty years ago and it may be the case that what is popular in psychology today is now passé in sociology or English. When we read about pedagogies from our colleagues in other disciplines we deepen our understanding of the teaching-learning process and broaden our horizons on what is possible in our own teaching. One of the goals of the *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* is to give our readers the opportunity to see what colleagues in other disciplines are doing in their classrooms.

When Boyer spoke of the scholarship of integration he was referring to integrating content across disciplines; I believe it is also important that we integrate pedagogies of teaching across disciplines. Maybe I was wrong when I intimated that integration was done primarily by the renaissance men and women of the academy. When we are open to learn from all our colleagues, of any age, in any field, we can all grow in our teaching and our knowledge of the teaching-learning process. I'm sure my junior colleagues will take the opportunity to point out the foolishness of my thinking . . . I'll remember to learn from their teaching.

### References

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