

**INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING
THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING
AT ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY**

Kathleen McKinney
Deborah Gentry
James Broadbear

Illinois State University,
Normal, IL 61790

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Involvement in the CASTL Program

Since 1988, several Illinois State University faculty and a larger discussion group of faculty and staff members have participated in the CASTL program and our ongoing research on student engagement. Our campus definition of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) is "systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public." Currently, supported by the Illinois State University Foundation and the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, we are varying stages of conducting four research projects related to the topic of student engagement:

- Jack Chizmar (Economics) and Doug Turco (Health, Physical Education and Recreation) have analyzed and reported their data from a quasi-experiment looking at the impact of graded vs. ungraded homework on participation (one measure of engagement), course grade, and other measures. A journal article related to this effort is in press.
- Val Farmer Dougan (Psychology) and psychology student David James conducted a Web questionnaire study of Illinois State University students' engagement and the correlates of engagement. An article about this work has appeared in a campus publication entitled *CATalyst*.
- Sociology professor Tom Gershick and Sociology graduate student Lana Berardi conducted qualitative interviews with about 20 Illinois State University instructors and faculty members investigating their perceptions of student engagement and how engagement can be enhanced to improve teaching and learning. The results have been disseminated by multiple means, including the 2002 Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting and the *CATalyst* publication.
- Finally, Wendy Troxel, Jamie Young (UAO), and Kathleen McKinney (CAT) have been conducting secondary analysis of data from our freshman, sophomore, and senior surveys, and the National Study of Student Engagement, looking at variables related to engagement over time.

Kathleen McKinney, Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching, and Doug Turco and Jack Chizmar, two ISU faculty members, are the recipients of a \$5000 "Going Public" small grant from the American Association of Higher Education. This grant has helped us begin to disseminate knowledge obtained from our research on student engagement for the CASTL Campus Program. We have already begun dissemination of some of this work both internal and external to Illinois State University.

- The October, 2000, and October, 2001, issues of the CATalyst focused on student engagement and CASTL work. This is distributed on-campus to over 2,000 people and to teaching centers around the nation via a newsletter exchange. In addition, it is posted to our Web site (<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/publications/catalyst.shtml>).
- We have also posted updates on our campus program to the AAHE CASTL Web Center (<http://aahe.ital.utexas.edu/>).
- Furthermore, we have begun internal presentations of some of the research, including at our Teaching-Learning Symposium held annually in October.
- We have begun a Web Board discussion on student engagement research open to anyone on- and off-campus (<http://Webboard.ilstu.edu/~CASTL-ISU>).
- We hosted a one-day conference on ENGAGING MINDS: A CONFERENCE ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING on our campus Wednesday, July 18, 2001 (10:00 am to 3:00 pm). The conference was free and open to all faculty, staff, and students at ISU and nearby institutions.
- Finally, the research teams have been writing articles for submission to national, peer-reviewed higher education or teaching journals.

Teaching and Learning Symposium

October 24, 2002, will be the date for the 5th Annual Illinois State University Teaching and Learning Symposium. This day-long event provides an opportunity for faculty, graduate assistants, and staff to share teaching resources, teaching strategies, and pedagogical research on college teaching and student learning/development. Though all relevant topics are appropriate, each year's symposium has encouraged presentations on select topics. For example, the call for the upcoming symposium has emphasized active learning; assessment; collaboration between academic and student affairs; interdisciplinary efforts; and out-of-class learning experiences. Paper, poster, and roundtable presentations are common. A notable speaker external to campus is invited to give a keynote presentation. This October, Dr. James A. Eison, Director of the Center for Teaching Enhancement at the University of South Florida, and co-author with Charles C. Bonwell of *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom* will fulfill this role. The symposium is held in a centrally located and highly visible venue. Each year, it draws more attention and participation. Information about this event can be found at this website: <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/events/tls.shtml>.

Workshop on Scholarly Writing for Publication

Dr. Elizabeth Rankin, professor of English and director of a faculty development program at the University of North Dakota came to the Illinois State University campus to present a workshop on scholarly writing for publication in April, 2002. Dr. Rankin is also a consultant-evaluator for the National Council of Writing Program Administrators. A copy of her recent book, *The Work of Writing: Insights and Strategies for Academics and Professionals*, was provided to each workshop attendee. The personal and professional benefits of engaging in scholarly writing, including that pertaining to SoTL, were highlighted. Dr. Rankin emphasized the usefulness of forming academic writing groups. The workshop incorporated a role play that demonstrated how such a small group might operate. This and other strategies she shared enabled attendees to complete the workshop

sensing the work of writing could be more manageable, productive, and rewarding for them. It appears a number of writing groups will be newly formed as a result of this workshop experience, including several with a focus of SoTL writing. Faculty writing about SoTL can benefit from visiting the following website sponsored by the ISU Center for the Advancement of Teaching: <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/publications/> It provides links to examples of such writing in final published form.

SoTL Editors' Panel Presentation

Upon recent investigation, there appears to be 28 faculty members at Illinois State University who are currently serving, or have recently ended a term, as an editor for a scholarly journal. Seven of those 28 persons are editors of teaching/learning related journals. Two of those SoTL editors joined with two other SoTL editors from other universities to provide a panel discussion. Panel participants included Helen Moore of the University of Nebraska who is editor of the *Teaching Sociology*; William Becker of Indiana University who is editor of the *Journal of Economics Education*; Dale Fitzgibbons of Illinois State University who is editor of the *Journal of Management Education*; and Deborah Gentry of Illinois State University who is editor of the *Journal of Teaching in Marriage and Family*. The panelists spoke of the mission and expectations of their respective journals, definitions of SoTL from the perspective of their respective disciplines, and strategies and tips for undertaking high quality SoTL and then seeking to get the outcomes of such work published.

SoTL Teaching-Learning Communities (TLC)

A TLC is a campus-wide opportunity for faculty members of varying ranks and teaching assistants from differing disciplines to meet informally on a regular basis in small groups to reflect upon and discuss issues related to teaching and learning. Considerable sharing and mentoring occurs during these gatherings. Most small groups meet for 1-1.5 hours every other week during an academic term. When possible, a Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) staff member attends TLC sessions in an effort to assist with facilitation of discussion. Each TLC group member receives a blank journal in which s/he can write reflections and ideas. On occasion, the CAT secures reading materials that a given TLC group would like to focus upon. For example, one TLC group has read and discussed *Scholarship Revisited: Perspectives on the Scholarship of Teaching*, the summer 2001 volume of the New Directions for Teaching and Learning Series. As a result of these efforts, the project for this Summer Academy was solidified. A small travel grant proposal to attend the Lilly Conference on College Teaching in November, 2002, was composed and submitted. Members of another TLC group decided to implement an innovative teaching approach, monitor resulting outcomes, and document their observations in their journal on a regular basis. Eventually, their systematic reflections and observations were formally presented at the ISU Teaching and Learning Symposium as well as at the Lilly Conference on College Teaching. For more information about TLCs at ISU, visit this website: <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/evaluations/index.shtml#Instructor Teaching-Learning Teams>

Workshops on Defining and Evaluating SoTL

As Director of our teaching center, I work with Chairpersons and personnel committees, and faculty members on evaluating teaching. This has led to a “workshop” on defining, measuring, and evaluating (formative and summative) teaching, scholarly teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. We discuss the differences between these concepts, how faculty might document their work in these areas, criteria, evidence for success, which work “counts” as teaching or service or scholarship, how/where SoTL fits within current policy, etc. I provide the participants with several handouts. Participants have the opportunity to hear what “goes on” in other departments. The workshop is offered at two different days/times to maximize attendance.

SoTL Small Grant Program

We have used several small grant programs to support SoTL work on campus. You can see guidelines for past grant programs at the URLs listed below. This coming year, we will begin a new program. Funds are limited but we will support five SoTL projects at \$4,000 each. We hope to increase those funds in the future. In addition, faculty are encouraged to submit SoTL projects to our University Research Grant (internal small grant program), though must funds in this program go to “traditional disciplinary research.” We work with faculty to write high quality SoTL proposals in an effort to increase their competitive edge in this program.

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/awards/sotlgrant.shtml>

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/awards/tldevel.shtml>

<http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu/grants/>

First Year Faculty Institute on Classroom Assessment and Classroom Research

Each year the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) and the University Assessment Office (UAO) offer a summer teaching institute titled “Classroom Assessment and Classroom Research” for tenure-track faculty members who have just completed their first year of teaching at Illinois State University. The emphasis of the institute is on measuring and understanding student learning using strategies for getting formative feedback from and about students. We examine what faculty members can do to better assess and research student learning outcomes at the classroom, program, and/or department levels. We also discuss how such work is part of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and can be shared through local and national publications and presentations. The institute features presentations by on-campus experts, as well as round table discussions with the participants. This unique interaction with colleagues from across disciplines is designed to assist new faculty members in their planning and improvement of courses for the upcoming academic year and beyond.

Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Our President, Provost, and Vice President for University Advancement worked hard over the course of several years to obtain the funds to Endow a Chair in SoTL. Dr. K. Patricia Cross, as most of you know, is a well-know scholar in the field of higher

education. She has generously endowed the Cross Chair in the SoTL at Illinois State University. Dr. Cross and her sister are Illinois State alums, and their father is a former Illinois State University professor. After a national search, I have the honor to be selected as the first Cross Chair in SoTL. The position is designed to work, on occasion, with the new Director of our Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) and other faculty development leaders. The roles of the Chair, however, are distinct from those of the CAT Director. More specifically, as Cross Chair, I will engage in my own SoTL scholarship in Sociology and in higher education more generally. Second, I will facilitate working with faculty, graduate students, and staff to do their own SoTL work. The third role I will have as Cross Chair is that of a social change agent, working to promote, share, reward, and use SoTL work on campus. Finally, I will serve as a representative on the SoTL from Illinois State University to the higher education national scene working with my own disciplinary society and with organizations such as the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) and the Carnegie Foundation.

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/sotl/index.shtml#chair>

SoTL Web Site

We have put together (continue to work on and welcome suggestions, links, etc.) a web site of information and resources for the SoTL. The site's main headings include the following:

- Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Internal Grants Used to Support SoTL
- Internal Outlets for Presenting and Publishing SoTL Work (i.e., Teaching-Learning Symposium, Teaching with Technology Conference, *In Teaching...*, *the CATALyst*)
- Other Publication Outlets
- Issues Related to Human Subjects
- Illinois State University's Involvement in the CASTL Campus Program
- Other SoTL sites
- Examples of SoTL work
- AAHE Summer Academy Project 2002 on SoTL

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/sotl/index.shtml>

Kathleen McKinney, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology
Cross Endowed Chair for the
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61790-3990
(309) 438-5943
kmckinne@ilstu.edu

Deborah Gentry, Ed.D
Professor of Family Science &
Associate Dean, College of Applied
Science & Technology
Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61790-5000
(309) 438-8748
dgentry@ilstu.edu