The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Enhancing Learning Through Inquiry

CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

May 2, 3, & 4, 2006
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
# 10th Annual Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning

## 27th National McGraw-Hill Ryerson Teaching, Learning, and Technology Conference

### The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning:
Enhancing Learning through Inquiry

**Thursday, May 4, 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Registration &amp; Continental Breakfast – Main Foyer, McCain Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>Opening Plenary</td>
<td>Scotiabank Auditorium</td>
<td>Ken Bain, Montclair State University</td>
<td>What Do the Best Teachers Do? Understanding excellence in teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Refreshment Break – Main Foyer, McCain Building</td>
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<td>10:15</td>
<td>4-1a Impact of Gender on Evaluation &amp; Performance</td>
<td>Room 2016</td>
<td>Cox, Dalhousie &amp; Fisher, Saint Mary's</td>
<td>4-2a Evaluation Methods in Engineering</td>
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<td>10:15</td>
<td>4-2a Evaluation Methods in Engineering</td>
<td>Room 2017</td>
<td>Barkanova, Acadia</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>4-3b Designing Inquiry into Student Learning</td>
<td>Room 2021</td>
<td>Park &amp; McLellan, McMaster</td>
<td>4-4b An Introductory Survey Course for Teachers in HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>4-3b Convergent Inquiry Writing and Listening Practices</td>
<td>Room 2022</td>
<td>Shilton, UPEI</td>
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<td>Room Change</td>
<td>Room 2021</td>
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<td>10:45</td>
<td>4-1b Socio-Dramatic Pedagogy</td>
<td>Room 2016</td>
<td>Dean, SUNY, New Paltz</td>
<td>4-2b Computer Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>4-2b Designing Inquiry into Student Learning</td>
<td>Room 2017</td>
<td>Park &amp; McLellan, McMaster</td>
<td>3D Virtual Science Lab</td>
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<td>5-1a Teaching Legal Research &amp; Writing</td>
<td>Room 2016</td>
<td>Elkadem &amp; Blaikie, Dalhousie</td>
<td>5-3a Engaging Students to Apply Abstract Knowledge</td>
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<td>5-3a Engaging Students to Apply Abstract Knowledge</td>
<td>Room 2022</td>
<td>Rosenzweig &amp; Segovis, Bryant U</td>
<td>5-5a Providing Senior Undergrads with Teaching Experience</td>
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<td>Schellinck &amp; Girling, Dalhousie</td>
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<td>5-1b Rhetorical Inquiry and Enabling Pedagogy</td>
<td>Room 2016</td>
<td>Kerr, Durham College</td>
<td>5-4b Implementing a TA Training Program</td>
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<td>Room 2021</td>
<td>Bennett, Dalhousie</td>
<td>3D Virtual Science Lab</td>
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<td>5-3b Rhetorical Inquiry and Enabling Pedagogy</td>
<td>Room 2022</td>
<td>Gilin, Vulcano, &amp; Fisher, Saint Mary's</td>
<td>5-5b Assessing Learning from More than One Perspective</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>5-4b Implementing a TA Training Program</td>
<td>Room 2022</td>
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<td>Carnegie, U of Ottawa</td>
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<td>5-5b Reflective Learning through Online Journaling</td>
<td>Room 2022</td>
<td>Wideman, U of ON Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Refreshment Break – Main Foyer, McCain Building</td>
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<td>3:15</td>
<td>Closing Plenary</td>
<td>Scotiabank Auditorium</td>
<td>Randy Bass, Georgetown University</td>
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<td>Is Relearning Learning? And other questions we need the scholarship of teaching and learning to help us answer</td>
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<td>4:30</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
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What Do the Best Teachers Do: Understanding excellence in teaching
Ken Bain, Teaching and Learning Resource Center
Montclair State University

What do the best teachers do to captivate and motivate students, to help them reach unusually high levels of accomplishment? Are there any central qualities that allow the most effective teachers to stimulate deep learning among their students? There are no easy answers to these questions, no simple lists of what to do. Great teaching requires extensive thought and self-analysis. Based on his book, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, and the fifteen-year study of outstanding teachers that supported that work, Ken Bain will challenge you to think deeply about how best to understand human learning and create those conditions in which it is most likely to flourish (a natural critical learning environment). How you think about fundamental issues of human learning can have an enormous influence on your success as an educator. He will also challenge you to think about new ways to examine and assess your efforts to create that learning environment.

Ken Bain (Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin, 1976) recently accepted a position as Vice Provost for Instruction, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and Professor of History at Montclair State University, and will begin his new position on May 1, 2006. Prior to moving to NYU, he was founding director of the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence and a professor of history at Northwestern University.

4-1a  The Impact of Gender on Evaluation and Performance
Anthony Cox, Computer Science, Dalhousie University and
Maryanne Fisher, Department of Psychology, Saint Mary's University

We have recently explored the under-representation of women in computer science programming contests at both the high school and university level. This research has unearthed many seemingly innocuous behaviours leading to biases that are potentially found in typical university classrooms. For example, when faced with the possibility of restrictive time limits or negative scoring on tests, women's performances decrease relative to their performance without these regulations. Similarly, although women are able to compete, and may enjoy competitive environments, performance is often increased when students are encouraged to form a cooperative unit, with competition being distributed among the units. Furthermore, the importance of feedback on incremental progress is often extremely beneficial, especially to women. The objective of this session is to provide an overview of our research and the current literature, with the goal of enabling educators to create more gender-neutral forms of evaluation. Since evaluation is often linked to student performance, we will also discuss ways of improving student performance and participation in higher evaluation.

4-2a  Teaching and Learning Evaluation Methods in Physics
Svetlana Barkanova, Physics
Acadia University

Undergraduate students are not trained observers, and faculty should be very careful in interpreting the standard course evaluations for the purposes of their classroom research. The paper proposes custom-made opinion polls and statistical analysis of multiple-choice exams in large classes as an alternative. For small classes, we suggest informally interviewing each student individually. Several other forms of inquiry into student learning are discussed. We will also discuss the ethical considerations emerging from testing new teaching and evaluation approaches on our students, and student attitudes towards such experiments.
4-4a Interprofessional Education for Health Professions Students: The "Seamless Care" model
Karen Mann, Medical Education,
Judith McFetridge-Durdle, School of Nursing,
Helen A. Ryding, Applied Oral Sciences,
Maria Sarria, Medical Education, and
Anne Godden-Webster, Faculty of Health Professions
Dalhousie University

Given the evolving complexity of the health care system, students in the Health Professions need to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work effectively in inter-professional teams. "Seamless Care" is one of eleven national grants awarded by Health Canada to inform policymakers of the effectiveness of Interprofessional Education to promote collaborative patient-centred practice among health professionals. The "Seamless Care" model of Interprofessional Education was designed with input from three Faculties at Dalhousie University (Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Professions) and is rooted in the tradition of active learning, problem-based learning, and role modeling.

In the "Seamless Care" model, teams of students from five disciplines work together to assist patients with a chronic illness to play a central role in managing that illness through development of self-management and decision-making skills. The primary goal of the model is the development of student's interprofessional collaborative skills. This paper describes the "Seamless Care" model with the goal of stimulating discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to Interprofessional Education.

4-5a University-Community Partnerships in Service Learning: An innovative pedagogy in higher education
Ann Bigelow & Heather Carson, Service Learning Program
St Francis Xavier University

This presentation will introduce Service Learning as a teaching and learning methodology that expands the classroom into the community. Participating faculty and administrators will learn the basic concepts of service learning and the roles played by faculty, administration, service learning staff, students, and community organizations. They will also be given examples of the types of projects involved. The benefits of service learning to the institution, faculty, community, and students will be discussed as well as some of the challenges service learning presents. Participants will also be introduced to the Canadian Association for Community-Service Learning, the new national organization formed to offer support to universities embarking on service learning program development.
4-1b  **Enhancing Student Learning through Socio-Dramatic Pedagogy**  
Ann V. Dean, Educational Studies, State University of New York (SUNY), New Paltz

Faculty members and classroom teachers are invited to discuss how improved learning can occur through the use of spontaneous, arts-based, socio-dramatic pedagogy.

Concerned that my course “Literacy for Diverse Learners” was over-intellectualized and that my students were becoming passive recipients of theory, I borrowed from J.L. Moreno’s (1988) concept of socio-drama to create a teaching model based on dramatic, participatory, active learning. My new pedagogy involves students personally and deeply with the socio-linguistic theories that underpin the course. Students interact with evocative themes chosen from academic research articles, literature, films, documentaries and autobiography. The experience enhances their capacity to understand relevant course ideas (such the relationship between social class differences and literacy achievement), and allows students to empathise with the lives of low literacy learners.

**Socio-dramatic pedagogy:**

- Provides a different kind of learning (directness of an encounter in the moment arouses imagination-spontaneity-insight)
- Enables students to engage in experimental behaviors within a safe context
- Helps students to make connections between theory and their lives
- Heightens students’ awareness of socio-political processes
- Allows students to experience varied discourses
- Improves class discussions
- Informs and enriches written responses by students
- Provides useful ways to assess learning

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4-2b  **Lessons from Designing Inquiry into Student Learning**  
Sean Park & Andrea McLellan, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University

Geared for course instructors, Inquiry facilitators, librarians, and education administrators, this roundtable discussion will open with a brief overview of the four-year Inquiry model used in the Bachelor of Health Sciences (BHSc) program at McMaster University. The BHSc. approach to Inquiry will be explored in four domains:

1. an overview of skills fostered through Inquiry and the methodology employed;
2. the components and characteristics of an Inquiry curriculum integrated among courses over four years;
3. the challenge of teaching in an Inquiry environment and the impact of Inquiry on facilitators and instructors; and
4. the methods that can be employed to measure student outcomes.

The goal of the subsequent discussion will be to explore the issues that arise through these domains in context of the participants’ experiences with Inquiry.
4-3b Convergent Inquiry: Writing and transformative listening practices
Wendy Shilton, English Department
University of Prince Edward Island

This presentation proposes to explore what the presenter calls "convergent inquiry," or listening as a transformative practice for interdependent learning. Convergent inquiry is premised on a collective understanding of problem-sharing and problem-solving. The presentation will first discuss listening as a context-bound rhetorical process based on goal-setting and decision-making. It will then suggest ways to strengthen the teaching of convergent inquiry through Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) strategies that encourage inquiry, analysis, reflection, critique, sharing, connection, and imagining to facilitate student involvement and engagement with a community of others.

4-4b Transforming Teaching, Learning, and Self: An introductory survey course for teachers in higher education
Adam Caron, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching in Higher Education

Since 2003, the Institute for the Advancement of Teaching in Higher Education (iathe.org), in collaboration with colleagues from across Canada, has been developing an online, self-reflective survey course on teaching in higher education. This 12-week course entitled "Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education: Transforming Teaching, Learning, and Self" will be showcased for session participants. The course has been developed to meet the needs of a wide diversity of learners, particularly those new to teaching, including full- and part-time college and university faculty, sessional instructors, and graduate students. The course development team is made up of college and university faculty members and educational developers. Each module within the course has been designed by one or more experts in the topic area from across Canada, including many faculty who are award-winners for their teaching. Using streaming video, relevant text materials, and asynchronous discussion, the course provides a foundation for ongoing reflection and professional development in a flexible manner. Our goal for this session is to provide interested members of the higher education community with information about the course and to obtain feedback on this approach to professional development.

4-6b Three-Dimensional Virtual Science Laboratory Game for Inquiry-based Science Education as a Portal to the ScienceSchoolHouse Library
Robert Alan Paul, Philosophy
Dalhousie University

Instructors in introductory science and science education and educational publishers can benefit from research and development of the 3D Virtual Laboratory and ScienceSchoolHouse Online Library. These are new ways of teaching science that engage students with a Lab that plays like a computer game, but is for performing experiments instead of shooting aliens. We will demonstrate and provide the opportunity to play with the Lab and view the Online Library. We will start with a demonstration and guide participants in using the materials.
Great Hall, University Club

Caesar Salad
Steamed Vegetables
Dinner Rolls & Garlic Bread
Lasagna
Meatless Lasagna

Assorted Sweets

Coffee/Tea
Assorted Juices
The Legal Research & Writing course (LRW) at Dalhousie Law School uses what is commonly known as the “formative marking” method. While pedagogically sound, especially in a professional-school environment where skills, as well as intellectual dexterity, are being taught, this system has faced often crippling obstacles.

First and foremost is the nature of the subject matter itself. Legal Research and Writing has been the black sheep of the law school curriculum for years. The course aims to teach practical writing skills along with legal analysis and problem solving. Since its emphasis is more on the tools of effective professional communication, than on the subject matter of a particular core area, students have tended to significantly devalue the course. This trait of LRW, far from being a hindrance, should be embraced as the course’s true defining characteristic. LRW teachers want students to appreciate the technicalities of professional written communication, at the same time as they are fine-tuning critical and analytical skills. Yet, without the objective of teaching a foundation of doctrinal principles, students often feel the course merely addresses the superfluous of legal expression. The problem we focus on is the fact that students resist learning the technical aspects of legal research, citation and legal writing. Because of this resistance, they are often unable to move on to gain a full appreciation for and ability to engage in effective legal writing.

In our presentation we hope to describe the problem and possible causes and to suggest possible solutions. Our target audience is anyone who teaches similar courses or who teaches courses with a component that requires mastering technical details and information as a prerequisite to further learning. Our session approach is a formal report. As an outcome, we hope to increase awareness of this impediment to learning in this or similar contexts and to provide possible solutions.
5-3a  Engaging Students to Apply Abstract Knowledge
Sina Adl, Biology
Dalhousie University

Many students sometimes have difficulty making the connections between (abstract) ideas discussed in class, and the everyday world they are familiar with. My experience is with the biology of invisible species (microscopic), and their ecology (the important roles they have in the environment). The aim is to facilitate making the connections between the world WE experience, and the one occupied and affected by the micro-organisms. I have adopted a multi-pronged approach to do this: 1) by increasing the number of class-related interactions among students, to discuss topics covered in class face to face, on their own time; 2) by providing a focused group project for them to tackle, so as to apply the newly gained knowledge, for marks; 3) by providing a real or hypothetical local problem, that students can identify with; 4) by allowing them to roam for websites and library material; and 5) by allowing open book exams so that students spend less time memorizing what is easily accessible, and more time understanding and applying their new knowledge. These have the added benefit of encouraging students to be focused in class, because the lectures contain clues and information useful for their report. It also increases the social interactions among students, often lacking in large classes.

5-4a  A Report from the Front: A decade-plus inquiry into cooperative learning
Martin Rosenzweig, Mathematics and James Segovis, Management
Bryant University

There have been periodic statements of dissatisfaction with the teaching of mathematics, as well as science and engineering, in the United States for some time now. "America's undergraduates—all of them—must attain a higher level of competence in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology.1." Much of the failure of students to perform satisfactorily has been assigned to the methods of instruction. As a consequence, research on alternative teaching strategies, such as active learning, cooperative learning, etc., has become of increasing interest. For the beginner the sheer volume of material available is daunting. In this matter the "teaching centers" or "centers of academic excellence" are useful sources of information and assistance.

What will be discussed in this session is the approach used for a first-year mathematics course; however, the methodology is in large measure portable to other areas, although discipline-specific alterations may be needed.

REFERENCES

5-5a  A Winning Formula for Providing Senior Undergraduates with Teaching Experience
Heather Schellinck & Adrienne Girling, Psychology
Dalhousie University

The purpose of this presentation is to describe a method to provide undergraduates in a large first-year psychology class with lab experience and to give senior undergraduate students the opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively with a group of first year undergraduates. The senior students meet weekly with their instructor to plan the lab classes. They subsequently meet biweekly to teach the material to the first year students. These senior students also complete assignments that help them consolidate and update their knowledge of psychology and neuroscience. Both groups of students appear to benefit from this student-to-student approach to learning. At the conclusion of this presentation, the participants should have sufficient information to enable them to mount a similar course in a number of introductory university and college disciplines.

5-1b  Personal vs. Impersonal Student Evaluation Techniques
Richard Kerr, School of Justice
Durham College

This workshop should appeal to anyone who evaluates students' work. It is designed to foster the use of competency-based evaluation criteria for students' written and oral work. The successful personal evaluation techniques start on the first day of class with the initiation of the process of rapport building, respect, and trust. This process is compared with an impersonal approach to determine the relative merits of each. Following a presentation of various examples of competency-based evaluation tools and a personal method of applying them, the participants will work co-operatively to apply these principles to examples from their own subjects for sharing and discussion with the group as a whole.
5-3b  Paving the Way to Success: Rhetorical inquiry and enabling pedagogy
Lyn Bennett, English
Dalhousie University

The study of rhetoric has long been recognized as crucial to academic and professional success. In the twenty-first century, business communications research offers a stream of articles and books on "the gentle art of persuasion" (Reischl 24), researchers of science writing identify "the necessity of rhetorical discourse during a shift in knowledge" (Reeves 322), and scholars in the arts and social sciences universally recognize the crucial role of language in the construction of knowledge. Rhetoric is alive and well, and it is a practice that—whether we realize it or not—we also teach. Intended for a general audience, this presentation will consider some of the ways the study of rhetoric can enable teachers in all disciplines. All academic work is highly contextualized and, given rhetoric's subtle understanding of the roles of subject, speaker, and audience, it promotes a disciplinary consciousness that goes beyond language use. Because rhetorical inquiry heightens our awareness of the ways academic communities construct, promote, and validate scholarship, it also helps us to become more fully cognizant of how we achieve academic success. The explicit understanding of disciplinary conventions enabled by the study of rhetoric thus allows us to share with our students what might otherwise remain internalized. To illustrate how rhetorical inquiry applies to teaching practice, I will draw examples from "Literary Landmarks," the English Department's "gateway" class. This example will show how a rhetorical approach to teaching can help our students become successful participants in our research communities.

Works Cited


5-4b  Implementing a Teaching Assistant Training Programme for Promoting Student Learning
Debra Gilin, Brent Vulcano, & Maryanne Fisher, Psychology
Saint Mary's University

The Department of Psychology at St. Mary's University has recently engaged in an exploration of the role of teaching assistants. The majority of our assistants are undergraduate students who are required to evaluate their peers' work. Often the assistants have limited, if any, prior experience, and faculty members must devote substantial time on an individual level to outline various aspects of the role. Consequently, assistants receive various levels of information, which impacts student learning in various ways. Thus, as part of this review process, we were faced with the need for a systematic, but short, training program. We have since developed a program that may become implemented throughout the university. In this session, we will review the components of the training program and the impact that this training has made on the teaching assistants. As well, we hope to receive input from participants on how we might improve this training, and discuss potential benefits in terms of both student's and assistant's learning. Finally, we will discuss how an academic culture can be created that views the development of teaching assistants as an important mentoring process fostering academic excellence overall.
5-5b  Is Learning Happening? The need to assess from more than one perspective
Jackie Carnegie, Cellular & Molecular Medicine
University of Ottawa

The goal of effective instruction is successful learning. While learning is traditionally evaluated using summative examinations, evaluation at this stage is too late to permit interventions addressing learning gaps. However, formative learning evaluation provides opportunities for instructors and students to recognize learning deficits and to address them in time to benefit student outcomes. This is particularly important for large classes where instructors do not know individual students and minimal opportunity exists for one-on-one learning guidance.

While instructors need to be aware of their effectiveness, it is equally important for students assess their learning progress. This workshop will discuss various venues for student-based and instructor-based assessment of learning, recognizing the value of each while simultaneously noting associated challenges. Student-based approaches include web-based self-testing with feedback, and in-class activities such as personal response pads and PowerPoint-supported, interactive self-quizzing activities. Feedback will be solicited from participants regarding strategies to promote and monitor in-class involvement. These approaches also provide data to instructors on instructional success. Indeed, personal response pads provide instantaneous, whole-class feedback, allowing instructors to immediately address learning difficulties. Other approaches, including the combined multiple choice/short answer question, provide data that guides instructors to modify teaching so as to address common student misconceptions.

5-6b  Reflective Learning through Online Journaling
Maureen Wideman, Innovation Centre
University of Ontario Institute of Technology

In this session, the presenter will discuss her experiences with online learning journals, which were a requirement of her third-year e-learning course. Using the ICE method of evaluation, student learning was tracked through the Ideas, Connections, and Extensions stages to determine if students were able to take their learning outside the classroom. Students were required to journal every week on the WebCT course site. The journals enabled the professor to determine the strengths and weaknesses of her teaching as well as determine the depth of knowledge students were acquiring. This session would interest those who are interested in reflective teaching practices and how to use technology to accomplish this goal.

2:45 – 3:15  Refreshment Break
Is Relearning Learning? And other questions we need the scholarship of teaching and learning to help us answer
Randy Bass, Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship
Georgetown University

One of the strengths of the scholarship of teaching and learning is how it enables faculty to look at dimensions of student learning that are not always captured by traditional instructional and assessment practices. Our ability to improve educational experiences depends in large part on making visible these all-too-often invisible processes of learning. Not only are many of these processes invisible, but they run counter to the biases about teaching, learning, and expertise that underwrite higher education. The scholarship of teaching and learning provides a range of practices for helping us understand and act on types of learning that might otherwise remain invisible or incomprehensible.

Randy Bass has been working to integrate new technologies, pedagogy, and educational change since 1986, and is a nationally recognized leader in the field. He is the editor and author of numerous publications and has directed or collaborated on numerous education and technology projects, including the Visible Knowledge Project and the American Studies Crossroads Project. He served as the Electronic Resources Editor of the Heath Anthology of American Literature, and won the 1999 EDUCAUSE medal for outstanding achievement in technology and undergraduate education. Before founding CNDLS at Georgetown, he served as the chair and founder of the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable. Dr. Bass is an Associate Professor of English, a member of the American Studies committee, and a Senior Scholar with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

4:30 – 5:30
Wrap-up