A Coming of Age: Revisiting Aiaee Scholarship

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Abstract

This article examines emerging definitions of scholarship and challenges AIAEE members to develop a body of scholarly knowledge. If we are to become a “discipline,” then we, as a profession, need more than common interests evolving from practice.

Introduction

Is AIAEE “coming of age”? Is it reaching a stage of maturity, after 16 years, such that a core of knowledge is evolving in the discipline or is its knowledge base still a conglomerate of disparate studies conducted in varied countries, much like “trivial pursuit,” without thematic themes? If we attempt to develop partnerships with the private sector, then can we develop a vocabulary that transcends “researchese” and constitutes the new forms of scholarship?

Many current thinkers define scholarship as multidimensional; that is, scholarship can be exhibited through research, teaching and outreach activities (Glassick, et al., 1996). AIAEE members need to consider the dimensions of scholarship as they continue to evolve a definition of excellence for the discipline. What is our standard for excellence? Does it simply vary with the unique judgement of the referees for the journal or the paper sessions for our meetings? Are we a profession?

A profession has an organized body of knowledge with an unique language and vocabulary. The body of knowledge embodies an accumulation of scholarly efforts of many sorts. Does AIAEE have an organized body of knowledge that meets certain standards or is it just an accumulation of stories? How are we to define scholarship in AIAEE?

Many colleges and universities are wrestling with the issue of what defines “scholarship.” There are those who argue that scholarship involves discovering or creating new knowledge, or at least synthesizing knowledge in a new way. From this perspective, scholarship is generally synonymous with research. Further, the traditions of the hard, basic sciences helped provide this definition with an orientation toward positivistic lines of inquiry. However, even within the category of evidencing research as scholarship, there are other ways of knowing. The researchers in qualitative research, phenomenology, ethnography, single subject research, grounded theory, case study methods, historical, philosophical, interpretative or critical science would quickly verify this contention. In the arts, performances and exhibits may illustrate scholarship. In architecture, the unique design or critique might evidence scholarship. Might one exhibit scholarship through teaching and service as well? What definitional standards for scholarship will AIAEE members encounter in the future? What are the implications for a practice-based field such as AIAEE? As scholarship is redefined in the academy, this paper begins to explore the implications for the scholarly development of agricultural and extension education theory and practice.

Theme: Current Models of Scholarship

Webster's New World Dictionary definitions of “scholar”, “scholarly” and “scholarship” included terms such as “specialist in a particular
branch of learning”; “having or showing much knowledge, accuracy and critical ability”; and “the systematic knowledge of a learned person, exhibiting accuracy, critical ability and thoroughness” (Warmbrod, 1991). Academic scholarship, by these definitions, could be exhibited not only through research but also through teaching and service activities.

Many current writers have defined scholarship as multidimensional. Boyer (1990), for example, maintained that work in the professorate has four separate but overlapping dimensions: the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching. Rice and Richlin (1993) have proposed similar dimensions. Discovery entailed adding new knowledge through research. Integration involved employing higher level cognitive functions to construct “meaning” from isolated facts, concepts and constructs. Application occurred when knowledge is “responsibly applied to consequential problems” (Boyer, 1990); it is distinctly different from the usual service activities documented in curriculum vitae -- e.g., serving on committees, advising organizations, and contributing to departmental activities. Glassick, Huber and Maeroff (1997) discussed how they perceive that each should be assessed.

Scholarship through teaching emphasized the acquisition of knowledge that can be acquired only by professors who are informed and intellectually engaged teachers (Warmbrod, 1993a). Shulman (1986) defined teaching not only as the transmitting of knowledge but also as the transforming and extending of knowledge, while Warmbrod (1993a) and other writers note that an effective way to learn is to teach.

Rice and Richlin (1993) proposed that these four views of scholarship (scholarship as discovery, integration, application and teaching) are discrete types but form a conceptual whole that is every bit as important as the parts. They further noted that in the redefinition of scholarship the goal is not to elevate practice above research and theory but that the “art” of practice has been so mystified that it has often been summarily dismissed; however, it should be viewed on a more even plane.

In a literal sense, then, scholarship includes those things which scholars do: they teach, they research, and they serve their discipline/professions, the university and society. However, teaching is not always scholarly, some is routine and not effective. Similarly, there is research which is too mechanical to be called scholarly and there is service which has more to do with departmental “housekeeping” than knowledge building. Is the research of AIAEE too routine and does it merely deal with trivial issues?

What makes an activity scholarly? A Michigan State University report on university outreach (1993:2) offers defining parameters:

The essence of scholarship is the thoughtful creation, interpretation, communication or use of knowledge that is based in the ideas and methods of recognized disciplines, professions, and interdisciplinary fields. What qualifies an activity as “scholarship” is that it is deeply informed by accumulating knowledge in some field, that the knowledge is skillfully interpreted and deployed, and that the activity is carried out with intelligent openness to new information, debate and criticism.

Oregon State University also provides a succinct definition:

Scholarship is original intellectual work based on a high level of professional expertise whose significance is validated by peers and which is communicated in appropriate ways so as to have impact on or signifi cance for publics beyond the university, or for the discipline itself.

Therefore, scholarship, deals with important and significant topics, ideas and concerns; the intellectual substance -- the content -- with which scholars deal is important, significant, vitally critical to the discipline or area of specialization. Scholars do not deal with trivia and unimportant matters. Scholars are not satisfied with conventional wisdom; the title of
scholar is not achieved or bestowed by self-proclamation, but by one’s peers (Warmbrod, 1993; 1993a). Miller (1991) identifies scholarship and substance as major concerns with which a profession must be concerned. “The teaching-research polarity sets intellectual substance and educational process at odds. And not only are disciplinary content and teaching methods separated, they also are hierarchically arranged so that research is always viewed as superior to teaching” (Rice & Richlin, 1993). However, must not teaching, too, deal with substantive, scholarly content? Scholarship is not discrete and exclusively the province of research but includes all of the Boyer categories.

AIAEE Scholarship

If discovery, integration, application and teaching of knowledge are central to the mission of higher education and if they are often categorized as research, service and teaching; what is the significance for AIAEE? A dialogue concerning the dimensions of scholarship and the implications for the profession is needed. As starters, AIAEE academicians and practitioners might consider the following questions:

• How can AIAEE -- again, both academicians and practitioners -- demonstrate scholarship through research, service and teaching? What are the ways in which this is typically done?

• What kinds of evidence qualifies such activities as scholarly? Does a contribution in only one of the areas of discovery, integration, application and teaching suffice for a person to be declared a scholar? Must scholars in AIAEE contribute to all four dimensions?

• How do we assure scholarly standards?

• How do we meet the responsibilities of being a professional and scholar while moving the profession “down the road to knowing” (Miller, 1993) and, thereby developing a theoretical basis for the discipline which extends beyond conventional wisdom and practice?

• How can we assure that new entrants to the field are professionally socialized to contribute to scholarship in AIAEE as well as practice? How do we go about preparing future scholarly practitioners capable of operating in arenas with the new definitions of scholarship?

• Finally, who decides what is “scholarship”, what is “scholarly”, and who is a “scholar”?

These and related questions warrant wide discussion. Ways of thinking about just two of these questions will be elaborated here. Outreach teaching and outreach service are expanded as these are two common activities of many AIAEE members.

Evidencing AIAEE Scholarship

A recent University of Wisconsin report, The Wisconsin Idea and Outreach (1994), proposed categories of evidence that would help document the scholarly nature of activities in the outreach research, teaching and service functions (See Appendix A). These expanded categories of evidence, intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, might prove useful to AIAEE members. The categories also offered possible measures of quality for the discipline to consider. Oregon State University (Appendix B) has also created similar categories.

The report suggested that evidence of outreach research might include: (1) publications and presentations (books, monographs, chapters, articles, bulletins, reports; delivery via instructional technologies) including those for practitioners and the public; (2) internal and external review of research process, outcomes and impact; (3) approval of research proposals for external funding; (4) awards, honors, citations for creative works, and applied research; (5) evidence of impact of scholarship or practice in the field; (6) evaluation of innovative clinical procedures; and (7) evidence of impact on public/private policy makers.

Suggestions to document outreach teaching include: (1) observation reports by colleagues, peers and teaching assistants; (2) assessments by students, participants, trainees, clients; (3) enrollment demand by clientele; (4) syllabi,
teaching plans, materials, development of new courses; (5) reflection on learning outcomes by students, employers, etc., producing changes in professional practice; and (6) approval of funding for curriculum development.

Evidence of outreach service might include: (1) reports of benefits to recipients; (2) new ideas gained that have an impact on research; teaching agenda; (3) evidence of change in public policy; and (4) reports; evaluations of service.

When these scholarly activities act in combination, suggested evidence included: (1) national or international recognition of professional contribution, by leaders (both academicians and practitioners) in the field; (2) manifest demand for professional assistance; (3) detailed assessment of outcomes; and (4) national/international awards of recognition by associations in the field.

The AIAEE Scholarly Practitioner

Checkoway writes (1991:224):

*Quality research, teaching and service are emerging as complementary activities in many professions and field. The new vision is one in which excellence in one activity is increasingly inseparable from other activities in accordance with the best traditions and highest standards of the academic community.*

The emerging conceptualization of scholarship can provide a renaissance to the practice-based field of AIAEE where categories are often blurred between research, teaching and service. The challenge to AIAEE is to further develop and support academicians and practitioners as reflective or scholarly practitioners (Sandmann, 1994). Such scholarly practitioners will need to have both the inclination and well-honored skills in knowledge generation, application and transmission. Skills must continually be improved. Much of our research is fraught with methodological errors in sampling, design and/or analysis. Research, simply, must get better.

The current multidimensional definition of scholarship can energize and discipline AIAEE. Our scholarship has, too often, tended to be accounts, stories, if you will, of projects and activities. Account after account of study abroad programs and study tours, for example, do not advance the knowledge base of the discipline unless someone analyzes these experiences and makes meaning from them for the discipline (Miller & Sandman, 1998). Hopefully, this article will stimulate a fuller and more vigorous discussion on the implications of such a conceptualization for theory and practice within AIAEE, and on the role of AIAEE and internationalization efforts of universities in the continued shaping of the definition of scholarship. Without a scholarly basis (a pedagogy of substance), the profession will retrogress, atrophy and die.
Appendix A

Documenting Scholarship: Some Examples

Teaching and Learning: *In a teaching portfolio*

Describe your original and most significant scholarly contributions to teaching and learning.

Document impacts of your contributions on student learners, in terms of outputs such as enhanced student understanding, retention, behavioral change and subsequent performance.

Document your communication of scholarly contributions to educator peers, and summarize evidence of peer acceptance, recognition, or adoption of your contributions.

Summarize student, and peer (or public) evaluations of your courses, course materials, curricula, and teaching or advising methods.

Summarize evidence of your leadership and contributions of successful team efforts, as a scholar.

**Discovery**

Describe your original and most significant discoveries and scholarly contributions.

Document the impacts of your contributions in terms of outputs such as advancement of scientific discovery and understanding within and beyond your area of inquiry, and public benefits attributable to your scholarship.

Document your communication of scholarly contributions to peers, and summarize evidence of peer validation, acceptance, or use of your contributions.

Summarize evidence of your leadership, and contributions to successful team efforts, as a scholar.

**Integration**

Describe your original and most significant accomplishments in creating new and different understandings and uses of information.

Document the adoption and applications of your integrative contributions by others.

Document your communication of scholarly achievement to public and peer audiences, and summarize evidence of their recognition, acceptance and use of your scholarship.

Summarize evidence of your leadership, or contributions to successful team efforts, as a scholar integrator.

**Application**

Describe the original and most significant applications from your scholarship of application.

Document the impacts of your communication of contributions to users, publics, and peers, and summarize evidence of their recognition and use of your contributions.

Document the impacts of your creative development of new materials, technologies, or uses in terms of results such as scope of use, markets, and benefits of your contributions.

Summarize evidence of your leadership, and contributions to successful team efforts, as a scholar.
Appendix B: Forms of Scholarship

Scholarship creates something that did not exist before that is validated and communicated to others; new understanding in the minds of students, new knowledge about ourselves and our universe, new beauty that stimulates the senses, new insights, and new technologies and applications of knowledge that can benefit humankind (College of Agriculture, Oregon State University, Corvallis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of the scholarship</th>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
<th>Discovery</th>
<th>Artistic Creativity</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Application</th>
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<tr>
<td>With learners, develops and communicates new understanding and insights; develops and refines new teaching content and methods; fosters lifelong learning behavior.</td>
<td>Generates and communicates new knowledge and understanding; develops and refines methods,</td>
<td>Interprets the human spirit, creates and communicates new insights and beauty; develops and refines methods.</td>
<td>Synthesizes and communicates new or different understandings of knowledge or technology and its relevance; develops and refines methods.</td>
<td>Develops and communicates new technologies, materials or uses; fosters inquiry and invention; develops and refines new methods.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Primary audiences for scholarship</th>
<th>Teaching materials and methods: Classes: Curricula; Publications and presentations to educator peers and broader publics,</th>
<th>Peer-reviewed publication and presentations; Patents; Public reports and presentations.</th>
<th>Shows, performances and distribution of products, reviews, news reports: copyrights; peer presentations and juries, publications.</th>
<th>Presentations, publications, demonstrations, and patents.</th>
<th>Demonstrations and presentations to audiences: Patents; Publications for users; Periodicals and reports; Peer presentations and publication.</th>
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<td>Learners; Educator peers.</td>
<td>Peers: Supporters of research; Educators; Students; Publics.</td>
<td>Various publics; Peers; Patrons; Students.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Primary means of communicating scholarship</th>
<th>Originality and significance of new contributions to learning; depth, duration and usefulness of what is learned, lifelong benefits to learners and adoption by peers.</th>
<th>Originality, scope, and significance of new knowledge; applicability and benefits to society,</th>
<th>Beauty, originality, impact, and duration of public value; scope and persistence of influence and public appreciation.</th>
<th>Usefulness and originality of new or different understandings, applications, and insights.</th>
<th>Breadth, value, and persistence of use and impact.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>How scholarship is documented</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Artistic Creativity</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Application</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching portfolio; summaries of primary new contributions, impacts on students and learning, acceptance and adoption by peers; evidence of leadership and team contributions,</td>
<td>Summaries of primary contributions, significance and impact in advancing knowledge, new methods, public benefits, communication and validation by peers; evidence of leadership and team contributions,</td>
<td>Summaries of primary contributions, public interest, and impact; communication to publics, peer recognition and adoption; evidence of leadership and team contributions,</td>
<td>Summaries of primary contributions, communication to users, scope of adoption and application, impact and benefits; acceptance and adoption by peers, evidence of leadership and team contributions,</td>
<td>Summaries of primary contributions, communication to users, significance and scope of use and benefits; commercial and societal value; acceptance and adoption by peers; evidence of leadership and team contributions,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Literature Cited**


Miller, L. (1993). Interdisciplinary, soft, applied and other anomalies in research: The future. Diamond Anniversary Lectures, Department of Agricultural Education, Ohio State University, Columbus.


