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# Evidence of the Transformational Dimensions of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Faculty Development Through the Eyes of SoTL Scholars

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*This analysis began from two unlikely starting points: a favorite Marcel Proust quote below that has nothing to do with faculty development, but could, and Pat Hutchings (2000) descriptive quote, “The scholarship of teaching and learning [SoTL] is characterized by a transformational agenda” (p. 8). Do SoTL faculty development programs foster transformation? Is there evidence of a transformational process and transformative learning? The project summaries of eight SoTL scholars were analyzed for evidence of transformation. The evidence for transformation of landscapes of learning, teaching, scholarship, and self are explored from SoTL scholars’ perspectives in a faculty development program, providing insight into and support for transformational faculty development.*

The only real voyage of discovery . . . consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes . . .

—Marcel Proust

This captivating metaphor contains elements of transformation and a living paradox that we know to be true in our lives. Without going anywhere, we can journey someplace new. Careful unpacking of its meanings reveals principles relevant to the work of faculty development and the experience of transformative learning.

Marcel Proust claims that discovery through fresh eyes surpasses traveling to new surroundings. First, we acquire fresh eyes, and second, once we get the new eyes, we'll not only see differently, but actually make the voyage of discovery. His adage implies choice—that we can choose to have new eyes, or else what would be the point in admonishing us to do so? His challenge also implies a result—two transformations occur—in the one who sees, and that which is now seen. The shift in the seer precedes the shifting landscapes, and is required to make the real voyage of discovery. The transformations are so powerful that the experience surpasses actually being in a new place with new surroundings. The paradox, however, is in the result, in staying where we are and yet voyaging beyond what we already see. The earth has not moved under our feet and we have not gone anywhere. Yet somehow we have changed. What we see has changed, and these changes make as much difference as if we had physically traveled from where we originally stood and looked. Our vision shifts; the familiar landscapes transform; we voyage; and we discover.

It would be no small stretch to consider scholarship as a voyage of discovery—a voyage that may not take us very far physically. Familiar landscapes can become new through the journey of inquiry. The scholarship of teaching and learning calls the scholar to discover and make the voyage of inquiry. But does it call for transformation? When Pat Hutchings (2000) said, “The scholarship of teaching and learning [SoTL] is characterized by a transformational agenda” (p. 8), we can imagine transformation resulting along broad, institutional dimensions, or transformation of the individual. If we consider individual transformation, might Proust’s paradox offer any insight into the process and outcomes of transformation through scholarly inquiry into teaching and learning? Though Proust surely was not speaking to faculty developers in higher education, perhaps he has something to say to us.

### TRANSFORMATION THROUGH NEW EYES

We are familiar with the experience of acquiring new eyes in our daily lives that emerges out of intentional choice or through sudden flashes of insight. For example, when we experience “new eyes” unexpectedly, with little choice or effort, sudden insight may appear as an “aha” moment. We feel like we are seeing an old idea for the first time. It seems to strike us, as in a bolt of lightning. For example, on our walk home, the streetlight on the snow or wet pavement catches our eye in a way that seems to transform our predictable, once familiar street into a picturesque, European hamlet. At other times, in an instant, our close partner or child appears to us as if we are seeing them for the first time. A sense of wonder is evoked, and we gaze in surprise with rapt attention. We are

mesmerized, if not transported, by a nuance or trait that hadn't shown itself before or in quite the same way. We are able to discover something novel among the myriad familiar characteristics we've already seen and looked at many times. This experience of acquiring new eyes may be more abstract and occur less visually when transforming familiar ideas, perspectives, and feelings. These sudden flashes and glimpses bring wonder, and delight, and color our all too familiar world with fresh scenery, texture, dimension, and hue, almost jarring us physically. We are moved. We have traveled. We discover.

Our acquisition of new eyes may emerge also from our hard work or intentional effort. For example, through sheer determined and fixed attention, we stare at a hologram trying desperately to see what is before us in a different way. We try to *will* a new perspective by looking intently. Similarly, in personal and professional situations, most of us have had an occasion in which we intentionally stepped back physically or emotionally in order to distance ourselves and gain a new perspective or renew the visual anatomy of our mind's eye. These acts are intentional as we free ourselves from familiar constraints in order to see differently than before, and may take more time.

### FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The voyage occurs then, in living the paradox, in that mysterious intersection between the new seeing on the part of the viewer, observer, or participant, and that which is already there but able to be newly seen. We should not be surprised that learning about learning may require new eyes cast on the very familiar terrain of our teaching and learning in order to see new possibilities and begin new voyages of discovery. Does this happen in our faculty development programs or in how we approach faculty development? Is transformation an explicit goal when we think of improving teaching and learning? More importantly, what is transformation and how would we know it occurred?

A common goal in faculty development is to engage faculty in effective teaching. However, all too often, we direct our resources toward instructional improvement that aims to train faculty in new techniques through a primary focus on cognitive learning. Levinson-Rose and Menges (1981) reviewed literature on faculty development programs spanning the late 1960s until 1980. Most programs were technique oriented and prescriptive "without consideration of the faculty member's teaching or his or her prior knowledge and experience" (Cranton, 1994, p. 727). Traditional approaches may ignore the perspectives and beliefs faculty already have formed. Cranton (1994) claims it is unlikely that faculty have made explicit their assumptions about teaching and learning or the consequences of acting on those assumptions.

Robertson (1997) contrasts simple learning that “further elaborates the learner’s existing paradigm, systems of thinking, feeling, or doing relative to the topic” with transformative learning that “causes the learner’s paradigm to become so fundamentally different in its structure as to become a new one” (p. 42). Sokol and Cranton (1998) concur that adult educators have often assumed that learning about teaching is instrumental. This can lead to “forming practices rather than transforming practices” (Cranton, 1994, p. 734). Even participatory programs do not necessarily incorporate transformative learning processes. Our directive methods often include brief workshops and teaching tips as we aim to be both effective and efficient while imparting new knowledge and building new skills. These efforts can improve teaching and student learning and provide vital resources. However, brief exposure to how-to strategies, while important, do not provide the trusting and reflective contexts for critical discourse in which teaching and learning assumptions are challenged.

### TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

Transformative learning was introduced by Mezirow (1997) as a change process that transforms frames of reference (Imel, 1998). His theory defines frames of reference as “the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). According to this view, “actions and behaviors will be changed based on the changed perspective (Cranton, 1994, p. 730).

Several key elements of the transformational learning process are cited frequently in the literature. Initially, a disorienting dilemma, or “an activating event that typically exposes a discrepancy between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard or read” (Cranton, 2002, p. 66) and may contribute to a readiness for change (Taylor, 2000). Cranton (2002) describes this as a “catalyst for transformation” (p. 66). It could be a single event or a series of events that occur over a much longer period as in “an accretion of transformation in points of view” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). For example, engaging in problem solving may challenge and expose discrepancies (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2000).

The literature highlights the central importance of cultivating a process of critical reflection with certain key elements (Mezirow, 1991; Sokol & Cranton, 1998). “Critical reflection is the means by which we work through beliefs and assumptions, assessing their validity in the light of new experiences or knowledge, considering their sources, and examining underlying

premises" (Cranton, 2002, p. 65). Cranton (1994) explains, "Transformative learning theory leads us to view learning as a process of becoming aware of one's assumptions and revising these assumptions" (p. 730). Cranton (1994) simply states, "If basic assumptions are not challenged, change will not take place" (p. 739), and elaborates that we are more likely to have sets of assumptions that guide teaching practices. Sokol and Cranton (1998) further explain, "As transformative learners, they question their perspectives, open up new ways of looking at their practice, revise their views, and act based on new perspectives" (p. 14). Mezirow (1997) cautions, "learners need practice in recognizing frames of reference and using their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective" (p. 10). Several authors point out the necessity of making the time necessary for critical reflection (Pohland & Bova, 2000).

In addition to critical reflection that challenges assumptions, transformative learning calls for a trusting, social context for the dialogue referred to as reflective discourse (Mezirow, 2000) or critical discourse (Grabove, 1997). Cranton (1994) argues that the most promising transformative learning potential in faculty development work is long-term work with others, including "a group of faculty genuinely interested in teaching" (p. 735). Taylor (2000) found that the key ingredient most common in the process of transformational learning was the context of relationships. Imel (1998) concurs with the importance of establishing a community among learners.

Several sources emphasize individual agency; learners having their own design (Taylor, 2000); autonomous thinking; and control and choice (Grabove, 1997; Mezirow, 1997). Mezirow (1997) suggests that the educator serve as a facilitator or *provocateur*, in order to foster the self-direction and control needed for transformative learning. The role of the educator or faculty developer in transformative learning processes changes from that of a directive expert by shifting power, responsibility, and decision-making to the faculty (Cranton, 1994). Robertson (1997) writes extensively on the importance of creating a helper relationship. According to Baumgartner (2001), action on the new perspective, as in "living the new perspective" (p. 17), is critical for transformative learning to occur.

As opposed to the elements critical for the process of transformative learning, the outcomes indicative of transformation may include Cranton's (1992) framework of three types of change: change in assumptions, change in perspective, and change in behavior. Boyd (1989) claims an outcome of transformative learning includes a change in self.

Mezirow's theory and ideas have been expanded upon by several theorists in order to address his emphasis on the rational and linear aspects of transformation (Boyd, 1991; Grabove, 1997; Robertson, 1997). Baumgartner (2001) argues that "transformational learning is a complex process involving thoughts and feelings" (p. 18), and compares Dirkx's (1998) extrarational emphasis in which transformation involves soul-based learning that is not constrained by rational and cognitive learning. Grabove (1997) further emphasizes the potential for integration of self and other, renewal and rebirth as themes indicative of the nonrational dimensions of transformative learning. She suggests the transformative learner "moves in and out of the cognitive and the intuitive, of the rational and the imaginative, of the subjective and the objective, of the personal and the social" (Grabove, 1997, p. 95).

We might ask ourselves as faculty development professionals, do we offer programs that incorporate the processes that enable deeper understanding, discovery, or transformative change? Are we aiming for increasing knowledge and skills as primary program outcomes, but falling short of creating opportunities in which faculty can critically reflect, reconceptualize, and engage in soul learning? Wouldn't it make sense to imagine that at some point, in some faculty members' careers, they will seek deeper understanding and affective as well as cognitive transformation? Are we considering how, and are we willing to offer a palette of opportunities that include a broader array of learning and development? Though time and budgetary resources are stretched, must we provide only the most popular programs, and not venture into opportunities that may promise a different kind of development? Certainly not all faculty at all points in their careers would have the interest or time to invest in transformative change programs and, given time constraints, may prefer brief exposure to new techniques in order to improve their teaching. But the question facing faculty developers is not necessarily how to appeal to the masses, but rather, how to offer a diverse array of opportunities for improving teaching and learning that meet the needs of faculty at a variety of levels of involvement and development. What type of programs produce this type of transformation, and how would we determine evidence of transformation?

This empirical analysis of a SoTL program examines the experience of SoTL from the scholars' perspectives, in light of the theoretical literature on the process and outcomes of transformation. Looking at evidence of transformative learning through SoTL may help us to consider investing in programs soundly linked to individual change and which may better prepare faculty to advance sustained departmental and structural changes in teaching and learning that have not been able to occur in higher education (Lazerson, Wagener,

& Shumanis, 2000). Perhaps we have been selling learning and change short by investing in quick fixes in our faculty development efforts. In order to transform not only teaching and learning, but institutions and their structures, have we considered the value of transforming individuals, or individuals transforming themselves?

### **A SoTL PROGRAM AS A MODEL OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING**

Each year at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM), a Midwestern research intensive urban university, five center scholars are selected by the Center for Instructional and Professional Development (CIPD). The SoTL scholars submit proposals to participate in a yearlong SoTL program. Each individual scholar identifies an initial focus of inquiry around student learning, designs a rigorous research question and project, implements it, and reports and disseminates the results. Each scholar receives an \$8,000 grant to use as he or she deems appropriate, and may choose to arrange a course buyout, for example, or hire a research assistant.

The group of center scholars meets three times over the summer for extended sessions to refine their questions and discuss articles about SoTL, their SoTL methodology, and preparation for the institutional review board (IRB) process. The group also meets previous center scholars and hears of their projects in detail. The extended summer sessions allowed the scholars to reflect on and discuss articles that challenged their assumptions about student learning and teaching, or to gain a clearer understanding of SoTL. Most of the discussions with the center scholars were informal, leisurely, and lively, involving personal exchanges over lunch and establishment of rapport. Toward the end of summer, we delved further into their research designs and problems with methodology. During the academic year, we focused on updates of their projects and discussed their emerging findings. Inevitably, stemming from a scholars' project focus, our conversation would hone in on some aspect of student learning, such as motivation or student expectations. As a group, we would explore our assumptions and their connection to the articles we read and to our teaching. The scholars often arranged additional one-on-one consultations with the CIPD staff on qualitative methods and finding relevant literature.

In the spring we attend the national conference of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), and the scholars submit a summary of their work in progress for conference dissemination. The year winds down with the scholars vigorously engaged in collecting and analyzing their data, or writing up their project summaries or articles for their disciplinary journals. Interestingly,



the scholars frequently lamented ending our monthly meetings, expressing regret at no longer having the group experience, and were very willing to participate in our ongoing CIPD programs as facilitators, disseminators of their study, or as guest speakers at the future center scholar monthly meetings.

At the completion of their SoTL project, scholars prepare a five- to ten-page project summary that describes their SoTL project and findings, the process they undertook to begin and complete their project, and their reflections on the process. Each scholar uses similar standard headings as were used most to present the case studies in Hutchings (2000) including Framing the Question, The Context, Gathering the Evidence, Emergent Findings and Broader Significance, Conditions for Doing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Benefits of the Work, and Lessons Learned. Clearly, the content and format of the project summaries differ from the format of the articles the scholars may submit to their disciplinary journals. Each year the newest center scholars submit their project summaries to be compiled into a monograph by the CIPD. Although the headings remain the same each year, a new monograph title is selected for each annual monograph. The monograph is distributed to faculty and teaching academic staff at campus teaching and learning events focused on SoTL (Schroeder & Ciccone, 2002, 2003).

As SoTL projects vary in their completion time, the annual monograph produced may contain summaries from several of the current SoTL scholars, as well as the previous year's center scholars, in order to provide at least five summaries in each monograph. In addition, one of the UWM project summaries in the second monograph was from a scholar in the University of Wisconsin Teaching Scholars Program designed for faculty and teaching academic staff with 10 or more years of outstanding teaching experience. With a primary focus on the scholarship of teaching, participants at mid-career can approach teaching and student learning in a scholarly way by designing a major course revision during the yearlong program. The teaching scholars meet several times a year for extended programs, institutes, and conferences. Therefore, the eight scholars in the monographs whose SoTL work was analyzed for this study are called SoTL scholars for the purposes of this study.

As assistant director of the CIPD at UWM, I assist the director in coordinating the Center Scholar Program and provide consultations to the scholars. I collect and co-edit the monograph, and consequently, I become very familiar with their individual experiences as well as their written project summaries.

My interest in transformational change through faculty development originates from my dissertation project focused on faculty as change agents. I investigated the individual and broader organizational change that can result

from participation in a sustained, transformative faculty development program (Schroeder, 2001). Through qualitative case study, I looked at the individual and organizational conditions that fostered faculty involvement as change agents within their departments and beyond, stemming from participation in sustained faculty development programs. In pursuing this earlier research, I had been immersed in the literature on individual and organizational change, including transformational change (Mezirow, 1990), individual learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Miles & Fullan, 1992; Kozma, 1985; Senge, 1990), and reconceptualization and transformative faculty development (Bowden, 1989; Cranton, 1994, 1996; Gravett, 1996; Ho, 1998; Pintrich, Mart, & Boyle, 1993; Prawat, 1992; Ramsden, 1992; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). This literature helped direct me to the deeper learning and transformation necessary for change in faculty beliefs and conceptions about teaching and learning, their faculty teaching practices, and involvement as change agents in broader organizational change around teaching and learning.

Having arrived at this institution just over two years ago, I reflected on the types of programs and change produced through participation in the existing faculty development programs offered at UWM. Since I often look at university life through the lens of individual and organizational change, I began to wonder about the center scholar SoTL program and to notice that the scholars' project summaries often referred to their experience with SoTL as a powerful process touching them along deeply personal, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. I wanted to delve further into whether participation in the SoTL scholar programs was a transformative experience, and if so, in what ways. I wondered if I would be able to determine evidence of the scholars' individual transformations from their writing.

### GATHERING EVIDENCE OF TRANSFORMATIVE OUTCOMES

To gather evidence, I approached the project summaries as narrative, qualitative data in which the subjects reveal the process of their SoTL experience using the language and metaphors they were comfortable using to present their experience and findings. Documents and materials that the subjects have written and that already exist serve as qualitative data and provide rich descriptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Together, the two monographs comprised 150 pages of data. I reread the completed summaries from the previous two monographs twice more, noting themes and patterns of change as they emerged (Miles & Huberman, 1984). All of the eight scholars made references to individual change. After analyzing the data, the themes of landscapes of learning, teaching, scholarship, and self emerged. I selected

key excerpts to extract from the original data that demonstrated transformation. McCall and Simmons (1969) describe this type analysis as analytical description.

As an indication of transformation, I first noted comments that used language, including *change, learned, discovered, enlightenment, shifted, new*, as well as the use of metaphors that indicated change. I then noted comments that specified what had changed or the type of change, as in *I now felt...* or, *I used to, but now I...* or, *I no longer...* or, *I had thought...*, indicating a change in feeling, perspective, practice, or way of being. Initially, I had not realized how often the scholars employed the language of vision and voyage or journey to discuss change in their summaries, as they had not spoken so metaphorically during our discussions. However, the use of *sight, vision, journey, and new perspectives* are common metaphors for transformation and change and were used very frequently by the SoTL scholars as well, and brought to mind Proust's familiar verses and affirmed once again that he, indeed, had something to say to us in faculty development.

I was curious whether the scholars thought the experience had changed them in broader terms, including their practices, perspectives, and selves, and if change occurred or was expressed along both cognitive and affective dimensions.

From the collected voyages into SoTL by the scholars, it was apparent that each spoke from his or her unique point of departure within a disciplinary terrain. Yet they share the very essence of transformation through new eyes. What can we learn about SoTL from the SoTL scholars using Proust's metaphor and paradox as a guide? How did faculty experience having new eyes to cast upon the terrain of teaching and learning? How did their fantastic voyages begin? What evidence of transformation did their individual summaries provide?

### **Landscapes of Learning**

Every time we encounter a person gazing through binoculars, a telescope, or zoom lens, we cannot help but wonder what he or she is looking at. Just what are SoTL scholars seeing with new eyes? The subjects of their intense studied gazing through their SoTL work are varied and diverse, stemming from the questions and problems in their teaching and classroom interactions.

SoTL scholar Jude Rathburn (2002) examined how the use of technology helps or hinders student learning by examining multiple intelligence theory and learning theory in the consideration of instructional design. She explained,

Each assignment or in-technology exercise gives me a window through which I can gain a glimpse of students' attitudes, triumphs, and the struggles involved with learning new technology and applying those tools in new situations ... (p. 53)

Once the instructors have begun to ask questions, to approach their teaching with inquiry, they form questions or problematize learning (Bass, 1999). This begins the deliberate charting of a voyage to unfamiliar landscapes of learning.

All learning activities and dissemination of student work occurred through the web component in public forums. In addition, there were chat rooms and bulletin board forums strictly for "socializing." I wanted to look at how a sense of community might occur if students had an additional means of interacting beyond the classroom walls. (Rathburn, 2002, p. 83)

SoTL scholar Renee Meyers (2003) described how she began to look at learning.

I wanted to know more about "what is" happening in the group discussions that occur regularly in my classroom. I examined how students' use of evidence facilitated learning in group quiz discussions. I was interested in knowing more about "how" students communicated in these groups, and how that communication affected discussion learning outcomes. ... I decided to look more closely at students' use of evidence in this persuasive process. (p. 16)

SoTL scholar Kathryn Olson (2003) chose to study the cultivation of deep understanding in the revision of a Pro-seminar course. In order to see into learning, she "chose four quite different assignments" (p. 44) in the revised Pro-seminar course to examine with new eyes. Although she had designed and taught both versions of the Pro-seminar course, her SoTL project involved engaging the students in making "transparent [the] purposes of Pro-seminar assignments, as well as the course's role as a part of a larger graduate curriculum" (Olson, 2003, p. 42).

SoTL scholar Barb Daley (2002) investigated how constructivist teaching using concept mapping influences the learning processes of adult students in higher education. In her SoTL project, she "saw really significant changes in

how students learned” (p. 23) each time she used concept mapping in her courses. She further explained,

I began to think about how I could not only teach the content in my courses, but how I could also help adults to understand their own learning processes . . . I started to use concept mapping in the courses I was teaching and each time I used it, I saw really significant changes in how students learned . . . The funding allowed me to follow students for a year and see what impact the maps had on their learning. (pp. 22–23)

SoTL scholar Elizabeth Buchanan (2002) wanted to “look at the impact of a hybrid approach on undergraduate students and their learning experiences . . . [to discover] an alternative educational experience and environment . . . [and to] . . . look at how a sense of community might occur” (pp. 11–12) through interactions outside a physical classroom space. Buchanan emphasized the importance Cross and Steadman (1996) place on observing students while they are learning.

Observing students in the act of learning, reflecting and discussing observations and data with teaching colleagues, and reading the literature on what is already known about learning is one way teachers can implement the scholarship of teaching. (p. 2)

Rathburn (2002), too, began to see changes in learning during her SoTL project and pointed out, “I can see improvement in the depth of analysis” (p. 53). Buchanan (2002) noted how the students in her SoTL project felt more comfortable in the class and participated more enthusiastically: “This learning experience required commitment from students and once they had bought into the course, learning became transparent and seamless” (p. 15).

However, the intentional, deliberate *looking in* that changed the scholars’ familiar landscape of learning was not always affirming or comfortable. Their new vision of the landscape of learning was often accompanied by expressions of disappointment, uncertainty, surprise, puzzlement, and even discomfort as they uncovered false assumptions and gathered their surprising findings. For example, several scholars admitted, “What surprised me was that I could not prompt these goals with or without the software” (O’Malley, 2002, p. 45); “My growing disappointment with the superficiality of their responses signaled a great disparity between what I expected my students to believe about their role as learners and their actual beliefs . . . I was shocked to realize that

many people do not share my technological enthusiasm" (Rathburn, 2002, p. 51); "I was puzzled and a little disappointed" by students who indicated they hadn't sensed improvement in their analytical or critical thinking skills (Aycock, 2003, p. 29). Daley (2002) expressed her surprise that some students explained that they did not use concept mapping because they did not have the software access, despite her instructions that they could construct the maps however they chose. SoTL scholar Lisa Dieker (2002) "was shocked to learn" (p. 37) that her novice teachers were intimidated by watching videos of expert teachers and expressed confusion and uncertainty about the expected learning. These uncomfortable surprises reinforce the importance of deliberately allowing oneself to challenge assumptions, to view the familiar with fresh eyes, and the necessity of going beyond what we think we know anecdotally about learning in order to transform.

### **Landscapes of Teaching**

The voyage of discovery for the SoTL scholars included acquiring new perspectives on their teaching as well. Why is this distinct from seeing or experiencing changes in learning? As reward systems and faculty roles have evolved to value research over teaching, most faculty are not encouraged to look into their teaching. According to Shulman (1999), "Blindness and amnesia are the state of the art in pedagogy" (p. 16). This blindness characterizes the polar opposite of having cultivated a multiplistic view of teaching and the "turning it this way and that" (Aycock, 2003, p. 27). Huber and Morreale (2002) explain that the current state in teaching is one in which "... our colleagues may care deeply about their courses, but they do not usually see their own teaching and learning as a matter for scholarly inquiry and communication" (p. 25). Bass (1999) struggled with the difficulty of framing a crisis in learning as a line of inquiry, a set of questions that originated in his teaching and concurred with Grant Wiggins's (1996) explanation, "... we find it difficult to see when our teaching isn't clear or adequate" (as cited in Bass, 1999, p. 4). If it is hard to even see our teaching with our existing eyes, how will we come to see it with new eyes?

Fortunately, changes taking place outside of higher education have found their way into our colleges and universities and are forcing us to look harder at our teaching, and in some cases "... are encouraging innovation and leading many faculty to turn a critical eye on their own assumptions and traditional teaching practices" (Huber & Morreale, 2002, p. 8). New eyes are perhaps fashioned in part from critical eyes turned to focus on how our own assumptions affect our teaching and courses, and learning within our disciplinary fields. For example, the SoTL scholars became familiar with the SoTL work of Carnegie

scholar and psychologist Bill Cerbin (1996), who admitted, "I began to think of each course . . . as a kind of laboratory . . . and along the way you can watch and see if your practices are helping to accomplish your goals . . ." (p. 53).

Can the mind's eye begin to shift in how it sees the familiar terrain of teaching? The scholars discovered this was possible. O'Malley (2002) developed a new perspective toward the familiar assumption that simply lecturing on a topic leads to student learning, despite his colleagues' frequent support of this conclusion. Buchanan (2002) expressed her transformation in teaching in terms of enlightenment: "I have a newfound sense of what quality teaching and learning really are. . . . One could consider my experience a form of enlightenment" (p. 15). Similarly, Daley (2002) reported her familiar ways of teaching had changed.

I found myself very excited about this project because it allowed me to look at my teaching and ask questions that I felt could only help me become a better teacher.

I chose to teach two groups of students to use a constructivist strategy called concept mapping . . . I followed these students during semester two to see if they continued to use concept maps and to find out how the use of maps impacted their learning. (p. 29)

Rathburn (2002) described how her view of her teaching underwent serious transformation as she became a learner herself.

Now that I view my teaching as a quasi-experiment in progress, I am not as hard on myself as I used to be when an exercise or activity flops. I still have plenty of "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days" in the classroom, but they are much less devastating. I have learned to view those experiences as opportunities to model my own process of critical reflection as I explain to students my rationale for trying something new or changing an approach that is ineffective. (p. 55)

Meyers (2003) referred to her transformation in teaching as she, too, became a learner through the work of SoTL.

This study taught me that I need to help my students learn "how to argue" more successfully in group discussion. If I can find a way to teach that practice so students really learn how to argue effectively,

then they have acquired a skill that they can use across their lifespan. This research project opened my eyes to that need. (p. 21)

Skeptics may claim that it is impossible to change the landscape of teaching, that the structures are too deeply embedded that support research, which in turn affect how we see teaching. How can we afford to believe that our perspectives are impossible to change? It is our perspectives that should be forming our practices and the necessary accompanying and supportive structures and practices, and they should never be beyond the reach of questioning and revision. If we are complaining that the embedded structures, values, and beliefs are difficult, if not seemingly impossible, to change, might we look to the level and depth of change we are willing to support through the types of faculty development opportunities we provide?

If we recall, before the research model became firmly embedded in academia, teaching was a clear and established priority. We transformed our vision of teaching when our values and mission shifted and we adopted a research model largely inherited from German research universities. Our own history challenges our resistance to change, our pessimism about change, and should encourage us to invent programs that help move higher education to consider broader forms of scholarship that reinforce multiple facets of our institutional missions. From our past, we learn that the landscape of teaching can shift, and through SoTL faculty development programs, we can indeed be encouraged that transformation is possible. As one SoTL scholar pointed out,

Perhaps, the great lesson learned throughout this project is that teaching can be reframed so that it no longer resides at the bottom of one's to do list. It can become an activity one wants to talk about with her colleagues, an activity one looks forward to each week or even each day; teaching is embraced as heartily as one's research activities where student learning is always at the fore of the research questions. (Buchanan, 2002, p. 16)

### **Landscapes of Scholarship**

The voyages taken by the SoTL scholars reveal scholarship as connected work and as collaborative work through SoTL. In contrast to the often private and autonomous efforts of teaching and research, Meyers (2003) made new connections between her multiple faculty roles, transforming how she sees her scholarly research interests.



Another lesson I learned is that with SoTL it is quite possible for a faculty member to bring together both their research and instructional interests. In the past these two activities have been quite separate in my mind. But by doing this project, it was clear that I could meld my research and teaching interests in group communication, and by doing so, I could expand and enrich both my research and teaching activities. This was one of the first projects that I have ever done where these two aspects of my career came together so seamlessly. (p. 22)

Other scholars emphasized the impact that the collaborative structure of the SoTL scholar program had on their perceptions of scholarship. One scholar commented,

Working on a SoTL project with a group of other committed, engaged, and enthusiastic faculty members, served to remind me, and reinforce for me, my beliefs about how valuable groups can be in one's own learning process . . . I think the Center Scholars group is a great framework for doing SoTL research, and helped me see how valuable such groups can be for those of us doing research a bit out of the mainstream in the academy. (Meyers, 2003, p.22)

Rathburn (2002) found both connection and community in the collaborative aspects of the SoTL program.

I also feel connected to a dedicated community of scholars who recognize that teaching is worth doing well. I no longer feel like a lone voice in the wilderness—there are others who are learning and exploring right along with me. (p. 55)

The collaborative yearlong program with lively discussions at monthly meetings created a valued and supportive group that transformed another scholar's perspective on scholarship. As one scholar admitted, "One lesson I relearned from doing this project is the power of the 'group' in the research endeavor" (Meyers, 2003, p. 22).

### **Landscapes of Self**

Parker Palmer (1998) challenges us to explore "the inner landscape of the teaching self" (p. 4). The self is a dimension of transformation that we seldom focus on or intentionally nurture, and we rarely create a space for dialogue

about deeply personal changes. However, the scholars articulated this level and type of change. Buchanan (2002) experienced deeply powerful changes.

Finally, my teaching will never be what students called “normal.” The scholarship of teaching and learning provides a foundation from which the “norm” is called into question and critiqued . . . My participation as a Center Scholar changed the way I view myself and my role in students’ educational experiences . . . I had changed as a result of the experience. (pp. 15–17)

Meyers (2003) revealed the transformation of her inner landscape. “Finally, I learned (or maybe re-learned) how much I value the teaching and learning process. In doing this project, my passion for the educational enterprise was rekindled (p. 22).”

How often do we hear these kinds of statements in higher education or within the parameters of faculty development programs? Involving faculty in revising their syllabus is exciting and essential. Involving faculty in scholarly voyages of inquiry into teaching and learning where transformation is possible is incredibly exciting, for them as well as us, and raises the likelihood of involvement in broader institutional change (Schroeder, 2001). The SoTL scholars from each of the four years of the program at UWM continue to give their time, expertise, and support to ongoing programs, again and again, without compensation. A web of discoverers and voyagers is spun around teaching and learning, creating a community of inquirers who have transformed.

### **Gathering Evidence of a Transformative Process**

When we examine the experiences of faculty engaged in the work of the scholarship of teaching and learning, we find faculty achieve some of the same important ends of traditional faculty development workshops—improvement in teaching and student learning through the acquisition of knowledge about teaching and learning new teaching techniques and strategies. However, the process of engaging in SoTL work allows faculty to develop by way of a different route than that of workshops or skill-building and technique training resulting in a very different process and set of outcomes.

Convinced that the scholars had experienced transformational outcomes, I considered further how the program at UWM created a process that illustrated elements of transformative learning. I was prompted to examine the literature in order to compare the SoTL Center Scholar Program as a transformative learning process to the theoretical underpinnings of transformative learning.

Was there an initial disorienting dilemma or catalyst, for example? Bass (1999) explains that the SoTL provides an opportunity for faculty to see in their teaching a set of problems worth pursuing as an ongoing intellectual focus. (p. 3)

There is then a tight connection between the shift to seeing teaching as an activity over time and a belief in the visibility and viability of teaching *problems* that can be investigated as scholarship, and not merely for the purpose of “fixing them.” (p. 2)

According to Bass (1999) changing the status of the problem in teaching is a transformational change and a fundamental shift. We can begin to see how the challenge of seeing into teaching and reframing questions for SoTL inquiry entails having new eyes cast on our familiar classrooms contexts. The once familiar classroom landscape now looks different when we make the fundamental shift to engage in the “problematization of learning” (Bass, 1999, p. 1). This early stage of inquiry, forming a question and peering into learning, may serve as the catalyst for transformation or disorienting dilemma in which our teaching practices or student learning aren’t working as planned. Our assumptions push closer to the surface. Transformation can begin, and the real voyage of discovery calls.

As shown in Table 4.1, I compared the components of the SoTL program at UWM with the transformative learning literature. From this careful analysis, I concluded that the Center Scholar Program created a unique process that clearly involves a number of elements central to the process of transformative learning.

For example, the proposal process and intensive discussions of the research questions provide the initial articulation of the scholars’ assumptions about learning and teaching. The self-designed nature of a research project creates a clear opportunity for self-direction. The articles, discussions, consultations, and elements of surprise through data collection produce an ongoing challenge of assumptions and lively, critical discourse. Pohland and Bova (2000) and Cranton (1992, 1994) point out the importance of follow-up support activities to support the transformative leader. The scholars’ ongoing involvement with CIPD illustrates the element of extended support. We remained an interconnected community; former scholars stop by for coffee, update us on their involvement in their departments, and recruit new scholars. The expressed intensity of connection and longing for interaction as scholars completed their projects reinforces Mezirow’s (1990) claim that transformative learning is not an individual process, but, rather, involves processing more than information in order to explore alternative perspectives and the importance of critical discourse among colleagues.

TABLE 4.1  
**A Comparison of the Elements of the UWM SoTL Program  
 With Transformational Learning**

<b>SoTL Program Process</b>	<b>Transformational Learning Process</b>
Classroom teaching concerns/event	Disorienting dilemma; catalyst event
Write/submit SoTL proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refinement of proposal with CIPD Staff</li> <li>• Problematize learning</li> </ul>	Articulate assumptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Critical reflection/challenge assumptions</li> </ul>
SoTL scholar extended summer meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refinement of questions</li> <li>• SoTL articles</li> <li>• Discussion of proposals</li> <li>• Discussion of articles</li> <li>• IRB process discussed</li> <li>• Previous scholars as guests</li> </ul>	Articulate assumptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical discourse</li> <li>• Critical reflection</li> <li>• Challenge assumptions</li> <li>• Revise assumptions</li> </ul>
Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary journals</li> <li>• General education literature</li> </ul>	Critical reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge assumptions</li> <li>• Revise assumptions</li> </ul>
Individual project design	Self-direction, independence, autonomy
Data collection	Self-direction, independence, autonomy
Analysis of data collected	Self-direction, independence, autonomy, reflection; revise assumptions
Findings	Self-direction, independence, autonomy, reflection; revise assumptions
Written project summaries	Critical reflection
Application of findings to teaching	Taking action, implementing new practices
Dissemination of project	Ongoing support/networking
Ongoing involvement with CIPD faculty development programs	Ongoing support/networking
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Transformative Learning</b>
Seeing new landscapes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Scholarship</li> <li>• Self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perspectives</li> <li>• Feelings</li> <li>• Behavior</li> <li>• Soul-making</li> </ul>

The additional research elements, particularly research of the SoTL kind, illustrate another of the many ways transformative learning can be implemented. Standards of scholarship and principles of transformative learning are both satisfied and evident through the UWM SoTL program. The literature suggests there are many dimensions, not one process, (Grabove, 1997), and no single mode (Cranton, 1997) of transformative learning.

## CONCLUSION

The voyages made by the SoTL scholars share common experiences in traveling the depths of transformation. Both the SoTL Center Scholar Program process and the outcomes provide evidence consistent with the transformative change literature. The unique components of rigorous scholarly research through SoTL are seamlessly woven into and support transformative learning. Their voyages to new landscapes far surpass the mere changing of scenery. Excerpts from the writings of the travelers can help demystify the transformational agenda along individual dimensions and enable us to see how the choice to transform lies waiting along our familiar and daily paths of teaching.

We do not have to search hard to find evidence of deep change in the reflections of the eight SoTL scholars on their yearlong investment in a SoTL faculty development program. In fact, most of the comments about change carry a life-changing force of passion and transformation that we may only hope to encounter occasionally in our work and leisure lives. While standing on the familiar ground of their everyday practice of teaching, they felt the surprise and wonder that signaled they were indeed *looking in* on learning and teaching with new eyes, and the familiar landscapes they have known truly became unfamiliar, wonderfully unfamiliar. Aycock (2003) fittingly reminded his readers how T. S. Eliot (1964) described poetry as the "... making of the familiar strange, and the strange familiar" (p. 259). Their evidence of transformation through SoTL is not easily dismissed as mere touchy-feely experiences, though they readily admit being deeply influenced both cognitively and affectively. Their evidence challenges and confronts us as faculty developers to make possible programs that offer deep change, and may indeed play a critical role in fostering the type of broader change and structural adjustments necessary to transform higher education (Schroeder, 2001). Is their transformation not unlike the deeper understanding and life-changing transformation we strive for and intend for our students? We may embrace transformational agendas in our faculty development programs armed with the evidence of voyages of discovery through SoTL, and the zest of Dr. Seuss's lyrical reminder, "Oh, the places you'll go!" (Geisel, 1990, p. 11).

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