

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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Congratulations to FY11 SoTL Research Grant Recipients

We received nine applications requesting a total of \$38,000 for our “Scholarship of Teaching and Learning on Civic Engagement/Service Learning Small Grant Program”. The program provides scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) small grants to study the developmental and learning outcomes of Illinois State students involved in civic engagement and/or service learning in classes or in co/extra-curricular experiences. It is one activity used to meet the goals of our final phase in the CASTL (Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) campus program which focuses on SoTL, civic engagement, and learning. Up to \$5,000 grants were awarded to:

- Judith Briggs, Art Education; Kim McHenry, Art Education; Michael Vetere, Theater Education: *Community Arts and Pre-Service Educators: A Study of Civic Engagement*. This project is an action research study asking the question “what impact does civic engagement with an after-school community arts program have on the development of pre-service educators?” Data will come from questionnaires, interviews, reflection journals, and observations/records.
- Laura Erskine, Management and Quantitative Methods: *Community Organization Research Project (CORP): Learning Decision-Making through Civic Engagement*. In this SoTL study, student learning outcomes (related to civic engagement and leadership) as a result of participation in the Community Organization Research Project (CORP) will be assessed via reflection papers, questionnaires, focus groups, and student products.
- Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, Educational Administration and Foundations; Jodi Hallsten, Communication; Wendy Troxel, Educational Administration and Foundations; Erin Pearce, Office of the Dean of Students: *Six Years of Collaborative Service: EAF 463 and LinC*. This longitudinal research seeks to assess the benefits to students of participation in a volunteer service-learning project and the kind of learning they report immediately after the project, and 1-5 years later. The study will use student reflection papers, an open-ended survey, and meta-analysis of six years of data.
- James Thompson, Special Education: *Creating Family Assessment Portfolios (FAPs) in SED 101*. A service-learning experience involving the creation of Family Assessment Portfolios will be investigated in terms of the learning outcomes for students creating the portfolios and the satisfaction levels of the parents. Structured student reflections and student and parent survey responses will be the main sources of data.
- Jeffrey Walsh, Criminal Justice Sciences; Jessie Kriener, Criminal Justice Sciences; David Marquis, Student Body President: *Taking Stock of Student Outcomes: Examining Participation and Perception of Civic Engagement at a Large Midwestern University*. This project seeks to examine ISU students’ levels of involvement in civic engagement and the relationship between student civic engagement and short- and long-term, intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes. The research will use a campus-based electronic questionnaire.

SoTL Travel Grants for FY11 (2010-2011) Available

Funding is available for SoTL Travel Small Grants (up to \$700) for trips already taken but not fully reimbursed, or trips to be taken in FY11 (July 2010 through June 2011). Travel must be to present SoTL work at a SoTL, teaching, or disciplinary conference, or to attend an all SoTL conference, specifically. The two application rounds have deadlines of September 20, 2010, and February 7, 2011. Four SoTL travel grant reports from past recipients are on pages 2 and 4.

The Call for Applications for round one was mailed out in late July and can also be found on our Scholarship of Teaching and Learning web site at <http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/downloads/pdf/travGrantFY11.pdf>.

A Sampling of SoTL Travel Grant Reports

*Costume Society of America Annual Symposium
by Jennifer Banning, Family and Consumer Sciences*

I was part of a multi-institutional panel presentation, “A Costume Society of America Discussion: Teaching Dress History,” at the Costume Society of America Annual Symposium in Kansas City, MO in May. This national organization is comprised of individuals with an interest in dress or fashion history, with the majority teaching fashion-related courses at colleges or working with historic fashions in museum settings. Most presentations at the national conferences center on new research in the field of fashion history; because of the strong interest of some members about improving student learning in fashion history courses, our panel discussion was proposed as a way to begin a dialogue on effective teaching methods.

My portion of the panel discussion detailed the SoTL research I began in fall 2009 with my FCS 361, “Fashion History before 1900,” class at Illinois State. For this research I received IRB approval to investigate the impact of Team-Based Learning (TBL) on students’ learning and application of concepts taught in the course. Because fashion history students were struggling with objective tests and failing to apply course concepts in a meaningful way, TBL was introduced as a way to help students see the real-world applications for the course, while also increasing engagement and encouraging higher performance. The traditional lecture-style course had previously relied primarily on unit exams for assessment; after TBL was introduced authentic tasks became the primary assessment tool. Team-Based Learning is a decades-old teaching strategy originally begun in large business management classes that combines individual student work (primarily out-of-class) with heterogeneous student team assignments (all in-class). As students unanimously preferred the TBL approach to learning in FCS 361 over the traditional lecture-style, I have been eager to share these findings with my colleagues at other universities.

Our presentation was part of a main session; this allowed all the attendees the opportunity to listen to, and ask questions about, this first teaching presentation in conference history. We were encouraged that our topic was well-received, and many people afterwards asked more questions. Many had never considered teaching methods other than lecture, so our presentation was an epiphany for some. It was suggested that this type of presentation should be held at all future conferences, as other fashion history instructors were eager to continue sharing strategies and hearing about “what works” from others. Additionally, I attended numerous research presentations and talked with professionals from around the nation, opportunities that will help in teaching my fashion history course. Groundwork was also laid for future research collaborations, particularly with the TBL model of teaching.

Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference by Beverly J. Barham, Health Sciences

The Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference held in Biloxi, Mississippi is a premier venue to share teaching strategies with fellow educators from other Medical Laboratory Science programs. This year’s theme was “Normal is gone and it is not coming back” beginning with an excellent keynote speaker who was very convincing on the ideal of doing more with less and not making it painful.

I presented my SoTL work, “Multi Tasking 101: Helping University Based Students Better Prepare for Professional Practice.” Many times the “on campus environment” for pre professional practice students is not a good representation of the challenges students may face during their professional practice experience. Since my students attend an 18 week professional practice experience off campus, I have tried to prepare them for some of these new challenges before they leave campus. In both the lecture and laboratory portions of the pre professional practice courses, I have tried to give them a better understanding of what to expect and how to handle those challenges. In the lecture portion, case-based scenarios of typical situations that might occur in a clinical laboratory are given to students for discussion in a group setting. In the laboratory portion, students are challenged during their lab time with distractions that are common to the clinical laboratory in an effort for them to understand the importance of remaining focused for the task at hand and generating quality results for the patient. I am pleased to report that student response was positive. My work was well received by those in attendance at this conference and I have heard from one colleague who is implementing a similar strategy in her courses.

This conference included several sessions on ways to help students do better while on campus and before their professional practice experience. One specific program involved a mentoring program for the junior cohort, using members of the senior cohort “who have been there, done that” to help with the fast paced and content heavy junior level courses. I hope to have this type of mentoring program in place for next year. It does not take a lot of resources, but the rewards can be great. Other ideas included partnering with other programs within your institution to bring a real world look to some of your classroom and laboratory experiences. I have done this with the safety program in my department but I am hoping to expand this to other programs, so that our students can have the most realistic and best experience possible. The entire conference promoted the idea of doing more with what you have already rather than wishing for more and being disappointed. I like the sustainability idea and know that we in our program can accomplish even more with what we have right now. I am excited to put my ideas into practice!

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Opportunities for Involvement in SoTL at Illinois State

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 Illinois State. The members of the network will be involved in reading, conducting, sharing, and applying SoTL work to enhance the learning of Illinois State students. The primary benefit of membership in this group is that the SoTL NETWORK will facilitate SoTL projects and application that will enhance student learning and development at Illinois State. Additional benefits include growing your networks with other members of the Illinois State community who have similar interests, providing you with opportunities to share work in progress or practice presentations and work on publications for later external audiences, increasing your expertise about SoTL, obtaining resources such as SoTL books or minimal compensation (e.g., \$100 operating funds) for certain activities, and having the opportunity to apply for mini-travel or research grants related to SoTL. If you are interested in this group, please send an email to kmckinne@ilstu.edu by **September 30** and you will be added to an email list (for announcements only). You will then be contacted about preliminary meetings.

ISU SoTL Resource Group: Do you need some assistance related to design or analysis or literature or

theory on a SoTL project? 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 a private email to me at kmckinne@ilstu.edu with your name, title, department, phone number, and brief description of your expertise.

Write a Brief Summary of your SoTL Work at ISU for the Newsletter: Are you working on or have you recently finished a SoTL project on the learning of Illinois State 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. Send this in a word file, electronically, to 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 completed? 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 me at kmckinne@ilstu.edu and we will add it to our list of example SoTL publications by members of the Illinois State community.

Recent SoTL Workshops

Searching for SoTL Literature - Fifteen ISU instructors participated in this hands-on, three-hour workshop on February 12 to help them find relevant past work on a teaching-learning topic that they could apply to their own teaching and/or use it in a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project. Participants received handouts, a book on conducting SoTL, and lunch.

Along with typical strategies used to search for extant literature on a topic, the following tips were suggested:

1. There is no one SoTL database so several will need to be searched.
2. Read the titles of articles in recent issues of major SoTL journals using the links to such journals available at <http://ilstu.libguides.com/sotl>.
3. Go to the sites of SoTL conferences such as ISSOTL, the SoTL Commons, and Lilly conferences and check for proceedings to look for related work. If bibliographies are not posted, email the presenters.
4. Go to sites that are 'repositories' of SoTL work such as the Visible Knowledge Project at Georgetown and the Carnegie Foundation Keep Snapshots of Carnegie Scholars and other SoTL researchers, and the University of Nebraska course portfolio site to look for related work (see <http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/pubOuts/index.shtml>). *Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair in SoTL and Sharon Naylor, Milner Library, facilitators.*

Doing SoTL on Student Outcomes of Civic Engagement - In this four-hour workshop on July 20, seven participants began to conceptualize and design a scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) project studying the developmental and/or learning outcomes of a curricular or co-curricular civic engagement/service learning experience. The workshop involved presentation, discussion, and hands-on activities.

Attendees met with other faculty with experience in this area of research from across campus. Using one-on-one conversations, this created connections for future projects. During a discussion on SoTL research it was noted there are gaps in SoTL research such as the need for more longitudinal research, research on graduate students doing civic engagement, more direct measures of disciplinary learning, and measures of the impact on the community. Participants received books on civic engagement and on doing SoTL research, a \$100 stipend or \$100 in operating funds, and lunch. The workshop was co-sponsored by The Office of the Cross Chair in the SoTL, the CASTL SoTL and Civic Engagement Team, and The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. *Phyllis McCluskey Titus, EAF, Jennifer McDade, CTLT, Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair in SoTL, and Erin Pearce, Dean of Students, facilitators.*

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*Central States Communication Association (CSCA)
Conference by Jenna Durham, Communication*

I received a SoTL Travel Grant for the April Central States Communication Association (CSCA) Conference in Cincinnati in April. The CSCA brings together primary and secondary school teachers, students, college and university professors, and communication professionals. This year's annual conference focused on the role our communication discipline plays in the development of civic engagement practices and research at student, community, and societal levels.

My first paper presentation, "Being a PEP(y) instructor: Assessing the political engagement project in the basic communication course COM 110," received the Douglas Trank Top Paper Award. It was an honor to be rewarded for my hard work on my Master's thesis. This quantitative research paper assessed student's political engagement skills in the basic course. Specifically, students reported on measures of political skill, knowledge and efficacy, and their anticipated future participation, all of which scholars confirm contribute to responsible democratic participation. Results show statistically significant gains on pre- to post-test scores from students participating in the Political Engagement Project (PEP) in COM 110. The qualitative portion of my thesis reported the responses of COM 110 instructors who incorporated the PEP into their classrooms. Coupling these two types of research provides instructors strong pedagogical implications. For example, the basic course must create an environment to engage students, demonstrate to students they can be agents of change, cultivate students' positive attitudes towards political engagement, make course content relevant, engage in dialogue and deliberation, as well as generate effective communicators in a democracy.

I was also a member on a panel presentation including current and previous Illinois State graduate students and faculty, titled "Getting engaged: Marrying the classroom to communities in the basic communication course." We discussed ways the basic communication course classroom can be more connected through civic engagement projects. Each panelist addressed curricular elements including developing learning outcomes and managing assessment. We also spent time explaining the importance of developing good partnerships in the community and gaining traction for ideas on and off campus. Audience members shared their experiences with us and were able to generate additional opportunities for their campuses and communities at home.

*American Cleft Palate Craniofacial Assn Annual
Conference by Jamie Perry, Communication Sciences and
Disorders*

I attended the American Cleft Palate Craniofacial Association (ACPA) annual conference held in Fort Worth, TX in March and presented my recent SoTL work entitled "Do 3D Stereoscopic Computer Animations Improve Student Learning of Surgical Procedures?" The purpose of this study was to determine whether the use of 3D stereoscopic technology can improve students' understanding of the anatomy and the surgical steps related to cleft palate. This information is especially important for our graduate students to know upon entering into a medical related vocation. From my experience as the instructor for cleft palate, this concept is very challenging for our students. This study allowed me to show strong support for the use of such technologies in the classroom. The application of this is not only to communication science classrooms (as used in the study) but also to medical schools. This conference was a fantastic forum to share and discuss such possibilities with physicians, professors, and clinicians who are devoted to cleft palate. My presentation was very well received and stimulated a lot of discussion, particularly among those who provide instruction at medical schools around the country or in programs such as mine (communication sciences and disorders programs).

An additional conference benefit was being able to gain information about other studies about teaching and learning. There were two conference tracks, technology and training, which provided numerous displays of such work. I learned a great deal from attending these sessions and posters. I also found ways to enhance my own SoTL work on a broader scale. One study demonstrated the use of an online dissemination of a training program (such as mine). Through this method they were able to obtain a large sample size. I discussed with the author ways in which I might be able to apply the same program to my SoTL work in order to increase my sample size (which is currently 40 students).

From the generous support provided to me through this SoTL travel grant, I was able to make public a study which demonstrates a systematic study on teaching and learning. In addition, I was able to highlight one of our own (very bright) undergraduate students and provide a significant representation of our institution. Lastly, I was able to learn of methodologies and technologies that might be implemented into my own future SoTL work which will ultimately impact my classroom at Illinois State.

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