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## Introduction to Section Two: Styles of Learning

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## *Introduction to Section Two: Styles of Learning*

*Anne Ponder  
Colby-Sawyer College*

**T**he National Collegiate Honors Council has redesigned its national conference periodically, and one of those metamorphoses in the 1980s introduced sessions with “master teachers”. The session I remember now, years later, was led by Catherine Cater. This “master teacher” modeled most of what the rest of us have spent our careers emulating. And so, it is fitting that this central section of this volume takes up key topics in teaching and learning. Gabelnick, Braid, and Levy were not available to attend the October, 1999 panel in Orlando; their work appears here for the first time.

An expert in learning communities and currently leading a learning community, Pacific University, as president, Faith Gabelnick exhorts us to move learning communities from the periphery and make them instead a primary design of academic culture and community. She quotes Jaworski, Wheatley, Vaill, and Senge in her persuasive essay, beginning and concluding with Senge, “Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human.”

Bernice Braid’s essay explains that even very fine students are, “adept at separating out, but impoverished when it comes to pulling together.” Then, using the City-as-Text model, she offers some exceedingly useful suggestions about how we should respond pedagogically.

Individual research with students, long a primary instructional mode in the sciences, can be achieved in the humanities as well, Carol Kolmerten explains. She outlines her own progress from solitary scholar to a scholar whose understanding is credited to collaboration with another scholar, a student. Carol and her colleague discover that in the Beecher/Tilton scandal of 1874-75, neither the prevailing, inherited understanding of what happened or the assumption Carol began her work with would suffice.

The erudite Jim Herbert is at work on a larger project on this subject which we eagerly anticipate. Resting on the work of the philosopher, Jurgen Habermas, Jim recommends that there should be implicit rules of procedure in optimal circumstances for teaching and learning which he calls, “‘discourse’ proper”. “Discourse in this sense—it can be plausibly be argued—is the very structure for human knowledge and morality.”

Using the world as her classroom, Diane Levy writes reflectively, as she would have her students write after travel abroad. She reviews the learning inherent in the movement into and back from the strange and the familiar in a thoroughly engaging and informative way.