

Updates and Resources on ISU Involvement in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair in SoTL

Illinois State University, through the Office of the Cross Chair (and prior to that, the 'old' Center for the Advancement of Teaching), has been involved in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning since its beginning in 1998. There have been several multi-year phases of this work involving various people and initiatives here at ISU and in collaboration with the Carnegie Foundation and other institutions (see sotl.IllinoisState.edu/castlAahe/ for links to documents and sites reflecting these efforts). At this time, we are completing the third phase and beginning the fourth and final phase of this work (at least as formally connected to Carnegie). Thus, I wanted to provide you all with a brief update, some resources, and some encouragement to offer ideas or be involved.

The third phase of this work had ISU connected to five other institutions all focusing on encouraging and supporting student voices in SoTL work. This meant different things at different schools but, at ISU, we connected that effort to promoting learner autonomy in students. In terms of scholarly teaching and learner autonomy, we have held three campus 'student-faculty conversations' on learner autonomy in the last year and we have worked on a website of resources and events related to learner autonomy (sotl.IllinoisState.edu/castlAahe/autoWeb.shtml). Special thanks go to Patricia Jarvis, Psychology, for her work on these two efforts. We encourage you to send any ideas or resources for this web page to Pat (pajarvis@ilstu.edu). In addition, two teams of faculty-student collaborators wrote two chapters for an edited volume on student voices and SoTL (see the end of this message for the citations); others have given related conference presentations. Finally, we have funded more formal SoTL work on learner autonomy conducted by ISU faculty with ISU students (as both 'subjects' and research collaborators). You can see brief reports or web snapshots of some of this work at sotl.IllinoisState.edu/castlAahe/learnAutonomy/snapshots.shtml and sotl.IllinoisState.edu/castlAahe/learnAutonomy/rep0506.shtml and sotl.IllinoisState.edu/examples/repFinds/rep0607.shtml. This phase of our CASTL Learner Autonomy work will wrap up at a pre-conference event before the annual meetings of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in October.

We begin the final phase of CASTL in January. For that phase, institutions are required to link SoTL to key campus initiatives. What follows is a description of part of our application for this phase of work.

At Illinois State University, we have been involved in a number of 'high-leverage institutional agendas' that are directly part of or related to our strategic plan, *Educating Illinois*. Two of these are the American Democracy Project --and civic engagement more generally-- and promoting Learner Autonomy. As we move forward on these and related initiatives, we are also hoping to strengthen our existing investment in, and understanding of, service learning and its connection to civic engagement and learner autonomy. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning can help us with these initiatives and general goals. This would happen via mechanisms such as sharing past SoTL literature on these topics, holding campus conversations about these topics, assisting in the design of and support for local SoTL studies on these topics, and making public what we learn to share implications and promote change when appropriate. Thus, our more specific goals for this final phase of the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning or CASTL are that through engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning we will do the following:

- Better understand and document the developmental and learning processes and outcomes for students of involvement in civic engagement experiences in and out of the classroom including service learning opportunities.
- Better understand and document the extent to which, and how, enhanced learner autonomy is related to civic engagement and service learning experiences.

- Share what we learn via the web site, presentations, and publications.

All three goals connect to values, goals, or action items in our institutional strategic plan, *Educating Illinois*, as well as to work and support from the office of the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

McKinney, K., Jarvis, P., Creasey, G., & Herrmann, D. (2009). A range of student voices in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. In C. Werder & M. M. Otis (Eds.), *Engaging student voices in the study of teaching and learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Sublett, M. D., Walsh, J. A., McKinney, K., & Faigao, D. (2009). Student voices through researching and promoting learner autonomy. In C. Werder & M. M. Otis (Eds.), *Engaging student voices in the study of teaching and learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.