

Friday @ the Center: Sept. 26, 2008

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

One of four types of scholarship encouraged and recognized in the SPU Faculty Handbook (section 5.2.2.2 found at <http://www.spu.edu/facstaff/handbook/faculty/5/index.asp#5.2.2.2>) is the scholarship of teaching. A movement originating in a Carnegie report issued by Ernest Boyer in 1990, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) involves more than preparing and teaching a class, no matter how excellently such teaching is done. The SoTL involves framing a question for study, gathering evidence and reflecting on it, trying out new insights, and publically disseminating that information so that others can critique and build upon it. It is an eminently suitable scholarship for those faculty with heavy undergraduate teaching loads, as it directly connects one's teaching and research. It is the kind of work our Physics colleagues are engaged in and receiving large grants to support. Although the SoTL draws on the work of our colleagues in the Education in its concern for how learning takes place, it also requires pedagogical content knowledge and an ability to synthesize. Interested in pursuing this line of research? A good introduction is *Enhancing Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Challenges and Joys of Juggling*, by Kathleen McKinney (Anker 2007). And come and talk to me about your ideas: I'm happy to serve as a sounding board.

SoTL Conference

Already working in an area of SoTL and wondering where to disseminate your findings publically? Submit a proposal to the 21st annual Lilly Conference on College & University Teaching—West, to be held in Southern California on March 20-21, 2009. Lilly Conferences combine workshops, discussion sessions, and major addresses, with opportunities for informal discussion about excellence in college and university teaching and learning. The 2009 Lilly-West Conference theme is *Millennial Learning: Teaching in the 21st Century*. Proposals are invited on any topic relating to teaching in the 21st century. Featured tracks will include:

- Advancing Active Learning
- Teaching Well with Technology
- Engaging and Motivating Students
- Promoting Diversity
- Service/Experiential Learning

See http://www.iats.com/conferences/conference%20west2009_info.html for more information. Presentation proposals are due **Oct. 31**.

GE (General Education): Imagination at Work #2

General education, Carol Geary Schneider writes, is the “academic commons” of higher education, yet the organizational structure of American higher education, our own institution included, is departmental. Faculty identity and teaching loads are grounded in departments, and department chairs and faculty members constantly struggle with the competing demands of staffing their own majors and programs and “contributing” to general education. Where do your loyalties lie? How can we fashion a true “commons” of learning for our students?

The First Day of School Butterflies

We won't see any lunch boxes, and I doubt there will be many bright white bobby sox—two things that I instinctively associate with the first day of school—but we'll all find new (young) faces, anxious spirits, and abundant energy in our classrooms next week. Admit it, don't you still get a few butterflies on that first day, too? From first-year students leaving home for the first time to graduate students beginning their final quarter of course work, we will encounter a unique excitement that is one of the sweetest experiences of the professorial life. Enjoy!



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