The Communities We Serve: Toward an Integrative View of the Global and the Local

Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Oct. 19, 2010 Liverpool, UK

Maggie Castor, Elon University
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ELON UNIVERSITY
Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

GOSHEN COLLEGE
Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning
ISSOTL 2010 Conference Theme posits two “worlds”

→ Local world where our work is focused on issues that are particular to the “places where we live” (context-bound)

→ Global world where theories address generalized or “universal” issues (context-independent)
Teaching and Learning problems emanate from “local” practice, and also from the influence of our shifting local conditions and shifting institutional identities in relation to our local communities (context-embedded).

We believe it’s more complicated than this… a cycle, yes, but context seems important…

Teaching and Learning theories address generalized or “universal” issues, but are still aligned with the “local” contexts from which emanated the problems that help us determine what to theorize (context-aligned).
Assumptions about theory and practice

By pursuing these “problems of practice,” teachers expand their understanding and improve their work…. In short, when teachers address the “problems” and questions in their classroom, they … make local theories that they can apply in a number of related contexts and that other teachers can learn from and build upon. These local theories can serve as the basis for a powerful knowledge-base different from—but no less important than—the knowledge-base that has emerged from conventional research on teaching and learning.

Questions about the process and purpose of Teaching and Learning

We believe these questions provide appropriate context for discussion of T/L theory and practice:

1) Which communities’ cultures do our Schools preserve?

2) For which communities’ futures do our Schools equip students?
Questions about the process and purpose of SoTL

We believe these questions provide appropriate context for discussion of SoTL theory and practice:

1) In what ways do shifting notions of **community** affect the **context** of practice?

2) In what ways do shifting notions of **identity** affect the **context** of practice?
The Shifting Meaning of “Particularity” in the context of teaching and learning: a case study of faculty at a Mennonite college in an emerging Latino immigrant town

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Ross Peterson-Veatch
Director of Curriculum, Teaching and Faculty Development, CITL
Associate Academic Dean, Goshen College

Robert Reyes
Director of Research, CITL
Professor of Sociology, Goshen College
Context of Goshen College: Institutional Characteristics

- 920 Students
- 17% Students of color
- Rural (town of 30,000) and residential
- Local economy dominated by “light industry/manufacturing”
- Local unemployment rate 13.5% (down from a high of 20% in 2009)
Context of Goshen College: Institutional Identity

- Owned by Mennonite Church (MCUSA)
- Until 2008, required to have incoming classes of 60% Mennonite students
- Current Faculty requirement:
  - 80% Mennonite, 100% Christian
- Mennonite students “retained” at rate of 91% vs. 78% for whole cohort (1st to 2nd year)
Context of Goshen College: Changes in the Goshen Community

• Demographic shift in local community
  – 700% increase in Latino Pop since 1990
  – Local schools now 37% Hispanic
  – 29% of town now Hispanic (down from high of 35%)

• CITL founded in 2006 (3-part effort)
  – Increase Hispanic student recruitment/retention
  – “Transform” curriculum, pedagogy & infrastructure
  – Research to understand community and document institutional changes
Faculty Development Program

- Faculty Learning Community
  - Course-based year-long program
  - Small stipend ($2500 for 12 months)

- Faculty Research Colloquium
  - Project-based year-long program
  - Released from one course
  - Small research fund for expenses related to projects ($2000)
Faculty Development Program – Research Colloquium

**Panel Presentation on the Educational Experience of Latino Students in Local Schools**

**Monday, May 17, 2010**
Newcomer Center 17 6-8 p.m.
Light refreshments will be provided.
Admission is free, RSVP to Rocío Díaz at the CITL office (brocioc@goshen.edu) by Thursday, May 13, 2010.

**Aliah Carolan-Silva, Ph.D.**
The Influence of Latino Students' Social Networks on Their Academic Achievement

Dr. Carolan-Silva's research explores Latino students' educational experiences and the changing composition of their social networks as they transition from high school to college. She uses sociocultural theory to examine how social networks influence academic achievement. Through examining how students' social networks influence their educational achievement and college preparation, she hopes to offer implications for both schools and families about how to better support the education of Latino youth.

**Kevin Gary, Ph.D.**
The Virtues of Excellent Teachers

Dr. Gary's research focuses on excellent teachers at diverse schools who have taught for more than seven years, noting how such teachers conceptualize and understand the art of teaching. This study is situated in the context of the search for effective teaching that is not merely efficient and comprehensive but also meaningful and transformative. The study seeks to understand how these teachers' teaching differs in important ways from good teaching. In short, Dr. Gary's study seeks to define and understand the art of teaching.

**Christie Bonfiglio, Ph.D.**
The Use of Intensive Strategies Within a Response to Intervention (RTI) Model: Implications for English Language Learners (ELLs) and Academic Success

RTI is a three-tiered process for varying degrees of research-based intervention within the academic environment to students with academic difficulties (Browne-Childers, Bruningh, & McDoan, 2005). One advantage of RTI is that it allows schools to intervene early to meet the needs of struggling learners rather than waiting for them to fail. Another is that RTI maps each specific instructional strategy to students' prior academic history, which can be very helpful to both teachers and parents (McAuliffe, Knopf, & Young, 2003). This project evaluates the RTI process within a small urban elementary school where many of the students are English Language Learners and the school is in need of early intervention with regards to reading instruction. This study identifies specific instructional strategies for academic success.

**Panel Presentation on the Higher Education Experience of Latino Students at Goshen College**

**Friday, May 14, 2010**
Newcomer Center 19 12:15 p.m.
Light lunch will be provided.
Admission is free, RSVP to Rocío Díaz at the CITL office (brocioc@goshen.edu) by Wednesday, May 12, 2010.

**Carlos Gutiérrez, M.A.**
Effective Marketing Strategies for Recruiting Latino Students

This research aims to identify what are the factors that Latino students consider important when making college-bound decisions as well as the association between those factors and the perceptions they hold towards their top college choice. A study based on attitudes and attributes will help define these factors.

**Rebecca B. Horst, M.A.**
Understanding Student Faith at Goshen College

This study examines the landscape of religious faith for Latino students at Goshen College compared to the total student body. Survey results shed light on the relationship between students' participation in religious activities and their sense of belonging at Goshen College.
Examination: Faculty Development Programs

• Focus of the Study
  – Examine the effect of participation in the faculty development programs to explore how the faculty see their work shifting in response to the shifting of the community of students CITL is committed to serve.

• Data Collection
  – We collected data from about 18 of the 28 participants in our programs (2008, 2009, 2010) using semi-structured interviews and email questionnaires.
Emerging Constructs for Conceptualizing Responses to Shifts in Institutional Identity

- **Insider**
  - High Association w/ local context
- **Invested Insider**
- **Uninvested Insider**
- **Insider**
- **High Investment**
  - In preservation
- **Invested Outsider**
- **Uninvested Outsider**
- **Outsider**
  - Low Association w/ local context
- **Low Investment**
  - In preservation

- **Low Investment**
- **Uninvested Outsider**
- **Outsider**
- **Invested Outsider**
- **High Investment**
- **Invested Insider**
- **Insider**
- **Uninvested Insider**
- **Uninvested Outsider**
- **Outsider**
- **Low Investment**
- **Low Association w/ local context**
- **High Association w/ local context**

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**CITL**

Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning
Institutional Identity Issues & Its Impact in Teaching and Learning

• Definitions:

 – **Invested Insider**: High Understanding, Association with and Focus on Preserving existing Institutional Identity.

 – **Invested Outsider**: Low Understanding, Association with existing Institutional Identity but willing to support.

 – **Uninvested Insider**: High Understanding, Association with but uninterested in preserving existing Institutional Identity.

 – **Uninvested Outsider**: Low understanding and low interest in preserving existing institutional identity.
Examples From Faculty Development Programs (*i.e.*, Research Colloquium)

- **Invested Insider:**
  - “Opening up to the local Latino population is great for GC, and that’s where I want to see Goshen going”… “At the same time as we are opening up GC to other local populations, sometimes the match isn’t very good.” (19-25 yrs)
  - “I think we have a lot of students who come here, because of athletics, and they often tend to be business majors. They did not have any idea that they would come to a college that would have a controversy about singing the national anthem, or a slogan that would declare peace, that would care so much about reducing its carbon emissions, and creating a green campus….” “I welcome them here, but on the other hand I don’t want to water down what we are doing at GC, to be “accommodating.” I worry about that”. (19-25 yrs.)
Examples From Faculty Development Programs (*i.e.*, Learning Community)

- **Invested Insider:**
  - “So, for me [not singing/playing the national anthem] has been an important symbol. I want us to be hospitable without taking away from some of who we are and who we’ve been. And I understand that’s a very Mennonite thing to say, but I like the way Mennonites have done things and what Mennonites have stood for over the years and I think that’s what’s interesting and best about Goshen College. We are not a generic Christian college and if we have to become one to survive then I’d rather not survive. There’s no reason for us to survive if we are not somebody [distinct].” (19-25 yrs)
Examples From Faculty Development Programs (*i.e.*, Learning Community)

- **Invested Outsider:**
  
  “The way we talk about GC identity and diversity keeps reinforcing the notion that within Mennonite identity there is no diversity. It’s really important for all of us [to think about a variety of groups within the Mennonite identity], but it’s particularly important for those of us in the classroom to think about it. Let’s not reinforce [the Mennonite monolithic] here.” 11-15 yrs
Examples From Faculty Development Programs (i.e., Learning Community)

- Uninvested Insider:
  - “I think I’ve always talked with students about what’s going on, what the debates are, what the controversies are, I’ve always talked to students about how they fit in.” (26 yrs. +)
  - “I would say that my work is the same in that I see my work as being to expose students to multiple perspectives on an issue, to engage them in both intellectual and personal transformation – that is going to be determined by the context we’re in.” (26 yrs. +)
Institutional Identity Issues & Their Impact on Teaching and Learning

• Examples From Faculty Development Programs (*i.e.*, Research Colloquium)
  – **Uninvested Outsider:**
    • “I don’t have the passion that some people are driving with that whole discussion, I’m kind of sitting back and listening to that discussion. I can see both sides of it. I feel with regards to the national anthem, I feel badly for both sides because both sides are passionate and I do feel that we should be hospitable and so forth so I wouldn’t say that any part of the Mennonite portion has driven my research, aside from the fact that Mennonites are peace keeping and servant leaders and so forth which my study is very much about serving our at-risk populations.” (1-5 yrs)
Shifting Community Particularity & Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

- **Influence of Community Involvement**
  - *Development of Social Capital & New Community Networks*
  - *Community Involvement as a Means for Practical Applications*
  - *Community Involvement as a Means to Connect with Larger Moral Purpose*
  - *Being an Outsider Externally as Well*
  - *A Distinct View on Interdisciplinarity*
  - *Faculty Learning*
Authentic SoTL: Partnering with Local Communities to Create Meaningful SoTL

• Maggie Castor, mcastor@elon.edu
• Mark Meacham mark_meacham@abss.k12.nc.us
• Peter Felten pfelten@elon.edu
SoTL and community

- Carolin Kreber (2007): SoTL should not simply be rewarded by our institutions/disciplines and rewarding to us personally, but also “in the important interests of our students.”

- Sue Clegg (2008): SoTL tends to privilege faculty perspectives and to marginalize the views of students and those outside of colleges.

- Pat Hutchings and Mary Huber (2010): we need “to open the process of knowledge building to a wider group of participants, and to expand our conception of who has expertise to contribute.”
Two Projects at Elon University

• Elon Teaching and Learning Partnership (ETLP)

Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning
Questions?

- Who should be involved in SoTL inquiries?
- How do we learn to do SoTL together?
- What outcomes should SoTL aim to achieve?
- ??
References


Elon Teaching and Learning Partnership: http://org.elon.edu/etlp/


• Maggie Castor, mcastor@elon.edu
• Mark Meacham mark_meacham@abss.k12.nc.us
• Peter Felten pfelten@elon.edu
Questions for consideration

What resonates with you in the stories we have told?

What is the connection between the issues of practice in your context and the issues in ours? How are they different?

What implications do you see for the SOTL Research agenda based on the two presentations in this Panel Session?
Invitation to you

Please feel free to contact us with further questions or comments:

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Appendix

• Additional Quotes
  – Intersection of Community Engagement & Teaching and Learning

• Model #2 Intersection of Changes in Institutional Identity and Process of Transformation.
Emerging Constructs for Conceptualizing Shifts in Institutional Identity

- **Insider**
  - High Association w/ local context

- **Outsider**
  - Low Association w/ local context

- **Invested Insider**
- **Uninvested Insider**
- **Invested Outsider**
- **Uninvested Outsider**

- **Low Investment**
  - In preservation
- **High Investment**
  - In transformation

**Low Investment**
- **Insider**
- **Outsider**

**High Investment**
- **Insider**
- **Outsider**

CITL Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning
Shifting Community Particularity & Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

• Influence of Community Research on Student Learning
  – Development of Social Capital & New Community Networks
    • “I have met some new administrators as well as identified their process a little bit clearer for what they are doing in the community so that I can better instruct my students in the classroom as to what to expect and prepare them for obstacles they’ll reach as well and rewards they will have in the classroom.” (1-5 yrs)
    • “It got me more involved in the community- I met people that I would not have otherwise. Some of those meetings then led me to contacts in Mexico as well as here on campus… that study was a good introduction for going to Peru…doing Study Service Term. It was nice to have that background.” (19-25 yrs)
  – Faculty Learning
    • “I didn’t know much about the topic (Labor Migration)… I was learning while my students were learning. It was a rich experience with the students because of the controversial nature of migration.” (19-25 yrs)
    • I have to think a lot about what it means to be an outsider and doing research. I have to deal with my own position and background. I have had to think about [my] assumptions. (1-5 yrs)
Shifting Community Particularity & Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

• Influence of Community Research on Teaching
  – Community Involvement as a Means for Practical Applications
    • “I have some actual practical hands-on examples to bring to class… So it’s helpful in that I can bring real life examples into the class and we talk about that in a daily basis.” (1-5 yrs)
    • “But until you are out doing it yourself, it is just a much more rich experience, which you can bring back to your classroom. We can be exited and we can discuss it, but having our students out there and working with them side by side may be a different capacity; makes it bring it all together. There is a better understanding.” (1-5 yrs)
    • “The chance to understand the local community has provided me with a lot of insights in terms of the experiences of the students at the college level, and also a chance to connect the college more with what is going on in the local community, to develop more partnerships. Sometimes higher education remains isolated. But in order to create fluidity for students I think we have to have a much more active role in the community.” (1-5 yrs)
Influence of Community Research on Teaching

- **Community Involvement as a Means to Connect with Larger Moral Purpose.**
  - I think that part of being able to be at a college and have the resources of that college, but also working in the community and see where the college can make a difference, so the research doesn’t end with “here are the challenges” and then leaving it up to the community to deal with, but then we can find ways so the college is active and respond to the needs of the community (1-5 yrs).
  - The more we understand what they [students] are looking for and what factors affect their experience, and the more we make sure we have students who are able to come here, who are prepared… This makes me feel that the research we are doing here is even more important because it helps us to understand what the community needs and how we can respond to that. (1-5 yrs)
  - I think the biggest impact with me being back in the schools is that it makes it real and it really drives my passion for wanting to reach out and help. (1-5 yrs)
Shifting Community Particularity & Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

- **Influence of Being in a Mixed Level Group on Teaching**
  - *Development of Social Capital & New Community Networks*
    - “It’s expanded the number of things I know and it maybe makes me feel more connected to the people in the schools. But it’s stayed very social…” (26+ yrs)
    - [Before meeting in the mixed group] “…I was thinking to myself – why are we working with them? We have two different experiences. But when we met with them… I was consistently impressed with the quality of their teaching and their reflection on their teaching. I think some of our best teachers are people who have taught in high schools before they came here.” (19-25 yrs)
    - “I find myself as I’m preparing to teach or thinking about a class I just had, I’m thinking about – at the high school level what does that look like? I saw the connections, but just being conscious of the fact that we are doing the same thing has affected what I do in classes.” (11-15 yrs)
  - **Faculty Learning**
    - “There is something about structure that I understand differently now. Kind of going back to the coverage thing… I used to think more about the content of the class, and not thinking about the day-to-day nuts and bolts of the class, like you need to talk about announcements… these spaces around the lecture itself.” (1-5 yrs)
Shifting Community Particularity & Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

• Influence of Being in a Mixed Level Group on Teaching
  – Community Connections as a Means for Practical Applications
    • “There something about structure that I understand differently now. Kind of going back to the coverage thing… I used to think more about the content of the class, and not thinking about the day-to-day nuts and bolts of the class, like you need to talk about announcements… these spaces around the lecture itself.” (1-5 yrs)
    • “Particularly around the questions of working with diverse people, but also teaching about stratification and teaching within a context of stratification. Particularly with the High school people I can see that we are working with the same kinds of issues. They have different populations in their school and they feel that acutely, and we have different populations in our school and we feel that acutely.” (11-15 yrs)
• Influence of Community Research on Teaching
  – Being an Outsider Externally as Well
    • “I have to think a lot about what it means to be an outsider and doing research. I have to deal with my own position and background and what that means in a certain setting. I have had to think about the assumptions that I am bringing with me.” (1-5 yrs)
  – A Distinct View on Interdisciplinarity
    • “I really enjoyed being in the colloquium every two weeks with people from outside of the business department, outside the field of economics in particular. Having a professor of education, a Spanish professor, a sociologists. It was stimulating to have a couple of hours when we met to listen to other people’s presentations. Sometimes this gave me helpful insights for my project. But mostly, it was different and fun, to see how somebody approaches this issue from their own disciplinary perspective. I think we all get so grounded on our own set of assumptions, models and protocols that we forget what it must look to an outsider. Somebody equally smart but in a different way. “ (19-25 yrs)
Influence of Community Research on Teaching

- A Distinct View on Interdisciplinarity

  “We were learning what was happening in other disciplines, but there were still different disciplines. Increasingly the economy has become globalized, with transnational companies. Companies that are operating at a scale different than an individual nation. In an analogous way, ideally, academics would work on a transdisciplinary matter where we are not confined to our own discipline, and we don’t see somebody else’s idea as “well, that’s an idea, that’s a sociological idea… but, that’s just a good idea.” So we kind of dropped the distinction of what discipline we are coming from. And we give those outside our discipline a chance to interact with us and teach things about our discipline that we wouldn’t see from the insider’s perspective.” (19-25 yrs)