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Transforming *Scholarship Assessed* into Scholarship Accessed: Examining the Communication Implications of a Boyer Report

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ERNEST Boyer (1990) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching attempted to provide the catalyst for a paradigmatic shift regarding scholarship in the American academy with publication of the landmark *Scholarship Reconsidered*. *Scholarship Reconsidered* attempted to redefine scholarship beyond the narrow bounds of research publication to more comprehensively encompass four broad domains of faculty activity: the scholarship of discovery (which approximates the more traditional emphasis upon experimentation and research publications), the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of integration and the scholarship of application. Much as Kuhn (1962) explicates in regard to any paradigmatic shift, the movement toward this expanded perspective on scholarship has met with some resistance, some doubters, and some die-hard adherents to the traditional view. Indeed, some not only question the expansion of the meaning of scholarship, but also the value in making such a definitional transition and the practical application and assessment of such a more expanded and enlightened view.

Scholarship Reconsidered builds its own sound case for the expansion of the meaning of scholarship, but many others in education and communication studies have extended the case by touting the practical implications associated with the performance and assessment of all ilks of scholarship. Although their own research efforts focused exclusively on the scholarship of discovery as defined by publication rates, Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbury (1993) did clearly articulate many of the practical considerations that underscore the value of all scholarship. Hickson and his colleagues suggested that evaluation of scholarly productivity is often used to assess departmental performance. More importantly, they also suggested that the evaluation of scholarship often plays a critical career role for those who make up the professoriate in the way that they influence promotion, tenure, and other advancement and reward decisions. Hickson and his colleagues also suggested that the

evaluation of scholarly output and productivity—in their specific case, communication studies—is helpful in developing a “yardstick” for comparison with other disciplines. Shelton (1996) voiced the position that the Hickson, Stacks and Amsbury assessment of the disciplinary value of scholarship also held true for argumentation and other sub-disciplinary specialties. Shelton suggested that like some departments, some forensics programs and argumentation concentrations are compared to others; individuals who coach and teach in the areas are judged for promotion and tenure; and that a yardstick of comparison could be developed to contrast argumentation and forensics with other sub-specialties in the broader communication studies discipline.

The broader social implications of scholarship that are transferrable beyond the walls of the academy have become increasingly apparent in recent years. Alterman (1998) recently suggested that scholarship in certain public policy journals can make a real difference for American governance. He noted, “They can help shape not only public policy but also the political and intellectual discussions that shape that policy” (p. B6). Schneider (1998), reporting on a recent meeting of scholars to promote “a civil society”, cited representatives from the meeting who felt that both the scholarship of discovery and the scholarship of teaching can play a pivotal societal role by enhancing the way students think about, understand, and view the world around them. Colbert and Biggers (1992), whose often cited work on the values of debate helps to emphasize the scholarship of application in that regard, have also suggested that argumentation study and debate training also produce values that one may transfer beyond the confines of the ivory tower of academe. They note that such study and training can introduce students to social science skills and current events, enhance critical thinking skills, and provide professional development for future attorneys, politicians, business leaders, and others.

Despite the wealth of literature and practical experience that speaks to the importance of all types of scholarship, many have continued to question how such various interpretations of scholarship can be properly assessed and evaluated. The Carnegie Foundation initiated another project in honor of the late Ernest Boyer to help address such concerns. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) produced *Scholarship Assessed* as a means of helping to promote and facilitate the paradigmatic transition to a more expanded view of scholarship. This essay will offer a review of the text with a special thematic connection to discourse and “scholarly argument” of all sorts. Specifically, it will provide some general illumination regarding the text itself. Next, it will discuss the centrality of discourse and argument to the work. The essay will close with a discussion of implications, again with a special connection to the communication discipline.

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

Scholarship Assessed is, as noted, an Ernest Boyer project of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The work is clearly designed to extend the original argument made in *Scholarship Reconsidered*, which builds the case for extending the boundaries of what counts as scholarly activity for the nation’s faculty at colleges and universities. One month prior to his passing, Boyer wrote a brief prologue for the text, and he stressed both the importance of *Scholarship Assessed* and its dependence upon discursive argument. Boyer noted, “My own personal hope for this Carnegie report is that it will contribute to the current constructive debate about the role of the professoriate, and that from such discourse common language will begin to emerge within the academy about the meaning of scholarship and how it might be authentically assessed” (p. 3). An overview of the text illuminates how the authors of the report set about to meet Boyer’s goals.

This brief and very readable and engaging text, is divided into five chapters that follow Boyer's prologue. In addition, the text attempts to address the concerns raised by Boyer and to develop a general understanding of how all brands of scholarship may be evaluated and assessed in the academy. A brief review of its component parts further underscores the value of this text to all who wish to be actively engaged as members of the professoriate within any discipline or sub-discipline, germane to communication.

Chapter one, titled "Scholarship in Transition", provides a rich history and contextual framework for the text. Here the authors are principally attempting to draw connections between the larger social movement in the academy concerning scholarship and this individual text. The traditional role for the professoriate is explicated in a manner that is rich both historically and critically. The authors then summarize the case for a broader, more expansive definition of scholarship that first appeared in *Scholarship Reconsidered*. The authors also effectively tracked recent history by shedding some light on the "national conversation" that has been occurring on many campuses and in many disciplines in recent years. The question of assessment has arisen in that national conversation and the authors define their own mission for this text as one of helping to assure the evaluation of quality as it pertains to all aspects and domains of scholarship.

This essay will return later to chapter two of the text, "Standards of Scholarly Work", because it is both the core of *Scholarship Assessed* and the place where the centrality of discursive argument to the work is most apparent. Suffice it to say, however, that here the authors are consumed with the development of a set of criteria or standards common to all forms of scholarship that can be used to measure and ensure its quality. The six standards developed are summarized in Table 1. The authors suggest that all scholarship, from publication to application, must be based upon clear goals. The necessity for full and adequate preparation *prior* to the undertaking of any scholarship activity is also clearly explicated. The authors also make it clear that not only empirical tests, but all scholarship must employ appropriate methods. The uncovering of significant results, is obviously important to the scholarship of experimentation and discovery, but the authors build its case in regard to all scholarly domains and practices. Effective presentation may be a given for most all those in the communication studies discipline, but here again the authors make its case for all scholarship. In addition, the authors add to the list "reflective critique" which they see as adding heuristic fuel to scholarly flames.

The third chapter of the text "Documenting Scholarship", provides a position of great concern for many individual scholars and teachers. The authors note: "Such documentation requires rich and concise materials that the scholar and others assemble over time to make the case on the scholar's behalf" (p. 37). In other words, here the authors are directly connecting to those concerns regarding departmental and individual evaluation raised by Hickson and his colleagues (1993), Shelton (1996), and many others. The authors also go a step further here and report data that attempts to summarize some of the methods of evaluation and the documentation required to facilitate it at colleges and universities around the nation in specific regard to teaching, research, and applied scholarship. The authors also note that the central role of documentation is to "place scholarly work in perspective", by establishing a well developed context for both the individual scholar and her or his scholarly work.

Chapter four of the text, titled "Trusting the Process", goes a step further in connection to the six standards for assessment of scholarship by identifying and discussing the importance of allowing the *process* of scholarship to help guide both its outcome and evaluation. The authors define evaluation not only as a process, but also as a scholarly process that should adhere to the same six standards developed for all other scholarly processes outlined in Chapter three of the text and Table 1 here. The authors suggest that being able to trust in the use of those standards and the process of evaluation is critical for both individu-

als and institutions alike. Indeed, they conclude chapter four by noting: "Ultimately, trustworthiness must permeate every aspect of higher education so as to enhance the reputation of the institution and the accomplishments of its scholars" (p. 60). This essay will also return to this proof grounded in ethos and an appeal to credibility.

"Certain qualities associated with a scholar's character are recognized by virtually all higher education institutions as consequential not only for the individual professor but for the entire community of scholars" (p. 61), opens Chapter five of the text on "The Quality of a Scholar." After gleaned much from previous literature, the authors attempt to articulate those characteristics of a scholar that they see as cutting across discovery, teaching, integration, and application. Integrity, perseverance, and courage are outlined and discussed as such general standards or characteristics of scholars. Here the authors are basically stressing that "scholarship begins not with procedures but with ideals" (p. 66). This text, then, would certainly count as scholarship because it is replete with not only ideas but ideals as well.

Table 1
Scholarship Assessed six standards for scholarship.

1. Clear goals
 2. Adequate preparation
 3. Appropriate methods
 4. Significant results
 5. Effective presentation
 6. Reflective critique
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The four appendixes to the text provide rich data collections of various types. Both Appendix A and B report the results of national surveys conducted by the Carnegie Foundation regarding "The Reexamination of Faculty Roles and Rewards", drawn from two similar research efforts in 1994. Appendix C merely explicates some technical matters germane to the production of the text. The final appendix provided a nice summary of the Carnegie Foundation's classification scheme for institutions of higher learning. The richness of this text, especially for those engaged in the scholarship of communication and scholarly argument does not end with the addition of those various data bases and summaries.

THE CENTRALITY OF DISCOURSE

There is little doubt, at least at an implicit level, that there is a centrality of discourse and often discursive argument to scholarship. The authors of *Scholarship Assessed*, however, go a long way toward making that centrality more explicit for both their own text and for all scholarship more generally. Indeed, it is clear throughout the text that the authors are making an argument and building a case for the embrace of the six standards for assessing scholarship that they explicate. This alone should serve to draw the attention of many in communication to *Scholarship Assessed* but its appeal to those chiefly concerned with discourse extend even further. Indeed, the authors clearly explain that not only are they concerned with assuring rigorous assessment of all forms of scholarship, but that they are tackling that issue by helping to build and apply a common *vocabulary* to such assessment.

The development of that vocabulary is the central task of Chapter two, "Standards of Scholarly Work", and the place where the centrality of discourse is most keenly emphasized. Glassick and his colleagues note that the traditional perspective has produced a very

fragmented paradigm where scholarship is assessed only by standards unique to one or another specific domains. The authors expressly set out to “find a vocabulary to define the common dimensions of scholarship” (p. 24). That vocabulary and argumentative parallels are fully developed as each of the six evaluative standards are developed.

“Clear Goals” is the first of the six evaluative standards and it must start with a level of intrapersonal argument: “A scholar must be clear about the aims of his or her work” (p. 25). The authors go on to indicate that there are three questions necessary to ask in regard to goals. The first is “does the scholar state the basic purposes of his or her work clearly?” This question asks that scholars extend their discursive behavior in a public way and that they build the case for the public that they have already developed at a more intrapersonal level. The second of the questions asks “does the scholar define objectives that are realistic and achievable?” Defining is by nature discursive in the way that it establishes parameters for a discussion. The third of the guiding questions asks “does the scholar identify important questions in the field?” To “identify” again will necessarily require some discursive element and the raising of “questions” is a natural component of any communicative strategy. Glassick and colleagues also stress that establishing clear goals helps to promote other discursive behavior. They note: “Only by stating objectives clearly can the stage be set for more conversations for the appropriateness of goals” (p. 26).

The second standard, “Adequate Preparation”, suggests that it is important for a scholar to know her or his field as she or he undertakes any scholarly activity appropriate for the professoriate. Here, the authors make the centrality of discourse to any form of scholarship most explicit. “Scholarship is, in essence, a conversation in which one participates and contributes by knowing what is being discussed and what others have said on the subject” (p. 27). Glassick and his colleagues also note that scholars must ask who is interested in the findings of their scholarship. Such a question also draws in the audience in a way that suggests that scholarship should also be transactional in nature.

The selection of “Appropriate Methods” does not initially sound inherently discursive, but this standard cannot be rigorously pursued absent that fundamental ingredient. The selection of appropriate methods adds to ethos and helps construct an appeal grounded in credibility: “At the most basic level, appropriate methodology gives a project integrity and engenders confidence in its findings, products, or results” (p. 28). Just as Colbert and Biggers (1992) stress the enhancement of critical thinking skills as a consequence of participation in the study of argumentation, and the practice of debate, Glassick and his colleagues make it clear that the thoughtful and logical selection of methods is essential for the production of any scholarship. In addition, the authors note the importance of audience here again by stressing that the selection of appropriate methods helps to increase “the likelihood that colleagues will understand and accept the project” (p. 28).

“Significant Results”, the next of the evaluative standards for scholarship, is also very much dependent upon the audience. The authors note: “Any act of scholarship must also be judged by the significance of its results” (p. 29). Such judgments are rendered by audiences whether they be students who evaluate the scholarship of teaching, peer reviewers who evaluate the scholarship of discovery, or corporate and not-for-profit professionals who evaluate various forms of the scholarship of application. Indeed, the authors suggest that questions concerning the significance of results are necessary to “help colleagues chart the significance of a scholar’s work” (p. 29), and thus extend the role of the audience. The authors also develop their case here by indicating that the success of scholarship is often dependent upon the construction of new arguments to demonstrate that results are indeed significant.

“Effective Presentation” is again geared as a standard to connection-making with an audience, and it most directly stresses the centrality of discourse to scholarship. Here, it is worth quoting the authors at some length:

The contribution made by any form of scholarship relies on its presentation. Scholarship, however brilliant, lacks fulfillment without someone on the receiving end. The discovery should be made known to more than the discoverer; teaching is not teaching without students; integration makes scant contribution unless it is communicated so that people may benefit from it; and application becomes application by addressing others' needs (p. 31).

Beyond such a general embrace of the centrality of discourse, the authors also note that presentation is necessarily a "public" process and that all scholars must develop and learn various "communicative styles" to facilitate discussions among and across disciplines. Glassick and his colleagues close the discussion of effective presentation by noting that "In all scholarly work...evidence, analysis, interpretation, and argument should be handled carefully and honestly" (p. 33). "Evidence, analysis, and argument" should give all scholarship a common area of connection for communication scholars, as will be discussed in the closing section of this work.

The final of the six evaluative standards for scholarship is "Reflective Critique". As Colbert (1993) aptly noted, debate concerned with public policy matters and other communication practice shares a common background with Dewey's development of the reflective thinking process. This also suggests that if "reflective critique" is essential as an evaluative standard for scholarship, communication scholars should have keen skills in that regard and can, as I will explain, work to help others hone such skills. The role of audience is also important to the process of assuring appropriate reflective critique. The authors note: "As part of the evaluation, a scholar should solicit opinions and show the ability to respond positively to criticism" (p. 35). Here again, the transactional nature of the discursive process of scholarship is clear: a good scholar also permits her-or himself to be a good listener, a good audience.

Although the centrality of discourse is best displayed in a most explicit way as the six evaluative standards for scholarship are developed, such centrality guides all of *Scholarship Assessed*. For example, Glassick and his colleagues close the final chapter of the text by noting: "This report does not offer a formula. It does, however, provide a vocabulary for a thorough going debate about the elements of faculty evaluation" (p. 67). Those concerned with scholarly argument should be attracted to such centrality and should recognize that it is possible to develop important implications for the study of communication drawn from this brief but remarkably thought-provoking text.

IMPLICATIONS

Those who populate or inhabit the "communication studies community" can take much from *Scholarship Assessed*. It is a marvelous text for anyone who teaches, studies, researches, or in some other way engages in a scholar's life. It also has both "internal" and "external" sorts of implications for the discipline. The "internal" implications clearly relate to an embrace of *Scholarship Assessed* standards for the evaluation of all forms of scholarship which would most certainly include scholarly argument and applied areas such as communication administration. The 'external' implications regard those efforts that scholars trained in communication might undertake to both facilitate overall scholarship and to further promote the centrality of discourse to the scholarly community.

It is certainly easy enough to say that the communication studies community should embrace the six evaluative standards developed by Glassick and his colleagues in *Scholarship Assessed*. It is, however, more challenging and difficult to help define how such an

“embrace” might progress. Some efforts have already been undertaken in this regard. The National Communication Association and many subordinate organizations have sponsored and conducted investigations concerned with the advancement of the field and its members regarding individual matters such as tenure and promotion and disciplinary matters including research and discovery. As noted, Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbury’s (1993) work and many others in our discipline have offered “yardsticks” or measures of the traditional form of scholarship that appears in disciplinary journals. Despite these good efforts, there is even more the communication studies community could do.

It might be a useful first step for the National Communication Association and other subordinate groups to articulate organizational perspectives regarding *Scholarship Assessed* and what should count as scholarship. Such an organizational perspective would help provide some common ground and a framework for the expectations of individual communication studies scholars. Further, these organizations could do more to facilitate the recognition of various forms of scholarship and its assessment by members. Such efforts might include providing more organizational support for forensics program and course directors, under the broad rubric developed by the Carnegie Foundation. The provision of material germane to such an effort might help deserving directors demonstrate their engagement in “scholarship” to departments and institutions more accustomed to the older model of counting research publications. Additionally, the communication studies community could provide a valuable “outreach service” of sorts, as will be developed next.

The “external” implications of *Scholarship Assessed* for the communication studies community are tied very closely to the pursuit, development, and maintenance of an outreach service for other scholars. As the authors of *Scholarship Assessed* and our own research demonstrate, the community has much to offer others more generally interested in scholarship. The promotion of communication studies training in its various formats, classroom settings, and other manifestations could be developed as a “service” that helps facilitate the process of “reflective critique” for future scholars. Many institutions of higher learning have been assaulted with complaints regarding their failure to adequately prepare the future professoriate often leading to the establishment of PFF (Preparing Future Faculty) programs. The availability of an outreach effort concerned with “reflective critique” and the other scholarly values of communication might go a long way toward buttressing institutions from future assaults.

The development of outreach services and the further promotion of communication studies scholarship and its connections to such important societal issues as decision-making by those who govern and dictate public policy, would also serve the “internal” needs, of the community. A greater degree of visibility and institutional, support, and academic service might help secure funding for programs and research efforts, enhance class sizes and availability of communication coursework, and display to others that in many ways those in the community are also good scholars; scholars capable of surviving assessment and improving access to scholarship in all its “interspective” incarnations..

REFERENCES AND NOTES

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