

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

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Poised on the cusp of a new century in a world that wrestles with a multitude of difficulties, the university must fulfil a more well- rounded mission. New generations of college- goers need scholarly teachers to help them prepare for a time when global interdependency is much more than a slogan. Knowledge, for all the glory and splendour of the act of pure discovery, remains incomplete without the insights of those who can best show how to integrate and apply it. (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff 1997:10)

Introduction

In the context of the changing role of the university teacher, this chapter sets out to explore how Ernest Boyer's (1990; 1997) four scholarships (of discovery, application, integration and teaching) have made it possible to bridge the traditional gap between teaching and research. By providing us with a new paradigm for thinking about research in all its complexity, he has shown us a way forward which has begun to redefine how we now look at research, teaching and learning. This chapter is an attempt to chart and define the pathways of this new route. It is our experience that the process of reflective practice and the documentation of that in various portfolio formats appropriate to harnessing teaching and learning, have provided ways of acquiring and developing a scholarship of teaching and learning in keeping with the changing face of third level education. The following questions are kept in mind as the chapter progresses:

1. How is scholarship defined in the context of higher education?
2. What is the scholarship of teaching and how does it define research into teaching and learning?
3. What are the implications of the scholarship of teaching for practice?
4. How can the portfolio process advance the scholarship of teaching and learning?
5. What general lessons have we learned in UCC from our experience of the portfolio model and portfolio seminars as a way of documenting scholarship?

Overview

The chapter begins with an overview of Boyer's perspective, synthesising his thinking as it emerged in *Scholarship Reconsidered* and *Scholarship Assessed*. We then develop his thinking further, by focusing on the distinction between scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching, as defined by Shulman (2004:158) and by focusing on the idea of learning as part of the scholarship of teaching. The chapter will then tease out some implications of scholarship for current practice, focusing on how such teaching is to be documented and developed.

Scholarship Revisited

In giving us perspective on the concept of scholarship, and on the false dichotomy between teaching and research, Boyer (1990:15) reminds us that the word “research” is only a recent addition to the language of higher education, the term being used in England in 1870’s for the first time to mark Oxford and Cambridge out as places of learning (research), as well as teaching. The term ‘research’ began to emerge in American education only in 1906. Boyer further adds that scholarship originally referred to a variety of creative work, whose “integrity was measured by the ability to think, communicate and learn” (1990:15) not, therefore, by the number of publications a scholar produced, as has become the norm:

Scholars are academics who conduct research, publish, and then perhaps convey their knowledge to students or apply what they have learned. The latter functions grow out of scholarship, they are not to be considered part of it. But knowledge is not necessarily developed in such a linear manner. The arrow of causality, can, and frequently does, point in both directions. Theory surely leads to practice. But practice also leads to theory. And teaching, at its best, shapes both research and practice. (1990:15–16)

Boyer’s point is that a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar is needed: “a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice and through teaching” (1990:24). Hence the necessity of positing four dynamically interrelated scholarships, ‘pure research’ being co-dependent on the other forms of scholarship. Such a repositioning of the traditional view of research is even more pertinent in 2004, where huge funding can make research attractive as an end in itself and as the chief means of promotion. Such dislocation of research is short sighted, since research has to be communicated, synthesised and tested in the real world and be of value to the discipline, the students and the community. It is not an end in itself. As Shulman (2004:16) points out:

The intellectual and political message of *Scholarship Reconsidered* is that we need a broader conception of scholarship – one that points to the power of scholarship to discover and invent, to make sense and connect, to engage with the world and to teach what we have learned to others. Boyer and his colleagues wanted these different scholarly activities to be seen as of equal value to the broader community.

If we are to take Boyer’s challenge seriously, we need to look closely at each scholarship and tease out its implications for lecturers in the 21st Century.

The Scholarship of discovery

This type of investigative scholarship comes closest to what is traditionally understood by research and its focus on publication. However, “The scholarship of discovery at its best contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of a college or university. Not just the outcomes, but the process, and especially the passion, give meaning to the effort” (1990:17). In the new order, such scholarship also includes the creative work of scholars in the literary, visual and performing arts – hence the inclusion of all disciplines. Boyer’s focus on the words “process” and “passion” are pertinent, already signalling other embedded forms of scholarship within this one. The question behind this kind of research as Huber points out is, “What do I know and how do I know it?”. An answer to this question surely points in the direction of other forms of scholarship – for the how of knowing is dependent on making connections (integration) and on application of what is known; equally teaching others is one valid way of knowing what I know. Hence, the dynamic nature of the research even as it is conceived.

Our own experience of meeting regularly together in the university and discussing our disciplines and the challenges of trying to teach them, bears this out. The scholarship of discovery is linked with so many more pedagogical and practical discoveries once the area of expertise and

original scholarship has to be taught. Once the student enters the picture, the scholarship of discovery has to become interactive and dynamic, or remain inert and inaccessible to all but the few students whose intelligence profile is on the same plane as that of the lecturer. If the lecturer is to become a teacher, who transforms rather than informs, and who is inclusive and interactive, then the scholarship of discovery has to leave the traditional realm of “research” and find new directions. Indeed, Boyer’s four scholarships can be seen as the new directions that guide the compass of learning. To extend the metaphor, they are our north, our south, our east, our west. To neglect one would be to cancel all - for the centre would not hold; the compass could not function.

The Scholarship of Integration

In proposing *the scholarship of integration*, Boyer highlights the need for scholars to give meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective and making connections within and between disciplines. This form of scholarship has much to do with purpose and with the goals of a general education, as Boyer realised in his own experience (Boyer 1997:2) and is therefore asking the question: What do the findings mean? Such a question calls for critical analysis and interpretation. Thus, the specialised knowledge of research is placed in a larger context, “illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists too” (1990:18). Boyer goes on to point out that the scholarship of integration is closely related to discovery. It involves, first, “doing research at the boundaries where fields converge” (1990:19). Such work, he continues is increasingly important as traditional disciplinary categories prove confining, forcing new categories of knowledge:

Today, interdisciplinary and integrative studies, long on the edges of academic life, are moving towards the centre, responding both to new intellectual questions and to pressing human problems. As the boundaries of human knowledge are being dramatically reshaped, the academy surely must give increased attention to the scholarship of integration. (1990:21)

It is our contention that unless lecturers start sitting together, sharing the same space as well as their research areas, such scholarship will find it difficult to thrive. This process of sharing does not happen over night, as is well documented in our research to date (Lyons et al. 2002; Hyland 2004). Here in UCC, as part of the Teaching and Learning Support programme, we have spent the past three years learning to build sense of community, of trust and have struggled with working out a common language. Before this time, a smaller group of lecturers met regularly to discuss, develop and represent their practice. Integration is, then, as much attitudinal and habitual, as it is aspirational; it will only happen in the doing, when there is an audience to whom one must account and whose very presence demands their inclusion.

The *scholarship of integration*, therefore, also includes interpretation, fitting one’s own research – or the research of others – into larger intellectual patterns. Boyer points out that “such efforts are increasingly essential since specialisation, without broader perspective, risks pedantry” (1990:19). In an age of increasing specialism, such a caution is worthy, especially for the young lecturer who can find herself isolated. Hence, again, the importance of sharing practice and research with others and of creating the culture and climate where this is possible. Our own experience of the portfolio seminars at UCC is indicative of the effort necessary over time to make the scholarship of integration possible in practice: “The scholarship of integration is serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together and bring new insight to bear on original research” (1997:9). Part of this drawing together has to do with making time for lecturers to share and investigate their work. We found, for example, that lunchtimes were productive meeting times – if lunch were provided – a case, indeed, of providing food for thought!

The scholarship of Application

The third element, *the application of knowledge*, moves, in Boyer’s words “towards engagement”, as the scholar asks, “How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems?

How can it be helpful to individuals as well as institutions?" (1990:21). This is where theory meets practice and one informs and reforms the other. Boyer provides us with some interesting perspectives on the idea of service, which permeates this form of scholarship. He cautions that colleges and universities have recently rejected service as serious scholarship because of its vague definition and disconnected nature: Too often, "Service means not doing scholarship but doing good" (1990:22). To be considered scholarship, Boyer continues: (1990:22–23)

service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor – and the accountability – traditionally associated with research activities. . . . The scholarship of application, as we define it here, is not a one way street. Indeed, the term itself may be misleading if it suggests that knowledge is first "discovered" and then "applied". The process we have in mind is far more dynamic. New intellectual understandings can arise out of the very act of application whether in medical diagnosis . . . shaping public policy or working with public schools . . . In activities such as these, theory and practice vitally interact, and one renews the other.

A key point of learning for us in this university, is to hear, in our regular seminars, how our colleagues have applied their expertise in various settings and how these, in turn, have impacted on the discipline itself – how, indeed, practice has transformed theory. Dr. Anthony Ryan's article on *Teaching Resuscitation and Stabilization of NewBorn Infants in Ireland* (Lyons et al. 2002:Chapter 7) is an excellent example of this and of how the scholarships of application and teaching collide and sustain each other.

The Scholarship of Teaching

In relation to *the scholarship of teaching*, Boyer cautions that the "work of the professor becomes consequential only as it is understood by others" (1990:23). He, therefore, underlines the point that teaching is about learning. Teaching in his terms, is not some "routine function, tacked on, something almost anyone can do. When defined as scholarship, teaching both educates and entices future scholars" (ibid). Throughout his discussion of a scholarship of teaching, Boyer's (1990:23–24) weaving of the many strands that are intertwined in its web speaks for itself, issuing us with many challenges and resetting the compass once again for us:

Teaching is also a dynamic endeavour involving all the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning. Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined, and relate directly to the subject taught . . . knowing and learning are communal acts. With this vision, great teachers create a common ground of intellectual commitment. They stimulate active, not passive, learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over.

Note Boyer's commitment to life-long learning here and his pointing to the idea that it is the lecturer's job to teach students how to learn, not what to say or regurgitate. He also foregrounds the idea of Teaching for Understanding here, central to our work in scaffolding teaching and learning in UCC, by highlighting the process of planning, of making connections, of active learning and ongoing assessment that underline a scholarship of teaching. Of equal importance then, is the idea of seeing the teacher as a learner: (Boyer 1990:24)

Further, good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners. All too often, teachers transmit information that students are expected to memorise and then perhaps, recall. While well prepared lectures surely have a place, teaching, at its best, means not only transmitting knowledge, but transforming and extending it as well . . . In the end, inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive.

In terms of this publication, it is this form of scholarship that is our catalyst, our calling and our constant challenge.

Shulman's challenge

In his latest work, *Teaching as Community Property*, which is a collection of his many essays on higher education, Lee Shulman, who has now filled Boyer's shoes as president of the Carnegie foundation, critiques and develops Boyer's work and raises the bar for all of us in making real the following distinctions in terms of the work of CASTL (Carnegie Academy for the scholarship of Teaching and Learning):

Scholarly teaching is what everyone of us should be engaged in every day we are with students in a classroom or in our office- tutoring, lecturing, conducting discussions, all the roles we play pedagogically. Our work as teachers should meet the highest scholarly standards of groundedness, of openness, of clarity and of complexity. But the scholarship of teaching requires that we step back and reflect systematically on the teaching we have done, recounting what we've done in a form that can be publicly reviewed and built upon by our peers. It is this difference that moves scholarly teaching to a scholarship of teaching (Shulman 2004:166).

In another article in this collection, on the distinction between scholarly teaching and scholarship of teaching, Shulman (2004:149) elaborates on this concept by highlighting that scholarship has "three additional central features of being public, open to critique and evaluation, and in a form others can build on". He builds his case here by quoting from himself in *The Course Portfolio*: (Hutchings 1998:6)

A scholarship of teaching will entail a public account of some or all of the full act of teaching – vision, design, enactment, outcomes and analysis – in a manner susceptible to critical review by the teacher's professional peers and amenable to productive employment in future work by members of the same community.

It is this concept of the course portfolio and that of its sister, the teaching portfolio, which has provided the scaffolding for our collegial work together over the past three years, the adventures of which can be read as already cited.

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