

Opportunities and New Directions Conference, April 27 & 28, 2011

Keynotes, Plenary, Invited Workshop Descriptions

Presidents' Colloquium: Opening Keynote: Dr. Maryellen Weimer

Can Scholarly Work on Teaching and Learning Actually Improve my Teaching?

Books, journals, and articles on teaching and learning date back to the early 1900s – some even before that. All these materials have one thing in common: few educators read them. What can be learned from this literature? Is research a useful resource faculty need for self-improvement as teachers? Are fellow teachers the ones best suited to research and write about teaching and learning? How is this pedagogical scholarship alike and different from discipline-based research? In this keynote, Maryellen Weimer explores answers to these questions. Whether engaging in a thoughtful reflection of classroom experience or an empirical endeavour that answers a pragmatic question, post-secondary teachers can use the scholarship of colleagues not only to enlarge their understanding of teaching and learning, but also to increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Illustrative examples will offer a range of new ideas, interesting findings, and provocative points to consider.

Workshop: Dr. Maryellen Weimer

Taking Risks in Teaching: Successfully Implementing Change

In this workshop, Maryellen will describe a thoughtful and systematic approach to making changes in the classroom. She will identify a series of steps that can be used to ensure that changes positively impact learning outcomes, and acknowledging that instructors make changes for the right reasons, she will help you explore how to tailor planned changes to fit particular instructional situations. In addition, Maryellen will discuss with you how to assess these changes for impact, using the assessment data to determine if the strategy needs further adaptation. This approach to change reflects the systemic and cyclical study that SoTL work requires: an ongoing process of inquiry that includes planning, implementation, observation, and analysis.

Closing Keynote: Dr. Julia Christensen Hughes

The SoTL Imperative: Towards Greater Dissemination and Evidence-Based Practice

For decades, much has been known about how students learn and how faculty can foster deep approaches to learning. Thanks to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement, over the past few years our understanding has become increasingly mainstream and sophisticated. Still missing, however, is the wide-scale awareness and application of this knowledge within our institutions and our classrooms. In this keynote I will argue that the time has come to change how we approach teaching and learning. Drawing on research about deep and surface learning, student engagement, and retention, I will address 1) why the higher education system must change, 2) how we can better support the SoTL, and 3) ways to better ensure faculty put what is known into practice.

Plenary: Dr. Nicola Simmons

Telling SoTL Tales: Sharing Research Results in all the Right Places

Why don't we use what we know about how to enhance student learning to full advantage to improve teaching and learning in our courses, departments, or institutions? One factor is that educators do not always draw on the existing knowledge, but a second and equally relevant factor is that researchers may not always make their knowledge public in ways that will inform educational practice. In this plenary, I focus on the ways in which SoTL researchers at the University of Waterloo are connecting their knowledge to practice. Using a *micro-meso-macro-mega* framework (Poole, 2009; Simmons, 2008), I outline where they share their results, and perhaps more interestingly, where they do not. You will be invited to join the discussion about how the implications of these findings align with the overall goal for scholarship of teaching and learning: to improve student learning.

Poole, G. (2009). *The pursuit of the scholarship of teaching and learning in Canada: Good, but not good enough*. Keynote presentation at the Canadian Society for Studies in Higher Education annual conference, Ottawa, Ontario, May 25-27.

Simmons, N. (2008). *Navigating institutional SoTL cultures: Faculty developers as conversation catalysts*. Presentation at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL) annual conference, Edmonton, October.

Speaker Biographies



Dr. Maryellen Weimer is a Professor Emeritus of Teaching and Learning at Penn State, where she won the Milton S. Eisenhower award for distinguished teaching. Previously, she served as Associate Director of the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, a five year, \$5.9 million, U.S. Department of Education research and development center. Dr. Weimer regularly keynotes national meetings and regional conferences.

Since 1987 Dr. Weimer has edited the *Teaching Professor*, a monthly newsletter on post-secondary teaching with 15,000 international subscribers. She also has numerous publications including numerous articles in referred journals, book chapters, books reviews. She also serves on the editorial boards of numerous journals. She has edited or authored eight books including *Teaching on Solid Ground* (1995), co-edited with Robert Menges, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (2002), which has sold more than 23,000 copies, *Enhancing Scholarly Work on Teaching and Learning*, (2006), and most recently, *Inspired College Teaching: A Career-Long Resource for Professional Growth*, which was released by Jossey-Bass in March, 2010.

Weimer, M. (2010). *Inspired college teaching: A career-long resource for professional growth*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weimer, M. (2006). *Enhancing scholarly work on teaching and learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Menges, R., & M. Weimer (Eds.), (1995). *Teaching on solid ground*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Dr. Julia Christensen Hughes is Dean of the College of Management and Economics at the University of Guelph in Ontario. She is also past-president of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, a predominantly Canadian organization committed to enhancing the quality of teaching in learning in post-secondary institutions. A long-time advocate for educational reform, her research interests include academic integrity, student-centred learning, curriculum assessment and development, universal instructional design, and organizational effectiveness. An award winning instructor, educational consultant, and frequent keynote speaker, Dr. Christensen Hughes has facilitated several national events in support of the scholarship of teaching and learning and the teaching-research-learning nexus. In 2007, she was the recipient of the Edward F. Sheffield Award from the Canadian Society for Studies in Higher Education for the author judged to be most excellent in the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. In 2008, she was honoured with the John Bell Award from the University of Guelph for outstanding contributions to education. Most recently Julia co-edited *Taking Stock: Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*.

Christensen Hughes, J., & Mighty, J. (Eds.), (2010). *Taking stock: Research on teaching and learning in higher education*. Kingston ON: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Wolf, P., & Christensen Hughes, J. (Eds.), (2008). Curriculum development in higher education: Faculty-driven processes and practices. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 112.



Dr. Nicola Simmons is the Research and Evaluation Consultant at the University of Waterloo, where she facilitates Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research across campus. As past VP, SoTL portfolio, for the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), she has worked to support the SoTL agenda at the Canadian national level and beyond. Currently, Nicola is Chair of the Educational Developers Caucus, the Canadian organization for academic developers.

Nicola's current research examines SoTL researcher roles, including challenges and supports for identity development, and also national ethics policies pertaining to SoTL work. She holds additional research grants related to faculty development practices and program evaluation, and continues research projects that purposefully involve her students from the Masters in Education at Brock University, where she is a graduate advisor and teaches part-time. In addition to journal articles and book chapters, Nicola edited the 2010 and 2011 *Opportunities and New Directions: Canadian Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* books and co-authored *The Portfolio Process*, a volume in the STLHE Green Guide series.

Simmons, N. (Ed.) (2011). *Opportunities and new directions: Canadian scholarship of teaching and learning, Volume 2*. Waterloo, ON: University of Waterloo.

Simmons, N. (Ed.), (2010). *Opportunities and new directions: Canadian scholarship of teaching and learning*. Waterloo, ON: University of Waterloo.

Herteis, E. M., & Simmons, N. (2010). *The portfolio process: Green guide no. 10*. London, ON: Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.