Philosophy of Teaching

Most faculty my age did not receive education on pedagogy during their graduate education in their discipline. I was somewhat of an anomaly in that regard. Because of an occupational draft deferment based on being a teaching assistant in graduate school, unlike most of my fellow graduate students, I spent five years devoted entirely to being a teaching assistant, having full responsibility for recitation sections in introductory psychology, and eventually having full responsibility for teaching my own courses. Most of the recitations I conducted for introductory psychology were centered on the theme of innovative educational approaches. Several of these recitations used A.S. Neill's ***Summerhill*** (which emphasized choice as an important basis for student motivation) as a text; in subsequent recitations I used Postman and Weingarten's ***Teaching as a Subversive Activity*** (an approach that emphasized inquiry as a basis for learning). These texts were pivotal in having me consider alternative learning strategies to the traditions in the academy. These teaching experiences also convinced me that I wanted a career in academia that balanced teaching and research.

Kolb's learning theory posits a cycle that includes four interactive dimensions (i.e., abstract conceptualization, active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation). Although I cannot claim that my philosophy of education was informed by Kolb's learning theory from the start, I suspect that, whenever it was that I encountered it initially, it was easy for me to (a) understand it and its implications, (b) interpret and understand much of my prior teaching experiences in terms of its principles, and (c) implicitly or explicitly to have it shape my approach to subsequent teaching.

My colleague in the Psychology Department, John Kremer, and I shared an early interest in studying instruction, experimenting with strategies to help students succeed, developing innovative educational programs, and assessing the results of those interventions. We did this work as junior faculty at the same time that we were developing our programs of research and being promoted on those research accomplishments. We designed and implemented an M.S. degree program in Applied Social Psychology, which was focused on program evaluation. We developed SPUR, a summer research program that brought psychology majors from across the state to IUPUI each of four summers to work one-on-one with IUPUI psychology faculty. We developed interventions on study strategies for improving student success, including peer mentoring. We worked with high school psychology teachers, developed resources for them and wrote chapters for a high psychology textbook. We embarked on a major revision of the introductory psychology course that focused increased attention of learning aids, the use of class time for engaged and active learning (instructors were told "no lecturing"), clarified the learning objectives, incorporated peer mentoring, and increased retention. When offered the opportunity to try service learning in the early 1980s (long before the term was widely know or used), we jumped at the opportunity to incorporate it in Dr. Kremer's Psychology of Aging course and evaluate the outcomes. In different ways, for each of these projects, we were reflective practitioners as we invoked each of Kolb's elements in his learning theory. Writing grants to support this work involved innovative thinking, a curiosity to experiment, and developing concrete plans for implementing the programs and assessing their outcomes. In many cases, we disseminated the results of these experiences.

These various projects were also useful because we faced the challenges of working with different types of students. For SPUR, they were elite psychology majors which complemented interventions for struggling IUPUI students in introductory psychology. Helping high school

psychology teachers presented a different context, a different curriculum, and a different approach to helping them with pedagogy. The M.S. program in Applied Social Psychology used a mix of didactic courses, practica, and research. Each of these examples created a challenge of thinking through different pedagogical strategies that matched the learning objectives and the means of assessing them.

Each of these projects also influenced my approach to classroom teaching. My role as a designer of learning opportunities for my students (versus being only a lecturer) became clearer and significantly influenced my classroom teaching strategies across my career. I would experiment with my instruction, and found or developed ways to provide students with engaging activities (e.g., field trips, service learning, administering psychological scales for constructs in the course). As a founding faculty member of University College, I had additional opportunities to shape different pedagogical challenges (e.g., increasing retention, teaching a first-year seminar).

However, service learning as a pedagogy had the biggest influence on my classroom teaching. The pedagogy in so many ways reflected (a) Kolb's learning theory, which was a basis for much of my teaching until then, and (b) my growing interest in civic issues. The pedagogy of service learning is the best example we have in higher education of engaging students in all phases of Kolb's model. They face novel circumstances that call on innovative solutions to concrete challenges and that provide quick feedback on results; furthermore, service activities are intentionally related to course content (abstract conceptualization). In addition, service learning stresses the role of the student as an active learner. Service learning also expands the set of learning outcomes to include not only academic outcomes but also civic learning outcomes and personal growth of students.

Although I do service learning regularly in Introductory Psychology, the nature of service learning has influenced my teaching behavior in all of my courses. In my most recent teaching, much more class time is devoted to activities that draw on the student's experiences, that provide opportunities for active learning projects, and that have students collaborate with one another.

In addition, not only have the basics of Kolb's model been explicit and implicit in my classroom teaching, my mentoring of undergraduates, and the development of educational programs, but it has also been the basis for how Dr. Hatcher and I approached the challenge of faculty development associated with service learning. The faculty are now our students and we have used Kolb's model for designing activities to support faculty as they develop service learning courses.

Abstract Conceptualization. Faculty are predisposed to favor abstract thinking. Therefore, many faculty development activities at IUPUI have been directed at increasing the understanding that faculty have of pedagogies and practices associated with service learning and civic engagement. Each year, CSL offers workshops and seminars to assist faculty in developing an understanding of service learning and civic engagement.

Active Experimentation. CSL has sponsored Engaged Department Institutes in which teams of faculty and staff discuss and plan for civic engagement at the unit level. Internal grants have supported either (a) a department to develop new curricula that supports civic engagement through service learning, or (b) interdisciplinary teams to develop civic engagement activities around a community issue (e.g., environment, obesity, community development). These proposals require teams of faculty to work on implementing, expanding, and sustaining service learning within departments and schools.

Concrete Experiences. Many faculty lack knowledge and direct experience with service learning and many fail to appreciate how community service can enrich the learning of their students. Providing faculty with community service experiences can produce increased understanding of the potential for service learning. CSL sponsors numerous campus-wide community services activities for faculty, students, and staff (e.g., United Way Day of Caring, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-On of Service) that provide opportunities for faculty to become more familiar with community agencies, community issues, and the educational benefits of community service. An annual "Showcase of Civic Engagement" provides an opportunity for faculty to share their successes with each other and deans, chairs, and administrators.

Reflective Observation. Practitioners who systematically reflect on their activities are better positioned to improve their work over time. CSL looks for opportunities to include civically engaged faculty in workshop presentations and presentations at professional conferences as a means for having them reflect on their civic engagement activities and share their experience with others. CSL also contributes to faculty conducting research and scholarship on service learning through CSL's Signature Center activities.

Two publications on faculty development at IUPUI have explicitly used Kolb's theory as the basis for presenting an analysis of the design of the experiences. The first is a description of a Faculty Fellows program that I helped Indiana Campus Compact design in 1995 (and has been running since then) and was published in the *American Behavioral Scientist*. The second is a journal article on faculty development published in *Metropolitan Universities.*

Professional Development as a Teacher: Reflection

Self-analysis and critical reflection that promote professional development during a career occur in many forms. One that distinguishes my teaching career is systematically planning, implementing, and evaluating educational programs, courses, and curriculum reform. I have done that consistently across my career, from activities and projects as an Assistant Professor to my current activities associated with service learning and civic engagement. To design, implement, or change an educational program requires one to examine theories of learning, pedagogy, and variables that are known to be educationally effective. To evaluate and conduct research on educational programs requires one to specify a connection between (a) a theory of learning, (b) educational objectives, and (c) appropriate outcome measures. This approach provides an intense, systematic, integrative, and comprehensive reflective exercise. Developing innovative educational programs has involved not only developing designs for instruction, but also effectively managing the logistics of funding, implementing the program, developing research and evaluation procedures, developing measures of impact, data collection, and writing reports, and publications associated with teaching. This approach affirms my role as the designer and assessor of learning opportunities and represents an enormous investment when compared to nonempirical, armchair approaches to teaching. It also represents an integration of my teaching endeavors with my research skills (e.g., measurement, program evaluation) and administrative service as Executive Director of CSL. The range of empirical research on teaching programs illustrates some of the results of this process. In addition, I have developed resources for other faculty and published a wide range of scholarly articles on topics related to developing good practice in teaching service learning. Through my own classroom and all of my work at IUPUI on service learning, I am promoting a pedagogical agenda that encourages using educationally-meaningful service to produce civic-minded graduates of IUPUI. I have also been privileged to do this across the nation on other campuses and in international settings.