



Center for Teaching Excellence

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Kirk Borne
Computational and Data Sciences

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Dear Kirk,

Why are you receiving this personalized invitation?

You are receiving this invitation because of your prior expressed interest in the self-study of teaching/research model and the possibilities of its application for your own practice. I am pleased to announce that I will be launching the *Scholars of Studying Teaching Collaborative* (SOSTC) this fall in partnership with Mason's Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). This unique project will engage a cohort of faculty from various Mason Colleges and programs in a two semester research project with the goal of learning about and making practical a self-study of their professional practice.

The group will be limited to ten individuals, including the facilitator. If you wish to participate, please send me an email at asamaras@gmu.edu by **June 25** briefly expressing your interest and intent to participate with the following information:

- 1) Why you are interested in participating in SOSTC
- 2) What you might be interested in studying (that topic may change)
- 3) Your fall and spring teaching schedules and any standing meetings
- 4) Your availability for a project launch on August 23, 11 am – 2 pm at GMU

We will let you know if you have been selected by July 1st.

What's in it for you?

You will have the opportunity to connect with and work with faculty across programs in a project that matters to you. Our work will involve each of us in an individual project supported by our scholarly learning community. The final projects will be presented and published either individually and/or collaboratively. Faculty committed to participate in the project will receive financial support in the amount of \$1,000 for professional travel to a peer-reviewed conference to present the work produced in this project. This research further positions you to be at the forefront in studying your professional practice, with extended future possibilities for collaboration. Self-study research offers you an opportunity to author a personal and situated inquiry about an issue related to your professional practice and wish to explore with colleagues.

What's self-study research look like?

Your project can be focused on any topic that matters to your professional practice. It is not limited only to your teaching and may include other practitioner-based research questions. Self-study research allows educators to unveil a tacit understanding of the intersections of their personal histories of learning, their cultures, and their professional practices, and develop a self-understanding personally and professionally. I will support your efforts in the process of your question posing and enactment of a successful project.

Here are just a few examples of faculty self-study projects:

- Does my involvement in an electronic forum influence class community building?
- How do I balance my multiple roles as professor and department chair or administrator?
- How do I continue to develop my teaching while also attending to my scholarship?

- How does my collaboration with colleagues outside my university support my professional development and my scholarship?
- What is the effect of my Asian American culture on my teaching of multicultural issues?
- How can I practice shared leadership in an emerging professional community?
- Does my teaching philosophy align with my teaching? How do I live my values more fully in my teaching, for example, what is my philosophy and role in teaching about “truth” in history?
- In what ways does my work with performing artists influence my teaching of the arts?
- What is my interpretation of social justice and how does that influence my teaching and integration of that topic in the courses I teach?

As the facilitator with extensive expertise in the self-study methodology, I will offer a well planned and thoughtfully crafted set of scholarly activities designed to add to your professional development and scholarship. More specifically, I have planned a series of manageable and user-friendly workshops once a month where you will be provided guidance in the application of the self-study research model along with support from our community. A unique feature of self-study research is that scholars work to support each other’s efforts in what are known as “critical friends”, i.e., with the support of this teaching community. I respect your time as a faculty member and so a great deal of your participation will be completed online with a “critical friend”(s) you choose from our cohort who do not have to be from your College or discipline. We can also find support for online work if you are unfamiliar with using tools like Blackboard and Microsoft tools.

You will have an opportunity to:

- **Propose** a facet of your teaching and/or professional practice you want to explore and embed that personal inquiry within the context of a specific course(s) or program.
- **Enact** an inquiry using the Five Foci as guidelines of the self-study methodology in a case study approach to study the impact of your practice on others.
- **Collaboratively assess** your project in an intellectually safe and supportive community by making it explicit to yourself and validated through critical collaborative inquiries.
- **Disseminate** your project through a national presentation(s) and publication (s). Conference proposal and journal writing will be a component of our group’s work with the goal of submitting conference proposals in May 2011.

What’s Our Project Timeline?

1. Our first kick off meeting will be a working lunch meeting at August 23 at 11 am – 2 pm at the Southside Dining Hall. If you are unavailable on August 23, we will arrange a makeup. This orientation meeting will introduce you to the self-study methodology and assist you in clarifying your project inquiries. The implementation and assessment will occur over the academic year.
2. After our August 23 gathering, a series of three working lunches will be held in both the fall and spring semesters; largely extending the group’s online work.

I am excited and thankful for the support CTE is offering us. I do hope you will carefully consider accepting this personal invitation as I believe our work holds much promise and enjoyment for our collective efforts in continuing to make Mason, the best place to collaboratively learn – for students and faculty!

Sincerely,



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