

# Boyer's Expanded Definitions of Scholarship, the Standards for Assessing Scholarship, and the Elusiveness of the Scholarship of Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

Debate about faculty roles and rewards in higher education during the past decade has been fueled by the work of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, principally *Scholarship Reconsidered* and *Scholarship Assessed*. The author summarizes those publications and reviews the more recent work of Lee Shulman on the scholarship of teaching.

In 1990, Ernest Boyer proposed that higher education move beyond the tired old "teaching versus research" debate and that the familiar and honorable term "scholarship" be given a broader meaning. Specifically, scholarship should have four separate yet overlapping meanings: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching. This expanded definition was well received, but from the beginning, assessment of quality was a stumbling block. Clearly, Boyer's concepts would be useful

only if scholars could be assured that excellence in scholarly work would be maintained. Scholars at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching addressed this issue by surveying journal editors, scholarly press directors, and granting agencies to learn their definitions of excellence in scholarship. From the findings of these surveys, six standards of excellence in scholarship were derived: Scholars whose work is published or rewarded must have clear goals, be adequately prepared, use appropriate methods, achieve outstanding results, communicate effectively, and then reflectively critique their work.

The scholarship of teaching remains elusive, however. The work of Lee Shulman and others has helped clarify the issues. The definition of this form of scholarship continues to be debated at colleges and universities across the nation.

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Almost immediately after its publication in 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered*<sup>1</sup> became a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching "best seller." Ernest Boyer, working closely with Eugene Rice, clearly had struck a nerve in higher education. They, of course, had proposed that higher education move beyond the tired old "teaching versus research" debate and that the definition of scholarship be expanded to include not only research (the scholarship of discovery) but also the

scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching. The meanings of these four forms of scholarship are separate yet overlapping. Here at last was a vocabulary for discussion of the intellectual life of academe. Boyer and Rice had provided the foundation for a debate that was waiting to be held.

## A TIMELY PROPOSAL

Boyer and Rice had access to data gathered in early 1989 from more than 5,000 faculty members at all types of higher learning institutions. These data were the result of a survey by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which, in that survey and four previous ones, had been collecting information about faculty attitudes and values for more than 25 years. Included in the latest survey were questions that had been asked before about teaching and re-

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search, tenure and its criteria, the status of the profession, and faculty satisfaction.<sup>2,p.xix</sup> Not only did Boyer and Rice have data regarding faculty values in 1989 but, because of the earlier studies, they also could observe changes over time. In his forward to the 1989 report, Boyer concluded:

What we need, then, in higher education is a reward system that reflects the diversity of our institutions and the breadth of scholarship, as well. The challenge is to strike a balance among teaching, research, and service, a position supported by two-thirds of today's faculty who conclude that, "at my institution, we need better ways, besides publication, to evaluate scholarly performance of faculty."<sup>2,p.xxi</sup>

The data had pointed the way. Over 70% of the faculty said that their interests lay in teaching, and a significant percentage also concluded that "teaching effectiveness should be the primary criterion for promotion." Further, faculty overwhelmingly said they enjoyed interacting informally with undergraduates outside the classroom, and most rejected the notion that students should seek faculty help during posted office hours only. Clearly, the majority of faculty considered teaching to be a central mission and enjoyed the time they spent with students.

But most faculty at the four-year institutions also reported that the reward system was heavily weighted toward published research, not effective teaching, and more than one third of faculty supported the proposition that at their institutions, publications were "just counted, not qualitatively measured." Even at research universities, a surprising 42% agreed with this conclusion.<sup>2,p.xx</sup>

The concepts presented in *Scholarship Reconsidered* seemed timely to Boyer and Rice. They were right.

Boyer's lifetime commitment to service<sup>3</sup> as a part of education was a natural basis for the scholarship of application. His position was reinforced by another great leader in higher education. Derek Bok, in his *Universities and the Future of America*,<sup>4</sup> had warned against the dangers of detachment. President Bok wrote that

armed with the security of tenure and time to study the world with care, professors would appear to have a unique opportunity to act as society's scouts to signal impending problems long before they are visible to others. Yet rarely have members of the academy succeeded in discovering emerging issues and bringing them vividly to the attention of the public. What Rachel Carson did for risks to the environment, Ralph Nader for consumer protection, Michael Harrington for problems of poverty, Betty Friedan for women's rights, they did as independent critics, not as members of the faculty.

Indeed, the scholarship of application emerged not only from the data but also from the values of those two giants of higher education.

At the same time, the scholarship of teaching was most clearly derived from faculty attitudes and values. Although Boyer's commitment was clear, the scholarship of teaching was to become the most difficult of Boyer's proposals to interpret and implement.

Boyer saw the scholarship of integration as an extension of current practice. Jaroslav Pelican had earlier advocated interdisciplinary work as the best preparation for graduate study because "so much work is being done at the boundaries of fields."<sup>5</sup> Boyer extended this concept to include interpretation and placing ideas in a larger context.

But both Boyer and Rice knew that it was not the derivation of these concepts that was important. Their significance lay in the fact that they were the right proposals at the right time. Even though *Scholarship Reconsidered* lacked specificity, its concepts—the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, the scholarship of teaching—were immediately recognized as important new proposals in a field that was ripe for revision.

The debates began immediately, and a rich variety of institutions found the expansion of the definition of scholarship an attractive innovation. Several colleges and universities have already adapted or amended Boyer's proposal. The process of adoption has proved to be arduous. The exact meanings of words and phrases must be agreed upon. But the major difficulties arise in two areas. They are (1) the meaning of "the scholarship of teaching" and (2) the question of *how the quality of scholarship shall be measured*. I explore these two topics in depth in the remainder of this article.

## MEASURING QUALITY

Looking carefully at the issue of "measuring the quality of scholarship" or "how shall excellence be sustained,"<sup>6,p.10</sup> in 1994 the scholars at Carnegie contacted

- 51 granting agencies and asked, "How do you decide which proposals to fund?";
- 58 scholarly press directors and asked, "What criteria do you use when selecting manuscripts for publication?"; and
- 31 scholarly journal editors and asked, "What do you tell referees to look for?"<sup>6,p.24</sup>

The responses were analyzed, and the remarkable feature was the degree to which the responses shared elements. From the analysis, six shared themes were derived. These themes, called "standards" in *Scholarship Assessed*, stated that for a work of scholarship to be praised, it must be characterized by clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, outstanding results, effective communication, and a reflective critique.<sup>6,p.25</sup> See List 1 for brief explanations of these standards.

## List 1

Summary of Standards<sup>6, 7, 8, 9</sup>*Clear Goals*

Does the scholar state the basic purpose of his or her work clearly? Does the scholar define objectives that are realistic and achievable? Does the scholar identify important questions in the field?

*Adequate Preparation*

Does the scholar show an understanding of existing scholarship in the field? Does the scholar bring the necessary skills to his or her work? Does the scholar bring together the resources necessary to move the project forward?

*Appropriate Methods*

Does the scholar use methods appropriate to the goals? Does the scholar apply effectively the methods selected? Does the scholar modify procedures in response to changing circumstances?

*Significant Results*

Does the scholar achieve the goals? Does the scholar's work add consequentially to the field? Does the scholar's work open additional areas for further exploration?

*Effective Presentation*

Does the scholar use a suitable style and effective organization to present his or her work? Does the scholar use appropriate forums for communicating the work to its intended audiences? Does the scholar present his or her message with clarity and integrity?

*Reflective Critique*

Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work? Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique? Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?

\*These six standards can be applied to all four forms of scholarship proposed by Boyer: the scholarship of discovery, of integration, of application, and of teaching. The standards were derived from the analysis of information collected in 1994 by Carnegie scholars from granting agencies, scholarly press directors, and scholarly journal editors.

These six standards can be applied to all four forms of scholarship proposed by Boyer. The standards have been well received. Again, Carnegie has provided the vocabulary for a debate, a much-needed one. In some instances the standards were adopted as published, while in other places debate led to modification. In any case, the addition of *Scholarship Assessed to Scholarship Reconsidered* gave colleges and universities the tools to reconsider the definition of scholarship as well as criteria for promotion and tenure. The Faculty Roles and Rewards Conference of the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) held in February 2000 became a focal point for discussion and clarification of issues. That conference, entitled "*Scholarship Reconsidered Reconsidered*," was attended by more than 1,400 representatives of colleges and universities. The conference proceedings were filled with papers and symposia designed to assist institutions trying to make the transition to an expanded definition of scholarship. One notable example was the announcement of the East-West Clearinghouse and National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement.<sup>7</sup> As its name states, this clearinghouse provides (among other services) a national pool of peer reviewers who can give credible, standardized assessment for the scholarship of engagement (i.e., application).

Although much remains to be done, adoption and evaluation of the scholarship of discovery, integration, and engagement are proceeding well at many colleges and universities. The scholarship of teaching is a different matter, however.

## THE ELUSIVE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

From the beginning, precise wording to describe the scholarship of teaching was elusive as faculty members tried to differentiate good teaching from the scholarship of teaching. Fortunately, Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation, decided to help out. Shulman is an internationally recognized expert on teaching. To separate the scholarship of teaching from scholarly teaching, Shulman states that to be scholarship, the work must meet these criteria:

- The work must be made public.
- The work must be available for peer review and critique according to accepted standards.
- The work must be able to be reproduced and built on by other scholars.<sup>8</sup>

Nothing less will do—but still a precise definition of the scholarship of teaching was elusive. So, working with Barbara Cambridge at the AAHE, Carnegie instituted the AAHE's Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program,<sup>9</sup> which promotes campus conversations designed to help institutions draft definitions of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Quickly, more than 130 colleges and universities joined the conversations. Good progress is being made, but it is too early to state a broadly acceptable definition of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Most definitions published to date simply build upon Shulman's three criteria mentioned earlier.

#### A HARD BUT WORTHWHILE TASK

All in all, this is an excellent time to engage in conversations about giving scholarship a more efficacious meaning. Hundreds of institutions are themselves involved in the process. The AAHE's Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program is available, and conferences are being held at all levels—research universities, the National Association of State Universities and Land-grant Colleges (NASULGC), the Associated New American Colleges, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, and many others. All are finding that this task is not easy, but the result will be worth the effort. Expanding the definition of scholarship not only allows rewards to traditional research scholars but en-

franchises many fine faculty whose work is in the areas of application or engagement. It also gives room and encouragement for those scholars who truly wish to understand, expand, and enrich teaching in their disciplines.

Scholars have been empowered by these timely concepts, and the role of scholarship at colleges and universities is evolving nationwide, indeed, worldwide.

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