

SOTL AT ISU

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

Volume 6; September 2012



Announcing a New University-Wide SoTL Award

The Dr. John Chizmar & Dr. Anthony Ostrosky Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award was created to recognize and encourage high quality and quantity of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) work at Illinois State University and in the discipline beyond Illinois State that contributes to the SoTL field, the SoTL body of knowledge, improved teaching, and enhanced student learning. This award contributes to the external, positive reputation for SoTL work at ISU, and supports Educating Illinois’ “promoting the highest academic standards in our teaching, scholarship...,” occupying “a unique position of strength and visibility among institutions,” and values of “pursuit of learning and scholarship,” “individualized attention,” and “public opportunity”.

Eligibility for this award is twofold. First, SoTL at Illinois State University is defined as evidence-informed research (broadly defined given different disciplinary epistemologies) on the teaching and learning of our Illinois State University students that is made public. (The award is not for traditional, disciplinary scholarship or for

teaching-learning research on K-12 students/teachers or for assessment research not made public.) Second, all faculty members and academic staff at Illinois State University are eligible. The current occupant of the Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL would not be eligible while serving as Chair.

Selection criteria for the award recognizes that a cluster of SoTL contributions may be equal to that of one outstanding project; this award allows a broad application of the following criteria:

- Evidence of high quality SoTL work.
- Evidence of significant application/impact of SoTL work on teaching and student learning and/or development.
- External recognition of SoTL work in the discipline and/or in the cross-discipline SoTL field.

The first call for award nominations will be in the spring of 2013. Check the box on the SoTL home page (<http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu>) for a link to additional information on the selection process, time frame, application materials, and recognitions/obligations.

Video Project on Civic Engagement at ISU Completed

Over the last year, a video production team documented four Illinois State University civic engagement (CE) projects through 1. video documentation of CE sites and activities, and 2. recorded focus groups with some of the participating students to discuss and describe the nature of their experience. The video product, *Civic Engagement at ISU: Case Studies and Student Reflection*, is an integrated documentary that is both the SoTL method and the SoTL product (the way we chose to represent and share the scholarship). The goal of this project was to investigate the student CE experience and perceived learning outcomes at Illinois State.

School of Communication Assistant Professor and Emmy-award winning producer, Maria A. Moore, led the student documentary production and marketing teams with supervisory assistance from Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair in SoTL and Sociology Professor. The documentary production team included students Marlee Cooper, Dezarae

Dorsey, Adam Kopp, Cody Meincke, and Adam Rahn. The marketing and promotion team included students Jill Glazer, Paul Kritzmire, Emma Newman and Heather Van Buskirk. The video project was supported by Illinois State’s American Democracy Project (ADP), the Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL, and the Office of the Provost. The video will be available on the Illinois State website soon.

We are pleased to announce the local premier for the video will be November 13, 2012, with a 6:30 p.m. reception preceding the 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. showing in the Prairie Room of the Bone Student Center. There will be a discussion session immediately after.

Civic Engagement at ISU: Case Studies and Student Reflection will also be presented at the 2012 meetings of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) next month and the National Communication Association (NCA) in November, as well as submitted to student film festivals.

Highlight on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research

In *Highlight on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research*, we share a summary of a recent SoTL project conducted by Illinois State University faculty, staff, and students. The project summarized below is an example of a large-scale, longitudinal SoTL project.

Transforming Learning: A Longitudinal Examination of a Collaborative Service Project Involving Graduate and Undergraduate Students

Phyllis McCluskey-Titus and Wendy Troxel, EAF; Jodi Hallsten, COM; Erin Pearce Thomas, Dean of Students

Overview of the project: The primary purpose of the research study was to understand, through six years of data, what first-year and graduate students learned from participating in a collaborative service learning project. The project paired first-year students and master's degree students in hands-on community service activities. "Learning" was broadly defined using Howard Bowen's (1978) outcomes framework considering cognitive (information), affective (self-awareness), and life skills outcomes as indications of what a student might learn. The secondary purposes of designing the project as we did included the following: to provide graduate students, most of whom held assistantships in various student services offices across campus, as role models and resources for first-year students transitioning to campus; and to provide an applied setting for graduate students enrolled in a course about college students to learn about them through firsthand experience.

Project design: Students from two courses were paired each fall from 2005-2010. As a part of Illinois State University's "LinC" (Learning in Communities) course, first-year students are required to complete 6 hours of service in the community in order to introduce them to their new place of residence and to help them become aware of needs that exist. Concurrently, each fall semester first-year graduate students enrolled in the college student personnel administration (CSPA) master's degree program take a course entitled "College Students and Their Cultures." Over the six-year period, approximately 200 graduate and first-year students participated in one of the associated service learning projects. The projects varied each year, as did the partnering agencies. Over the six years, classes have come together to paint (a home for dislocated hurricane Katrina families, a childcare center for low income children, a vocational/technical wing of a high school, and a summer camp), perform landscaping and yard maintenance (at group homes for adults with developmental disabilities and at a pre-school), work at an animal shelter (cleaning cages, clearing trash, and walking dogs), build a home (Habitat for Humanity), and stencil warnings on storm drains (as an environmental awareness campaign to avoid improper dumping in neighborhoods). To best encourage interaction,

students were assigned to work in teams of four, including two undergraduate and two graduate students. Graduate students provided leadership for the teams, initiated conversation, and kept the group on task.

A variety of methods were used to assess students' learning. All participants wrote reflection papers and participated in separate class discussions about their experiences with the service learning project. During year one, LinC class participants also kept weekly journals, and their writing about the service learning projects was included as a data set. Since year three, the students wrote one-page "pre-project expectations" papers and then used those as a basis to reflect upon their experiences afterwards. Course evaluations, and any qualitative comments associated with the service learning project, were also included as a set of data for the purpose of understanding what students learned. In 2010, an open-ended survey asking about the service experience was sent to all the previous participants for whom current contact information could be located (n=85). Narrative comments from these data sources were analyzed through a constant comparative approach (Merriam, 2002). Based on the analysis process, distinct and broad categories emerged and were used to further explain students' learning within the jointly conducted service learning projects.

Selected Results: A sample of themes that emerged and a representative student comment included:

-understanding their connection with people in need and the community "*By integrating community service into the educational environment and including both graduate students and first-year students, they (the students) are able to learn from each other and in the process, give back to the community in which they are living.*"

-enjoyment in helping as part of a team "*There was never a time in the working session at the high school when people weren't working together. It was a very enjoyable work setting.*"

-satisfaction with the work completed "*I felt such a feeling of accomplishment like I had done something worthwhile...It is good to give a monetary donation, but I felt more of a sense of really doing something and helping after the service project.*"

-awareness of the value/impact of the work "*Evidence is all around that our economy is going into a major slump. This will create a larger demand on our charities and service organizations. So now more than ever, the understanding the value in service is needed in our students. Many students do not realize the satisfaction volunteering can bring until they are exposed to it. And this exposure might not occur unless it is through a college course.*"

-appreciation for what they had "*By participating in this service project I learned how lucky my family, friends, and I were when we were growing up.*" and "*[I learned] that I was given a lot throughout my life.*"

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-talking/working with new people “*I feel that the greatest value of an activity like this was the contact between the classes. All too often ‘freshmen’ or ‘graduate students’ can be abstract terms that we read about or talk about, but this put a face, a voice, and an attitude on those terms.*”

-awareness of personal skills and competencies “*This project truly opened my eyes to the amount of influence and significance we have with our students. I realized that whether I feel like an adult, or not, does not make any difference; I am perceived by students as a knowledgeable, competent adult that must be the example on how to become a contributing adult.*”

-empathy for “the call” to serve “*I learned that some people are more than just ‘volunteers.’ Some people should be called ‘dedicators’ because they honestly dedicate their life to an organization that helps people, animals, or just the earth itself. I also learned that volunteering does actually make a difference.*”

Dr. Maria Moore Wins University Research Initiative Award

Congratulations to Maria Moore, Assistant Professor in the School of Communication at Illinois State University, for earning and receiving a University Research Initiative Award (awarded this past spring at Founders' Day)! We highlight this award to Dr. Moore because a large part of her research and scholarship was, in fact, the scholarship

References and previously published works about this SoTL research project:

Bowen, H. (1978). Learning goals and outcomes. *New Directions for Education and Work*, 2, 79-94.

McCluskey-Titus, P., Hallsten, J., Troxel, W.G., Pearce, E. (2010). Reflections on a shared community engagement project with first year and graduate students. In K.McKinney & P. Jarvis (Eds.), *Gauisus: Selected scholarship on teaching and learning at Illinois State University, 2004-2009* (pp. 69-77). Also available on-line: http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/downloads/pdf/Gauisus_Online.pdf

McCluskey-Titus, P. (Fall 2008). The value of a cooperative service project as reciprocal teaching/learning for undergraduate and graduate students. *MountainRise: The International Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 5(1). Available on line: <http://mountainrise.wcu.edu/html/MR82.pdf>

of teaching and learning (SoTL). In addition, some of this work was represented in 'nontraditional' ways including video documentaries. Those of us who do and support SoTL work are very proud of both Maria and of those individuals on the selection committee for recognizing the research components and value of SoTL.

A SoTL on Service Learning Project in Process

A Mutually Beneficial Example of Service Learning: Collaboration between Pre-Service Language Teachers and a Local Community Center

Susan Hildebrandt, Language, Literature, and Cultures

¿Cómo te llamas? ¿Cómo estás? ¡Simón dice! These are just a few of the phrases that K-4th grade students at UNITY Community Center in Normal, Illinois, learned during spring 2012. Teacher candidates from Illinois State University's (ISU) Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures taught Spanish to about fifteen elementary school students. Focusing on engaging activities and practicing their new language teaching skills, teacher candidates got a real taste for what it takes to manage a classroom full of wiggly elementary 'schoolers'. Supported by a grant from the Endowed Chair of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at ISU, this project stems from the need to involve ISU students with the wider community, examining the outcomes of service learning and civic engagement. The SoTL research questions were: What benefits, if any, do language teacher candidates reap from assisting a local community center? What challenges, if any, present themselves to language teacher candidates as they work with a local community center?

While at the center during the spring of 2012, Spanish-speaking teacher candidates taught once during the seven week-long program. In the fall of 2012, new teacher candidates will teach twice during 14 weeks at UNITY. Most will carry out their student teaching experience the following semester. This first hand experience helps teacher candidates understand the more theoretical coursework, giving them useful experience planning and carrying out real lessons with real students. It also serves as a first run at completing the newly instituted Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) that the state of Illinois will soon use to evaluate student teachers' performance in the areas of planning, instruction, teaching, and analyzing teaching. The project now focuses on teaching Spanish, but we hope to expand it to include French and German along with older UNITY children.

Primarily qualitative analysis of the following types of data is in progress:

- Philosophy of teaching statements (3 drafts)
- “What I learned” wiki entries
- Midterm and final exams and reflections
- 15-minute teaching samples (3-4)
- Teacher Performance Assessment assignments
- Two or three 30-minute interviews

ISSOTL Conference Travel Grants Awarded

The 2012-2013 SoTL travel grant funds have been awarded to several individuals who applied last spring by submitting and having accepted one or more SoTL proposals to the annual meetings of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to be held this October in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Below are the recipients and their presentation titles.

Susan Hildebrandt of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures for *Service Learning Outcomes of an American World Language Teacher Education Course* (with Iryna Brown)

Maria Moore of Communication for *SoTL and Civic Engagement at Illinois State University (ISU): Producing a Digital Documentary Film through a Year-Long Interdisciplinary Community of Students, Faculty, and Admin-*

istrators (with Kathleen McKinney, Cody Meincke, Adam Kopp)

Phyllis McCluskey-Titus of Educational Administration and Foundations for *How Student Learning in Four Applied Disciplines is Influenced by Faculty Practitioner Background*

Erin Mikulec of Curriculum and Instruction for *Learning Together: Pre-Service Teachers and their Professors Participating in a Radical Field Experience* (with Paul C. Miller); *Collaborative Classrooms: Examining the Learning Outcomes of Students, Pre-Service Teachers and Instructors in a Clinical Experience at an Alternative Education Setting* (with Adam Herrmann); *Perceived Learning Outcomes from Participation in a Registered Student Organization Sport Club* (with Kathleen McKinney)

SoTL Travel Grant Report: Community Service and Learning

As space permits we publish travel grant reports in *SoTL at ISU*, which may be edited due to space limitations.

2011 National Art Education Association Conference Kimberly A. McHenry, Art Education

One presentation was given at the 2011 National Art Education Association (NAEA) National Convention (March 17th – 21st) based on the research I conducted with Dr. Judith Briggs and Michael Vetere for the College of Art in fall 2010. This qualitative study was a year-long project with data collected through the end of spring 2011 and focused on the impact of civic engagement with an after school community arts program on the development of pre-service educators. The after school program utilized in the study was the Friday Arts Experience, an hour-

long program held seven times a semester, in both fall and spring, on Fridays at the Bloomington-Normal Boys and Girls Club. Since spring 2009, a variety of art, theatre, early childhood, and elementary education students from ISU earn diversity hours towards the College of Education's minimum 50 hour requirement and gain hands-on experience working with children in this program.

For this study, volunteers were recruited from art education courses and three sections of a theatre education course offered to early childhood and elementary education majors. Data for the research included an entry questionnaire/interview, exit questionnaire/interview, clinical observation reflections, researcher field notes, and images of student work. The research roundtable presentation at the NAEA Convention was titled, "Community Arts and Preservice Arts Education: A Recommendation for Praxis".

The First Cross Chair in SoTL at Illinois State Retires

Elizabeth Welch, Managing Editor

Dr. Kathleen McKinney retired from Illinois State University after 25 years of service on June 30th. Her career at Illinois State began in Sociology/Anthropology as a faculty member, then in 1996 she became the founding Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (which together with Faculty Technology Support Services later form the Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology). In 2002 she became our first Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning after a national search.

This fall the Provost's Office begins the search for a new Cross Chair. Per Dr. McKinney, applicants should be

"involved in the national and international SoTL movement in and beyond his/her own discipline, have a record of his/her own SoTL work, be tenured or eligible for tenure as a professor, and be able to provide faculty development for SoTL to others." When the official job posting is released she asks you share it with those world-wide who qualify.

Update: Dr. McKinney has accepted the University's offer to return part-time through June 2013. She will be conducting some of the duties of the Cross Chair, so that there is continuous support for SoTL on campus. We look forward to working with you a bit longer, Dr. McKinney!

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