



Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

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Capacity Building & Connecting With Wider Audiences



Arshad Ahmad,
STLHE President

In our most recent newsletter, Sarah and Roger invited the membership to consider the question, "Whom do we teach?" and raised a number of related questions about students. Here, I share some of my own thoughts on the students we teach in class and online, and focus on a larger audience that we might better serve, both nationally and overseas.

For all teachers, traditional class sizes have expanded dramatically, sometimes with adverse effects (Cuseo, 2007). Yet,

groups, should we choose to do so. The STLHE Board also publicly articulates advocacy as one of its strategic goals, and reaching out is nothing new. In fact advocacy was identified as the number one priority by an overwhelming majority of our membership in a survey conducted last year. So the important question remains: who is this "broader audience"?

To answer this question, let me first acknowledge that, generally speaking,

As a national Society, we may have more collective expertise to profoundly understand and respect any given audience than any other group in Canada. This gives us leverage to engage broader groups, should we choose to do so.

since the first STLHE Green Guide on Teaching Large Classes was published in 1998, our Society's conferences have repeatedly showcased effective teaching practices to engage and improve student learning, regardless of class size. This is not to say that I prefer a class of nine hundred, which I once taught, over a PhD class of nineteen, which I have also taught. Without a doubt, each offers a qualitatively different teaching and learning experience.

Suppose we think about our scholarship as seen through a wider lens, however, bringing in many more learners. We coach, consult, advise and teach peers, organizations, and members of distinct communities locally, regionally and abroad. A deep understanding of our students, including their particular learning needs, predispositions, styles, and preferences, may be critical in guiding us to design any learning episode. Indeed, being learner-centered is part and parcel of our collective teaching philosophy.

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academics are often blamed for focusing on fairly narrow audiences, especially when it comes to the dissemination of our work. More importantly, there is a widespread (public) perception that academic findings frequently do not address complex questions – many of which are related to the quality of education – which matter most to society.

If we wish to connect with groups in the public at large, such as parents who are very much interested in these questions, how do we build communication capacity to reach out to them? In addition, how do we make our concurrent efforts to enhance various aspects of the scholarship of teaching and learning, more accessible to parents? How do we engage other segments of the public, the government, and our own institutions on educational questions that not only matter but also should serve to improve the larger society?

Building communication capacity must also acknowledge the proliferation of "knowledge" and the ability of more members in society to access that knowledge instantly. This proliferation has eroded traditional academic and selected disciplinary venues such

as monographs, journal articles, or books, and has consequently reduced their dominance in shaping policy and practice. Accordingly, we might ask, how can we create more mainstream ways of communication with viable media which is not only effective but also as stable as paper records used to be?

In a recent provocative article, "When Knowledge Wins: Transcending the Sense and Nonsense of Academic Rankings," 1991 3M Teaching Fellow Nancy Adler goes further: "As the rate of societal change quickens, cycle times in academic publishing, which have lagged behind those in industry and technology, become crucial. In a world of instant communication in which 70 million blogs already exist and 40,000 new blogs come on line each day — the majority of which are not in English (Lanchester, 2008) — academia cannot continue to rely on a venerated journal-publishing system that considers publication delays of up to 2 years to be both acceptable and normal" (Adler & Harzing, 2009).

Any national communication strategy should consider both human and monetary resources. Are we ready to step up our roles, communicating in new and unfamiliar ways? Are we ready to blog, become web savvy, and find new ways to disseminate to the mainstream media? Do we understand enough about our national audience to redress public misconceptions about our work, eliminate false dichotomies that have pitted research against teaching, and transform our own educational practices? Zundel, Deane & Summerlee, all Presidents of the Universities of Sudbury, McMaster and Guelph, have been forcefully articulating these very issues.

Should the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education – all of us – commit actively to Canada's current and vital educational issues? My answer is a resounding YES. Yes, the Canadian public needs to hear from its front line teachers. Yes, the public needs unfiltered opinions from professors, contract teachers, teaching assistants, educational developers, librarians, and students. We foster and guide the new generations, entering the halls of learning, and emerging as engaged, enlightened, and thoughtful citizens. Therefore our voices must be heard. Yes, beyond our expertise, history, values, milestones, and our

very raison d'être as a Society, we are the eyes and ears of the public. Shakespeare might call us "God's spies." We must build communication capacity to reach broader segments of our society.

Of course, these endeavours will be expensive. STLHE cannot stretch its current institutional and individual membership monies further, given our ambitious array of existing operating activities and events. Nor can we easily ask more of our generous partners who already support so many of our programs. Yet, to leap ahead in building a national communication strategy, we must think big — which is exactly what the STLHE Board has set out to do. Your Board is currently being advised by a legal team to help us create a charitable arm to enable us to accept tax-exempt donations. Simultaneously, during our next face-to-face meeting in February, we plan to flesh out a revolutionary, capacity-building proposal from the 2010 3M Cohort which, again, will be geared to increase financial stability and reach out to

broader audiences. And, as I have said in an earlier message, and Sylvain Robert states here in his inaugural report, STLHE has recommitted itself to strengthening bilingualism.

Coincidentally, it is heartening to read messages in this Newsletter from the Presidents of our sister associations POD and ISSOTL. Both Peter Felten and Gary Poole face challenging, audience-related questions, and speak to adapting our organizational roles in times of unprecedented change and globalization. All three of our organizations excel at advocating for the improvement of teaching and learning and for the enrichment of the student experience. We can be heartened because we have so much in common. As partners, we stand united in reaching out, together, to meet change on its own terms. Could it be, as Ray Land points out in his extraordinary article on Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge, that our organizations are at the gateway of transformation? Are we about to step into some unknown liminal phase where we need to be prepared for the disconcerting conceptual and ontologi-

cal shifts of transformation? If so, I urge you to join us in welcoming the challenges ahead.

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Co-Editors' Co-Editorial



Sarah Keefer and Roger Moore
STLHE Newsletter Co-Editors

As co-editors, we were thrilled with the number and variety of responses we received to our first question: *Whom do you teach?* It was a pleasant surprise to see so many writers breaking away from the binary **us** (faculty) vs **them** (students), instead to reach out to construct a bridge between themselves and their students. We were also amazed at the variety of perception on what "Whom do you teach" means to you. Students from all levels of society were mentioned in the submissions; the term *students* clearly no longer refers only to those who exit high school and move directly into higher education (often without adequate preparation) — the traditional empty vessel which awaits filling. We were also delighted with the description of the non-traditional situations taken advantage of as brave new opportunities for instruction by eager teachers demonstrating an inspiring pedagogical creativity.

We have selected five pieces from your submissions which seem to represent the breadth and diversity of reflections which we have received. Since there is not enough space to include everyone and everything, we have asked some of you whose responses encompassed more than one "question" to

re-imagine your ideas for a later issue, and have attempted to summarize the rest here in our co-editorial, focusing on some of your principal ideas. Wherever possible, we have included the name and institution of the author of each selected quotation. Glen Loppnow (University of Alberta) notes the heterogeneity of students at various stages of their development who, nevertheless, all "thirst for old-fashioned engagement and stimulation, amongst all the noise and distractions of the 21st century." As such, he sees that while "the landscape has changed, the plowing, seeding, and nurturing continues," and that our most pressing need is to deal with the exponential rise in distractions that confront today's students. Vanisha Sukdeo (PhD candidate, Osgoode Hall) sees her students as "more tech savvy than students from past generations but still remain[ing] the same at the core — worried about failure, worried about the job market when they graduate, and pleased when they understand and accomplish." Sylvain Robert (UQTR) considers the range of those whom he teaches as being comprised of some students that he knows personally, others that he does not know, and still others that he will never know. He allows his students to approach him "as easily as their 'bubble' allows." The idea of the student's individual bubble is continued by Alice Cassidy (In View Teaching and Professional Development) who writes that when she walks into class, she wonders "what's in the imaginary thought-bubble over each student's head." This she attempts to understand and "read," urging us "really [to] know our students as people and as learners, in order to make learning as effective as possible." Roberta Burke (Mohawk College) works where passion for the career and application of knowledge and skills are emphasized over research. She asked us if we might extend our questions to include questions like "What is your philosophy of teaching? What is the most important thing that you want to impart to

your students? What most do you want your students to remember about you?"

The issue of student identity and the virtual classroom is foregrounded by Brock Fenton (UWO), who says tell us that he recognizes his students' names but does not "necessarily know their faces," for he meets them "in a virtual classroom for 'discussions' but ... [they] do not use a webcam so I do not see them." He has been teaching for forty years but is not sure that the students are any different now than they were when he started in 1969. David Cass (Professor Emeritus, Alberta) initiates an important conversation for us on class size by noting that he never paid a lot of attention to who he was teaching, "particularly in large classes. In small classes, I usually got to know my students fairly well, but in large classes (400) that was not normally possible." These summaries are brief and we apologize for their brevity. However, we do not apologize for their perspicacity and their variety, and as co-editors we wish to stress the importance of the "multi-logues" that you are opening here. Because the voices of our readership are disparate, and they are many, we would like wherever possible to share with all our readers the different points of view brought forward by some of the many who read and contribute to this Newsletter.

Next Topic: What are we teaching? Are we teaching a subject, and nothing more? Are we modelling a way of life, of nurturing, of caring? Are we aware of how much — and what — our individual students actually take in? What are we doing to encourage communication between them and us on this crucial issue? Please get back to us with responses of 250 words no later than 15 April, 2011: reply to us both: sarah.keef@rogers.com and roger.moore@rogers.com.

The Purple Professor Says



"Students don't change; they are just the same as they always were: unprepared, casual, empty vessels expecting to be filled, potential disasters waiting to happen. When I teach, I look out on an sea of anonymous faces; I don't want to know their names, nor do I want to hear their stories. I'm just not interested in their daily cares and worries. So what if they've got problems? Those problems have absolutely nothing to do with me and even less to do with my subject. As for grading, I hate marking their work; it's handed in at the last possible minute, and it's sloppy and careless. Give them one good examination at the end of the year, as hard as possible, to test them on the small print and the footnotes. That'll sort the wheat from the chaff! And stop wrapping them up in cotton wool; don't mollycoddle them: it's just not worth it. Throw them in the deep end, I say, and let them sink or learn to swim."

Who Were in my Three Courses?

Rosemary Polegato, Mount Allison University

Your question, Whom are we teaching? inspired me to reflect on who were in my three courses during Fall 2010.

1. They are diverse:

- Their names include Brooke, David, Dominique, Jarrett, Kelci, Lena, Ling, Max, Michela, Mitchel, and Shay.
- Some are from homes with two parents; some live with one parent; some are from multi-generational, ethnic families.
- Some don't pay for their education; some hope that a student loan and part-time job will cover expenses.
- Some have travelled the world; some have never been on an airplane.
- Some love conceptual models and images. Some only get engaged when we go out into the community. Some love to read. Some do not want to miss a class.
- Some write very well; some prefer to present their ideas in front of the class.

2. They are the same:

- They have a soft spot for parents, siblings, peers and being Canadian (even if they are just visiting).
- They are respectful about keeping laptops closed and cell phones off (because we all agreed to), and are sheepish when they forget.
- They are willing to reference properly — with the help of my Quick Style Sheet.
- They visit Moodle regularly to use the materials I've posted there.

- They want choice within structure — even if it's in small things.
- They expect justice — even if it's in small things.
- They are conversant in social technologies, and don't mind if I'm not.
- They like theory tied to current issues.
- When I give them space, they come up with good ideas I would never have thought of.
- They like a break from routine, but settle back in quickly.
- They laugh with me when I mess up, and go along with my "experiments."
- They like team work, but want to be able to express themselves, too.

3. They are unique:

- Like the student who regularly sees movies with her aunt who has a physical disability.
- Like the student who shares his love of fantasy football with his brother, and the one who talks about NASCAR to just about anybody.
- Like the student who does incredible "improv," the one who shared his first song, the one who submitted an alternative book for an assignment, and the one who loves to dance.
- Like the student who wins snowmobiling trophies, and the one named "Athlete of the Month."
- Like the student who spent Independent Study Week volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, and the one who makes music for cancer research.

We Are Teaching the Faces Behind Technology

Ginette Roberge,
Université Laurentienne

Educators and students all bring some of themselves, of their lived experiences, to the classroom. My lived experience as a former elementary teacher, now employed in a higher education setting, brings me to try to learn about my students and their individual differences, and this includes determining their dominant learning style on the first day of class. Fortunately, the small class sizes, representative of my institution, make this possible.

Being still new to the higher education world while maintaining my primary teaching roots, I have noticed, however, that the rate at which technology is evolving has had a considerable influence on educator and student interactions. There is no doubt that various technologies have revolutionized the world of communication. In general, has this revolution helped enhance connections between educators and students? That is debatable. Despite my best efforts to get to know my students personally, the anonymous nature of electronic communication, despite all of its convenience, has diminished the frequency (and necessity) of face-to-face contact with students.

Consequently, we can merge the differences between the students of 1990 and those of 2010 by remembering who we are not teaching. We are not teaching a computer screen or a number on an electronic class roster. We are not teaching a blogger, a tweeter, or an e-mail address. We are teaching the faces behind technology, the persons with the professional aspirations who have chosen our programs. We are teaching the individuals who will likely become the tangible voices of our profession.

Human Connection is the Foundation of Effective Teaching and Learning

Billy Strean,
University of Alberta

My belief is that human connection is the foundation of effective teaching and learning. There is probably nothing as simple and powerful as the act of learning students' names and then getting to know them as individuals. Sure, we can deliver content to an ocean of bodies, but the lack of personal relationship impedes what is possible. Trust is crucial for an optimal learning environment and it is built by recognizing students on campus, taking the time to acknowledge their diverse approaches

to learning, and encouraging them to get to know us. We don't need to succumb to myths about students' inability to attend or learn; we do well to understand that each generation has its own learning preferences and challenges. Continually questioning our own assumptions about learning, and uncovering how our biases and preferences can inadvertently dictate our practices will keep us fresh and responsive to the changing "whom" that we are teaching. When I am at social functions

and people ask me about my job, I usually say I'm a teacher. They typically follow with "what do you teach?" My standard response is "students." I can appreciate why my wife doesn't think this is funny anymore, but I believe it's a crucial distinction. Rather than starting with the "subject matter," I get curious about who the learners are, what makes them tick, how the objectives of the course are relevant to their lives and their problems. The "who" (and the "why") had better precede the "what."

Making Personal Connections

Jean Choi,

Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Whom do I teach? Aspiring musicians, nurses, industrial designers, heating, refrigeration and air conditioning technicians, radio broadcasters, and psychologists. This is just a small sample of my students. I teach Psychology at Humber ITAL and the University of Guelph-Humber, and, though Psychology may be a discipline which is common at any given post-secondary institution, the diversity of the programs in which my students are enrolled is not. My main challenge is to engage students who are taking my courses as electives, and that comprises the vast majority. An effective strategy of engagement lies in making personal connections. I consider that knowing who my students are is an essential part of my job. Arriving early to class, talking informally during break, and chatting when seeing them

on campus, all in addition to class discussions, help me to understand my students. In class, I call each student by name, and most are eager to share how their unique experiences and knowledge either support or refute the issue at hand. *A corollary of personalization is that students' presence in class is easily acknowledged, affecting accountability and attendance.* This is significant, given that a recent meta-analysis indicated that class attendance is the best-known predictor of the final grade in a course.¹ Despite the student diversity, however, there seems to be common ground: students are connected with one another via social media. When I worried about an announcement not reaching the entire class, one student reassured me that, through her text messages and Facebook

posts, all would receive the message within hours, and she was right.

And, should I ever become complacent, I can depend on my students to keep me honest; an indignant "But it's week 4!" from a student when I asked for his name, was all I needed to make me go back to study the photo class roster.

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How to Learn about Who We are Teaching in Larger Classes

Angie Thompson,

St Francis Xavier University

I make concerted efforts to get to know "who" I teach. I start each new class with large index cards upon which I ask my students to put their names, where they are from, and responses to a few questions.

In my first year class of 130+ students, the questions were

- (1) What are your goals when at StFX? After graduation?
- (2) What has a teacher done in the past to help you learn?
- (3) Is there anything else you would like me to know about yourself?

In my fourth year classes of 50-70+ students, the questions were

- (1) What will you do to ensure your success in this class?
- (2) What can I do to help you be successful in this class?
- (3) What is your approach to living a physically active lifestyle?

An overall healthy lifestyle?

I add the students' photographs (from the class list) to these cards, and review their responses, both to become familiar with "who" is in my classes and to ensure that I address their learning styles/preferences.

I also use a technique called "Daily Experts" whereby I put five to ten students' names on a PowerPoint at the beginning of class, and these students become the first ones that I solicit input from. I also use these students to participate in a "living" Likert scale where they show

agreement to a question by moving to stand against a large scale of 1 to 10 which is presented at the front of the classroom, and then explaining why they chose that ranking.

These easy-to-use, interactive teaching tools help me to get to know my students by name, and to discover how they each learn most effectively in the classroom. Using such tools shows them that I am interested in them as individuals and not just part of the class.

Whom Do I teach?

Sonsoles Sánchez-Reyes

University of Salamanca in Ávila

They say that a person has as many personalities as she speaks languages. They might also say that good teachers are as many types of teacher as they have students. Father Sarmiento, an erudite Spaniard from the eighteenth century, wrote that eloquence exists, not in the one who speaks, but in the one who listens. This maxim gives a prime role to the receiver, obviously, but it also makes the sender focus her discourse on the one she is teaching, for this is the only way to achieve success when communicating. Adapting our teaching to each student seems, at first glance, to be too ambitious; however teaching practice leads us quite naturally in this direction if we want to remain active and vigorous.

We each contain many teaching personalities; each one of them complements the rest and helps us to evolve. In a normal day, I begin by teaching university students in Education or Tourism; I continue with student inspectors in the Centre for Police Training, or with students studying Spanish as a foreign language. In the afternoon and evening courses, I teach retired people and teachers who are still in training. The diversity of their outlooks, expectations, needs, perspectives, and circumstances enriches and strengthens my professional capabilities with the daily gift of permitting me to see my role from different perspectives. It allows me to face challenges which the students themselves help me to overcome. When the day ends, I often come to the conclusion that my students have also been my teachers.

Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge

Jan Meyer, *Professor of Education at Durham University (United Kingdom) and Ray Land,* *Professor of Higher Education at Strathclyde University (Glasgow, Scotland).*



Ray Land is Professor of Higher Education and Head of Learning Enhancement at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK. His research interests include academic development, threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge, research-teaching linkages and the development of graduate attributes, and theoretical aspects of digital learning. He is the author of *Educational Development: Discourse, Identity and Practice* (Open University Press, 2004) and co-editor of *Education in Cyberspace* (Routledge Falmer, 2005), *Overcoming Barriers to Student Learning: Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge* (Routledge, 2006), *Threshold Concepts within the Disciplines* (Sense Publishers, 2008), and *Research-Teaching Linkages: Enhancing Graduate Attributes* (QAA, 2008). A new volume, *Threshold Concepts and Transformational Learning* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers) was published in 2010.



Jan Meyer is a Professor of Education and the Director of the Centre for Learning, Teaching, and Research in Higher Education at the University of Durham in the United Kingdom. Much of his research career has been devoted to exploring mechanisms for developing meta-learning capacity in students, to the modelling of individual differences in student learning, and to the construction of discipline-centred models of student learning. He has more recently developed, in a series of seminal papers with Ray Land, Peter Davies, and Glynis Cousin, the theoretical framework of threshold concepts – a framework that provides a new lens through which to focus on critical aspects of variation in transformative learning experiences and accompanying ontological and epistemic repositioning in terms of disciplinary, and interdisciplinary, aspects of thinking, reasoning and explanation.

Jan Meyer and Ray Land first presented their notion of "Threshold Concepts" at the 2002 Improving Student Learning conference in Brussels. In the intervening decade they have published three volumes of studies of threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge, with three biennial international conferences on this theme, in the UK, Canada and Australia, and a fourth taking place in Ireland in 2012. There is now substantial empirical evidence for threshold concepts, drawn from some one hundred and fifty scholarly papers in a large number of disciplinary contexts, and from authors in the higher education sectors of many countries (Flanagan 2010). It is an interesting example of a global theory instantiated in local practices and through disciplinary variations.

Their approach builds on the notion that there are certain concepts, or certain learning experiences, which are akin to passing through a portal, from which a new perspective opens up. This allows the learner to enter new conceptual territory where things formerly not within view can be perceived. This permits a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed means of understanding or interpreting or viewing something, without which the learner cannot progress, and it results in a reformulation of the learner's frame of meaning. The threshold approach also emphasises the importance of disciplinary contexts, since the conceptual boundaries that are crossed are part of disciplinary structures and formation. As a consequence of comprehending a threshold concept, there may thus be a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even world view.

Meyer and Land characterise such conceptual gateways as *transformative* (occasioning a significant shift in the perception of a subject), *integrative* (exposing the previously-hidden inter-relatedness of something), and deem them likely to be, in varying degrees, *irreversible* (unlikely to be forgotten, or unlearned without considerable effort). They are also frequently *troublesome* for a variety of reasons (Perkins 2006). These learning thresholds are often the points at which students experience difficulty. The transformation may be sudden or it may be protracted over a considerable period of time, with the transition to understanding often involving troublesome knowledge. Depending on discipline and context, knowledge might be troublesome because it is ritualised, inert, conceptually difficult, alien or tacit, because it requires the adoption of an unfamiliar discourse, or perhaps because the learner remains "defended" and does not wish to change or to let go of his or her customary way of seeing things.

The transformation is also troublesome because, in addition to integrating new conceptual material, it entails a letting go of a hitherto-familiar view. It also involves an uncomfortable ontological shift. We are what we know. Insights gained by learners as they cross thresholds can be exhilarating but might also be unsettling, requiring a change in subjectivity and, paradoxically, a sense of loss. The notion of a "threshold" has always demarcated that which belongs within (the place of familiarity and relative security) from what lies beyond (the unfamiliar, the strange, the potentially threatening). It reminds us that all journeys begin with leaving that familiar space and crossing over into the riskier space beyond the threshold. So, too, with any significant transformation in learning: all threshold concepts scholarship is concerned (directly or indirectly) with stepping into the unknown, and into the discomfiting conceptual and ontological shifts which that stepping out entails. Difficulty in understanding threshold concepts may leave the learner in a state of liminality, a suspended state or "stuck place" where understanding approximates to a kind of "mimicry" or lack of authenticity. The transformation is invariably accompanied by a changed use of discourse. A further complication might be the operation of an "underlying game" which requires the learner to comprehend the often tacit games of enquiry, or ways of thinking and acting, that are inherent within specific disciplinary knowledge practices.

Typical examples might be "Marginal Cost," "Opportunity Cost" or "Elasticity" in Economics; "Evolution" in Biology; "Gravity" in Physics; "Reactive Power" in Electrical Engineering; "Depreciation" in Accounting; "Precedent" in Law; "Geologic Time" in Geology; "Uncertainty" in Environmental Science; "Deconstruction" in Literature; "Limit" in Mathematics; or "Object-Oriented Programming" in Computer Science.

The thresholds approach has significant implications for both course design and assessment. It draws attention to what matters most in a curriculum, and can serve to streamline curricula that have become overly "stuffed." In this respect, threshold concepts can be viewed as the jewels in the curriculum. The approach indicates that learning requires a certain recursiveness (coming at the troublesome knowledge through differing modes) which is not easily accommodated within "short, fat" modules or semesters. It implies a need for a more dynamic form of assessment, capturing progression through the liminal phase at different points – a flickering movie perhaps, rather than a

single snapshot. It also implies a listening for student understanding, a process to which packed schedules and large class sizes are not entirely conducive.

The approach is neither teacher-centred nor student-centred, and invites disciplinary academics "to deconstruct their subject, rather than their educative practice, thus leaving them within both safe and interesting territory" (Cousin 2007). It is now being used as a curriculum design tool, a mode of pedagogical research and an approach for the professional development of new academics. Mick Flanagan's comprehensive website on thresholds (www.ee.ucl.ac.uk/~mflanaga/thresholds.html) shows how recent scholarship around the world has challenged and extended the theoretical boundaries of the thresholds framework in relation to our understandings of transformation, liminality and students' experience of difficulty.

FURTHER READING

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Teaching, Learning and Globalization

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Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning
Elon University, NC

Globalization has become an obsession in higher education. Across the planet, professional associations like STLHE, HERDSA, ISSOTL, and POD all will host 2011 conferences exploring boundary-crossing in a rapidly diversifying academy; HERDSA's conference theme, for example, emphasizes the "seismic" shifts and "tectonic" transformations occurring in the sector, both in Australia and internationally." Many seem to agree with Thomas Friedman's 2005 contention that the world is flat.

My past year as the POD Network's president has me wondering whether Friedman's thesis actually holds for teaching, learning and academic development in higher education. In other words, do we have a level playing field that allows innovators from anywhere to influence practice everywhere? Additionally, as a historian, I harbour a certain skepticism toward claims about the progressive nature of change over time. So, even if we could have one, would we want a flat world in teaching, learning and academic development?

Some evidence supports Friedman's thesis in our context. Technology makes it simple for our ideas to cross oceans. Most of us can access the world's academic literature from our computers. As the literature spreads, we do too. POD's 2010 conference, for instance, attracted participants from every continent except Antarctica, including more than thirty from Japan alone. New professional organizations also are flattening our academic world. The International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) and the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) are relatively young associations (founded in

1993 and 2004) that bring together scholars in their fields from across the globe. With their conferences and journals, both contribute to an environment that allows innovation in teaching and academic development to spread rapidly.

In published scholarship, however, the boundaries in our fields seem to be less permeable – at least in the United States, where we habitually read work by our national colleagues. This fall I conducted an informal research project comparing citations from a recent volume of POD's annual *To Improve the Academy* (#28, 2010) with a similar sample from ICED's *International Journal for Academic Development* (three issues, September 2008 - June 2009). Over that period of time, *TIA* and *IJAD* each published twenty-one articles, representing some of the best academic development scholarship in the world. All forty-eight of the authors of the *TIA* articles reported being at North American institutions, while only eight out of fifty-two *IJAD* authors were. The works cited in these articles echoed the authors' institutional affiliations. Of the nearly 250 books cited in *TIA*, some 94% were published in the United States, while 39% of the books referenced in *IJAD* were published in the U.S. Journal citations followed a similar pattern. More than 400 journals were referenced in the *TIA* and *IJAD* articles that I examined, yet only 25% of those journals were cited at least once in both *TIA* and *IJAD*. Although some variation should be expected, the lack of overlap is striking. Around the world, academic developers are doing similar work but reading and producing different scholarly literature. I suspect that I would find comparable results if I expanded my sample to include HERDSA's *Higher Education Research & Development*, or if I explored volumes focused more directly on the scholarship of teaching and learning, such as STLHE's *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*.

Our scholarly world, it seems, is *not* flat. We tend to read, cite, and write with colleagues from our own neighborhoods, particularly those of us in the United States. Effective innovation in teaching, learning and academic development anywhere may not be influencing practice everywhere. Friedman's thesis, it seems, does not describe our professional world.

That might be unfortunate but it is not particularly surprising. Academics are busy people, furiously juggling multiple obligations. Staying current in the global literature on teaching, learning and academic development might be too much to expect. Additionally, most of us will not, and probably should not, transform our teaching practices as new research emerges. Instead, pedagogical change tends to be contextual and evolutionary. Effective teachers and developers often make small intentional changes, and then assess the learning that results from those changes, before committing to further action.

Taking this deliberate approach to our work, however, is not the same as adopting a parochial view that local practices are good enough. Anna Carew and her colleagues argue in a 2008 *IJAD* article (13:1) that we should aim for "elastic practice" — the capacity to tailor our local work to reflect both a deep knowledge of our own context and an adaptive view of our profession's best practices.

If we can be elastic, then globalization doesn't need to flatten us. Instead, we can attend to our own contexts while we learn from and contribute to our increasingly global profession.

McMaster University: Research on Teaching and Learning: Integrating Practices Conference

Nancy E. Fenton,
McMaster University

The Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL) at McMaster University held its second annual SoTL conference on December 9th, 2010. Based on the successes of last year's inaugural event, the conference was re-envisioned, expanded and renamed "Research on Teaching and Learning: Integrating Practices." This year's theme of *integrating practices* provided an opportunity for faculty, students, staff and administrators to exchange ideas across disciplines and institutions, and to take part in "conversations of discovery" about classroom research and practice.

A full slate of short and long concurrent paper presentations covered a broad range of topical subjects, including complexity in the classroom, integrating research into the science curriculum, connections between ESL and ASL, collaboration between the library and iSci (iSci is a two year old integrated science program at McMaster University offered to forty students/year), and the question of whether or not critical thinking pedagogy should "go wild." The conference concluded with a wine and cheese reception and a poster presentation session.

A *Research on Teaching & Learning Guidebook* was launched at this year's conference. The guidebook was written to assist newcomers to research on teaching and learning, and includes a description of key teaching and learning concepts, a discussion of the cycle of scholarship of teaching and learning, worksheets, and useful resources. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the Guidebook, please contact Elvia Horvath at horvath@mcmaster.ca.

The majority of conference attendees responded very favourably to the conference, and told us that they "really enjoyed collaborating with colleagues and learning new ideas about teaching and learning," and "mixing with educators from completely different disciplines." The conference organizers were thrilled to observe and to take part in so many cross-disciplinary conversations that encouraged the public engagement of research on teaching and learning. Sue Vajoczki, Director of CLL, said "the growth in the number of conference participants, the range of topics presented and the excitement amongst the conference participants during the day indicate to us that the idea of integrating practice and research in the classroom has traction at McMaster and beyond. We are excited to see what next year's conference brings."

SAVE THE DATE for next year's Research on Teaching & Learning

CONFERENCE: December 7th & 8th, 2011 at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada



This year's distinguished keynote speakers were Dr Julia Christensen Hughes and Dr Joy Mighty (pictured below), both past Presidents of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), and co-editors of the exciting new book *Taking Stock: Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. They delivered a provocative and stimulating talk entitled, "Taking Stock: Integrating Research and Practice." Their remarks encouraged conference attendees to identify opportunities for integrating research findings into their own practice through implementing innovative, evidenced-informed approaches that foster student engagement and deep learning. The active engagement of the attendees reflected how useful the discussion was for exploring possibilities to reduce the gaps between research and practice in promoting effective teaching and learning.

Sue Vajoczki, Director of CLL, McMaster University and Sylvia Avery, STLHE Administrator



Joy Mighty and Julia Christensen Hughes, editors of *Taking Stock: Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*

Over seventy-five scholars from a diverse range of disciplines and international institutions provided a total of thirty-nine peer-reviewed presentations (workshops, short and long

Two Societies – One Overarching Goal

Gary Poole,
*University of British Columbia President,
International Society for the Scholarship
of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL)*

In October, 2009, the then-STLHE President Joy Mighty and her counterpart from the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Jennifer Robinson, signed a Letter of Agreement recognizing the mutual aims and similar missions of the two organizations. Personally, I could not have been more pleased, not just because we now can promote events in each other's publications and have conference registration fees waived for our respective Presidents: I was most pleased because this agreement represented the meeting of some very fine minds.

My biases here are obvious — I have been deeply involved in the workings of both Societies. It is what I have learned from that work that makes me very happy to see the Letter of Agreement in place. Both Societies feature committed membership with active, creative, and productive Boards of Directors. These are the kinds of people who say, "I would be happy to take on X" rather than "someone should really take on X."

For ISSOTL, the "X" is very interesting indeed. In October, 2010, the ISSOTL Board was presented with an exciting plan for the creation of a new journal. To make this endeavour worthwhile, it is important to create an entity that does not simply repeat or compete with existing publications, such as the *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. With this in mind, it was good to see that the proposed plan took time to describe existing publications in the field so that redundancy could be avoided.

Throughout my association with STLHE, I have never considered the Society to be exclusively Canadian. This is probably because people from around the world attend STLHE conferences, and in return, STLHE members can be found everywhere from Barcelona to Perth. At the same time, ISSOTL actually has the word "International" in its name, and so those of us on the ISSOTL Board are engaged in important conversations about how we can live up to that claim.

One example for ISSOTL is the location of its conferences. Our seven conferences have been held in four countries. While this is a good start, it hardly covers the globe. Reaching out to Asia, Africa, South America, and other parts

of the world is no easy task, especially for conference planning. Some locations are simply better equipped to host a major conference than others, yet it is arguable that those areas newer to the scholarship of teaching and learning, or which are still building the resources to host a conference, are the ones which we need to support most. Additionally, the further afield we go, the more difficult it becomes for a large portion of our membership (for example, those from North America) to attend. These are challenges, but they are not insurmountable.

A related issue is representation on the ISSOTL Board. STLHE has made some excellent strides recently regarding the work of its Board's regional representatives. I am envious of this work because it is one thing to find someone from a province or national region to serve on a board, but something else again to motivate nominations from further reaches of the planet. Again, we are not daunted by this challenge. Past-president Jennifer Robinson chairs a very proactive committee on leadership and elections, and we have some fine people coming forward to serve.

So, the fun never ends, as they say — two great organizations are exploring their mutual passions to improve teaching and learning. The Letter of Agreement is revisited annually by each Board. It is my hope that, with each new year, we will find more and more ways to work together effectively.

Institutional Membership in STLHE

Glen R. Loppnow,
*Interim Membership Chair,
STLHE Board of Directors*

What is institutional membership and what does it "do"? This is the first question that popped into my mind when I was approached to volunteer as Interim Membership Chair for the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. So, first a little bit of history.

Institutional memberships have been a cornerstone of the Society in recent years. STLHE is a Canadian society devoted to advancing the ideals of teaching and learning in higher education across all disciplines. The Society was founded in 1981 with the support of forty-eight founding universities and colleges. These institutions wanted a tangible way to demonstrate their commitment to teaching and learning by providing funding to support STLHE's efforts; hence institutional memberships were initiated.

So what does institutional membership "do"? The benefits of membership to you, your staff and students, and the Society are listed below.

Recognition:

Your membership will distinguish your institution and reflect your commitment to teaching excellence and to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Your membership makes public that the climate of the institution is positive and nurturing for teaching and learning. Your membership allows you to have the right to use the STLHE logo on your own web site and publications in order to highlight your dedication to excellence in teaching and learning in higher education.

Support for your teachers and students:

Your membership allows all teaching staff and students to get reduced membership fees. Your membership allows all teaching staff and students to attend the annual conference upon joining the Society. Your membership allows us to publicize and celebrate the award winners who are advancing teaching and learning in higher education.

Support for the work of STLHE:

Your membership helps to support us in our work in the scholarship of teaching and learning, in advocating for teaching in higher education, and in providing publications and annual conferences. Your membership supports the work of educational developers across Canada, including those at your institution, by directly financing the activities of the Educational Developers' Caucus.

We look forward to your continued support, and to an exciting year of accomplishments in 2011, as together we seek to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. Have a look at the list of institutional members on the STLHE website to see whether your institution is a member this year; if not, you might contact your Provost or AVP to encourage a renewal. Without your support, our Society cannot continue. A sincere thank you.

EDC

Educational Developers' Caucus

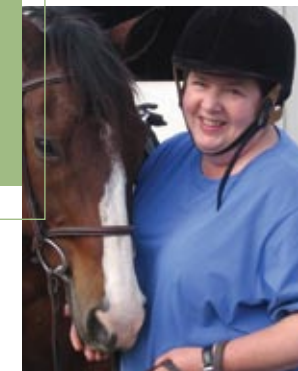
Nicola Simmons,
EDC Chair, University of Waterloo

The Caucus is a diverse, collegial community that shares ideas and resources informally in support of Educational Development across Canada. We provide professional development opportunities for members – conferences, Resource Bulletins, and, new this year, our first Educational Developers' Institute in February. In addition, we provide grants in support of teaching and learning. Visit the Caucus at www.edcaucus.com.

Who Are We? EDC 2010 Membership Breakdown

The majority of the 125 EDC members identify primarily as Educational Developers

(N=36) working in centres; Directors (N=29) are second, followed very closely by faculty members (N=27). Other groups include Associate Directors (N=9), administrators (N=7), and independent Developers (not working in a teaching centre or not specified) (N=7). The smallest two categories (not labelled on the graph) are students (N=3) and those involved in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (N=1). Our 125 members are therefore an eclectic group of people interested in the enhancement of teaching and learning approaches. Fourteen of the 125 are from colleges, two are from francophone universities,



and the remainder are at anglophone universities. We are also pleased to welcome eight international EDC members.

EDC Grants

In our most recent competitive, peer-reviewed grants process, three new multi-partner projects from a diverse range of institutions were awarded grants for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Our warmest congratulations and appreciation go to these colleagues for their work towards strengthening teaching and learning practices:

Faculty Cyber Connections: Building on Best Practices (Phase One):

Christine Foster, Janice MacMillan, Faith Ratchford, Francine Chartrand, Jo Anne Wilson, Danielle Van Dreunen;

SoTL Portal: Connecting Researchers:

Gary Hunt, Peter Arthur, Sylvia Currie, Heather Hurren, Janine Hirtz;

Queen's Academic Leadership Program:

Denise Stockley, Penina Lam, Jacoba DeVos, Ben Kutsyuruba, Sheila Pinchin, Ruth Rees, Doug Reid.

Announcement

Chair of Bilingual Advocacy

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Sylvain Robert to the STLHE Board who replaces Aline Germain-Rutherford as Chair, Bilingual Advocacy for a four-year term. Sylvain's responsibilities are to support, engage and network with our francophone colleagues, to promote the quality of the Society's bilingual communications, to serve as our ambassador at teaching and learning events and to increase the visibility and participation of francophone members in all aspects of the Society's activities.

Sylvain has earned numerous teaching awards including the 3M National Teaching Fellowship in 2009. He brings a wealth of experience, expertise and goodwill to STLHE, and a strong vision that promises to strengthen both bilingualism and post secondary education in Canada.

Regional Election for Central Ontario

The STLHE Board also wishes to congratulate **Sue Vajoczki** as the elected representative of Ontario Central and welcomes her to the Board. In addition to serving as a regional representative by keeping in close touch with members, Sue will be leading a primary portfolio and contributing to all aspects of the Society's operations.

On the way to new adventures...

Sylvain Robert, UQTR



I am delighted to be addressing you as STLHE's newly-appointed Chair for Bilingual Advocacy. My mandate is four-fold: 1) to advance support for and involvement of our francophone colleagues in order to increase their visibility; 2) to serve as an ambassador for the Society at teaching and learning events/ac-

tivities, spearheading projects which further the Society's presence in francophone regions both in Canada and overseas; 3) to create a network of francophone members who would attend events/activities sponsored by the Society; 4) to increase and promote the quality of the Society's bilingual communications.

In this second decade of the twenty-first century, the strong presence of **both** official languages in all of STLHE's ongoing conversations with national members and international affiliates will enhance the advancement of teaching and learning for **all** Canadians. Our francophone members are essential to STLHE for their contribution

to a genuinely bicultural teaching and learning environment. They will share equally in the shaping of our future through the building of learning-strategy bridges between English and French educators, as integral members of cross-cultural collaborations, and, more particularly for me, in providing support for the specific mandate of this new Chair.

I am very pleased to report that we have already created a committee for the effective translation of STLHE materials to reflect our dedication to bilingualism. Its members, to whom I am very grateful, are as follows: Arshad Ahmad (Concordia U.), Marla Arbach (U. of Ottawa), Sylvia Avery (McMaster U.), Olenka Bilash (U. of Alberta), Catherine Black (Simon Fraser U.), Alex Fancy (Mount Allison U.), Sarah King (U. of Toronto), Yves Mauffette (UQAM), Roger Moore (St. Thomas U.), John Oughton (Centennial College), Diane Pacom (U. of Ottawa), Dana Paramskas (U. of Guelph), Diane Raymond (U. Montréal), Ginette Roberge (U. Laurentienne), Sylvain Robert (UQTR), Valia Spiliotopoulos (U. of Victoria), Riisa Walden (McMaster U.), and Laura R. Winer (McGill U.).

In a second step, AIPU (Association internationale de pédagogie universitaire / International Association of University Teaching), will hold its 27th international congress in Trois-Rivieres (QC) in 2012. Since its inception in 1980, AIPU forms a network of practitioners, trainers and experts on a mission to contribute to the overall development of the pedagogy of higher education in a context of international collaboration. International organizations such as the Association of Partially or Wholly French Language (AUPELF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the International Fund for University Cooperation (FCIP, Fonds International de Coopération Universitaire, FICU) support the action of AIPU. Talks will soon be undertaken with the Secretariat of AIPU-Americas, to build bridges with STLHE.

Other initiatives will be launched during this year. Their number and quality will largely depend on how you, my friends, wish to be involved in shaping them. Please accept a warm invitation to get involved! I look forward to hearing from and working with you all.

UBC Academic Leadership Development Program: Teamwork, Passion and Dedication

Luisa Canuto, Faculty Associate, Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT), and

Gary Poole, University of British Columbia President, International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL)

During the summer 2006, the Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG) partnered with Human Resources to create and pilot the Academic Leadership Development Program (ALDP) to build leadership capacity at UBC, enhance the effectiveness and personal satisfaction of heads, directors and associate deans, and help to articulate their roles and responsibilities. Other units had offered newly-appointed heads programs such as workshops, mentoring, or one-on-one consultation, and had provided precious support on a number of occasions. The ALDP, however, is a yearly, multi-faceted program which integrates a variety of elements to handle different "levels" of academic leadership, from visioning and strategic planning to budget and financial matters. The program content is focused on the practical, and its preferred style of delivery is primarily problem-based.

Participants are actively engaged through a series of half-day workshops in which they are exposed to all the various university resources available to them, and are asked to reflect on

their roles, responsibilities and expectations around broader leadership topics such as visioning, strategic planning, leading change and conflict resolutions, and negotiations. Two-hour sessions offer the chance to work on specific issues related to "day-to-day" matters such as staff or faculty relations, or budget and finance. Lastly, one-on-one, optional coaching helps participants to determine and achieve their individual, professional goals.

Besides conducting a needs assessment before launching the program, we subject each of its components to evaluation by means of feedback after each session, using questionnaires and interviews for the purpose of improving the program. This combination of quantitative, immediate feedback and qualitative, longer-term data has proven very helpful with ongoing development. For example, we conduct one-on-one interviews and focus groups with people who completed the program over a year ago. We also include in our interviews those who, for various reasons, were unable to attend a significant number

of events. Through these methods, we have learned about the more lasting effects of the program and about the realities of leaders' schedules. For example, one enduring result is the building of a "cohort effect," such that leaders feel comfortable calling upon past program "classmates" when they have questions or challenges.

We must however say that the secret ingredient of this complex recipe is the people who created the program and still dedicate numerous hours to the revision, reconsideration, and reshaping of each of its pieces. We wish that everyone at UBC had the experience of working with a group of exceptional individuals like those in the ALDP's Planning Team. These include representatives from Human Resources, senior administration, and our Learning and Teaching Centre.

Find out more about the ALDP at <http://www.aldp.ubc.ca>.

A Successful Experience: Learning Outside the Classroom

Malama Tsimenis, University of Toronto-Scarborough

Initial Reactions

When I announced, on the first day of classes, that my new advanced Oral French practice course had an obligatory community service component, my students were, to say the least, sceptical. As I explained that they were to spend three hours per week throughout the semester volunteering for francophone organisations in Toronto in addition to their normal classroom hours, they shot each other worried looks. Since they were used to more traditional classroom activities – in-class discussions and debates, listening comprehension activities, reading texts aloud – this hesitation was understandable.

The Partners

The following three community partners hosted the students:

(a) *OASIS Centre des femmes*: the aim of *OASIS* is to eliminate violence and improve the situation of francophone women in the Greater Toronto Area by offering services to encourage their autonomy and support their various endeavours, while at the same time promoting community awareness of violence against women;¹

(b) *Centre francophone de Toronto*: the *Centre francophone de Toronto* supports the development of the francophone community of the GTA in all its diversity by offering a broad range of services, programs and activities, including social, legal, health and employment services, artistic and cultural programs, and programs to help welcome and integrate new immigrants to the GTA;²

(c) *Écoambassadeurs du Monde*: *Écoambassadeurs du Monde* seeks to "create awareness and teach both francophone and anglophone communities about environmental issues" by engaging and collaborating with partners "to guarantee the largest impact possible in the community."³ Volunteers who work for this organisation coordinate activities in the community and in francophone schools to increase public awareness about environmental issues.

The Students' Roles

I negotiated with the partners to determine the nature of the volunteer work the students would do under the supervision of the program coordinators. It was necessary that the students' tasks correspond to the course objectives, which included improving their speaking and listening skills, attaining a high level of accuracy and flu-

ency in their oral expression, increasing the spontaneity of their discourse, and enriching their vocabulary. The following list highlights some of the tasks the students performed for the above-mentioned organisations:

(a) at *OASIS, Centre des femmes*,⁴ the students helped to organise and coordinate social gatherings for women to escape their isolation and re-adapt to society (a large number of these women had suffered domestic violence or been victims of war), and participated in more informal discussions with recent arrivals to Canada, with whom they shared recipes.

(b) At the *Centre francophone de Toronto*, the students did interpreting tasks for new immigrants; led conversation circles; helped to organise activities for Black History Month; and prepared convivial activities for the Centre's twinning committee (the Centre pairs recently-arrived francophones with people who are well established in the Toronto francophone community).

(c) At *Écoambassadeurs du Monde*, the students helped to construct enjoyable educational activities for students in francophone elementary schools; designed and gave quizzes to students; led discussion groups with students on subjects including healthy eating, natural resource use, energy conservation and the environmental "3 Rs" (Reducing, Reusing, Recycling); and prepared meals with the students.

The Students Reflect on their Experiences

*"Un apprentissage à lieu à la suite de l'utilisation d'informations accompagnée d'une réflexion sur l'effet produit par cette action en fonction des buts visés."*⁵

I chose to use a service-learning model for this advanced Oral French course, not only to allow students to immerse themselves in the French language and in francophone culture, but also to encourage them to reflect critically on language learning and on their particular experience as language learners. This critical engagement may be the most important aspect of service-learning courses. In their biweekly reflection pieces, students were encouraged to articulate their challenges, to identify the turning points in their learning, to update me on their worries, regrets and disappointments, to suggest individualised learning strategies that would help them improve their language skills, and finally to reflect on the rewarding and enriching experiences that their volunteer

placements offered them. Students participated in these reflections with refreshing and sometimes surprising candour; since their volunteer placements filled specific community-based needs, they flourished both as language learners and as citizens.

The Benefits of Service Learning

The students' initial apprehension quickly gave way to a real enthusiasm which was evident not only in their written reflections but also in their attitudes towards the experience. They began to speak to each other in French in the hallways on campus and in their daily conversations; they attended activities organised by their host organisations outside of their mandated volunteer time; and they socialised with other volunteers – usually francophones in their age group – outside the framework of their placements. These extra experiences allowed them to reap the social and linguistic benefits of their immersion in francophone culture, and of course had impressive effects on the quality of their spoken French. The students unanimously reacted positively to this course, stating that this experience was one of the most rewarding of their careers and even suggesting that every third and fourth year course have a service-learning component. As for the future of this course? It will be given again as a service-learning course in January of 2011; this time, some of last year's students will act as mentors to their younger colleagues.

Translated by Jeri English, University of Toronto-Scarborough

1 Translated from the organisation's mission statement <http://www.oasisfemmes.org/qui-sommes-nous/mission.html>.

2 Translated from the organisation's mission statement (<http://www.centrefranco.org/fr/qui/mission>).

3 The objectives of the organisation as taken from its English website (<http://www.ecoambassadeurs.org/who-are-we/our-goals?lang=en>).

4 Only female students were able to volunteer for this organisation.

5 B. Bourassa, F. Serre, et D. Ross (1999). *Apprendre de son expérience*, Québec, Presses de l'Université du Québec, p.16.

Regional REPORTS

The STLHE Newsletter is pleased to announce the Regional Reports for issues beginning with #56. We are grateful for the following input, and we invite all Regional Representatives to send us any kind of commentary – from informal notes to detailed reports -- that will allow us to link STLHE members from coast to coast by letting them know what's happening in our provinces.

Angie Thompson,
St Francis Xavier University:

"I have sent two messages, one in the fall and one just before Christmas vacation to those in my region. These messages are intended to build rapport and to provide a venue for the Nova Scotia members to share information about regional events as well as reminders about national events. I intend to send a message following each STLHE board meeting."

Mercedes Rowinsky-Geurts,
Wilfrid Laurier University:

"Communication between the STLHE members in Ontario South-West and the STLHE Board Representative for the region has proven successful. Among many other activities planned for the coming months, the University of Waterloo is planning their yearly conference for April 2011: *Opportunities and New Directions: a Research Conference on Teaching and Learning*, April 27-28, 2011.

Wilfrid Laurier University is celebrating 100 Years Inspiring Lives of Leadership and Purpose. The year-long celebration was launched in October 2010, and events will be taking place all through the year in the main Waterloo campus as well as at all the satellite Laurier campuses in Brantford, Kitchener and Toronto."



3M National Teaching Fellowships Le Prix national 3M d'excellence en enseignement

2012 Submission Deadline: August 31, 2011
Date limite de soumission des candidatures: le 31 Août 2011

For more information, please visit the website: www.mcmaster.ca/3Mteachingfellowships/



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Pour toutes informations supplémentaires, veuillez consulter le site web: www.mcmaster.ca/3Mteachingfellowships/

PARRAINÉ PAR 3M, MACLEAN'S ET AFFAIRES UNIVERSITAIRES

Announcing the 2011 3M National Teaching Fellowships



3M Canada and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education are delighted to introduce this year's 3M National Teaching Fellows:



Diana Austin
Department of English
University of New Brunswick



Lisa Dickson
English Program
University of Northern British Columbia



Arne Kislenko
Department of History
Ryerson University



Maureen Mancuso
Department of Political Science
University of Guelph



Nick Mount
Department of English
University of Toronto



Scott North
Department of Oncology
University of Alberta



Fred Phillips
Department of Accounting
University of Saskatchewan



Leslie Reid
Department of Geoscience
University of Calgary



Adam Sarty
Department of Astronomy and Physics
Saint Mary's University



Billy Strean
Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
University of Alberta

3M Canada and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education are delighted to introduce this year's 3M National Teaching Fellows.

The Fellowship recognizes exceptional achievements and contributions by teacher-scholars across Canada. Now in its twenty-sixth year, the Fellowship — over 258 strong — continues to build and enhance personal and institutional reputations as the most prestigious recognition of teaching excellence in Canada. Their home universities particularly can celebrate the Fellows' tireless dedication to teaching, learning, and educational leadership.

The 3M National Teaching Fellows will be introduced to Canada in the special issue

of Maclean's on March 10th. STLHE will honour the 2011 3M National Teaching Fellows formally at the annual conference, hosted by the University of Saskatchewan, on June 17. In November, 3M Canada will reward the Fellows, bringing them to the Banff Springs Hotel for a scholarly and inspirational retreat.

The 3M National Teaching Fellowship personifies the diverse landscape of the Canadian academy, representing a wide range of regions, disciplines, and universities both large and small.

The 3M National Teaching Fellowship, established in 1986 through the generosity of 3M Canada and STLHE, pays tribute to 258 Canadian professors from forty-five universities.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Ron Marken
PROGRAM COORDINATOR
3M National Teaching Fellowships

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Saskatoon, SK S7N 0L2
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Email: ron.marken@usask.ca



The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Book Reviews

Why Teach? (2009) An Appreciative Commentary and an Invitation

Many have read *Silences* (2008). Some have attended dramatic readings of selections at annual STLHE conferences. Mike McManus (Sheffield Hallam University) is among these. Yet few know of the response to *Silences* he initiated with Sheffield Hallam faculty, published as *Why Teach?*



I met Mike McManus at the June 2009 STLHE Conference, University of New Brunswick. As its editor, he told me the story of *Why Teach?*

"I had been immensely moved by reading *Silences* and by being present for a public dramatization in Canada of selected excerpts [STLHE Windsor], at a workshop devised by Alex Fancy, a 3M National Teaching Fellow. I knew that I had colleagues who were equally passionate about teaching and

learning but who were also frustrated by institutional boundaries and processes. Perhaps this (writing retreat away from the campus) allowed them a freedom to express themselves in a novel way.

This book consists of the responses of a group of staff from the faculty of Development and Society at Sheffield Hallam University to the simple question 'Why teach?' There are six sections in the ninety-eight page book, the first five of which were written over a two day writing retreat, with the sixth section consisting of reflections written a short time afterwards.

Why Teach? is available as a free pdf download at www.lulu.com/product/paperback/why-teach/6008070. Printed copies can also be purchased at this site.

In response to the near final version of *Why Teach?* which Mike sent me after STLHE, I wrote a four page appreciative commentary. Here I share several brief excerpts, firstly so that you know how evocative I find these faculty stories, poems and reflections, secondly so you will download and read *Why Teach?* yourselves, and thirdly so that you will consider sharing your responses to *Why Teach?* with others through the STLHE Newsletter.

Edited excerpts from my 18 July 2009 letter:

"Dear Phil, Liz, Serena, Karen, Emma, Annabel, Mike, Richard, Anthony, Steve, and Gary.

In expressing your stories and poems, you discovered much in common... more, it seems than you had expected. I learned how much you were on your own, in isolation, with so little feedback or support in teaching. How

strongly you identified with your students and their learning. How you sought to make a difference for students in your daily efforts to teach well, though you were seldom recognized or rewarded by the system. How moments in memory from many years back still stood out like yesterday in startling imagery and articulate writing.

Your 'silences' took shape for me around Steve's reflection after the retreat:

'It strikes me that all too often we are unable to draw effectively on our inner feelings, the masks of teaching become harder to remove, and the opportunities to share important observations about the meaning of what we are doing – as opposed to the technical processes and knowledges – become scarce indeed. I suggested flippantly towards the end of the second day that this was a substitute for the culture we never had, and I think this is why it (the retreat) made such a lasting impression' (Steve Spencer, p. 80).

Does 'the culture [of teaching] we never had' leave a hole in our individual and collective souls as university teachers? Do we lack words to name and affirm our experiences and ourselves as teacher, words for us to hear our own voices as teachers? Does university culture silence us from voicing our values, aspirations, care for students, our longing for meaning and interconnectedness?

Quoting Paul Ricoeur, you are 'the extraordinary within the ordinary.' I say this because someone needs to tell you so. Others need to share in reading your stories and hearing your hearts so they can hear our own as we, teachers, struggle to find our voices, our words, our students, ourselves.

Gratefully . . ."

Why Teach? tells of the liberating power that emerges when a small group of teaching faculty name and voice together their experiences, as Paulo Friere taught us. *Why Teach?* shows how honest conversations about teaching and learning can be a path with potential to "transform the academy," as Parker Palmer and Arthur Zajonc argue in *The Heart of Higher Education* (2010). We welcome your comments on *Why Teach?* How can we extend the conversations initiated with *Silences* and joined so eloquently by faculty of Sheffield Hallam University in *Why Teach?*

John Thompson,
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Pierre Boulos. *Understanding Cyber Ethics in a Cyber World.* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2008. x. 98.

This is an amazing book. It is extremely well-organized under what I call a basic build-up system, an organizational system by means of which each facet is placed clearly before the reader and then built upon, so that a well-structured argument is developed. At no stage is the reader lost, because there are constant references backwards to what has just been learned and, thanks to the structure in place, if one does forget a term or an argument, then one is able to locate it easily in an earlier chapter and revise the concept quickly.

This book borrows from the cyber world which it investigates, and presents the reader with the closest thing I have seen in print to an interactive learning system. In this fashion, right from the start, the author offers An Introduction to Ethical Theory (pp. 1-6), and, immediately after presenting the objectives of the chapter, he sets out the **questions to keep in mind**. Interactivity springs from the author's suggestion that "You may wish to jot down a written answer to each question." Then the questions follow: (1) "What is the role of ethics in understanding and regulating online behaviour?" (2) "How do we justify our claims about the rightness or wrongness of actions?" (3) "Why does it make sense to consider our actions when we act?" (4) "Why does it make sense to consider the outcomes of our actions?" "With these questions set clearly before us, we then move forward into the main question discussed in chapter 1: "What is the role of ethics in understanding and regulating online behaviour?"

Chapter 1 continues with even more interactivity. After asking the question "What should an ethical theory include?" the author invites the reader to jot down suggestions and ideas as answers. Then he poses another series of interactive statements and questions: (1) "Ethics should tell me how to _____" (fill in the blank). (2) "Should ethics consider the consequences of actions?" (3) "Is the ethically right thing to do always going to make me happy?" (4) "Are there times when it is permissible to carry out actions that society generally would not permit? If so, when?"

It is only after the reader has thought about and considered the issues that the author then discusses the issues themselves, distinguishing between theoretical and philosophical ethics, practical ethics, and professional ethics, within the larger constructs of consequentialism or teleology (from the Greek *telos*, meaning *purpose*) and deontology (from the Greek *deon*, meaning

duty). Quotations and arguments follow from the texts and words of John Stuart Mill, Socrates, and Immanuel Kant. For me, however, the key to all of this is that readers first answer the questions as best as they may and then, only then, are the wider arguments placed before them. This is what I would like to refer to as a virtual-textual approach. One final example, and I quote: "So here is your challenge: Can you think of an ethical rule we could construct that would be *independent* of the consequences that follow from our actions?" (p. 4), and again, "This is a difficult question, and I would like you to think about it before moving on. You may wish to jot down some ideas" (p. 5).

This structure is followed throughout the book. There may not be many pages (only ninety-two) and it may seem, therefore, to be an "easy read" but it is by no means an "easy think" because it is profoundly thought-provoking, challenging as it does many of the reader's preconceived ideas about plagiarism, privacy, rights of free speech, and so on. In addition, the constant exhortations to "stop and think" or to "jot down some ideas before you continue" hammer home the necessity of a slow, deep reading of the text, preceded (or sometimes followed) by an extensive thought process. This is not just a text you can skim for its content and main ideas.

That said, a skimming of the chapter titles will demonstrate exactly where the book takes the reader: (1) An Introduction to Ethical Theory; (2) A Brief History of the Computer and the Internet; (3) Architecture and Geography; (4) Governance; (5) Free Speech (including pornography and spam and content control); (6) IP (including what is intellectual property and the internet and copyright); (7) Shhh! Privacy Required; (8) Placing Barriers. It also includes a final bonus: **case studies**. These are inserted at regular intervals and contain newspaper clippings and online commentaries concerning actual, up-to-date (2008) law suits that have involved huge issues with regard to what is happening right now on the Internet. All in all, this is an excellent, eye-opening, thought-provoking book. I recommend it most strongly.

Roger Moore,
St. Thomas University



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Please submit your articles, book reviews, photos, and other teaching and learning news to the co-editors for consideration in the STLHE Newsletter.

Submissions must be in accordance with STLHE Newsletter Writing Guidelines" (currently under revision). See Newsletter section of STLHE website for details.

If you have a recent publication you would like to have reviewed, or if you have suggestions regarding the new format of the Newsletter, please contact the co-editors. We would like to hear from you!

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The STLHE electronic mail forum, active since October 1988, supports the exchange of opinions, ideas and experiences concerning teaching and learning in higher education. To subscribe, contact the list coordinator: Russ Hunt, email hunt@stu.ca or visit Communication at www.stlhe.ca.

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