Taking College Teaching Seriously: Pedagogy Matters!: Fostering Student Success Through Faculty-Centered Practice Improvement

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Book Review

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The Global Skills for College Completion (GSCC) initiative, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is one of many efforts targeting the advancement of community college students, faculty, and institutions across the United States. Faculty selected to participate in the initiative taught developmental courses, documenting and analyzing pedagogical practices using Web 2.0 tools in order to facilitate communication and collaboration around teaching and learning. Regular and consistent forms of peer feedback, coaching, and reflection required participants to learn with, and from, one another. Primarily intended for college instructors, *Taking College Teaching Seriously* promises to broaden the impact of their faculty practice improvement model by encouraging the application of these processes by instructors of all types of courses in all institutional contexts of higher education. The value of this book for faculty lies in its accessibility and in its applicability: any faculty member, or group of faculty members of the same institution or across institutions, can easily replicate one or more of the processes described and explained in this book and so heighten their potential for acquiring some of the lessons learned.

Although there are many useful components in this engaging book, it should be recognized that in the larger context of scholarship on teaching and learning the book contributes to that body of work focused on the significance of reflection as a faculty practice. While faculty assessment is a built-in feature of college courses through peer visits and course evaluations, and a standard requirement in faculty review processes over the course of a career, faculty reflection on teaching and learning is often underemphasized and much less institutionalized. Furthermore, when faculty reflection on teaching and learning does occur, it often is an

isolated practice intended to address a particular issue or recurring problem experienced in a specific course. However, the movement toward institutionalizing faculty reflection practices appears to be growing steadily and assuming a variety of forms. One form highlighted in this book is the formation of an online community of practice (24-26). Put simply, a community of practice typically serves a small group of faculty with a shared interest who agree to organize themselves around work on a common issue or goal. In some cases, the formation of a community of practice may be connected to teaching and learning initiatives at a particular institution. However, as technological practices continue to become more embedded in college curricula and teaching, the design and implementation of online communities of practice may prove more practical and more beneficial to faculty development and support. Furthermore, communities of practice may transcend disciplinary boundaries; while the faculty participating in this initiative had primary expertise in mathematics and English, such practice readily extends to those in other disciplines as well.

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