Inquiry into Learning Environments

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The scholarship of teaching according to Ernest Boyer, former President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in his book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* is to change the paradigm that to be a scholar you must be a researcher. Boyer wanted to value multiple types of scholarship (discovery, integration, application and of course teaching). Scholarship of teaching later became the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) because teaching and learning cannot be separated for one learns as one teaches. Also, it became a term used for classroom research done by the educator where results are shared. Although a question still remains as to whether this sharing has to be through a peer review process to count as scholarship, many educators can agree that inquiry into one's own teaching may lead to improving one's practice. This inquiry can be about the educator's personal knowing, methodology, content or context. It can be about the how, when, what, where and by whom. Transformative Dialogues offers educators a place to share their inquiry through a peer reviewed process.

In this issue are three reflection pieces, inquiry into their own experiences. In *What If Grassroots Don't Take Root?: Reflections on Cultivating Communities of Practice*, authors Stephanie Oliver and Gavan Watson review their experience of a community of practice at their post-secondary institution and present questions for further research. Author Joan Flaherty in *Lessons on Teaching and Learning from a Walking Workshop in Nepal* discusses the process and outcome of a 12 day education tourism workshop that changed its format from a traditional workshop to one with seven days of trekking in the Himalayas and the resulting additional course outcomes. Graduate students Judy Nguyen and Andrew Estrada Phuong in *Discovering the Teacher Within* discuss the process they used to improve their instructional skills in the classroom.

Although, I believe in multiple ways of knowing and have encouraged our post-secondary educators' community to use other communication formats (video, projected media presentation, poem, etc.) most often written format is still preferred. Not everyone has perfect writing skills, even though they may be excellent educators. Janelle Voegele and Dannelle D. Stevens decided to create a community of practice on an academic writing program to tackle this issue. They share the process and practice in C*ommunities of Practice in Higher Education: Transformative Dialogues Toward a Productive Academic Writing Practice*.

Tracy Daraviras teaches in a cohort program, where faculty teach in multidisciplinary teams and advise students. A part of their work is to negotiate work and provide feedback. In *Spaces in between: Team teaching in a Freshman Learning Community*, these authors discuss the benefits and challenges of this approach. Another learning environment is service learning. Linda Holt in *The Campus on the Hill: Diversity at Our Doorstep* argues that if we change traditional service learning to critical service learning, it can help students recognize injustices. Another learning environment, one with a mixture of international and local students is discussed in the next article, *Changes in Faculty Practice for International Students: A Case Study*. Curtis Washburn and Jace Hargis use a qualitative multiple case study research methodology and share their research findings.

More and more institutions are using undergraduate research as a learning methodology to improve student knowledge. David P. Burns and Anya Goldin, in *Undergraduate Research Experiences in the Liberal Arts: The Case of Parent Advisory Councils* describe how working with a parent advisory council can help meet this knowledge requirement.

In some of our institutions, statistics are taught in a number of faculties in isolation. Authors Brenda Ravenscroft and Brenda Ravenscroft, in *Balancing Act: Creating a Multidisciplinary Blended Introductory Statistics Course* describe their experience of trying to solve this issue.

The next article in this issue, *The switch: Who teaches, who learns? A teaching professor and an educational developer transform their roles.* In this essay, Michelle Yeo (educational developer) and Sarah Hewitt (faculty member) describe how they worked together to create a first year course. They share insights from the collaboration process and from a student perspective, Yeo, educational developer, became a student in the classroom.

Faculty members are, in some institutions, required to write teaching philosophies with the understanding that it impacts course design and the environment that is created. Julie Brooke and Jo-Anne H. Willment inquired about the process of teaching philosophy development and their results are reported in the last article.

In each of these articles, colleagues are inquiring into their practice and sharing their insights. There are many ideas to help dialogue to transform our own teaching.