Participating in a Community of Scholars

Despite the obvious differences in the two kinds of inquiry described above, I believe both of them (and the many hybrid efforts that have some features of each) can be considered examples of scholarship, in its most honored sense. As noted frequently (e.g., Bernstein & Bass < http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2005/JA/Feat/bern.htm >, 2005; Woodhouse, 2010), Boyer's (1990) landmark book challenged the assumption that the term scholarship is simply a synonym for research. He identified research as scholarship of discovery, the process of adding new knowledge through inquiry and investigation, but he argued we should also recognize other activities as parallel forms of scholarship. Some scholars integrate others' discoveries and synthesize new forms of understanding, while other scholars engage external communities by examining and refining academic ideas and practices through their use in addressing pressing challenges. Boyer also argued that instruction is another arena for scholarship, and being a separate category meant it was a kind of scholarship distinct from the practices of discovery researchers. If this designated community would not merely replicate discovery, what exactly would such scholarship look like?

Recognizing that simply declaring teaching to be scholarship was not a sufficient analysis, Boyer undertook a second major project to describe the defining features of scholarship, but he died before it was completed. Fortunately his colleagues at the Carnegie Foundation completed that work and brought forward a careful analysis of the intellectual habits of communities of scholars (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff, 1997). Based on extensive interviews with scholars of many kinds, they concluded that scholarly communities share six common characteristics: scholars have clear goals, prepare through knowledge of other scholars' work, use shared methods, gather evidence, engage in reflective critique of findings, and make their work publicly visible. Using this analysis in the second book, Glassick et al. suggested that teaching *can be* scholarship, but only if the teacher engages in the shared intellectual habits of a community of scholars of teaching.

There are two important implications that come from this analysis. First, not all teaching qualifies as scholarship. A teacher can be professionally competent by conscientious delivery of courses using traditional delivery methods and measures typical of higher education. That instruction becomes scholarship when the instructor reads widely on contemporary practices, evaluates understanding with a range of student performances, reflects on student learning to refine the course learning activities, and engages colleagues in public discussion of those conclusions and refinements. Second, not all communities share the same procedures for measurement and for analysis. In a community working to maximize learning by the students currently enrolled, the conventions of evidence and analysis would favor immediate feedback on practices that match the resources available to the faculty members. In a community working to maximize what is learned about general models of learning, the conventions would instead favor systematic design of interventions that allow for separating the effects of different innovations on specific aspects of student performance, yielding more generalizable findings.

Both of these communities of scholars are doing work at a much more sophisticated level than the competent teacher described above who carefully but privately delivers a conventional course. Each community engages in public scholarly discourse about what is learned and how it moves their understanding forward, but they operate under different shared goals and methods. Both communities make important and complementary contributions to the mission of their institutions, and they co-exist nicely. The problems

arise when institutional policies categorize the activities and give them differential weights. When the community of *teaching* scholars claim their work to be scholarship, some colleagues say it does not meet the standards of *discovery* scholars, even though it was never intended to do so. It was intended to produce the best teaching and learning possible within the constraints of institutional resources and human capital. It is at this point that the fully elaborated version of Boyer's model can be useful; scholarship of discovery and scholarship of teaching are in fact different enterprises, but they share common characteristics that distinguish them as scholarship. One is outstanding discovery and the other is outstanding instruction, and both are accomplished within a community of scholars with shared goals, methods, and forms of public discourse.

An Inclusive Category Will Increase Participation and Enhance Learning

I think we need to navigate a sane path through the tension between the nature of our work as scholars and the values and priorities of our profession. I would offer one observation that I do not hear made very often: relatively few regular faculty members actually can follow the discovery path typically packaged as scholarship of teaching. It is very demanding in both time and research skill, and as noted by Woodhouse (2010) it is difficult to meet the professional standards of the education research community. Those faculty members with the greatest teaching responsibilities have the fewest discretionary hours to spend on research protocols that would be added on top of course delivery. While social science faculty members have some advantage in research methods, all of us who are not in schools of education have a lot to learn about rigorous research on teaching and learning. It would be very presumptuous to assume that a humanities or natural science professor can attend a two week workshop on SoTL and then conduct high quality inquiry into instruction. In a discovery community your work is compared with someone who has a Ph.D. in educational research and many years of experience conducting social science studies. In an important way, it is not a very welcoming invitation to join the real discovery enterprise in teaching.

On the other hand, I think there is a much more welcome invitation to a community of scholars who focus on improving their own practices and the understanding demonstrated by their own students. Local reading groups and teaching centers provide opportunities to read about evidence-based innovations, often within your own field. By paying attention to key features of your students' work, you can see if some critical aspects of their understanding are sensitive to the enhancements you have tried. We are already skilled at methods of evidence and argument within our own fields, and we are reasonably expert judges of the quality of students' work. By using those existing skills to focus on the teaching you will do anyway, you can turn a course you need to teach often into an intellectually interesting ongoing inquiry. By using readily available forms of online representation and sharing, a community of scholars can emerge around even a local body of such teaching. When that community is well informed by research, public with evidence of student work, and open to comment and critique, it constitutes a community of scholars of the practice of teaching.

For me, the goal of SoTL is to have every teacher treat every course as an opportunity to learn how to create better learning environments and generate richer educational experiences. Woodhouse (2010) points out that getting faculty members to change their teaching practices is challenging, and evidence suggests that informal, interactive ways of learning about colleagues' work yield more change in practice than formally published

research on general principles of teaching and learning. Making our teaching and our students' understanding visible as practice (not as research) may be an optimal way to influence the quality of teaching and learning in scholarly communities, and it is a low cost (and relatively low stress) form of engagement in our own professional lives (Bernstein, Burnett, Goodburn, & Savory, 2006). It may not convince a dean that you are a fast-track researcher, but it may well demonstrate your excellence as a teacher and encourage colleagues to follow your scholarly example.

Choose a Form of Fcholarship That Fits

All of this conversation and our personal decisions take place in a social context, heavily influenced by the values of our colleagues. In places where the SoTL leaders come from schools and colleges of education, there is typically a rejection of the informal scholarship framework, despite its sharing the major characteristics of a community of scholars (Glassick et al., 1997). In my personal experience, this is more often the case in the U.K, Australia and Canada. In the U.S. there are more SoTL leaders who do not have credentials as educational researchers, but even here there is a strong voice insisting that intellectual achievements appear as published research. For me, this response represents institutional narrowness on criteria for professional advancement, but those committees are made up of us, the professoriate. Perhaps this is a time when we should re-assert the inherent value of teaching as a mission of the university; effective teaching should be rewarded and honored because it is important, not because it resembles discovery research. We could follow Boyer's original intent and declare that discovery research is only one of several ways that a community of scholars can make important contributions. If SoTL is to serve the ultimate goal of improving student success, we as a community cannot limit the definition of scholarship to discovery and require our colleagues to divert their teaching energies into research on education to gain professional standing.

Each faculty member can examine the time, resources, skills, and energy available for the teaching assignments presented. From such a realistic assessment, instructors will situate their own work on a continuum from systematic and intentional delivery through intellectual consideration of evidence of learning to rigorous identification of effective educational practices. The work can be shared with colleagues, evidence and reflections can be posted on line, or articles can be submitted to various forms of peer-reviewed publications. I would suggest that any combination of points on those two continua can meet the criteria for scholarship of teaching as Boyer (1990) intended, as long as it is informed by the work of others, evidence-based, and public, as outlined in the second part of Boyer's argument (Glassick et al., 1997). As institutions we might better improve the learning of our students by making the faculty's intellectual work in teaching visible for discussion and collaboration than by inviting our colleagues to discover new frontiers in educational practice or theory. I am pleased that so many professors do engage in serious discovery research in education, as that benefits us all. I just think there are also communities of genuine scholarship that have other purposes, and we need people doing that work as well.

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