

Introduction

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Widespread accessibility to working teachers matters a great deal, especially if we consider the incredibly diverse range of contexts in which higher education operates these days.

—JAMES M. LANG, *SMALL TEACHING* (2016:5)

The quote by Dr. James M. Lang speaks to the aim of this book, which is to bring the most current, vital teaching practices together into one resource enabling both new and experienced faculty to learn from each other. Of course, the topic itself is a familiar one—a proliferation of books examining the best practices in teaching and learning, the science of learning, and assessment techniques line the shelves of centers for teaching excellence and the office desks (and floors) of our colleagues. Book discussion groups on teaching topics have become a staple of professional development programming (often found convening at campus coffee shops). Still, for many faculty or graduate student instructors, reading and digesting over a dozen new texts (not to mention journal articles) each year in the scholarship of teaching and learning is just not possible. This book attempts to bring together, in one volume, a collection of the tried-and-true best practices and most recent innovations in scholarly teaching. Over 20 instructors have shared their experiences, knowledge, challenges, assessment strategies, and practical tips to ensure that graduate students in courses on teaching, adjuncts, and new and tenured faculty can benefit from and refine the practice of scholarly teaching. To meet the goal of accessibility for those from diverse educational contexts, the authors represent a multitude of institutional settings and rank, including educational developers, junior, mid-, and late-career faculty, community college faculty, faculty at private institutions, and those from research-based state systems.

We have compiled original chapters from faculty who are active scholars in the field of teaching and learning to provide insights into the most effective strategies and evidence-based best practices. Furthermore, to be included in the volume,

chapters had to meet three basic criteria. First, the topic of the chapter had to be grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning beyond the disciplinary journals of the author's field of study. With over 400 scholarly journals within the scholarship of teaching and learning, this requirement was essential to avoid discipline-specific contexts and enable the reader to locate the application of the subject more broadly. Next, each chapter needed to include an assessment strategy or evidence of effective implementation of the teaching technique, theory, or framework. This criterion ensures that the chapters in this book model best practices in the scholarship of teaching and learning. In addition, evidence of effectiveness helps the reader determine whether a specific practice would align with the outcomes of their particular course as well as larger institutional goals. Finally, all chapters provide concrete tips and practical resources that instructors can use in their own teaching and learning environment. Many of the tips in the chapters reflect Lang's (2016) small teaching approach whereby instructors can make small changes to their current course structure. Other chapters require more time, reflection, and planning to apply the pedagogy being introduced.

The idea for this volume grew out of a series of teaching and learning workshops, organized by the editors, where both the participants and facilitators learned from each other. The workshops were sponsored and organized by a small group of members of Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), the International Sociology Honor Society. Held just prior to the annual regional sociology meetings throughout the United States, the workshops created a transformative experience by bringing faculty and graduate students who were passionate about scholarly teaching together in a collaborative environment. In order to build a community of learners, we held sessions facilitated by individuals who incorporated the best practices of teaching, innovative assignments, and effective assessment strategies in their courses.

Feedback from workshop participants further encouraged us to find a way to share the learning from each other's experiences on a wider scale. Nearly all of the participants from the workshops indicated that throughout the sessions they considered overarching processes and ideas that would inform their future teaching choices, and they were able to identify other scholarly teachers. Additionally, nearly all of the participants believed that the workshop met or exceeded their expectations. Participants stated that they especially enjoyed the conversations with each other and the sense of community that developed from the peer-learning format.

While largely successful at networking and providing inspiration, these workshops present challenges to the dissemination of the scholarship of teaching and learning. One challenge is that attendees desired more details about the topics presented beyond the one-page handouts and brief sessions. They also wanted information on the teaching techniques and strategies from the sessions they were

unable to attend. Another challenge of the workshop format for long-term learning is what participants actually do with the materials, tips, and techniques gained. Very often, attendees return to their home institutions inspired and armed with the intention of incorporating the material they learned into their courses or sharing ideas with colleagues. Unfortunately, we know that the excitement often ends when the reality of the needs of the current semester or demand for research productivity hits. By mid-semester, most of us file away (or more aptly pile away) those handouts and notes from the attended workshop. Such materials often resurface much later during an office makeover or a transitional move. By that time, the innovation is outdated or the notes are indecipherable.

Attendance at the workshops continues to be robust, and AKD has made every attempt to keep the registration fees affordable for all teachers in higher education (including offering travel awards). Still, we know that funding for teaching and learning workshops is becoming more difficult to secure, and additional time away from teaching in the middle of a semester is a challenging hurdle for many faculty, instructors, and graduate students. Given the positive feedback and success of the pre-conference workshops and the challenges associated with a workshop format, we began discussing how to bring the accessibility with working teachers of the pre-conference model to a larger audience. That is when the idea for this edited volume took flight. Some of the chapters in this volume are authored by the initial workshop participants. All chapters are written by individuals we can learn from. While many of our contributors are from sociology, and the majority are from disciplines in the social sciences, their allegiance is to improving teaching and learning for all.

Our contributors focus on a number of different aspects of teaching: starting from understanding how learning happens, to specific ideas on pedagogical techniques, and ending with the dissemination of information through the scholarship of teaching and learning. We have divided the book into four sections: curricular innovations, classroom techniques, out-of-class situations, and assessment. We could have placed many of the chapters into multiple units as the topic and methods naturally overlap. Our greatest hope for this book is that it will assist us in learning from each other.

PART 1: CURRICULAR INNOVATIONS

- Chapter 1, “The Science of Learning in a Social Science Context” by Melinda Messineo, provides an overview of the science of learning to help readers address common learning challenges in their social science classes. Readers will explore how the brain learns, ways to help students improve their focus to more effectively retain information, and how to enhance the social aspects of learning.

- Chapter 2, “Pedagogical Techniques for Creating a Community of Inquiry in Online Learning Environments” by Andrea N. Hunt, describes the findings from a survey of undergraduate students regarding their perceptions and preferences for course delivery and provides a conceptual model (i.e., the Community of Inquiry framework) that connects social interaction, critical thinking, and effective course design to promote deep and integrated learning.
- Chapter 3, “Co-Teaching: Risks and Rewards” by Renee Monson and Kristy Kenyon, provides a review of the scholarship on student and faculty experiences in co-taught courses and includes the reflections of the authors on experiences in co-teaching a bi-disciplinary course. The authors demonstrate that co-teaching can foster intellectual engagement and growth for students and faculty alike. They offer practical advice for those considering co-teaching, including recommendations for seeking institutional support, course planning, classroom dynamics, assessing student learning, and course assessment.
- Chapter 4, “A Collaborative Affair: Connecting Students with the Community through Research” by Michele Lee Kozimor-King and Barbara Prince, provides a summary of the literature on the benefits and challenges of community-based research (CBR), presents background information and assessment of a CBR project embedded within a research methods and statistics course sequence, and ends with a practical guide on how to implement a CBR project into a new or existing course.
- Chapter 5, “Strategies and Resources for Internationalizing the Curriculum” by Christine K. Oakley, provides a context for understanding current campus internationalization initiatives and useful strategies to adapt to specific student populations and institutional settings. She presents a discussion of the ideal institutional environment for internationalizing the curriculum, strategies to assess how well a program of study meets globally focused student-learning outcomes, and ways to infuse intercultural and global dimensions into courses. The chapter includes a brief discussion of strategies for faculty to become globally engaged.
- Chapter 6, “Flipping Out: Understanding the Effects of a General Education Flipped Classroom on Student Success” by Craig Douglas Albert, Stacie K. Pettit, and Christopher Terry, investigates the effects a flipped classroom has on student success. They tested the relationships between the flipped design on student performance and content knowledge in Introductory American Government using grades and withdrawal rates as a measure of student performance. In addition, they administered a 15-question pre- / post-test content knowledge instrument. Finally, they provide results from the data and suggestions for implementation.

- Chapter 7, “Reaching and Teaching ‘Nontraditional’ Students in Community Colleges and Beyond” by Sara Parker, provides an introduction to teaching community college students by identifying four characteristics of this population: academic under preparedness, significant percentages of first-generation and / or immigrant students, complicated attendance patterns, and heterogeneity. The chapter includes a review of literature on increasing student success and provides evidence of a successful classroom intervention.
- Chapter 8, “Addressing Learner Variability on Campus through Universal Design for Learning” by Shannon Haley-Mize, provides an overview of the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) theory and a review of the literature on UDL in higher education. She provides an application of UDL to course design, including online learning environments and suggestions for implementation.

PART 2: CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES

The second section of the volume is rich with suggestions on ways to improve specific pedagogical techniques that we typically use in our classrooms.

- Chapter 9, “Without Apology: Reclaiming the Lecture” by Diane L. Pike, draws on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) literature and professional experience to support four key behaviors (accompanied by the appropriate attitudes and knowledge) that can strengthen lecture: a new kind of preparation, embedded action, eradication of traditional PowerPoint, and playback. The chapter provides guidance on how to utilize the lecture successfully.
- Chapter 10, “Scribes in the Classroom: Effectively Using PowerPoint to Enhance the Classroom Experience” by Monica R. Sylvia and Brenda J. Kirby, explores how to use PowerPoint to facilitate the best learning environment from both the instructor’s and students’ perspectives. They review the literature on effective PowerPoint use and examine the results from their empirical study that investigates the differences between text-intensive and bulleted-outline PowerPoint slide formats.
- Chapter 11, “Discussion in the Social Science Classroom” by Jay R. Howard, examines classroom norms that present challenges in engaging students as well as lead to the domination of discussion by a small group of students. The chapter provides strategies for overcoming these classroom norms to encourage participation and involvement in discussion.
- Chapter 12, “Facilitating Learning and Leadership in Student Team Projects” by Dennis O’Connor, provides an overarching model for creating successful student teams and building team leadership from project development and management to evaluation. This chapter includes tips and tools for implementing student team projects designed to increase the learning that occurs through group work.

- Chapter 13, “Courting Controversy and Allowing for Awkward: Strategies for Teaching Difficult Topics” by Mari Plikuhn, explores the range of topics that are currently considered difficult to teach, reviews the literature on classroom management strategies for structuring productive discussions of controversial material, discusses techniques for creating safe student interactions, and provides examples of policies designed to develop a respectful classroom culture.
- Chapter 14, “Becoming a Culturally Inclusive Educator” by Dena R. Samuels, examines the role that faculty members play in creating a diverse and inclusive classroom. She presents results from her own national research study that examines faculty perceptions of and education on being culturally inclusive. The chapter provides strategies for implementation so faculty can transform themselves and their classroom into a more culturally inclusive environment.
- Chapter 15, “The Value of Games and Simulations in the Social Sciences” by Amanda M. Rosen, explores the benefits and challenges of using simulations and games in the social science college classroom. She presents the results from an analysis of 66 publications on games and simulations in political science along with an interdisciplinary discussion of the literature discussing the conditions under which simulations and games are effective. She also provides best practices and tips for the use of simulations and games in the classroom.
- Chapter 16, “Putting the Student at the Center: Contemplative Practices as Classroom Pedagogy” by Tracy Wenger Sadd, provides an introduction to the use of contemplative practices in academic courses ranging from physics, chemistry, biology, and environmental science to literature, law, social work, economics, and sociology. She provides a summary of the research on student outcomes related to the use of contemplative practices, basic guidelines for integrating these practices into the classroom, and several examples from the implementation into two academic disciplines.

PART 3: OUT-OF-CLASS SITUATIONS

The third section of the volume covers two topics that largely affect students’ preparation outside of the classroom: reading and engagement with the material.

- Chapter 17, “Student Reading Compliance and Learning in the Social Sciences” by Jay R. Howard, examines one of the key challenges in virtually all college-level courses: getting students to read. The chapter provides a review of the literature on the effects of motivation and use of classroom time with regard to students completing reading assignments. He also provides suggestions of best practices for ensuring students read and benefit from the reading.
- Chapter 18, “Cultivating Engagement and Deepening Understanding While Leaving the Textbook Behind” by Robin G. Isserles, chronicles the decision to

abandon the use of a traditional textbook in an introductory sociology course and provides concrete tips for implementation of the practice. She discusses the literature on textbook use and the impetus for the decision to leave the textbook behind. She explains the results from her analysis of student survey data and student work.

PART 4: ASSESSMENT

The final section focuses on assessment strategies, including backward design and the development and use of rubrics. The last chapter provides a discussion on how to transform innovative assessment techniques and pedagogies into research consistent with the scholarship of teaching and learning.

- Chapter 19, “(Re-)Creating Your Course: Backward Design and Assessment” by Melinda Messineo, discusses backward course design using a step-by-step process suitable for new course development or revision of an existing course. Instructors will develop transferable strategies by examining concepts important to backward design and course assessment, including alignment, active learning, and formative and summative assessments. She provides tips and techniques for implementation.
- Chapter 20, “‘Am I Grading Consistently and Effectively?’: Developing and Using Rubrics” by Shirley A. Jackson, provides an examination of how rubrics can be useful tools to help faculty provide feedback to students that is meaningful, efficient, and consistent with grading standards. She presents a discussion of the benefits of and challenges to using rubrics. This chapter includes suggestions and tips for novice users of rubrics.
- Chapter 21, “Defining and Implementing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” by Jeffrey Chin, examines the area of study referred to as the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), distinguishes Sot from scholarly teaching, and provides a short history of the field. He provides strategies and tips for ways to transform scholarly teaching into Sot research. The chapter also explains how faculty can use Sot to fulfill the demands for assessment of the curriculum.

REFERENCE

- Lang, James M. 2016. *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.