

## The Scholarship of Teaching: Why India should promote it for promotion & tenure

Thomas V. Chacko

Dean Medical Education, Believers Church Medical College, Thiruvalla, Kerala

Email: drthomasvchacko@gmail.com

The vast majority of Faculty within Medical Colleges in India are worried and agitated ever since the Medical Council of India in its regulations on minimum qualifications for teachers in Medical Institutions (MCI 1998, 2010)<sup>(1)</sup> required certain specified number of research publications as first/ second author. Whereas the MCI's intentions for this amendment were meant to enhance the research output from medical colleges, the lack of facilities in most medical colleges for fundamental research needed for generating new knowledge along with being overburdened by routine clinical work and lack of protected time needed for engaging in research, made it difficult for majority of medical teachers to become principal investigators to be counted as first/ second author and generate new knowledge needed for "original" research as required by MCI. Moreover, with the limited number of acceptable journal with scope and space for only certain limited number of original research articles, there led to mushrooming of "predatory journals" out to meet the new demand for faculty to publish or perish. As a result, quality suffers and the purpose for introducing this reward system in the form of requirement for faculty to do research and thereby increase the research output from India has been defeated.

This dilemma among the higher academic circles was recognised in the West more than 25 years back when Boyer (1990)<sup>(2)</sup> published findings of research carried out by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching through National Surveys of Faculty of Higher Education in the USA in 1969 and 1989 and found that the proportion of teachers admitting that they are finding it difficult to get tenure & promotion increased from 21% in 1969 to double that number i.e. 42% in 1989. Their concerns were legitimate in the sense that the primary mission of a university or college was teaching, with the professor devoting most of his/her time and energy in fulfilling that mission. Harden and Crosby's (2000)<sup>(3)</sup> 12 roles of a teacher listing 6 areas of activities of a teacher (the teacher as information provider, the teacher as role model, the teacher as facilitator, the teacher as assessor, the teacher as planner and the teacher as resource developer) also failed to identify research as the primary role / activity of the teacher. So, it is logical for faculty to ponder and question how research is rewarded more than teaching as the yardstick of measurement of the worth of the professorial work. Scholars who studied this phenomenon of research being rewarded and not the teaching, postulated that during the World War times,

universities and colleges got accolades for contributing to new knowledge and discoveries that gave humankind (and the war machinery) an edge over the enemy as well as ways for solving problems in daily living. Hence research output came to be more valued and excellence in teaching was considered as "routine" and "expected" work for which you got paid, and so for that required no rewards.

After the Carnegie Foundation study, Boyer (1990)<sup>(2)</sup> recommended that in higher education, we must move beyond the "teaching versus research debate" and enlarge the definition of scholarship itself to include besides the **scholarship of discovery** ("original"/ fundamental research) the **scholarship of integration** (making connections giving new meaning to isolated facts across disciplines, bringing new insight to bear on isolated original research), **scholarship of application** (applying new knowledge to solve real world issues or generate new knowledge for new applications) & **scholarship of teaching** (Scholarly product of teaching and using research to generate new knowledge to advance the profession of teaching) to capture all types of scholarly efforts of teaching faculty that they engage in as professors.

Diamond (2002)<sup>(4)</sup> reported that tenure and promotions dictated by "original research" was the predominant thinking in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but after Boyer expanded the definition of Scholarship of the Professoriate (and thus getting rewarded for their wider spectrum of scholarly efforts), he observed a major transition in higher education at the end of the twentieth century. From about merely a quarter of the professoriate engaging in scholarly activities in the 1980s, by the year 2000, the expanded definition of scholarship (and thereby the recognition and rewards to those engaging in scholarly activity) enlarged the proportion of faculty who could engage in scholarly work to double the 1980s figure. Thus this change in definition of scholarship not only led to reduction in the proportion of frustrated faculty, but also made them more productive by opening up the field of research which they could do that was more directly impacting their professional practice through applied research, research across disciplines and improving teaching through generation of evidence of its effectiveness and improving the quality of teaching leading to more efficient learning by students.

The above mentioned benefit reaped by academia in the West promises a lot for us in India. Imagine the current less than 5% of 40,000 teachers (400 Medical colleges with on an average 100 teachers each) engaging

in fundamental research i.e, Scholarship of Discovery (2000 teachers) enlarging to up to 60 to 80% of them (25-30,000 teachers) starting to engage in the other scholarships of integration, of application and of teaching. It will result in huge jump in research output and the added benefit of improved teaching and learning in the medical colleges and the universities through introduction of new modalities of teaching, innovative curricular approaches that address the local health care needs and generating the evidences about their effectiveness!

### **What is the difference between Scholarly teaching & Scholarship of Teaching?**

Shulman (1999),<sup>(5)</sup> the President of the Carnegie Foundation and an internationally recognized expert on teaching started the ball rolling when he proposed the following **criteria (three “P” s)** for the work of a teacher to be recognized as ‘**Scholarship of Teaching**’ for differentiation from just scholarly teaching:

1. **Publicly disseminated:** The work must be made public and archived to be retrievable,
2. **Peer Reviewed:** The work must be available for peer review and critique to accepted standards;
3. **Platform to build on:** The work must be able to be reproduced and built on by other scholars

Thus whereas Scholarly teaching is “expected” as part of the job of the teacher, and benefits the students whom the professoriate teaches, **Scholarship of Teaching is an enduring educational product of new knowledge or its presentation that was peer reviewed or publicly disseminated** and thereby contributes to the development of the field and impacts the whole fraternity and the discipline of teaching (and hence learning by students). Scholarly and creative work of the teacher leading to scholarly product therefore becomes an avenue for recognition and career advancement through publication in peer reviewed journals where the peer teachers value the contribution of the teacher as novel (new) and useful to the fraternity who can then replicate it in their own institution.

### **The Process of building Scholarship of Teaching:**

Fincher & Work (2006)<sup>(6)</sup> built a new perspective on Scholarship of Teaching where they stated it can evolve from teaching itself (gather data about one’s practice or gather data relating to one’s teaching and develop educational resources with the view to improve learning) to “Scholarly Teaching” to “Scholarship of Teaching” (where the product developed in a scholarly way gets subjected to peer and public scrutiny to get published) ; and this scholarship of teaching itself can take the path of either Scholarship of Discovery (gathering evidence and new knowledge generated in teaching-learning through research) or Scholarship of Integration (integrating existing isolated knowledge within different disciplines across disciplines e.g. use of Virtual reality in simulation for learning skills and generating data to show

that it works) to Scholarship of Application (applying new discovery to teaching-learning).

Surely, by encouraging their teachers to engage in scholarly teaching and in scholarship of teaching, institutions would be fulfilling their education mission optimally within the institution. They will be engaged in continuing quality improvement in the teaching-learning process and outcomes when the teachers use research methods to do program evaluation of ongoing educational programs, apply innovations across disciplines to teaching for optimising learning by students, and generating the evidence that the new teaching or curricular modality works. Through promoting scholarship of teaching and its publication in peer reviewed journals, the evidence based good teaching practices will be disseminated and adopted across institutions and thereby bring credit and recognition to the institutions supporting scholarship of teaching-learning.

### **How to measure quality of Scholarship of Teaching?**

This requirement for being a work of Scholarship of a teacher was further built up by Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997)<sup>(7)</sup> in their work for the Carnegie Foundation. Glassick (2000)<sup>(8)</sup> observed that although the concept of Boyer’s expanded definition of Scholarship was well accepted among the academia, concerns were felt about the quality of Scholarship of Teaching for it to be recognized and gain acceptance at par with other Scholarships. For this purpose, there was need for identifying Standards to measure quality of Scholarship. The answer to that again emerged from the work done by Carnegie Foundation when Glassick analysed the data of Granting Agencies to identify features that were in common among successful Grantees. From this emerged the document “Scholarship Assessed” and the **Glassick’s Six Standards for measuring Quality of Scholarship:**

1. **Clear Goals** and the Scholar identifying important questions in the field,
2. **Adequate Preparation** to understand the existing scholarship in the field,
3. **Appropriate methods** with the Scholar using methods appropriate to the goal and applying the methods effectively,
4. **Significant Results** that add new knowledge to the field or opens up additional areas for further exploration,
5. **Effective Presentation** of their work using suitable style, organization and in appropriate forum to the right audience with clarity and integrity and
6. **Reflective Critique** by the Scholar to critically evaluate his/ her own work, bringing adequate breadth of evidence to the critique and use of evaluation to improve the quality of future work.

They focused more on the **process of scholarship itself as a measure for quality of scholarship.**

Building on this, **Diamond (2002)** suggested a **combination of Product and Process Standards** as a practical and functional way of evaluating the scholarly work of faculty members – **the five Ps of Scholarship:**

1. **Product of expertise:** The activity or work requires a high level of discipline-related expertise.
2. **Process should be Scholarly:** The activity or work is conducted in a scholarly manner with clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methodology
3. **Publicly disseminated:** The activity or work and its results are appropriately and effectively documented and disseminated. This reporting should include a reflective critique that addresses the significance of the work, the process that was used, and what was learned.
4. **Platform to build on:** The activity or work has significance beyond the individual context; it breaks new ground or is innovative; can be replicated or elaborated.
5. **Peer Reviewed and valued by Peers:** The activity or work, both process and product or result, is reviewed and judged to be meritorious and significant by a panel of one's peers.

Obviously, if the five Ps as stated above are fulfilled, the scholarly work of a teacher is most likely to get published and the publication can again be reviewed by the institutional promotions and rewards committee for judging the quality of publication and rewarding the teacher effort within the home institution.

### **Organizational support needed to promote scholarship in education**

Now that we have realised the value of Scholarship of Teaching in contributing to not only improvement in scholarly teaching but also helping bring recognition to the institution through the scholarship of teachers that is valued by peers and publicly disseminated for wider replication outside the local context, it becomes imperative on the part of the medical college, the University and the MCI to initiate and create an enabling environment to encourage larger proportion of its faculty members to engage in the scholarship of Teaching besides the other scholarship of discovery, integration and application. **Fincher et al (2000)<sup>(9)</sup>** using the 4 frames of Bolman & Deal proposed the following measures as **indicators of Institution's commitment to Scholarship of Teaching:**

1. Under **Structural Frame** within the Medical College:
  - a. **On the organizational chart**, have Educational Leadership positions that are equivalent to research and clinical practice positions

- b. **Educational Leadership positions** directly reporting to Dean, President of organization
  - c. **Have a separate office of Medical Education**
    - To Mentor & help in Peer Review of Scholarship of teaching , Curriculum review & conduct of CPD/CME to build capacity of teachers,
    - Do program evaluation of ongoing educational programs to ensure standards and continuing quality improvement,
    - Help encourage Self-assessment by teacher relative to others & mentor them for further improvement
    - Institute Peer reviewed Grant Award for start-up seed money for innovation in education similar to Grants for research
  - d. **Library and web access** to books & journals in education
  - e. **Education facilities and support personnel** to promote & support scholarly efforts of teachers
2. Under **Human Resources Frame** within the Medical College: Faculty capacity building in education & Educational Research
    - Workshops, Workshop series, Fellowship programs
  3. Under **Political Frame** within the Medical College:
    - a. Have Educators in Leadership positions & including them in the faculty selection and promotion committees,
    - b. Have Educators as members in key Committees
  4. Under **Symbolic Frame** within the Medical College:
    - a. Public documents and Brochures to give prominence to outstanding Educators
    - b. Recognition and rewards to educators during rituals, ceremonies, convocation

Similar recognition and rewards for teachers in recognition of their Scholarship of Teaching at the University and national levels will go a long way to motivate and sustain a high level of educational scholarship and productivity leading to more frequent curricular reforms for better learning by students.

For reaping these benefits, a supportive environment needs to be created within institutions through conscious efforts by those in academic leadership positions to provide the facilities needed as stated in structural and human resource frame and also make their support explicit by doing what is listed under political and symbolic frame.

Accrediting and Regulatory Agencies should also include these elements in the Minimum Requirements Standards in Medical colleges to ensure that Scholarship of Teaching gets a boost within most Institutions in the country. India badly needs this push to ensure that the

full potential of the teachers is brought to fruition in an expeditious manner.

### References

1. Medical Council of India. Minimum Qualifications for Teachers in Medical Institutions Regulations, 1998 (amended upto 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2017) available from <http://www.mciindia.org/Rules-and-Regulation/Teachers-Eligibility-Qualifications-Rgulations-1998.pdf> accessed on May 18, 2017.
2. Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate Ernest L. Boyer. Princeton, New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 1990. Available from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED326149.pdf> and accessed on 17 May 2017.
3. Harden R M and Crosby J R . AMEE Guide No 20: The good teacher is more than a lecturer - the twelve roles of the teacher. *Medical Teacher*. 2000; 22 (4): 334–47.
4. Diamond, R.M. Defining Scholarship for the twenty first century. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 2002; 90:73-80.
5. Fincher RE, Work JA. 2006. Perspectives on the scholarship of teaching. *Med Educ* 40:293-295.
6. Fincher RE, Work JA. Perspectives on the scholarship of teaching. *Med Educ*. 2006; 40: 293-295.
7. Glassick C.E. Boyer's Expanded Definitions of Scholarship, the Standards for Assessing Scholarship, and the Elusiveness of the Scholarship of Teaching. *Acad. Med.* 2000;75:877–880.
8. Fincher R.E, Simpson D.E, Mennin S.P et al. Scholarship in Teaching: An Imperative for the 21st Century. *Acad. Med.* 2000;75:887–894.