

CENTER FOR  
ENGAGED LEARNING

# What Teaching Looks Like

Higher Education through Photographs

*Cassandra Volpe Horii and Martin Springborg*



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**7.01**

*A faculty member in art at an associate's institution surveys the installation of *The Teaching and Learning Project* work in the college art gallery. (Reproduced by permission from Luke Austin.)*

CHAPTER 7

# **Photographs and Change Agents**

## *Campus Communities Encountering Themselves*

If people only thought we could dare look at ourselves.

—Dorothea Lange (1964)

## Defining Change

Throughout this book, we have explored ways in which photographs both reflect and have the potential to improve higher education. Anne Whiston Spirn discovered this same “synergy” between “the observing and portraying of the world and acting to change it” (Spirn 2008, xiii) in the work of photographer Dorothea Lange, who was herself aware of the possibilities when we “dare look at ourselves” (Spirn 2008, 8). Contemporary photographers such as Dawoud Bey have broken new ground in intending for photographs to exist “in conversation with communities,” as he did with an exhibit of high school student portraits alongside the words of those portrayed, which “influenced curators and educators to consider how their work could have a greater impact” (Shakur 2018).

Of course, disciplines such as the fine arts, art history, design, journalism, and communications have long histories of employing, researching, creating, and integrating photographs into theory and practice. Documentary photographs have also played crucial roles in social change processes almost since the invention of the medium (Tate n.d.; Hostetler 2004). However, the use of documentary photography as an intentional and integrated strategy for systemic change of educational institutions and practices themselves is still relatively new for higher education. This chapter documents ways in which postsecondary institutions have so far leveraged the intrinsic properties and power of photographs to support their efforts to improve teaching, learning, campus climate, and other facets of their educational endeavors.

Colleges and universities have been grappling with the need for and process of organizational change for decades, with increasing urgency. Institutions around the world are examining change processes related to student access and success (Geertsema and van der Rijst 2021), sustainability practices within colleges and universities (Hoover and Harder 2015), and the role of educational developers in

change processes (Gachago et al. 2021; Fosslund and Sandvoll 2021). In the United States, as shortcomings persist, such as inadequate graduation rates, mounting educational debt, and inequities that are particularly harmful to marginalized students, national organizations and initiatives focused on studying, accelerating, and fostering major systemic changes have emerged (ASCN, n.d.; American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2017; NASEM, n.d.). To quote from the vision statement of one such endeavor, these efforts are bringing educators together so that “students in every institutional setting experience teaching that aligns with what we know about how people learn, and that draws in and supports all students,” with coordinated projects helping to “integrate what is known and soon to be discovered about organizing, leading, and evaluating change efforts to maximize the individual and collective efforts” of those involved (ASCN, n.d.).

Broader recognition has emerged that isolated actions at individual institutions do not tend to shift the larger cultures and systems enough. Some projects have focused on identifying “levers” for change—actions that might have an outsized impact compared to the effort, backed by evidence from various academic disciplines (Laursen 2019). The higher education community is also becoming clearer about terminology and tools, defining a “change agent” as a person or group working to shift instructional practices, a “change practice” as a tactic or method to foster improvement, and a “change strategy” as a coherent, systematic plan (Henderson, Beach, and Finkelstein 2011). In this framework, creating and sharing photographs is one change practice that is beginning to be employed by change agents. What change strategies are guiding such use?

This chapter provides answers to that question in the form of intentional strategies that led to the photographs you have encountered throughout this volume and intentional strategies that leveraged those photographs to further advance institutional change priorities. Many of the changes, both intended and observed, are related to the culture of teaching and learning within higher edu-

cation communities. Indeed, it is often “the goal of a to modify culture in particular ways, in order to support meaningful change” (Reinholz and Apkarian 2018, 3). Culture consists of people’s identities, relationships, implicit and explicit messages about worth, structures of power, and traditions. Change agents look to culture because it is pervasive and may be unconscious for those who have lived and worked within a context for a long time. Changing practices without changing culture leads to a high likelihood of those new practices falling by the wayside, as unsupported and unintegrated add-ons without clear value, making changes to teaching culture a “wicked problem” (Sagy, Hod, and Kali 2019).

Institutions that hosted *The Teaching and Learning Project* both intended and observed changes in the culture of teaching. We include reflections from change agents at seven of the twenty-one campuses that have participated in *The Teaching and Learning Project*, including contributions from Cassandra Volpe Horii, co-author of this book, in her former capacity as assistant vice provost and director of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Outreach (CTLO) at Caltech. The other six contributors and their contexts are as follows:

- Karishma Collette, assistant director, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan: This center used photographs to help launch the University of Michigan foundational course initiative, which was “a multi-year large course transformation project sponsored by the president’s office” with the “aim to support the success of all students from a wide range of backgrounds and motivations, and to increase instructor satisfaction and joy in the teaching of large introductory courses” (document emailed to authors, August 2, 2019).
- Larkin Hood, associate research professor in the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, Penn State University: This large university system has twenty-four campus locations across the state, with the research-focused University Park flagship campus often receiving more attention than others;



photographs from “campuses other than University Park helped make the work of faculty at the campuses more visible to the greater university community,” culminating in an exhibit of the photographs (document emailed to authors, January 30, 2020).

- Simon Huelsbeck, faculty member and division leader in studio art, Rochester Community and Technical College: This institution is a member of Minnesota State, the third largest system of state colleges and universities in the US, where the scale of the system can lead to faculty feeling disconnected from system-wide initiatives. Martin photographed Huelsbeck’s class and shadowed the interim president; the visit culminated in a photographic exhibit (document emailed to authors, January 14, 2020).
- Sara Kacin, assistant provost for faculty development and faculty success and director of the Office of Teaching and Learning, and Mathew Ouellett, former associate provost and director of the Office of Teaching and Learning (later at Cornell University), Wayne State University: “We planned an itinerary that included meeting with staff to talk about consultations, visiting and photographing classes across the disciplines, and headlining our annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Luncheon. We invited faculty colleagues to participate in the project with an eye towards capturing a range of learning environments, disciplines, students, and instructors” (document emailed to authors, September 1, 2019).
- Stacey Lawrence, senior associate director for STEM initiatives, and Mary Wright, associate provost for teaching and learning and executive director, in the Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University: “Although the Sheridan Center had been in existence for over 40 years, we were a relatively new integrated center bridging teaching initiatives and learning support with a number of new programs to fill Brown’s strategic plan for teaching and learning. During Martin’s visit, we



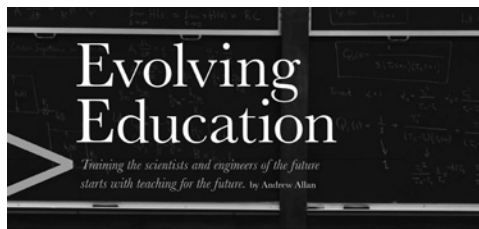
focused on Sheridan programs and staff as part of this transition” (document emailed to authors, August 21, 2019).

- Serge Petchenyi, multimedia creative lead, Diane Sempler, senior associate director, and Mathew Ouellett, executive director in the Center for Teaching Excellence, Cornell University: “Having recently merged academic technologies and teaching center units, *The Teaching and Learning Project* provided an entirely new way to think about photography and the work of the media team in our newly combined center” (document emailed to authors, September 1, 2019).

Reflections from these contributors explore several aspects of change in the sections that follow: changing communication, changing community, and changing practice.

## Changing Communication

Images are a common element in post-secondary institutional communications; photographs regularly occupy prominent places in college and university magazines, admissions brochures, websites, digital materials, and displays on walls and in hallways within physical spaces. Campuses participating in *The Teaching and Learning Project* approached this work with the hopes of improving communication and ended up with valuable new resources to enhance digital and print materials. At the University of Michigan, for example, Collette explained that “the photographs have been a key resource in publicity and communication about our services, programs, and events. They’ve been utilized in our annual reports, blog posts, project presentations and brochures, and are a prominent feature on the inaugural website of the new University of Michigan-led multi-institution Sloan Equity and Inclusion in STEM Introductory Courses research initiative.” But the nature of these photographs provided more than utility: Martin’s work,



Any evolutionary biologist will tell you, if you don't evolve, you perish. Throughout time, this has proved true not just for entire species, but for societies, organizations, companies, nations, and—especially—“institutions of higher education, where change is essential to reaching the widest variety of students and to remaining competitive in an ever-expanding field of educational options. And so, by modernizing the undergraduate core curriculum, restructuring the campus's writing center, founding a dedicated center for teaching and learning, and using the online arena to expand the Institute's educational reach, Caltech is undergoing an educational

evolution—an educational reworking, if you will—that is changing the way students connect with faculty, faculty connect with students, and both interact with the information and ideas they're encountering together. “One size fits all doesn't work any more. We have a diversity of academic programs and a diversity of students, and the old way just isn't the solution,” says Vice President Melany Hunt. “There's a renewed vigor in the way we think about undergraduate education, and a commitment among the faculty to improve it,” adds Jonathan Katz, chair of the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, who has been closely involved in Caltech's recent initiative to institute

a series of changes to update its core curriculum. This sequence of general education requirements has not been revised for nearly two decades. “Those changes have important implications not only for how our students will learn,” Katz says, “but for how we as faculty will teach them.” In the midst of all this reworking and rewriting, Minnesota photographer and educator Martin Springberg came to Caltech as part of his work on a nationwide photographic essay he's compiling: he spent three days taking shots of faculty and students as they went about the business of teaching and learning. The photographs on the next few pages are from that book as a day in Caltech's educational life.



Cecilia Villa Hest (left, director of the Caltech Center for Teaching, Learning, and Outreach) works with Professor of Biology and Geobiology Diana Norman (on left at table, below) and her Principles of Biology course lab to provide guidance in implementing the latest teaching methods, developing better lectures and more targeted homework assignments and exams, and obtaining and analyzing feedback from students.



In the Hest Writing Center—under the leadership of campus writing coordinator and lecturer in writing Jonathan Katz—students work one-on-one with professional and peer tutors to generate ideas, develop arguments, organize their thoughts, and release anxiety to academic, technical, and personal writing.



## 7.02

A page spread from Caltech's *Engineering & Science* magazine features *The Teaching and Learning Project* photographs to illustrate the doctoral institution's commitment to teaching and learning. (Photograph reprinted with permission from the institution, courtesy of Caltech Magazine).

in the tradition of documentary photography, differs from images geared toward advertising; it also draws upon his experience as a postsecondary instructor and educational developer. As such, these photographs helped campuses change the nature of communications about teaching and learning. At Caltech, Martin visited and made photographs soon after the launch of the new teaching center. The resulting images were compelling, showing modern classes rather than staged interactions, and they captured institution-wide attention. This momentum helped spur the publication of a prominent article on new teaching-related initiatives in the campus's flagship publication, spreading awareness of and interest in improving teaching (Allan 2013). The photographs also served as artwork for the center's physical space, surrounding center visitors with meaningful, compelling images.

Participants at Wayne State University experienced similar impacts on communication about teaching and learning:

The images from the project changed the way we used visuals to articulate and communicate our priorities. We placed posters of our faculty and staff everywhere, especially in the library and classroom spaces. The images were quickly incorporated into our website and print publications, becoming central to all of our communications with faculty. Once others saw these photos, they intuitively understood their power to authentically communicate the teaching and learning experience, hence the provost's office and student support offices wanted to use these photos, as opposed to staged or stock photos.

Other project participants found new and vital ways to represent their own work. Lawrence and Wright at Brown University observed:

Like many educational developers, we have facilitated numerous workshops and receive feedback from instructors about the sense of community and support they experience in our programs. However, prior to Martin's visit, we did not have access to photos that represent this sentiment. In fact, when putting together reports or promotional materials, it is relatively difficult to capture the essence of our work. The typical images are usually posed group photos at events and institutes. Occasionally, we have candid photos of awardees, but not of the moments that preceded their awards. We cannot convey the work we do with static images because educational development is dynamic, just as teaching is dynamic.

Lawrence and Wright invite us to revisit a theme explored in chapter 2, emotion. They have encountered "a stereotypical view of center for teaching and learning spaces as locations of remediation." What they found in Martin's photographs, though, was a palpable sense of joy, which became an important lever for change:

An aspect of the Sheridan Center's work that is made visible through the photographs is the enthusiasm that participants bring to our programs. Many of the images highlight a sense of vibrancy and joy, whether it is a highly animated graduate student in a Sheridan program or a faculty member who is laughing together with students. As a tool to make joy visible, *The Teaching and Learning Project* photographs serve as a powerful lever to motivate other instructors to engage in instructional development. In our annual reports or work with our development office, we frequently pull from these photos because of their power in capturing this essence of our work.

**7.03-7.04**

*Sequence of two photographs: Staff in a center for teaching and learning at a doctoral institution conduct a session for faculty and graduate students during a teaching certificate program.*





**7.05-7.07**

*Sequence of three photographs: Faculty and graduate students at a doctoral institution engage in discussion during a teaching certificate program at a center for teaching and learning.*











**7.08-7.10**

*Sequence of three photographs: A staff member in a center for teaching and learning at a doctoral institution facilitates a session for faculty and graduate students during a teaching certificate program.*





## Changing Community

Campuses also employed photographs—and even the process of deciding what, where, and whom to photograph—in creative ways, leading to enriching community interactions, deeper relationships, connections across institutional silos, and a profound sense of recognition that is often missing in the day-to-day work of postsecondary instructors.

Institutions have employed a variety of approaches to selecting classes and locations for Martin to visit and make photographs, including open calls for participants, invitations related to a particular theme such as large classes, or selection based on breadth of subjects and locations included in the photographs. View the online resource “[Sample Institutional Visit Schedules](#)” to see examples of what such schedules have included. Regardless of the process, participants found that the act of documentary photography itself opened up new pathways for acknowledging the value, effort, and importance of teaching, as Hood explains for Penn State University: “When our teaching center invited Martin, we reasoned that having photos would make teaching more visible to the university community. But we also learned in the process that the very act of taking a photo made teaching more valuable. To take a photo of someone’s actions emphasizes the importance of those actions. Asking faculty for permission to take photos communicates that they and their actions are worth documenting; it communicates respect for the work they do as teachers.” Kacin and Ouellett expand on that sense of valuing the work of teaching in especially challenging times:

Like many public research universities, Wayne State University has experienced significant cuts in state support over the past decade. While good teaching is certainly important, other aspects of the faculty role are weighted differently, such as building one’s research profile. There was little recent history of celebrating teaching and

learning as a campus community, although there were certainly exceptions at the department and college levels. After Martin's visit, everybody wanted copies of their classroom photos. For many, it was the first time seeing themselves in the act of teaching. It has been really lovely to see faculty recognize the significance of their work as teachers in new ways through this project.

Similarly, the work of those who support teaching and learning on campuses can often seem invisible or misunderstood. Oversimplified representations of academic staff roles in higher education abound; sometimes, they are even vilified or portrayed as requiring no particular expertise, despite the often-extensive academic and professional preparation needed to effectively work in such roles (Bessette 2021). Educational developers, a subset of academic staff who tend to bring a particularly wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and experiences to their work (Green and Little 2016), have at times struggled with a sense of precariousness (Sutherland 2015), which contradicts their positive ability to effect change (Plank 2019). *The Teaching and Learning Project* brought a new sense of recognition and clarity to these roles, as Lawrence and Wright discuss with respect to their own work: "We found that Martin's lens made visible our work and highlighted a key lever for change, enjoyment. We would encourage other campuses to consider how they might use images to not only raise the visibility of teaching through photos of campus instructors, but also to leverage the core values engaged in their own work, such as reflection and enjoyment, through photos of themselves."

Several institutions organized exhibits of photographs and other events in connection with their participation in *The Teaching and Learning Project*; examples of these exhibit materials are also available in the online resource "[Photographic Exhibits in Higher Education: Examples and Suggestions](#)." Exhibits in which campus communities had the chance to see and reflect on their educational

endeavors have become unexpectedly meaningful experiences. At Wayne State University, Kacin and Ouellett “blew up the photos to poster size and curated an exhibit in the atrium of our Undergraduate Library. With students, faculty, and staff moving through this building on a daily basis, it is an essential hub on campus. Students loved seeing themselves and their instructors to the point that some posters even ‘walked off.’” At Cornell University, the resulting exhibit focused on particular teaching strategies, leading to deeper engagement and connection:

The spring 2019 provost’s seminar on teaching and learning was the first time we presented a public exhibition of the digital prints highlighting the active learning strategies happening in our classrooms. The photos were set up on easels along the perimeter of the reception area. As people walked into the room, they saw their colleagues and friends caught in the act of teaching. Instead of proceeding into the main dining room, everyone stopped, clustered around the posters, and talked to each other. In a moment, people were able to see and think in a different way, to be attentive to details, and, through the images, pierce the veil of isolation that can surround teaching.

The very act of coming together to look at photographs can serve as a catalyst for interaction and recognition. Penn State University tapped into this potential with a gala event featuring *The Teaching and Learning Project* photographs, attended by faculty and campus leaders; instructors helped select images and stood next to their photographs during the event: “Some faculty appeared pleasantly overwhelmed by the experience, which gave them a chance to talk about their work with others, including those responsible for making decisions about teaching at the university. Upper-level administrators seemed to come away with a better sense of what happens in classes every day across the university.” Caltech also created an exhibit featuring images from *The Teaching and Learning Project*

along with photographs made by students and staff and archival images from the institution's history; it was located in a common area that serves as the main entrance to the teaching center and where students, faculty, and staff often gather before and after meetings and events. This exhibit, "Teaching and Writing at Caltech: Past, Present, Future" was a collaboration between the teaching center, writing center, and university archives; its creation extended our shared commitments to the intentional use of visual rhetoric and engaged the campus and alumni community (Caltech 2018).

Such events can play a significant role in bridging divides between institutional roles and creating a more positive campus climate. For example, Huelsbeck discusses new insights at Rochester Community and Technical College, one of thirty-seven campuses in the Minnesota State system:

I have often felt that I am an outsider in regards to the system-wide efforts. My colleagues are inclined to vent their frustrations with the system's requirements. Many faculty seem to perceive that we are given so many hurdles that aren't relevant to our day-to-day job of teaching our students. *The Teaching and Learning Project* exhibition helped to present the system of teaching and learning in a different light. It was a revelation to me that an artist, dedicated to improving teaching and learning, would be able to create work in this vein without irony—that in fact an artist would make work that, while realistic in its portrayal of the everyday mundane aspect of the work of teaching and learning, in the end could discover the nobility and the purpose of the work that we do each and every day.

These examples showcase the power of photographs, especially when viewed and discussed in community, to spark deeper understanding between and across people, roles, and organizational units within postsecondary institutions.



**7.11-7.12**  
*Sequence of two photographs: Faculty, administrators, and staff view and reflect on prints from The Teaching and Learning Project made at their institutions. (Reproduced by permission from Deidre Yingling.)*





**7.13-7.14**

*Sequence of two photographs: Students at an associate's institution view photographs from The Teaching and Learning Project made at their institution. (Reproduced by permission from Luke Austin.)*



## Changing Practice

An unexpected yet powerful use of the photographs from *The Teaching and Learning Project* builds on the communication and community impacts described above, but brings the photographs into formal professional development for postsecondary instructors and into the larger context of organizational change. At the University of Michigan, educational developers found the photos to be “immensely valuable in icebreaker activities and as prompts for reflection and group discussion. In course design sessions, the images are a great vantage point from which participants can observe the complex ecosystem of large courses. They have generated rich discussions about inclusive teaching, climate, and student experience in foundational courses, and about visible labor and the more behind-the-scenes work of teaching and managing them. They also helped build empathy across roles about the reality for various course stakeholders.” Collette further explains how and why this might be the case:

The photographs have enhanced audience rapport and participation. Attendees at our events hold various roles on campus (administrative leaders, faculty, lecturers, graduate student instructors, undergraduate instructors) and come from a variety of academic disciplines. As facilitators, we strive to create structures for effective brainstorming and collaboration, encouraging participants to learn from each other. However, with different identities, life experiences, and power hierarchies, inaccurate and hurtful preconceived notions, as well as feelings of hesitation, vulnerability, and impatience across roles, can surface. When we’ve used *The Teaching and Learning Project* images as facilitation tools, participants tend to more easily offer their thoughts and experiences, and are willing to strategize together about improvements to classroom practices. We hypoth-

esize that the photographs provide a useful distance from personal experience and in this neutral zone of engagement, barriers in the room, perceived and real, are more readily lowered.

Penn State University has also incorporated photographs into their professional development programming. The images allow facilitators to ask specific questions, which engage participants and draw them into reflections on teaching, for example: “What do you notice about the body language of the instructor and/or students? What is the instructor doing to make contact with the students? What is happening in this class? What do you see that makes you say that?” Participants’ answers lead to further investigation:

The responses show not only what people think teaching is, but what they see as their own teaching challenges. Frequently viewers notice that in one particular photo, students’ heads are turned in different directions. When asked why they are interpreting the photo as evidence of success or failure, people begin to support their impressions by pointing out details: some students are writing in their notebooks, so they must be paying attention. Other students have laptops open, so they must not be paying attention. These observations provide pathway to a discussion of how teachers interpret student actions and enable participants to identify alternate interpretations. A photo can offer teachers the opportunity to identify what they expect of students and brainstorm ways to more explicitly communicate their expectations.

We encourage you to use this book and its supplementary resources and guides, all made available under a Creative Commons license ([https://CreativeCommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0)), for professional development at your institution. In particular, the “Close Reading and Observation Exercises,” available at <https://www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org/books/what-teaching-looks-like>, include

selections that portray complex and thought-provoking teaching environments and interactions, and have the potential, through reflection and facilitated discussion, to spark dialogue and insights among instructors, staff, administrators, and others.

At Cornell University, engagement with *The Teaching and Learning Project* also served an internal professional development purpose, supporting staff members from media production and academic backgrounds who had recently merged into a new center, to share experiences and establish common ground. For those with media expertise, joining photoshoots and discussing photographs “helped the team transition from a production unit to one with a pedagogical approach.” Following Martin’s visit, this team continued to make photographs focusing on active learning in real classrooms. They also adapted the consultation process developed for use with faculty (Springborg and Horii 2016) for conversations among media and academic staff, resulting in “a deeply enriching internal professional development opportunity for our team. In our own unit, we are now more aware of what our work is. Through photography, we are developing our ability to observe, listen, and engage in meaningful conversations with each other.”

Some campuses have intentionally brought *The Teaching and Learning Project* photographs to bear on larger goals and challenges as a change practice and as part of a coherent change strategy. For example, the University of Michigan foundational course initiative was aiming for large-scale changes, and the photographs helped them establish a baseline from which to measure such change: “Martin observed and photographed twenty distinct teaching and learning spaces, including large lecture auditoriums, small discussion sections, labs, office hours, peer-led study groups and writing consultations, exam halls, and instructional team meetings. Our three-day agenda enabled documentation of the multifaceted student-student, instructor-student, and instructor-instructor interactions that are typical in these mammoth operations.” Whereas people at the University of Michigan sought a more thorough understanding of a particular kind of teaching

and learning environment, at Caltech they helped remedy a mismatch between reality and shared conceptions. Getting Martin into real classes helped to change and expand the institution's shared conceptual model of teaching. It may be a cliché, but being able to show today's teaching environment to varied campus stakeholders through photographs was worth many thousands of words.

Others have built photography into their organizational change strategies. At Wayne State University, "as a part of making teaching a more public and dynamic aspect of campus life, *The Teaching and Learning Project* made a discernable and important impact on warming up the climate for talking about teaching and learning in a kinder, friendlier way. The outgrowths of this program led to other complementary initiatives, too, such as our burgeoning Thank-a-Teacher program and the faculty-led Wayne State University Academy of Teachers." At Brown University, the photographs contributed to a shared identity among Sheridan Center staff as leaders of organizational change: "We are located in a library, and having photos of our work in action gives passersby a glimpse of what happens in a workshop, class, small-group consultation, or tutoring session. They make our work visible. As facilitators, these photos have prompted our reflection on the work of Sheridan Center staff and capture how we are agents of change on our own campuses." This self-recognition is an empowering form of support for academic staff doing transformational, but sometimes invisible, work to improve teaching and learning.



### 7.15

*The Teaching and Learning Project photographs on permanent display in a center for teaching and learning at a doctoral institution. (Reproduced by permission from Ching Lee.)*



### 7.16

*Staff in a center for teaching and learning at a doctoral institution prepare prints from The Teaching and Learning Project for display during an annual teaching and learning summit. (Reproduced by permission from the University of Virginia Center for Teaching Excellence.)*



## Making Photographs in Your Context

At this point, we hope you are excited about the possibility of incorporating authentic, documentary-style photographs into your efforts to change and improve communication, community, and educational practice within your own context. In addition to those already mentioned elsewhere, the online resources associated with this volume, available at <https://www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org/books/what-teaching-looks-like>, include samples of the following often-requested artifacts and materials. We find that when starting to make photographs of postsecondary teaching and learning, these examples support those efforts, even as you may need to adapt the exact language and formats for your institution:

- “**Guide to Making Photographs in Higher Education**”—A short guide to making photographs of teaching and learning in a documentary style within higher education institutions, including working with professional photographers and those in training.
- “**Sample Photograph Release Form**” for subjects appearing in photographs.
- “**Close Reading and Observation Exercises**”—Prompts to use with specific photographs and sequences of photographs for use in reflection and discussion on educational practices (e.g., one-on-one and in educational/professional development programs).
- “**Photography-Based Instructional Consultation Prompts**”—A guide to using photographs as part of individual consultations on teaching, particularly with the same instructors whose classes appear in the images.

In addition, we refer you to the discussion and references in the introduction to this volume related to creating long-form descriptive text to accompany pho-

tographs, so that your use of images may be as accessible as possible for members of your community.

## **Future Roles of Photographs**

Beyond supporting positive change within institutions, we believe that photographs have as-yet-unimagined roles to play in contributing to and shaping modern narratives about higher education. With new urgency, images like these have a place in building public trust, communicating the purposes and potentials of postsecondary education, and in advancing the sense of belonging and inclusion for diverse students, faculty, and staff. They also hold the promise of helping the higher education community grapple with its shortcomings and move forward collectively, with both intellectual and affective commitment, through the new ways of seeing that photographs make possible.

The recognition of the power of images is growing within institutions of higher education. We have started to see postsecondary organizations embracing the metaphor of thinking through images, as with the Association of American Colleges and Universities effort to better define and communicate “What Liberal Education Looks Like” (AAC&U 2020). Viji Sathy, a teaching professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, brings her photographic practice into classrooms, focusing on “visual representations of inclusiveness in educational spaces” (Sathy, n.d.). A growing number of faculty across disciplines, not only in the arts, are harnessing the power of photographs, both to enhance and reflect on their teaching practices. And with those photographs come new discussions with communications professionals about the ways in which authentic images can support institutional missions and goals.

Building on these new directions, we hope that postsecondary teachers, staff, administrators, and students are left with a sense of empowerment. Whether you

endeavor to make photographs yourself, collaborate with students and faculty in a nearby art department, or use this volume and accompanying online resources to launch professional learning communities exploring photography in higher education, the images you make about your own educational context and experiences will have the potential to open up new conversations and collaborations within and beyond your institutions. May our understanding of what teaching looks like continue to evolve alongside our educational practices, with and through photographs that reflect the beauty and complexity of higher education.



**7.17**

*A classroom at a doctoral institution is empty, quiet, and ready for students to arrive.*