Beyond Best Practices: Scholarship of Teaching & Learning 2.0

Part I
May 6, 1-4

Part II
May 7, 1-4

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What do you hear colleagues saying—in the hallway, copy room, coffeehouse, meetings, etc—about Belmont students?
Familiar Comments?

• Students don’t pay attention to my lectures.
• We got behind, and now I’m worried that we’re not covering enough material this semester.
• No matter how many times I explain this concept, students never get it!
• I’m so frustrated with the number of students who text in class.

Imagine These Instead

• My lectures don’t seem to be working. What are some effective revisions or even alternatives to lecturing?
• My students had a breakthrough today with this difficult concept. I’m glad we stopped and looked at it from multiple angles.
• I’d like to find out precisely where my students’ understanding of this concept gets stalled, and why.
• I wonder if there’s a way to harness students’ love of their smartphones to improve our class discussions, rather than distract from them.
To say that the purpose of colleges is to provide instruction is like saying that General Motors' business is to operate assembly lines or that the purpose of medical care is to fill hospital beds. We now see that our mission is not instruction but rather that of producing learning with every student by whatever means work best. 

**Missions & Purposes**

**Instruction Paradigm**
- Provide/deliver instruction
- Transfer knowledge from faculty to student
- Offer courses & programs
- Improve quality of instruction
- Achieve access for diverse students

**Learning Paradigm**
- Produce learning
- Elicit students' discovery & construction of knowledge
- Create learning environments
- Improve quality of learning
- Achieve success for diverse students

**Teaching & Learning**

**Instruction Paradigm**
- Covering material
- Knowledge delivered by instructor, received by students
- "Storehouse of knowledge" 
- Teacher-centered
- Faculty are primarily lecturers
- Faculty & students act independently, isolated
- Any expert can teach

**Learning Paradigm**
- Specified learning results
- Knowledge constructed by students & instructor
- "Riding a bicycle"
- Student- & learning-centered
- Faculty are primarily designers of learning methods/environments
- Faculty & students work with each other (& other staff)
- Facilitating learning is challenging & complex

**Meaningful Ways of Responding to T/L Questions**

(a continuum, not a hierarchy)

- Reflective Teaching
- Assessment
- Scholarly Teaching
- Scholarship of Teaching
- Educational Research

Brookfield, Palmer
Angelo & Cross
McTighe
Bass, 1999, \textit{Webbning}
Cross & Staszewski
L. \textit{E} & \textit{C} tradition
Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher, Stephen Brookfield

thinking about our teaching & assumptions about teaching from different perspectives
- our own experiences as teachers & learners
- our students’ perceptions of what “they find affirming or inhibiting”
- our colleagues as “mirrors, mentors, & critical friends with whom we engage in critical conversations about our practice”
- the literature

Assessment

gathering, analyzing, & using evidence of student learning to improve student learning
- Individual classroom assessment techniques (CAT): minute paper, muddiest point, clickers
- Department/program assessments: assess course learning outcomes
- Institution-wide assessments: NSSE, CLA

Scholarly Teaching

“Scholarly teaching is what every one of us should be engaged in every day that we are in a classroom; in our office with students, tutoring, lecturing, conducting discussions, all the roles we play pedagogically.” Lee Shulman

- Teaching as part of larger conversation
- Reflection
- Discuss with peers
- Informed by latest ideas & research on teaching (generally & in the discipline)
- Use classroom assessment to gather evidence of learning
- Invite peer collaboration & review
Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

Ernest Boyer, Scholarship Reconsidered (1990)

- One of four types of scholarship within our academic work
- There's a scholarship of teaching for everyone, not just education departments.
- Overcome “tired old” teaching vs. research dichotomy
- ... Vaguely defined

“Big Tent” (Hutchings & Huber)

Education Research

- Social science research
- Education departments & educational psychologists
- Not by (often not for) other disciplinary experts
What is SoTL?

Excerpts of video from bottom left of this page
https://my.vanderbilt.edu/sotl/understanding-sotl/a-scholarly-approach-to-teaching/

What is SoTL?

problems

“What matters most is for teachers to investigate the problems that matter most to them.” ~Bass, 1999

• Every semester, students struggle most with this concept.
• Students talk in class, but many don’t participate effectively.
• Students must not read my feedback on their papers because they repeat the same patterns over and over.
• Identify a problem with your students’ learning—ideally one that’s plagued you, puzzled you, or piqued your interest.

• Why is it a “problem”? Describe the situation, context, background, and consequences of the problem.

“All of these changes— in students, content, methods, assessment, and technology— invite pedagogical inquiry.” — Huber & Hutchings 2005

“The heart of the investigative process” results in “the generative questions around which all creative and productive activity revolves.” — Bass, 1999

Sample Questions

• What happens during conversations of difficult topics in my women’s studies class?
• What elements (if any) of what happens in the classroom generate joy in students?
• How do students’ prior experiences with literature affect their close reading skills?
• How do students experience interdisciplinary studies courses?
• Does integrating cooperative learning into a large introductory chemistry course help students (especially those who struggle most) with conceptual understanding, problem-solving ability, and self-confidence?
• Will my students think more critically if I add other kinds of exam questions beyond just multiple choice?
Problem: Students have trouble with $x$.

- What do they understand about $x$? What does it look like to understand it?
- What do they not understand about it? What are their misconceptions, bottlenecks, mental roadblocks about it? What do these difficulties look like?
- Why do they have difficulty with it? What are the sources of their misconceptions?
- What are the consequences of their misconceptions?
- How can I help students understand $x$?
- Does changing (or adding) $___$ help them understand $x$?

“You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about…"

You listen for awhile, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you…

The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.”

– Kenneth Burke, “The Philosophy of Literary Form”

“A Finished SoTL Project”

1. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
2. It’s situated in a conversation among scholars.
3. It has some sort of “data.”
4. The data has been analyzed.

“Lendol Calder & Mills Kelly, CASTL Institute at Columbia College Chicago, 6-10-06"
METHODOLOGY

project design
 evidence of learning
   + how evidence is analyzed

"Every scholarly & professional field is defined by the questions it asks."
   - Pat Hutchings, Opening Lines (2000)

question asked  ➞ project design
| "what works?" | seek "evidence about the relative effectiveness of different [teaching] approaches" |
| "what is?" | seek to describe "what it looks like" |
| "what's possible?" | related to goals for teaching and learning that have yet to be met or are new to the faculty member asking the question |
| theory-building questions | designed to build theoretical frameworks ("shaping thought about practice") for SoTL, similar to those in disciplines |

annotate short text for ‘conflicting’ patterns

-> read & articulate ambiguity as valuable, meaningful, multi-layered textual moments

(Chick, Hassel, & Rybak, Pedagogy, 2009)

“What is?” “What does it look like?” “What happens when...?”

“As we analyzed how students undertook their literary tasks, several patterns emerged in their thinking:

1. specific approaches to & attitudes toward the discipline itself
2. beliefs & strategies about the site of interpretive authority / where the power to identify meaning is located (the author, the instructor, the reader, the text)
3. misunderstandings of the processes of literary interpretation.”

Chick, Hassel, & Rybak
goals “what is?”
- meaning-making
  - description
  - understanding
  - discovery
  - hypothesis generalizing
- design
  - inductive
  - evolving
  - emergent
- students
  - small
  - purposeful
  - richly descriptive

results “what works?”
- prediction
  - confirmation
  - causation
  - fixing
- testing hypothesis
- deductive
  - structured
  - controlled
  - predetermined
- large
  - random
  - precise

Z happened, and it looks like a, b, & c.

E led to f.

• samples of students’ work (papers, journals, projects, presentations, performances, recorded or online discussion)
• classroom assessment techniques (minute paper, muddiest pt, clicker data)
• evidence of how students think (think-alouds, process logs, reflective journals, concept maps)
• scores (exam, or single exam question)
• counts (online postings, office visits, # pages read/written, hours studied)
• institutional research data (grades, GPAs, admissions scores, retention rates)
• students’ reports of their learning (surveys, interviews, focus groups)

quality collaboration dissemination

tomorrow
my.vanderbilt.edu/sotl

Thank you!