Promoting SoTL on Civic Engagement/Service Learning

Kathleen McKinney, Cross Endowed Chair for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

For the last several years, Illinois State University has had a major initiative to encourage and support offering students opportunities to engage in civic engagement and service learning both in and outside of the classroom. We have been an active member of the American Democracy Project (http://americandemocracy.illinoisstate.edu/). We now have a Civic Engagement and Responsibility interdisciplinary minor (see http://americandemocracy. illinoisstate.edu/civic-engagement-responsibility/). We have offered significant faculty development opportunities and resources to help instructors incorporate these experiences into students' learning activities.

Most recently, we have begun systematic efforts to encourage and support systematic, evidence-informed reflection/study by instructors about the learning and other outcomes for ISU students of these civic engagement/ service learning experiences...in other words, SoTL on these experiences and student outcomes. As part of ISU's final two years in the 15 year-long Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) program, a team of instructors/staff is assisting others doing this work. Team members are Tom Gerschick, SOA; Steve Hunt, COM; Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, EAF; Jennifer McDade, CTLT; Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair and SOA; and Erin Thomas (Pearce), Office of the Dean of Students. Thus far, using resources from the Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL, our major activities have included supporting five small SoTL grants on learning outcomes of civic engagement/service learning for FY2011 (and we plan to support 4-5 more in FY2012), offering a workshop last summer helping instructors to think about and begin planning a SoTL study on this topic (we plan to offer an additional workshop this spring or summer), working on a list of possible external funding sources for such SoTL projects, and conducting an online survey of ISU instructors about barriers and supports for offering civic engagement/service learning opportunities for students and doing SoTL projects on the outcomes of such experiences. Currently we are discussing how to support a student planned, filmed, and produced video of other students' reflections on their civic engagement/service learning experiences and, possibly, an edited book on SoTL on Civic Engagement.

If you have suggestions related to these efforts and/ or are interested in volunteering to help the CASTL team, contact Kathleen (kmckinne@ilstu.edu).

Internal Funding for FY11 (This Fiscal Year) Still Available

SoTL Travel Grants: Funding is available for round two of the SoTL Travel Small Grants (up to $700) for trips already taken but not fully reimbursed or trips to be taken in FY11 (July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011). Travel must be to present SoTL work at a SoTL, teaching, or disciplinary conference or to attend an all SoTL conference, specifically. The submission deadline is February 7. The Call for Applications was mailed out in late July to all faculty and is available at http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/downloads/pdf/travGrantFY11.pdf.

SoTL Small Grants – Learning Outcomes of Disciplinary-Based Student Clubs: Funding is available for four discipline-based research teams ($2500 per team across FY11 and FY12) to conduct a SoTL study of the learning outcomes from student participation in disciplinary-based undergraduate student organizations/clubs. The Call was distributed to all Chairs/Directors and on ISUTeach and is available at http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/downloads/pdf/.

SoTL Department/School/Program Grant Reports

Becoming an Urban Educator: Intellectual Growth and Development of Social Justice in Re-Designed Courses Serving the Urban Teacher Preparation Program

Gary Creasey, Carol Benson, Judith Briggs, Verenice D'Santiago, Lucille Eckrick, Elizabeth Hatmaker, Maggie Lakebrink, Robert Lee, Kimberly McCord, Kathy Mountjoy, Rachel Perveiler, Brent Showalter, Mark Temple, Jill Thomas

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the efficacy of a multidisciplinary Course Development Grant Program designed to prepare ISU pre-service teachers to work in underserviced settings. The rationale for this multidisciplinary program is to provide resources to faculty across departments and colleges to redesign an existing course to better prepare pre-service teachers to work in underserviced, urban communities. Grantees participate in a 3-4 day experiential learning trip to underserviced Chicago neighborhoods and Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and are provided the necessary support to re-design their courses in such a way to better prepare university students to work in this context. Further, by better understanding challenges that face people, schools, and communities in underserviced settings, it is hoped that the students of these grantees will "see a need to critique the systematic sources of racial and economic inequality in our society and schools" (Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline, 2009). Instructors address these program initiatives by infusing relevant course content concerning urban issues, creating assignments that provoke awareness of social justice issues, and encouraging an experiential trip to CPS for their students.

It was expected that students who enrolled in such classes would display more positive beliefs about urban education, more confidence about working in urban settings, and a stronger intention to work in these contexts. It was also predicted that students would demonstrate a growth in their awareness of social justice issues as they progressed through a re-designed class. These predictions were tested via both survey and interview methods involving students in 9 re-designed courses during Fall 2009 and Spring 2010.

In general, the initial quantitative analyses have supported our predictions. Students enrolled in re-designed classes demonstrated positive changes in urban teaching intentions and efficacy over time. Further, the qualitative analyses mirrored these findings as most respondents communicated more confidence and openness in teaching in an urban setting over time. However, whereas these data revealed that student impressions of urban school improved over time (e.g., "They are safe to work in"), their views of urban communities (e.g., "They are unsafe to live in") remained mostly negative and unchanged. Finally, when asked about the class experiences that had the greatest impact on student intellectual growth, many students (about 60%) indicated that instructor knowledge and competency regarding urban education, more so than course activities, had the greatest influence.

Although we will subject the interview data to more intensive coding efforts, the initial analysis suggests that these re-designed courses have a facilitative impact on improving the attitudes and expectancies of teacher candidates as to the realities of working in urban schools. Whereas the study results are very encouraging, we were somewhat disappointed that the students' perceptions of urban communities did not improve much over time when compared to their impressions of urban schools. These data are informative though, as instructors could be encouraged to recast their course content and activities (e.g., conduct field trips that include both school observations and community tours) to better showcase the strengths of urban communities and how these assets can be used to improve urban schools.

Co-authors are in alphabetical order.

An Intervention to Promote Civility Among Nursing Students

Sheryl Jenkins, Mennonite College of Nursing

Incivility impacts nurses and nursing students, and can negatively influence patient care and the quality of nursing education. The Institute of Medicine (IOM), The Joint Commission (for Accreditation of Hospitals), and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) have recommended implementation of strategies to manage incivility and build social capital. The purpose of this exploratory, mixed-methods study was to test an intervention to build social capital and civility in the Mennonite College of Nursing student community. Ninety-one nursing students completed questionnaires as to their satisfaction with peers in regards to civility, 25 completed the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) and participated in interviews, and 10 participated in the intervention, a journal club focused on civility in nursing.

Student leaders participated in a monthly Journal Club.

This intervention was designed to build social capital by raising students' awareness of civility, collaboration, and collegiality. The one hour meetings involved discussion of an article students selected from the nursing literature. Faculty researchers then led students in activities designed to encourage civility. For example, one session involved an exploration of competitive behaviors, which divide students, compared to supportive actions that unite them. In another session, students practiced a stress management strategy that employed relaxation breathing techniques and empathetic listening skills. Participants were also charged with modeling these behaviors as they interacted with other students and faculty. Finally, they kept on-line journals noting their development in the understanding of civility.

This study provided insight into student nurses' perceptions of civility as a concept which encompasses *respect, equality, caring, building relationships,* and *working together.* Participants described witnessing acts of incivility directed from student to student and from student to faculty. Interestingly, they did not mention episodes of incivility directed from faculty to student. Participation in the journal club intervention changed students' attitudes and behavior. Changes were reflected in the interviews, journaling, and WCQ responses. Students were more aware of the importance of civility and the negative effects of incivility, and more likely to accept others without judging them. They also reported that they were more likely to refuse to take part in uncivil behavior, were more helpful to others, and had a desire to serve as a role model for civility. Journal club participation was also related to a greater range and frequency of coping behaviors used. Exposing students to scenarios and experiential activities allowed them the opportunity to practice using other coping methods. It is likely that these experiences enabled them to draw from a wider repertoire of behaviors when confronted with uncivil behavior.

This study provided insight into student nurses' perceptions of civility, and participation in the intervention changed students' attitudes and behavior regarding civility. The researchers recommend expansion of this study to further test the impact of civility-focused journal clubs. Given the strong recommendations for change endorsed by the IOM, the Joint Commission, and the AACN, colleges of nursing should ensure that civility education is introduced throughout the curriculum. Clinical evaluation tools should include civil behavior as an expectation. Future research should include expansion of the proposed journal club model with a larger sample size and testing of new methods for promoting civility, such as in-class education, course assignments, and special presentations for students and faculty. Research recommendations include defining uncivil behaviors, developing policies, setting expectations, and devising consequences for these behaviors.

The findings of this study have been disseminated in paper and poster presentations. A paper presentation was made in January, 2010 at ISU's Teaching-Learning Symposium, Normal, Illinois. Poster presentations were made in March, 2010 at Mennonite College of Nursing's PhD Research Colloquium and in April, 2010 at the Midwest Nursing Research Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. An article describing the findings, *An Intervention to Promote Civility Among Nursing Students* by Sheryl Jenkins, PhD, ACNP, Cindy Kerber, PhD, CNS, and Wendy Woith, PhD, RN, was submitted to *Nursing Education Perspectives*, a peer reviewed journal for nurse educators in July, 2010.

Opportunities for Involvement in SoTL at ISU

The SoTL Network — This is a group of Illinois State University faculty, students, and staff members interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning. The members of the network are involved in reading, conducting, sharing, and applying SoTL work to enhance the learning of ISU students. Last fall, some members participated in a reading group (*Engaging Student Voices in the Study of Teaching and Learning.* Carmen Werder and Megan Otis, eds. Sterling, VA: Stylus); others participated in a SoTL writing circle. In addition, several members of the Network presented their SoTL work in a panel session at the ISU Teaching-Learning Symposium. If you are interested in this group, please send an email message to kmckinne@ilstu. edu and you will be added to an announcement-only email list.

Spotlight on a SoTL Publication — Have you recently finished and published a SoTL project on the learning of Illinois State students? Write a short summary (200-400 words) of your SoTL work at ISU for this newsletter feature. It should highlight your research question(s) or teaching-learning problem studied, the nature of your evidence, and key findings and applications. Please include the citation for the publication or web representation. Send this in a word file, electronically, to kmckinne@ilstu.edu. Summaries are due every August 1 or December 1.

ISU SoTL Resource Group — Do you need some assistance on a SoTL project related to design or analysis or literature or theory? Check out your colleagues who have volunteered to help as part of the ISU SoTL Resource Group (http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/resource/index.shtml). Interested in, willing to, and have expertise useful for serving on the ISU SoTL Resource Group? Then please send a private email to me at kmckinne@ilstu.edu with your name, title, department, phone number, and brief description of your expertise.

Spotlight on SoTL Publications

The Sociology Research Capstone Course at Three Institutions
Kathleen McKinney and Melissa Busher, Department of Sociology

This paper is the first of two papers based on data from a SoTL project on the nature of learning outcomes from, and student experiences in, the Sociology Senior Research/Thesis Capstone course as taught at three institutions in Illinois. The paper describes the objectives, structure, and outcomes of the one-semester, required sociology research capstone course. Pre- and post-questionnaires from students, syllabi from instructors, and a random sample of final research papers were analyzed. Results indicated that the main foci of the course are to conduct research, produce a paper/thesis, develop writing and presentation skills, and integrate past learning. Instruction in this course includes numerous 'best practices' from the literature on teaching and learning. There appears to be an under-emphasis, however, on helping students to apply 'theory' in their projects. The theses reveal a wide range of topics, methodological approaches, and quality with the Introduction/Literature Review and Discussion/Conclusion sections of the theses receiving the lowest quality scores.

(The paper is in press at *Teaching Sociology*, 2011. This project was supported by the American Sociological Association's Carla B. Howery Teaching Enhancement Grant.)

A Measure to Assess Student-Instructor Relationships
Gary Creasey, Patricia Jarvis, Elyse Knapcik, Department of Psychology

There is a need for an instrument that assesses student-instructor relationships as many experts speculate that close, non-threatening relationships between students and instructors predict positive achievement orientations, academic progress and success. In this paper, we presented reliability and validity data concerning the *Student-Instructor Relationship Scale*, a 36-item inventory we developed that taps student-instructor relationship connectedness and anxiety. In the first study, college students completed this instrument twice over a 3-4 week time period and the instrument subscales possessed good test-retest reliability. In the second study, the subscales of the SIRS were associated with student perceptions of test anxiety in a randomly determined class. As predicted, student instructor connectedness was negatively associated with test anxiety and student-instructor anxiety was positively associated with this construct. Thus, in this paper we established both reliability and concurrent validity for this instrument. A complete copy of the *Student-Instructor Relationship Scale* and its scoring instructions are contained in the publication.

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SoTL Travel Grant: Hawaii Int'l Conference on Education
Deborah A. Garrahy, Physcial Education-Teacher Education

Two presentations were given at the 2010 Hawaii International Conference on Education (January 7th-10th), based on the research I conducted along with Dr. Barbara Meyer from the College of Education in fall, 2007. The study focused on the required literacy course all secondary education majors at Illinois State must complete. This research study explained how one university implemented a literacy course for Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) majors only, in order to focus on how literacy could be implemented and incorporated into teaching secondary level Physical Education. During the fall, 2007, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction permitted one section of C&I 214 to be designated for Physical Education -Teacher majors only, the first and only time this has happened to date. The two presentations made from this data set at the conference were entitled: "Rumors, Relevance and Reality: The role of content area literacy in teacher education" and "We are all going to figure that out together: The implications of segregating content areas in content area literacy courses." The latter presentation has also been accepted as a publication due out in March, 2011 in the journal, US-China Educational Review.