



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

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The responses were excellent to Bill Kane's March FORUM, "Good Researchers Are Good Teachers: A Myth," and they show that the opportunity for dialogue brings out the best in our community of scholarship. Bill has obviously created discoveries and insights we might not have had without the stimulation of his essay. If you didn't get around to responding, it's not too late. We'll try to include additional responses in a future issue..

Faculty Responses

Yet again Bill Kane has impressed me not only with his excellent scholarship (Wissenschaft, in the sense in which it was discussed in his article) but also with his insightful handling of difficult ideas. I was particularly taken with his discovery of David Webster's explanation for other-wise knowledgeable persons continuing to believe in and spread the myth that there is a positive correlation between good teaching and research:

it is what they want to believe so they can continue to justify what they want to do.

Marvelous! It explains so many questions I have had about so many of my colleagues over the years. Thanks for a job worth doing and a job well done.

Jim Horton, Biology

It is my experience that educators who are excellent, persistent learners often stand out as fine teachers. This suggests that either research or scholarship (as Bill Kane has discussed them so provocatively) is a reflection of inquiry.

The distinction, thus, between research and scholarship may not be an especially useful one in this case. It is the intensity of personal learning that I would look for in a colleague to teach at my side.

Bruce McPherson, NCCAT

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Kane teases out some important issues and shows that confusing the relationship between teaching and research can contribute to the perpetuation of myths. He has identified at least two important conceptions of an effective teacher:

- (a) a generator of subject matter (by this he means a curriculum), and
- (b) one who has not only mastered needed competencies but learned when and how to apply them to students, especially undergraduate students.

I would add one more conception--a possessor of a desirable personality trait, namely, social interest. Herein lies the real difference between a teacher and a researcher. Whereas the teacher's ultimate goal is directed primarily toward student achievement, the researcher's goal is directed toward personal achievement. Where there have been instances of researchers using students in their studies, the students rarely benefit from the findings and they are often disenchanted by promises which lead only to the researcher's name in print.

Following Kane's lead of taking an argument to its logical end, as he did in tracing the course of the master teacher, how then should we address the course of the researcher? The Naturwissenschaft? If enhancing research does not enhance teaching, what then does it enhance?

I submit that the research effort enhances the ego of the professor. Thus, teaching is essentially sociocentered while research is ego-centered.

William Chovan, Psychology

Excellent! Dr. Kane did a great job focusing on an important issue for our university

*Clarence DelForge,
Elementary Education & Reading*

Jeff Neff, Geosciences and Anthropology, submitted two reviews of Profscam, a recent book sweeping academe and scandalizing the general populace. Here are a couple of excerpts from the reviews. Which view is more accurate, do you think?

"Notwithstanding abundant lip service to the contrary, teaching plays little role in decisions on promotion in our major universities, and so it naturally tends to be slighted by aspiring academics. Citing several cases where professors who received awards for distinguished teaching had been passed over for tenure, Mr Sykes insists that the contemporary 'academic culture is not merely indifferent to teaching, *it is actively hostile to it.*'"

"Profscam is criticized by some academic leaders as being anti-intellectual, simplistic, and poorly done. By focusing on the abuses by a few professors at some very large institutions, the book insults all hard-working, dedicated teachers across the country."