BRIDGING BOUNDARIES: ADVANCING LEARNING THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP IN AN EVOLVING ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE

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REFLECTION

The scholarship of teaching and learning focuses on improving student outcomes by leveraging research on education, instructional design, and pedagogy (Boyer, 1990). Scholars use analytical frameworks to inform innovative classroom policies and practices that enhance the learning experience and promote student success.

The Boyer Model of Scholarship not only promotes a student-centered learning approach but also inspires faculty members to engage in research activities that inform best practices in teaching and learning. This model recognizes teaching as a significant form of scholarship that influences student development. However, challenges arise when the scholarship of teaching and learning is not explicitly integrated into institutional research plans and frameworks (Simmons et al., 2021). Teaching-focused faculty often face barriers such as limited funding and a lack of collegial support for their scholarly endeavors, hindering the recognition of SoTL as legitimate research (Simmons et al., 2021).

In navigating these challenges and embracing the opportunities presented by Boyer's model, the JSE remains committed to fostering scholarly engagement, promoting interdisciplinary dialogue, and advancing knowledge that transcends disciplinary boundaries. By acknowledging the diverse forms of scholarship and supporting scholars in their pursuit of excellence, the JSE contributes to the ongoing transformation of academia and the enhancement of teaching and learning practices.

In reflection upon recent trends in academia and the integration of Boyer's model of scholarship, it becomes evident that the scholarly landscape is continually evolving to meet the dynamic needs of educators and learners alike. Boyer's model provides a comprehensive framework that guides scholars in their pursuit of knowledge across four distinct domains of scholarship. As we explore the current issue of the JSE, we witness the embodiment of these principles in a diverse array of articles that explore the intersections of teaching, learning, and disciplinary knowledge. These articles not only build upon the foundational concepts introduced in our reflection but also offer fresh insights and perspectives that propel scholarly discourse forward. It is evident that the articles featured in this issue of the JSE exemplify the principles of Boyer's model of scholarship. Across diverse topics and methodologies, each article contributes to the advancement of knowledge and practice in its respective domain, aligning with the four domains of scholarship outlined by Boyer.

CURRENT ISSUE

The articles featured in this current issue of the JSE present a confluence of insights that not only enhance understanding of educational practices but also push the boundaries of how teaching, learning, and grading are conceptualized within the educational system. As we navigate through newly discovered territory in the post-COVID era, where education, social interactions, and work dynamics have undergone significant transformations, the need for adaptability and change in educational approaches becomes apparent. For many, transitioning to online learning environments has prompted educators to reconsider their strategies and encouraged effectiveness to further student engagement.

The collective reflection across these manuscripts underscores the importance of adapting educational strategies to meet the evolving needs of students. This adaptation is particularly evident

in discussions surrounding grading practices. For instance, one manuscript explores the integration of technology and pedagogical knowledge to enhance teaching effectiveness, highlighting the imperative for educators to remain adaptable and responsive to changing educational landscapes. The rapid shifts experienced post-COVID have emphasized the necessity for adaptability as educational environments transformed almost overnight.

The articles featured in this current issue of the JSE represent more than just scholarly contributions; they serve as catalysts for innovation and adaptation in education. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant shifts in educational paradigms, the need for agile and responsive approaches to teaching and learning has never been more pressing. As we navigate through uncharted territory in the post-pandemic era, the insights gleaned from these articles offer invaluable guidance for educators, administrators, and policymakers alike. By examining diverse topics such as remote work transitions, strengths-based teaching, and the impact of cultural orientation on sports fandom, these articles shed light on the multifaceted nature of educational practice and the myriad ways in which scholars are rising to meet the challenges of our time. In essence, this issue of the JSE not only reflects the current state of scholarly engagement but also charts a course for the future of education, guided by principles of adaptability, innovation, and inclusivity.

The June 2024 issue of the JSE showcases a dynamic mix of scholarly contributions, featuring two empirical studies and four reflective practice articles. These articles offer diverse insights into teaching and learning, the application of disciplinary knowledge, and the interconnected concepts that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Through empirical research and reflective inquiry, scholars explore the intricacies of educational practices, shedding light on innovative approaches and critical reflections that shape the evolving landscape of scholarship and engagement in education.

Yoder documents an educator's transformative journey teaching in a private Christian school and undertaking research on the spiritual formation of Generation Z students. Drawing on Dewey's reflection concept and extensive literature review on spiritual development, the author explores why students in Christian schools perceive teachers as pivotal in their spiritual growth. This reflection probes the complexities of spiritual development amidst the digital upbringing of Generation Z, alongside teachers' struggles with fostering spiritual formation. Guided by Dewey's principle of continuity, the author seeks to deepen understanding of students' perspectives and enhance skills in supporting their spiritual growth. The narrative underscores teachers' multifaceted roles as mentors, confidants, and spiritual guides, transcending academic instruction. Emphasizing authenticity and faith modeling, the findings stress the importance of relationship-building and adapting teaching approaches to students' diverse faith stages.

Hahn reflects on the experience of transitioning over 100 student workers to remote work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent global pandemic represent significant experiences, prompting a need for reflection and adaptation. Through the efforts of over 100 student workers, the department maintained service levels and outcomes similar to pre-pandemic times while working remotely. This reflective practice explores four key strategies for the success of the student worker team in remote work: organizational culture, departmental culture, adapting an existing technology model, and training. Ultimately, all four strategies likely contributed to the team's success. However, it is acknowledged that these factors may offer an incomplete understanding of the team's achievements during the 18-month period of remote operations.

Anderson and Maguire offer reflections on their recent research collaboration investigating the link between strengths-based teaching and students' self-efficacy in higher education. Their study reveals that educators who adopt a strengths-based teaching approach, emphasizing students' capabilities, opportunities, and growth mindset, can enhance students' self-efficacy. Through regular engagement in reflective practice, the authors scrutinize their research findings, seeking ways to effectively integrate these practices into teaching methodologies. By accentuating students' strengths and fostering a supportive learning environment, educators aim to cultivate a foundation for lifelong learning and bolstered self-efficacy among students.

Westerson and Zafonte confront the unexpected challenges encountered in a professional writing program's culminating digital portfolio project. Initially envisioning the portfolio as a tool for students to showcase their writing prowess to potential employers, the instructors were disheartened to find that students' submissions fell short of anticipated professionalism in both content selection and design. This discrepancy raised concerns about students' perception of the project's significance in the job market. Reflecting on this disparity and drawing insights from theories such as self-focus in emerging adulthood and the need for additional guidance on large-scale projects, the instructors implemented portfolio check-ins to provide personalized feedback and perspective akin to that of potential employers. Looking ahead, the instructors plan to conduct surveys among program graduates to gain deeper insights into the post-graduation utilization of portfolios, thereby informing future enhancements to the portfolio project's effectiveness.

Ervin, Paltzer, and Taylor explore the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic, social, and spiritual dimensions of adults in the United States. Assessing the effects of social isolation and unmet physical or financial needs resulting from the pandemic on spiritual grace, the research conducted a survey from June through August of 2020 with a sample size of 94 respondents. Surprisingly, the study found that while the pandemic did not significantly affect spiritual grace overall, Christians demonstrated an increased likelihood of experiencing positive spiritual grace. These findings prompt further investigation into the potential resilience offered by spiritual coping strategies during challenging times, underscoring the importance of spirituality in navigating adversity and promoting well-being amidst crises.

Park addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the role of cultural orientation in how sport fans attribute their team's performance, specifically focusing on the diverse population of the United States. Conducted at a liberal arts university in California, the research utilizes correlations and hierarchical regression analyses to examine the attribution process among sport fans. The results reveal intriguing findings, particularly regarding the interaction of collectivism and fan identification, which negatively impacts internal attributions across wins. Additionally, the study highlights disparities among Asian Americans, who exhibit lower levels of internal attributions across wins. The findings offer valuable insights into the complexities of cultural orientation and its implications for sports fandom, providing a foundation for future research in this area.

The articles featured in this issue of the JSE underscore the importance of scholarly engagement and adaptive practices in education. By reflecting on Boyer's model of scholarship and exploring recent trends in academia, scholars continue to push the boundaries of teaching, learning, and scholarly inquiry. As we navigate through ongoing changes in education, it is imperative to embrace adaptability and innovation to meet the diverse needs of students and promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices. The insights shared in this issue serve as a catalyst for future research and practice, guiding educators, administrators, and policymakers in their efforts to enhance scholarly engagement and promote student success.

References

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