Highlights of the Carnegie Report: The Scholarship of Teaching from "Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate"

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The work of the professor becomes consequential only as it is understood by others. Yet, today, teaching is often viewed as a routine function, tacked on, something almost anyone can do. When defined as scholarship, however, teaching both educates and entices future scholars. Indeed, as Aristotle said, "Teaching is the highest form of understanding."

As a scholarly enterprise, teaching begins with what the teacher knows. Those who teach must, above all, be well informed, and steeped in the knowledge of their fields. Teaching can be well regarded only as professors are widely read and intellectually engaged. One reason legislators, trustees, and the general public often fail to understand why ten or twelve hours in the classroom each week can be a heavy load is their lack of awareness of the hard work and the serious study that undergirds good teaching.

Teaching is also a dynamic endeavor 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. Educator Parker Palmer strikes precisely the right note when he says 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.

Further, good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners. All too often, teachers transmit information that students are expected to memorize 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. Through reading, through classroom discussion, and surely through comments and questions posed by students, professors themselves will be pushed in creative new directions.

In the end, inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive. Almost all successful academics give credit to creative teachers—those mentors who defined their work so compellingly that it became, for them, a lifetime challenge. Without the teaching function, the continuity of knowledge will be broken and the store of human knowledge dangerously diminished.

Physicist Robert Oppenheimer, in a lecture at the 200th anniversary of Columbia University in 1954, spoke elegantly of the teacher as mentor and placed teaching at the very heart of the scholarly endeavor: "The specialization of science is an inevitable accompaniment of progress; yet it is full of dangers, and it is cruelly wasteful, since so much that is beautiful and enlightening is cut off from most of the world. Thus it is proper to the role of the scientist that he not merely find the truth and communicate it to his fellows, but that he teach, that he try to bring the most honest and most intelligible account of new knowledge to all who will try to learn."?

Here, then, is our conclusion. What we urgently need today is a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar—a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching. We acknowledge that these four categories—the scholarship of discovery, of integration, of application, and of teaching—divide intellectual functions that are tied inextricably to each other. Still, there is value, we believe, in analyzing the various kinds of academic work, while also acknowledging that they dynamically interact, forming an interdependent whole. Such a vision of scholarship, one that recognizes the great diversity of talent within the professoriate, also may prove especially useful to faculty.
Creativity Contracts

Given personal and professional changes that occur across a lifetime, what’s needed, we believe, are career paths that provide for flexibility and change. Alternating periods of goal-seeking and reassessment should be common for all academics. As Roger Baldwin writes, “Higher education should acknowledge the changing character of these periods and help professors travel through them successfully.” Specifically, we recommend that colleges and universities develop what might be called creativity contracts—an arrangement by which faculty members define their professional goals for a three- to five-year period, possibly shifting from one principal scholarly focus to another. Indeed, looking down the road, we can see the day when staying with one dimension of scholarship—without a break—would be considered the exception, not the rule.

Here’s how the creativity contract might work: We can imagine a faculty member devoting most of his or her early career to specialized research. The graduate program should change, of course, to accommodate into all graduate prepara-

tion graduate schools have, all too often, overlooked. Kenneth Eble in his book Professors as Teachers registered an observation that is widely shared: “[The professor’s] narrowness of vision, the disdain for education, the reluctance to function as a teacher are ills attributable in large part to graduate training. Upgrading the preparation of college teachers in graduate schools is therefore fundamentally important not only to improving teaching but to re-

fashioning higher education.”

Some critics have urged a Doctor of Arts degree for those interested in college teaching. It’s our position that this two-track approach is not desirable. The graduate program should change, not the degree. What’s needed is a re-

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Graduate Schools

Finally, graduate schools should give priority to teaching. As far back as 1930, G. J. Laing, dean of the graduate school at the University of Chicago, raised the essential questions: “What are we doing in the way of equipping [graduate students] for their chosen work? Have the departments of the various graduate schools kept the teaching career sufficiently in mind in the organization of their program[s] of studies? Or have they arranged their courses with an eye to the production of research workers only, thinking of the teacher’s duties merely as a means of livelihood... while he carries on his research? And finally comes the question: What sort of college teachers do our Doctors of Philosophy make?”

The standard response is that specialized study is the best preparation for teaching. This may be true for those who teach advanced graduate or post-doctoral students. At this level, faculty and student cultures closely inter-

act. But in teaching undergraduates, faculty confront circumstances in which more general knowledge and more precise pedagogical procedures are required. Helping new professors prepare for this special work is an obli-

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ments prepare graduate students for research assistantships—and rewarded. Indeed, graduate students are given recognition for such undertakings. Graduate students are not viewed as significant academic undertaking partners. The primary aim is to give senior faculty relief and help graduate students meet financial obligations. The needs of those being taught are often not seriously considered. The situation is exacerbated when the most accomplished graduate students are given research assistantships—and rewarded by not having to teach. One TA put it this way: "Teaching is considered secondary at best, with the implication being that those who aspire to teach or who enjoy it are not good scholars or intellects. The department gives double messages about teaching. It does not want to shortchange the undergrads, but it is suspicious of those of us who care deeply about teaching."\(^8\)

Yet, the situation is improving. Universities across the country are focusing on the role of TAs. National conferences on the subject are being held, and we urge that every TA participate in a seminar on teaching. We also urge that English proficiency be a prerequisite for such an assignment. . . .

One final point. Graduate students, in preparing to teach, also might be asked to work with mentors—veteran faculty who have distinguished themselves by the quality of their instruction. This approach is being used widely to prepare young people to teach in elementary and secondary schools. In higher education, a close and continuing relationship between a graduate teaching assistant and a gifted teacher can be an enriching experience for both. The observations, consultations, and discussions about the nature of teaching surely would help foster critical inquiry into good practice. . . .

Surely, much of what goes on in graduate education today is worth preserving. Graduate schools must continue to be a place where students experience the satisfaction that comes from being on the cutting edge of a field, and the dissertation, or a comparable project, should continue to be the centerpiece—the intellectual culmination of the graduate experience.

However, it is our conviction that if scholarship is to be redefined, graduate study must be broadened, encompassing not only research, but integration, application, and teaching, too. It is this vision that will assure, we believe, a new generation of scholars, one that is more intellectually vibrant and more responsive to society's shifting needs.

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