CASTL, Student Voices, and Learner Autonomy: An Update
Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair in SoTL and Sociology

Illinois State University (ISU) has been involved with the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) since its inception in 1998. The campus portion of CASTL is nearing the end of phase three, the final phase—the CASTL Leadership Program. In this phase, we are one of six schools in the theme group on student voices in SoTL (with California State University-Long Beach, Elon University, North Seattle Community College, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and Western Washington University—the coordinating institution). Our theme group's agreed upon general mission is the following: "We commit to engaging students as collaborative partners in improving teaching and learning through SoTL. We charge ourselves to create models that re-conceptualize learning spaces and roles. We will investigate, expand, share, and reflect upon experiences of learning founded on participation, reciprocity, and trust toward the development of student voices."

At Illinois State, we chose to link student voices in SoTL with our initiative to promote learner autonomy through SoTL. Our goals for involvement in this phase of CASTL included the following:

- Improve faculty and student knowledge about the current literature on learner autonomy.
- Support SoTL research projects (with student team members) on learner autonomy; offer assistance with design, implementation, making public, and application.
- Increase undergraduate and graduate student involvement in SoTL and research collaborations among faculty, staff, and students.
- Strengthen the SoTL component in graduate student training.
- Enhance student learning and learner autonomy through student involvement in SoTL.
- Help faculty and students use the knowledge base and their own SoTL research results on learner

autonomy to deal with common and distressing issues related to teaching and learning that may be related to low levels of learner autonomy (e.g., preparation, participation, reading, making good choices, time management).

We have completed or are engaged in several actions related to our goals.

- Created a web site about learner autonomy: http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/castlAahe/autoWeb.shtml. Links and resources welcome!
- Conducted workshops and discussion sessions on both doing SoTL and on learner autonomy, as well as practical applications of that knowledge.
    1. SoTL workshop for Graduate Students on February 27, 2009
    2. Graduate Student-Faculty Conversation on Learner Autonomy- Spring 2009
    3. Student-Faculty Conversation on Learner Autonomy: Where does learning take place and who is responsible?- September, 2008
    4. Student-Faculty Conversation on Learner Autonomy: Perspectives on Learning- February, 2008
    5. Student Research on The University: Ethnography of the University- Spring 2008
- Offered small, internal grants for SoTL projects on learner autonomy, funding twelve small grants (about $4-5k each) in the last three years.
- Helped SoTL researchers with study design and other issues for learner autonomy projects.
- Provided internal "making public" opportunities. Presentations at the the Partnerships for Student Learning regional conference at Illinois State in September 2008 and at the Illinois State Teaching-Learning Symposium in 2006, 2007, and 2008. Brief reports published in the SoTL at ISU newsletter. New publication in process.

- Connected learner autonomy to the co-curriculum and made collaborations with student affairs.
     Our second Student-Faculty Conversations on Learning involved connections with Student Affairs.
- Conducted small, qualitative assessment study of the results, impact, and role of students in SoTL internal grants (accomplished and reported in the Sublett, Walsh, McKinney, and Faigao chapter below).
- Contributed to Themed Group Final Product, resulting in the following chapters in *Student Voices*

in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Listening is Not Enough. (2009). Carmen Werder and Megan Otis, eds. Sterling, VA: Stylus (includes student co-author on each chapter):
     1. McKinney, K., Jarvis, P., Creasey, G., & Herrmann, D. "A Range of Student Voices." And 2. Sublett, M., Walsh, J., McKinney, K., & Faigao, D. "Student Voices through Research Projects on Learner Autonomy."

Two Reflections by 'First Timers' at the ISSOTL Annual Meetings

John Walker, School of Art and College of Fine Arts

I had the privilege of presenting a paper at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning's annual meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on October 18, 2009. The conference provided the opportunity to learn what others are doing in this growing area of scholarship and allowed me to place my own disciplinary- specific SoTL work within the larger SoTL field.

The keynote speakers provided overviews of recent work on teaching and learning. These speakers illuminated the direction in which SoTL is moving and the theme of the conference: Celebrating Connections. Throughout the conference I was reminded of the interest in sharing knowledge across disciplines, how much teaching scholars from widely diverse disciplines have in common, and just how much we can learn from each other. Of particular interest to me was the opening plenary by Dr. Marcia Baxter Magolda. Her presentation, "Learning Partnerships: Pedagogy to Promote Learning and Self-Authorship," reported on her 22 year, longitudinal study of young adult learners. Dr. Magolda caused me to reflect on where my own students, and students in my program (graphic design), are in their journey to self awareness; how knowing where they are in that journey can help me adjust teaching methods and expectations to more effectively engage students in the learning process.

Because I was from an underrepresented discipline at the conference, my input in group discussions was most welcomed and I truly felt that I was able to add depth and texture when and where I contributed. The same can be said for any one of the one-on-one informal discussions that I had throughout the conference with like-minded educators from disciplines as varied as English and Chemistry. I hope to bring the inclusive spirit of ISSOTL back to the College of Fine Arts and to graphic design educators through our own disciplinary meetings.

Derek Herrmann, Psychology Masters Student

In October 2007 I had the privilege of traveling with Illinois State faculty members, Kathleen McKinney and Patricia Jarvis, to Las Vegas, Nevada, to be a part of the planning of a book about student voices in the SoTL. This year, I was honored to travel to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, with them and John Walker, Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts, to attend the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) conference. The group of faculty and students from around the country who met in Las Vegas to start working on the book met again in Edmonton. It was great to reconvene with this wonderful group of people, dedicated to enhancing both their teaching and their students' learning, as well as to witness this book start to come together.

I also attended many conference presentations and, although they were both international and interdisciplinary, I learned a great deal from what other faculty members are doing to promote the SoTL in their own institutions…everything from a website that leads students through the research process step-by-step (something that I may use in my graduate assistantship in the future) to a presentation about how a men's studies course helped young men to think differently about their masculinity.

I want to thank Dawn McBride and Corinne Zimmerman, both Psychology faculty members, with whom I worked on a SoTL grant. With out them, I would never have had this opportunity. I also want to thank Kathleen McKinney, Pat Jarvis, and John Walker for all their hard work, preparations, and a wonderful time in Edmonton. This is definitely a conference and an experience I will never forget.

(The next ISSOTL Meeting will be at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (US) - October 22-25, 2009, see http://www.issotl.org/conferences.html)

Where Does Learning Take Place and Who is Responsible?: A Student-Faculty-Staff Conversation

Patricia Jarvis, Psychology

On September 16, 2008 a conversation between faculty, students, and staff took place in the Student Services Building (375) from 12:30 to 1:45. I, in my role as the Summer SoTL Scholar, led the discussion, in which all the members of the campus community were invited to participate in the conversation as well as enjoy a free lunch. The attendees included mostly students, as well as faculty (from Illinois State and its University High School) and staff, and about fifteen people total were present. We had a successful conversation in which many of the attendees participated and created an enjoyable open discussion about important issues related to becoming a life long learner consistent with the

Mission Statement in Educating Illinois. The following ideas and concepts were presented as the basis of the conversation: What is learner autonomy and how do we foster it? What are the implications of learner autonomy for courses, students, faculty and staff? The Cross Chair for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning sponsored this event.   Notes from the event are posted on the Learner Autonomy web page accessible from the SoTL web pages: http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/castlAahe/autoWeb.shtml. A similar event concerning learner autonomy in graduate students will be held in the spring of 2009.

SoTL Travel Grant Report

Craig T. McLauchlan, Chemistry

With the help of funding from a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Travel Grant, I attended the conference "Inaugural Conference on Classroom Response Systems: Innovations and Best Practices" on November 15 at the University of Louisville. I presented my work in the Health Sciences session, because my paper was deemed of sufficient general interest to be presented outside my usual STEM area. The stated objectives of the conference were the following:

1. Compare and contrast innovations in classroom response systems that lead to better student engagement, foster greater critical thinking, provide effective assessment and evaluation, and offer other benefits for faculty and students.
2. Describe "best practices" in the use of classroom response systems.

The greatest impact of the conference for me came from the two keynote addresses: one by Dr. Doug Duncan and the other by Dr. Tim Stelzer. These two men are widely respected in the clicker community and their insights of over ten years of experience in using clickers in physics classrooms were very valuable. Although I feel that I have a fairly good grasp of the literature in the clicker field and a good handle on how to use the technology well in the classroom, they provided up-to-date literature references and data from their studies at Colorado and UIUC, respectively, which will help me in my own classroom. For instance, I presented to the

conference about getting students to "buy in" to the technology use, but I will change my own methods in the future based on their talks – it seems that stressing the meta-cognitive value of the method to the students has been shown to increase their participation with the technology. Relatively recent results stressing the value of the use of good, insightful questions and the advantages of peer instruction were also highlighted in the talks. As such, I will continue to try to improve my question base and will work to more widely disseminate my work for others to use as well. The exposure to the literature from many disparate disciplines also showed me that many individuals are working towards the same goals but are not aware of each others' work.

My presentation included data from 4 semesters of pilot studies on engagement and involvement in general and advanced chemistry courses. Most of my data concern perception, and my own analyses showed no significant course grade gains from semester to semester. By listening to others, however, I discovered possible new ways to analyze this data and ways to be able to better assess the efficacy of new methods. In terms of SoTL, this was the highlight of the conference for me. The main message of the conference was that student engagement is an important part of student learning and, most importantly, that faculty can directly impact this engagement through their actions. The technology of clickers alone cannot increase engagement but through *effective* use, we as faculty can increase student engagement and, therefore, promote learning outcomes.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities to Support SoTL Work at ISU

SoTL Mini-Workshop for Graduate Students
    Friday, February 27, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm; 103B ITDC, 301 S. Main St, Normal. In this workshop, graduate students will learn about the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), a cross-disciplinary field where higher education instructors use disciplinary tools to engage in the systematic reflection/study of teaching and learning for the purpose of publication or presentation. They will have the opportunity to discuss using SoTL to improve teaching as well as SoTL project ideas and methodologies. Three SoTL books, a USB, full breakfast, and a Certificate of Completion will be provided to each participant. RSVP to kmckinne@ilstu.edu by February 18 (space is limited).

SoTL Project Working Group
    A SoTL Project Working Group is a small group of faculty, staff, and/or students, who are each hoping to start, in the planning stages of, currently conducting, or finishing up a SoTL project. This spring 2009 semester, our SoTL Project Working Group members will meet every other week in with an agenda to move everyone's project forward. We will problem-solve, complete IRB protocols, design studies or measures, peer review drafts of papers, identify presentation and publication outlets, work on practical applications, and discuss ways to document SoTL work for reward structures. Participants will receive three SoTL books, a small stipend payable in June, and a letter or certificate about your participation and SoTL project.
    Application information for the group was sent out earlier this month.

A Graduate Student-Faculty Conversation on Learning
    The purpose of the discussion is to consider how graduate students can become more independent learners and how faculty can help them do this. The event is sponsored by the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University and is open to all faculty, staff, and students. The date will be announced later this semester. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact session organizer, Patricia Jarvis (pajarvis@ilstu.edu).

Department/School/Program Initiative in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant Program
    The Call for Proposals for this program will be out in campus mail boxes and online (http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/funding/) in February. Two academic units will be selected for SoTL grants of $10,000 each for FY10 (July 2009 – June 2010).

New ISU SoTL Publication
    Throughout the summer and fall 2009, and in spring 2010, we will be producing a publication of brief "reflective essays" and "research notes" of SoTL work about Illinois State students that has been conducted in the last six years. The SoTL studies do not have to be ones funded by the Cross Chair and can be projects that you have already published as long as a new, brief essay or note is written and submitted for this ISU publication. Dr. K. Patricia Cross will write and Introduction to the publication which will be peer reviewed by local and external reviewers**.** You can be involved as an author and/or reviewer. Information will be out in spring 2009.

Links to Examples of SoTL Work at Illinois State

    On our Illinois State University SoTL web page, we try to keep various examples of SoTL work being conducted here in various formats or representations.

- A list of citations to SoTL publications by ISU faculty/staff/students (since about 2000): http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/examples/isupub.shtml

- Links to brief reports for various funded SoTL projects: http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/examples/
- Links to web snapshots of funded SoTL projects: http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/examples/KEEPShots.shtml