

## **Building Teaching and Learning Communities: Creating Shared Meaning and Purpose.**

Edited by Craig Gibson & Sharon Mader. (2019) 114 pages, ISBN: 9780838946565. \$35

**Subject:** How to be a better teacher

**Useful for:** Useful for those interested in creating teaching and learning communities or connecting their current pedagogical practices to the broader scholarship of teaching and learning.

**Format:** Collection of chapters by various authors, each with notes and a bibliography.

### **Reviewer's Comments:**

Building Teaching and Learning Communities centers around how libraries and librarians, in particular through their work implementing the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, can contribute to teaching and learning communities within higher education.<sup>1</sup> The goal of the book seems to be to break down the silos between faculty, instructional designers, educational developers, and librarians; I'll leave you to decide whether it succeeds.

Drawing significantly from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), the authors of the chapters navigate a variety of ideas and concepts, loosely organized under the theme presented by the title and in the introduction. One chapter discusses how to create and strengthen teaching and learning communities, with some focus on the role of libraries; another discusses the threshold concepts behind SoTL and how educators need to first address those concepts before adopting SoTL. One intriguing chapter ponders using SoTL to transform the ACRL framework into the library's signature pedagogy, one that would revolve around information literacy and would get students "thinking like a librarian" (my favorite quote of the book, from page 43). Another explores how to move students out of research bottlenecks (places where students tend to get stuck in their learning), using the ACRL's *Decoding the Disciplines*. Shifting rather dramatically, the next chapter discusses how to create learning partnerships between faculty, students, and librarians, using the authors' own experiences creating such a partnership as an example; learning partnerships place all three groups, often uncomfortably, on an equal footing to examine, analyze, and

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching and learning communities bring together a group of cross-discipline faculty and staff to regularly discuss and learn how to improve teaching.

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improve pedagogical practices. The final chapter describes how an informal writing across the curriculum program also became an early faculty learning community and traces the full development of that community into a center for teaching and learning.

For those who teach information literacy or for those looking to examine their teaching practices through a different lens, I found the chapter on bottlenecks quite interesting and full of practical suggestions. The other chapters didn't have much practical teaching advice, but could be useful to those seeking to develop a teaching and learning community in their organization (or to figure out whether their organization already has one). Ultimately, it's a short book (and easy to skim), so if the idea of teaching and learning communities intrigues you, pick it up and give it a read!

**Reviewed by:** Taryn Marks, Stanford University, in 2020.