

# SOTL AT ISU

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University  
“*systematic reflection/study on teaching and learning made public*”

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## Civic Engagement at ISU: A Documentary Film Project

Civic Engagement (CE) has been infused into the curriculum at Illinois State University resulting in various project-based student experiences each semester. Three years ago ISU began a systematic strategy to infuse CE where possible throughout the campus. Faculty members attended workshops, curriculum was changed, learning outcomes were assessed, and an interdisciplinary minor of Civic Engagement and Responsibility was created.

This fall, a video production team will begin documenting ISU CE projects and will interview participating students to describe the nature of their experience. The video product will become an integrated documentary exploring five cases of CE with a reflective discussion from among student participants. Led by School of Communication Assistant Professor and Emmy-award winning producer, Dr. Maria A. Moore, the production team will include graduate and undergraduate students from the School of Communication and will be overseen by the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and Professor of Sociology, Dr. Kathleen McKinney.

In this SoTL project, the impact of CE participation will be explored through discussion with student participants about their self awareness, their understanding of diversity, their understanding of democracy, their ability

to think critically about social issues, and their ideas about the integration of service, societal issues and coursework. The documentary will also explore the students' perspective about the value of CE project participation and what learning occurred for the student in the process.

As faculty and administrators, we presume that civic engagement in the community and in the classroom is an empowering and transformative experience for students who are able to participate, deeply, in CE projects. With this study, we will hear directly from the students as they reflect on their experiences. Through using the technique of digital video documentation, the students will literally and figuratively be given voice on the topic. The documentary technique will also allow sharing results more broadly with both the traditional academic and the non-traditional general public. Researchers studying civic engagement, student engagement or service learning, academic filmmakers using digital documentary as a scholarship method, and local community organizations participating with ISU students in civic projects may find these results useful.

*This video project is co-sponsored by the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the American Democracy Project at Illinois State University.*

## Illinois State and the 2011 ISSOTL Conference

Several Illinois State University colleagues plan to attend and present at the 2011 annual meetings of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Milwaukee, WI, October 19-23. If you are also attending, please send an 'fyi' email to kmckinne@ilstu.edu. Presentations by ISU faculty or staff include:

*Transforming Learning: A Longitudinal Examination of a Collaborative Service Project Involving Graduate and Undergraduate Students* (poster); Phyllis McCluskey-Titus and Wendy Troxel, Educational Administration & Foundations

*The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning In and Across the Disciplines* (panel); Kathleen McKinney, Cross

Chair and Sociology/Anthropology (with Nancy Chick, University of Wisconsin-Barron County, Gary Poole, University of British Columbia; Jennifer Robinson, Indiana University, and Lauren Scharff, US Air Force Academy)

*Expanding the Role of Civic and Political Engagement: A Case Study of SoTL Program Development* (panel); Maria Moore, Steve Hunt, Lance Lippert, Jeff Courtright, Communication; Jennifer McDade, CTLT

*Are Webtexts the Future of SoTL Publishing? A Discussion of the Opportunities and Challenges of Interactive, Open-Platform, Multimedia Scholarship* (panel); Maria Moore, Communication, Cheryl Ball, English (with Laura Cruz, Western Carolina University)

# Recent SoTL Workshops at Illinois State a Success

On April 14, ISU faculty, staff, and graduate students participated in a 2 ½ hour workshop on SoTL project design and writing an internal SoTL grant for year two of the “SoTL on Civic Engagement/Service Learning Small Grant Program.” Participants discussed and worked on SoTL research questions and methodologies, ideas for theory and previous literature, ethical issues, and more. Each received a copy of *Citizenship across the Curriculum*, *Civic Engagement in Higher Education*, and *Enhancing Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. Those that submitted a grant application to the program by the deadline received \$150.

Our diverse group included Jay Ansher, Physics; Lindsay Bondurant and Megan Kuhn, Communication Science Disorders; Lee Brasseur, Matthew Kim and John MacLean, English; Cynthia Edmonds-Cady, Social Work; Susan Hildebrandt, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; Chad Kahl, Milner Library; Winn Mahatanankoon, Technology; and Adriana Ransom, Music.

Nine ISU instructors participated in the 4 hour SoTL workshop on August 10 “Moving from a Teaching Learning Development Grant to a SoTL Project/Product.” Participants received materials and worked independently and in groups to consider the next steps in turning their TLD project into a more formal SoTL project and product. Each received a copy of the books *Enhancing Learning through SoTL*, *Engaging Student Voices in the Study of Teaching and Learning*, and *Inquiry into the College Classroom*, as well as a \$100 stipend. This workshop was co-sponsored by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

Participants included Anne Cox, Kinesiology & Recreation; Michaelene Cox and Shamira Gelbman, Politics and Government; Heidi Harbers and Jean Sawyer, Communication Sciences and Disorders; Susan Hildebrandt, Languages, Literatures and Cultures; Mark Leymon, Criminal Justice Sciences; Patrick O’Rourke, Agriculture.

## Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Travel Grant Reports

### **Carrie Anna Courtad, Special Education**

On November 5, 2010, I traveled to the Teacher Education Division (TED) National Conference in St. Louis and was part of the presentation panel *Be the Model: Preparing Teachers and Fostering Universal Design for Learning*. We shared with other attendees how to apply the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within special education teacher course work from Illinois State. During that panel I directly related my experience in creating UDL assignments for a class I had taught for two years in the Special Education Department. We felt the panel was well received by attendees. In fact, a new proposal was recently submitted to the same organization to discuss free technology available to support UDL concepts both within the K-12 and college classrooms.

### **Shamira Gelbman, Politics and Government**

I attended the February 2011 American Political Science Association’s Teaching and Learning Conference in Albuquerque, NM. It employs a distinct format in which participants are assigned to themed tracks, either as paper presenters or non-presenting discussants, and are expected to attend and participate in all track sessions. As part of my participation in the “Core Curriculum/General Education” track, I presented my paper *Bringing Writing Back In(to Large General-Education Classes): An Assessment of the Learning Outcomes of a Writing-Intensive Introductory American Politics Course*. The paper considers the challenges of requiring writing assignments in large introductory-level classes and reviews nearly 100 student reflections on a series of weekly in-class writing

assignments they completed in my Spring 2010 section of POL 106: U.S. Government and Civic Practices. Among the findings were that students perceived a variety of learning benefits from these writing assignments: improved writing and critical thinking skills, enhanced understanding of new concepts that had been introduced in reading assignments and lectures, a clearer sense of their own views on political affairs and civic life, and greater propensity for civic and political engagement. A revised version of the paper is currently under review for publication.

### **Keri Edwards, Family and Consumer Sciences**

A discussion based workshop, *Do You Know What I Know? The Use of Peer Feedback to Enhance Learning and Communication* was presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Child Life Networking Conference on November 7, 2010, in Kansas City, MO. The presentation, intended for an audience primarily of students and introductory level practitioners in the field of Child Life, was attended by an audience ranging from students to experienced clinicians and supervisors. The presentation was interactive and the audience participated in active discussion on the topic of using feedback in a wide variety of situations. Several additional areas for exploration and research were identified, such as use of peer feedback in supervisory relationships, feedback used for punitive or disciplinary process, and overall education related to the process.

Peer feedback has been found to be effective in teaching subject area content (such as developmentally appropriate practice) and communication skills, and enhancing active learning among students. The basic presentation was the

# Congratulations to SoTL Grant Recipients for 2011-2012!

## *SoTL on Learning Outcomes from Participation in Academic/Disciplinary RSOs*

- *Beyond the Classroom: Learning about People with Disabilities through a Student Disability Service and Advocacy Organization*; Emily Watts, Nicole Uphold, and James Thompson, Special Education
- *Autonomous Learning via a Student Produced Fashion Show*; Tricia Widner, Family and Consumer Sciences (Note, with the passing of Tricia Widner, the grant will be taken over by Hae Jin Gam.)

## *SoTL on Civic Engagement/Service Learning Small Grant Program*

- *The ISU CONNECT Program: Identifying Developmental, Motivational, and Civic Outcomes*; Gary Creasey and Verenice D'Santiago, Psychology; Kaitlin Jones, Communication; and Robert Lee, College of Education
- *Assessing a Situated Learning Approach in the Civically Engaged Classroom: Fostering Anti-Oppressive Community Practice*; Cynthia Edmunds-Cady and Ashley Boyer, Social Work
- *A Mutually Beneficial Example of Service Learning: Collaboration between Preservice Language Teachers and a Local Community Center*; Susan Hildebrandt, Languages, Literatures and Cultures; and Iryna Brown, Curriculum and Instruction
- *Preparing for a Career in String Teaching: Advocacy and Service Learning*; Adriana Ransom, Music

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result of an action research project related to use of peer feedback in a mid-level child development course at ISU. The child development course included a community-based clinical observation component and students used a peer review process to provide feedback to one another on written observations and interpretations related to the application of child development.

The goal of the conference presentation was to apply these results to the training of child life students and professionals, in their clinical settings. The presentation reflected Standards 2, 4, 6, and 8 (Administration, Education of Child Life Students, Professional Preparation and Development, Documentation) from the Child Life Council Clinical Standards of Practice. In doing so, this presentation provided a framework for preparing students for the Child Life professional certification exam and also provided professionals with continuing education professional development hours. Further exploration regarding use of peer feedback continues in the classroom at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

### **Susan A. Hildebrandt, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures**

Students with disabilities are increasingly members of university-level foreign language classes. Their academic success, along with that of other students, prompted an investigation of effective teaching practices. Seven post secondary students with documented disabilities were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of foreign language learning. Those students provided much information as to how to help them be successful in the classroom. The work presented at the three conferences below is an outgrowth of those extensive interviews and the feedback gained greatly informs my own teaching of future language teachers. The project research questions are:

1. What are the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding positive experiences learning a foreign language?
2. What are the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding barriers to learning a foreign language?
3. What are the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding elements of L2 learning that reflect the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning*?
4. What are the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding a foreign language classroom climate that is welcoming and inclusive?

Data analysis was clustered into four categories: student-related issues," "Professor-related issues," "Issues within the classroom," and "Issues outside of the classroom."

The work presented at all three conferences was based on the interviews described above, but each presentation highlights different aspects of the project.

- **AATSP** (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese). I shared findings with K-16 Spanish educators at the annual conference of AATSP, which took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, on July 10-13, 2010. The presentation for this conference focused on the Spanish classroom and was presented in Spanish.
- **ICTFL** (Illinois Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). On November 4, 2010, I presented findings specific to "Student-related issues" and "Professor-related issues" from this project to ICTFL in Peoria, IL.
- **WAFLT** (Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers). On November 5, 2010, I presented findings specific to "Issues within the classroom" and "Issues outside of the classroom" from this project to WAFLT in Appleton, WI. The WAFLT mission statement highlights its service to teachers of foreign languages for almost a century.

# Cross Chair Sponsoring SoTL Expert Speaker March 2012

Jennifer Meta Robinson will be coming to campus to speak on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in early March 2012. Her visit is co-sponsored by the Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL and a Sage Grant from Illinois State University Foundation. Jennifer is a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University where she teaches courses on performance and ethnography in America, centering on cultural approaches to interpersonal communication, food, place, and nature.

Robinson publishes and speaks widely on the scholarship of teaching and learning. She co-edits the Indiana University Press book series "Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," with Whitney M. Schlegel, Mary Taylor Huber, and Pat Hutchings, and is co-editor of *Teaching Environmental Literacy across the Curriculum* (with Reynolds and Brondizio, 2010).

She has served the International Society for the

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning since 2003, as a member of the founding board, as regional vice president for the United States, and in 2009-2010 as president. She coordinated two consortia convened by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of teaching that related to scholarship of teaching and learning, 2003-2009. She is the principal investigator for the Collegium on Inquiry in Action, funded by the Teagle Foundation to develop a model multi-disciplinary approach to preparing graduate students to be reflective teachers who base their teaching on appropriate learning theory and evidence of student learning. She served as director of Indiana University's Campus Instructional Consulting office and coordinator of the scholarship of teaching and learning initiative 2001-2008, which received a TIAA-CREF Hesburgh Award for faculty development in 2003. She earned her doctorate in English from Indiana University.

## Selected Opportunities for Involvement in SoTL at ISU

*SoTL Travel Grants:* Up to \$500 per grant is available to partially support travel related to SoTL in FY12. The Call for Applications is available at <http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/pdf/travGrantFY12.pdf>.

*SoTL NETWORK:* The SoTL NETWORK is a group of Illinois State University faculty, students, and staff members interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning at ISU. This past year, some members participated in a reading group (reading *Engaging Student Voices in the Study of Teaching and Learning*. Carmen Werder and Megan Otis, eds. Sterling, VA: Stylus); others participated in a writing circle working on SoTL writing. 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](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu) and you will be added to an email list (for announcements only).

*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>). If you are interested in, willing to, and have expertise useful for serving on the ISU SoTL Resource Group please send an email to [kmckinne@ilstu.edu](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu) with your name, title,

department, phone number, and brief description of your expertise.

*Write a Summary of your SoTL Work at ISU for the Newsletter feature, "Spotlight on a SoTL Publication":* Have you recently finished and published a SoTL project on the learning of ISU students? Write a short summary (200-400 words) highlighting 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](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu). Articles are due every August 1 or December 1.

*Send Your Recent SoTL Article Citations:* Have you published a paper since 2000 either about the field of SoTL or reporting on SoTL work you have done? If so, please check that your work is cited at <http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/examples/isupub.shtml>. If it is not, please send the citation to [kmckinne@ilstu.edu](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu) and we will add it to our list of example SoTL publications by members of the ISU community.

*Fall/Spring SoTL Sessions:* Be on the lookout for information on two "advanced" SoTL panels or workshops. One session will focus on measurement strategies and the other on nontraditional ways to share your SoTL work.

Kathleen McKinney, Ph.D., Editor ([kmckinne@ilstu.edu](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu))  
Beth Welch, Managing Editor ([eawelch@ilstu.edu](mailto:eawelch@ilstu.edu))

Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL, Campus Box 6370, Normal, IL 61790; Website: <http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/>