

# TEACHING HISTORY FORUM: THE AMATEUR HOUR

## INTRODUCTION

In 2004, David Pace's seminal paper, "The Amateur in the Operating Room: History and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," appeared in the *American Historical Review*.<sup>1</sup> In this essay's opening paragraphs, Pace distinguished between two imagined historians: One had access to "state-of-the-art knowledge" and designed lectures that were part of a "collective enterprise" to which generations of experts had contributed; the other worked almost completely in isolation, relying on "folk beliefs about the subject" and "impressionistic" uses of evidence. His quick revelation to readers that these two historians were actually the same individual and his recognition that "the transition from amateur to expert that occurred long ago in the realm of research had not yet been completed in that of teaching" set the stage for Pace to identify, over the course of the essay, a vision for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History and to make specific suggestions for research in History-SoTL.

The eminent historian of education, Jonathan Zimmerman, recognizes the chasm Pace identified in the discipline of history and places it in the larger context of college teaching in his 2020 book, *The Amateur Hour: A History of College Teaching in America*. In this special section of *Teaching History*, we asked fellow historian of education, Robert Hampel, to review Zimmerman's book. We then provided Hampel's review and Zimmerman's monograph to four historians whose scholarship incorporates the teaching of history, asking them to comment on how Zimmerman's work might have an influence on their teaching today. The contributions by Cate Denial, David Gerber, Jessamyn Neuhaus, and Keith Pluymers articulate the continuing complexity and challenges of college teaching and—importantly—demonstrate that scholarly teachers need not feel alone. As members of a growing community that increasingly draws upon evidence to inform its practice, these historians provide readers of *Teaching History* with practical examples, realistic appraisals of existing conditions, calls for purposeful support, and inspiring resources from which all teachers of history can draw.

Sarah Drake Brown & Richard Hughes, Editors

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<sup>1</sup>David Pace, "The Amateur in the Operating Room: History and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," *American Historical Review* 109, no 4 (October 2004): 1171-1192.