

*What Teaching Looks Like: Higher Education Through Photographs.* By Cassandra Volpe Horii and Martin Springborg. Elon, NC: Elon University Center for Engaged Learning. 336p. Open access.

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I once received an e-mail from a student with a photograph she had taken of her computer screen. She had a question about analyzing her data but included a sentence to the effect 'I'm not just doing this assignment at a bar, I'm at work' referring to the fact that various food and beverages were visible in the photo behind her computer screen. Teaching occurs in many settings and contexts, with some more intentionally designed to facilitate learning than others. In this case, the alternative to our e-mail exchange resolving this coding problem with the student at work and me working on my couch at home was for the student to put off doing the assignment until she could come into office hours which, given her work schedule, would have been days later.

Cassandra Volpe Horii and Martin Springborg leverage photographs as ways to experience the modalities of and hidden work inherent in teaching and learning, thereby prompting all manner of stakeholders in higher education --- from faculty, to students, to community members, to elected representatives --- to re-envision what both teaching and learning look like for today's students and faculty. The primary advantage to this approach is that it freezes moments in time for further examination. Whereas faculty members might only notice a few of the potentially hundreds of students that they are teaching in a given moment, photographs invite the reader to pause and reflect about what teaching and learning mean. As Springborg reflects in a photograph of notes he took during a classroom observation, to an extent, photographing the process of teaching and learning romanticizes the endeavor (118). At the same time, much of the allure of the photographs and their accompanying narrative is in imagining what happens next, after the photograph was taken. Photographs cultivate an undeniable interest in how the students and faculty in the frame continue the teaching and learning process and innovate and improve on a particular photographed moment in time.

The book is organized thematically, with each chapter asking readers to approach photographs about teaching from different perspectives. Chapter 1 discusses capturing images of the classroom generally. From there, each chapter addresses specific teaching themes. Chapter 2 challenges readers to think about faculty-student interactions within a learner-centered framework (i.e., from the student perspective). Chapters 3 and 4 cover the in-class environment, with Chapter 3 focusing on the chaotic nature of learning and Chapter 4 addressing technology and physical space in the classroom. Chapters 5 and 6 broaden the scope of teaching beyond the traditional classroom setting, emphasizing community service-learning and the hidden work and preparation that goes into creating a space to teach and to learn. Finally, Chapter 7 provides suggestions for using photographs to spur conversations and spark organizational change.

The authors clearly state that the text accompanies the photographs, and no one photograph is limited in its interpretation to a specific chapter and, therefore, theme of the book. Indeed, the book is best read straight through several times instead of breaking it up by chapter. Viewing all the photographs while pondering the questions raised in the chapters helps illustrate how each of the chapter themes are indeed intertwined. For example, the authors describe a learner-centered approach and later depict outdoor classroom spaces for courses in social science disciplines (173). But as someone who has taught at an institution with a prominent agriculture

program, I think of our *Animal Disaster Response* course where students in rafts practice rescuing inflatable dogs on a lake. This course is an example of cultivating a learner-centered environment that falls outside of the traditional classroom walls. As the photographs meld together, opportunities to combine their approaches in ways like *Animal Disaster Response* become evident.

The authors find and the photographs show that faculty experience similar opportunities and challenges across disciplines. To illustrate the power of the book's photographs, I highlight three images that convey themes from other disciplines that are particularly relevant to social science. First, teaching and learning are active endeavors. A series of photographs from a culinary arts program (217-222) shows students planning and preparing a meal. Social science is full of (usually less delicious) activity that can be incorporated in and out of the classroom. Second, as social science continues to leverage technology and methodological training, these techniques work in concert with broader discussions about theories and ideas. The authors show computer information systems students in a computer lab classroom space having a discussion with one another across their computer screens (181). This photograph alludes to the fact that classroom spaces built for teaching statistical software should still include student-centered discussions and interactive pedagogical approaches. Third, good teaching pedagogy may mean that classroom power dynamics are relatively flat, with students taking charge of their own learning. In a photograph of an engineering class discussion, any one of the individuals pictured could be the faculty member, as everyone is engaging with the topic in a similar way and with similar intensity (80).

While Horii and Springborg center their work on what *teaching* looks like, the sub-title of the book 'higher education through photographs' presents many opportunities for extending the photography as pedagogical tool concept to encompass the higher education landscape more fully. Several photographs hint at broader challenges --- a meeting with staff about finances (262) or promoting interdisciplinarity (16) --- but these topics deserve to be explored through photographs in their own right and integrated into a broader conversation about how postsecondary institutions facilitate teaching and learning. Indeed, reading this book is valuable because it sparks new ideas about perspectives that faculty, staff, and administrators may want to explore with photographs to obtain a more complete view of postsecondary education.

Chapter 6 emphasizes parts of the hidden work that faculty do, but, as the example at the beginning of this review describes, students also engage in hidden work that shapes their learning experience. Indeed, Horii and Springborg address these challenges and several photographs provide in-class illustrations (e.g., 109 depicting a sleepy student). Leveraging the student-co-creation model could help to bring further balance to this conversation. For example, a reflective portfolio assignment that asks students to write about their thoughts and experiences as a course progresses can include an option to add photos or videos. When I have asked students to complete portfolio assignments, they tend to use about half of the space in the portfolio to focus on course content, while the other half of the portfolio emphasizes the *process of learning* in a way that photographs could enhance.

Hidden work is not constrained to faculty and students. Indeed, successful teaching and learning experiences rely on support from staff and community partners. The posters that a faculty member and student are preparing to hang before class (123) likely required assistance from library or information technology staff to print. Similarly, an administrative professional or campus catering employees probably bought the bananas provided at the departmental meeting (240). The authors discuss the technological constraints of older or multi-use spaces, and the

photographs represent buildings from a wide variety of time periods (152). Notably, the spaces photographed do not appear to be in obvious disrepair thanks to the hidden work of maintenance and housekeeping staff. However, hidden work is required to secure funding to maintain those buildings, an increasing challenge, particularly at many small and/or publicly funded institutions.

Finally, the authors demonstrate the reach and impact of postsecondary institutions on the communities of which they are a part. Photographs of physician assistant students working at a community free clinic (e.g., 211) show how teaching and learning can occur in community settings. These images prompt thinking about the role of students, faculty, and the institution in the community. Institutions often provide valuable services and resources to the community, but also may rely on community support to function effectively. As many communities rely more heavily on institutional presence to drive economic growth and social mobility, photographs of the institution in the community raise questions about the impact of enrollment challenges and institutional closures. It is in this mindset of the all-encompassing ecosystem of higher education that Horii and Springborg provide an innovative model for institutional reflection and planning. Combined with tips on how to incorporate photographs into any institutions pedagogical discourse, the authors give face and meaning to performance benchmarks and metrics in a way that reminds faculty of the joy, struggle, and complexity of teaching and learning.

Notes on contributor:

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