

Book review of *Making Teaching Community Property A Menu for Peer Collaboration and Peer Review* by Pat Hutchings, Director of American Association of Higher Education's Teaching Initiative. An AAHE publication, 1996. There is no ISBN.

Slanger's objective summary: The main point I want to pass along is the last sentence (bolding mine) of the following paragraph from the Preface by Russell Edgerton, President of American Association of Higher Education:

Moreover, if teaching were to be seen as scholarly, intellectual work, it would not be enough to evaluate teaching simply by looking at student ratings. Teaching, like research, should be peer reviewed. **Indeed, *until* teaching is peer reviewed, it will never be truly valued.**

This publication is the first from an AAHE sponsored project on peer review of teaching that ran from 1994 through 1998. Hewlett Foundation and Pew Trusts supported the project. The second publication is a 1995 Project Workbook (in a 150-page binder) that has examples and other material to help all universities/colleges develop their own programs of peer review of teaching. These two and the other four publications of this project are listed in [About the AAHE Teaching Initiative](#) on page three of this review. This 1996 publication said the final report and dissemination of the results of this peer review of teaching project would be at the 1998 AAHE annual Conference on Faculty Roles and Rewards. *Making Teaching Community Property* has a preface, an introduction, nine chapters of two to four faculty reports each, a conclusion, a description of the AAHE teaching initiative, and a description of AAHE's peer review of teaching project. The first phase of the peer review of teaching project called "From Idea to Prototype: The Peer Review of Teaching" involved three departments from each of 12 universities. The faculty reports of chapters 1 – 9 are summaries, written by the faculty involved, of the projects and associated experiences. The project protocols ranged from involvement of a few faculty members to intercampus collaboration and external review of teaching.

Preface - Summary: Some discussion of teaching as the transfer of knowledge. See quoted paragraph above. The administrators involved in planning the project wanted to improve the quality of evidence of teaching, but consensus was reached that 1) it was too early to tie the project's activity to formal evaluation of teaching and 2) what was needed was the encouragement of faculty members to explore among themselves ways to collaborate that would genuinely improve learning.

Introduction – Summary: Teaching as scholarship. Teaching needs to become publicly discussed as research is publicly discussed. Faculty really are not in charge of the evaluation of teaching to the extent they should be-it is now more something done *to* instructors than *by* instructors. Campus cultures need to change. Substantial numbers of faculty members want to do things that would change the culture and are looking for outlets for these inclinations. I liked the following paragraph:

Second, many of the Faculty Reports (particularly those coming out of the AAHE project) are department- or program-based. This is not to suggest that crossdisciplinary collaborations are not highly powerful (you'll

find examples of these, too), but it *is* to suggest that content – the ‘stuff’ of teaching – is a powerful context for collaboration. It’s significant in this regard that Jean MacGregor, in her account of interdisciplinary learning communities in Chapter 6, says ‘What we have found is that it is around content that faculty may feel most excited about collaborating. The best conversations begin not around a teaching method (‘let’s try using student groups’) but around the ideas that people care about...around the invention of the experience they want to give students in terms of content and ideas.’ This emphasis on content rather than method, on substance rather than only the technique of teaching, follows from the vision of teaching as scholarly work.

Titles of Chapters 1 through 9, which cover pages 1 – 100, are as follows:

1. Teaching circles: starting the Conversation
2. Reciprocal visits and observations: opening the classroom door
3. Mentoring: teachers teaching other teachers
4. A focus on student learning
5. Portfolios: putting the pieces together
6. Team teaching and teaching teams
7. Collaborative inquiry and pedagogical scholarship
8. Departmental occasions for collaboration
9. Intercampus collaboration and external review of teaching

Conclusion – Summary: After promoting teaching as scholarship, Pat Hutchings, discusses four lessons suggested by the faculty reports about the role of faculty in the formal evaluation of teaching.

1. “We need to reexamine the relationship between formative and summative evaluation. In teaching, as in research, faculty may benefit from blurring the distinction.” In other words, strategies for improvement were often serendipitous in that they turned out to be evaluative of instructors as well.
2. “We can choose methods for evaluation of teaching that also promote and lead to improvement.” I’ll quote what I think are two important paragraphs below:

The puchline here is that though the methods traditionally used to evaluate teaching have not, perhaps, done much to improve it, that situation need not be perennial...as Lee Shulman (1995) has argued to participants in AAHE’s peer review of teaching project: ‘There’s a principle that is increasingly employed in discussions of evaluation and assessment today—a principle that we call *‘consequential validity.’* The point of the principle is that in choosing some form of assessment-of students, of faculty, of whomever-it is not enough to demonstrate that the method is accurate, that it’s predictive, that it’s fair-though all of those are important criteria. You also must make the argument that the use of a given method of assessment or evaluation contributes to the improvement of that which is being evaluated; that the evaluation approach advances the quality of the very enterprise being evaluated. The principle of consequential validity may help us bridge the formative/summative distinction.

In short, Shulman says, ‘we wish to ensure that whatever we do [to evaluate teaching] contributes to an improvement in the quality of the teaching’ ...and as many of the faculty reporting here would want to add: in the quality of student learning, as well.

3. “Reflective practice and improvement should be part of what we mean by (and evaluate and reward in) good teaching.” The faculty reports are evidence of the power of intrinsic motivation.
4. “Faculty whose teaching is being evaluated should see themselves not as objects but as active, central actors in the process, generating, assembling, and putting forward for review their work as scholar-teachers.” If faculty members do not evaluate learning outcomes, states, federal government, etc. will. The Conclusion ends with the mission statement of the AAHE peer review of teaching project, which includes the following three assumptions: 1) the goal should be to teach for understanding, 2) teaching is a scholarly activity, and 3) faculty need to be more active agents in documenting their teaching and the learning of their students.

About the AAHE Teaching Initiative – Summary: “The teaching initiative 1) develops tools and processes that can prompt greater attention to teaching and learning, 2) promotes a view of teaching as significant scholarly works, and 3) establishes networks of faculty and other committed to better teaching and learning.”

The projects and lines of work are 1) the peer review of teaching, 2) the teaching portfolio: capturing the scholarship in teaching, 3) cases about college teaching and learning: tools for reflective practice, 4) turning graduate students into teachers, and 5) the forum on exemplary teaching.

The publications available (as of the publication of *Making Teaching Community Property*) are 1) *Making Teaching Community Property: A Menu for Peer Collaboration and Peer Review* (1996), 2) *From Idea to Prototype: The Peer Review of Teaching: A Project Workbook* (1995), 3) *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching* (1991), 4) *Campus Use of the Teaching Portfolio: 25 Profiles* (1993), 5) *Using Cases to Improve College Teaching: A Guide to More Reflective Practice* (1993), and 6) *Preparing Graduate Students to Teach: A Guide to Programs That Improve Undergraduate Education and Develop Tomorrow’s Faculty* (1992).

About AAHE’s Peer Review of Teaching Project – Summary: The rationale for all this AAHE effort is that 1) student evaluations of teaching are not enough, 2) collaboration among faculty members is essential for improving teaching, just as collaboration improves research activity, 3) “the regard of one’s peers is highly valued in academe,” and 4) “peer review puts faculty in charge of the quality of their work as teachers.” The 12 universities and eight departmental academic areas are given.

Slanger’s subjective review: Good reference for checking your own plans.

Note: Attached to the hard copy of this review is as copy from page 75 of *Making Teaching Community Property* that lists journals in which the scholarship of teaching is published.