

Good Beginnings: Launching *Imagining SoTL*

Writing this introduction is an exciting moment, as we prepare to launch this new SoTL journal. It intends to provide a forum to highlight the work shared at the annual Banff Symposium for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. We called it *Imagining*, because of the inspirational Blackfoot translation of MRU's Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, offered by Leo Fox, *ksimstaani*. Thus, the journal is called *Imagining SoTL: Selections from the Banff Symposium*. We intend to speak to the aspirational nature of SoTL, its inherent hopefulness.

When the editorial board and I began this project, it was pre-pandemic. We had no idea in November, 2019, at the Symposium, what 2020 would bring. These papers were conceptualized in that before-time, but all of the work of review and revision happened while all of us were coping with a radically changed and changing context. In this sense, I and the editorial board are especially proud to bring this first issue to light, and appreciate the tenacity of the authors through this tumultuous period.

This first issue includes ten articles. They demonstrate the breadth of scholarship inherent in SoTL: in methodology, in discipline, in context. Methodologically, this issue spans quantitative and qualitative approaches, including such methodologies as applied hermeneutics, narrative inquiry, and post-structural approaches. Disciplines represented include health sciences, STEM, justice studies, general education, social work, faculty development, education, and studies that span an institution. All authors presented at the 2019 Banff SoTL Symposium (Engaging Students, Engaging Faculty), but hail from across Alberta, Canada, and one article from the U.S.

Several of these articles take a close look at pedagogies that make a difference in student learning. In pages 130-145, Anderson takes a deep dive into the use of Student Responses Systems in STEM, while Fantazir and Bartley (pages 3-24) present a compelling look at the gamification of a Justice Studies course. McCrory-Churchill and Clay (pages 25-40) research the difference in a writing intensive course, between providing ongoing feedback to students versus late semester feedback, showing the difference that feedback can make to students' reflective learning.

Some articles leave us with more questions than answers, such as Easton and Hewson's (pages 41-57) theorization of students' creation of Canadian superheroes, exploring the complexity of student perceptions of national identity and exposing some of the narratives we tell ourselves – a conversation never more urgent than now.

Three articles lean into the faculty development side of SoTL, with Hamilton and Simmons (pages 58-76) describing the revitalization of mid-career faculty through engagement in SoTL, while Simmons and Simmons (pages 122-129) explore the possibilities in using theatrical approaches in a SoTL workshop. Grant, Fedoruk, and Nowell (pages 146-162) reflect on engagements in authentic assessment practice.

Finally, three articles have at the forefront students and faculty members engaging in new ways. Popovic, Kim, Saleh, and Farrugia (pages 99-115) offer a narrative account of research partnership between faculty members and undergraduate students. Haney, Dean, Chronik, and Creig explore their partnership through an audio piece (short narrative found pages 116-121, along with the link to the audio) and we are excited to include this alternative format as part of our inaugural issue. Finally, Field, Blackman, and Francois (pages 77-98) explore nuances of the graduate student – supervisor relationship.

As I consider the ground covered by these articles at the close of 2020, I feel hopeful. The year has brought another change – the Institute has been restructured and renamed. We are honoured with the gifting of a Blackfoot name from Miiksika’am, Elder Clarence Wolfleg, and become the Mokakiiks Centre for SoTL. This word means ‘lodge for wisdom’ – a place where wise people gather to learn together, become more wise, and pass this wisdom on to future generations. Publication of this issue is our first act under the new name, and we might think of this journal as a kind of wisdom lodge itself, where learning about teaching is created and shared for the benefit of faculty members’ practice and the students they teach.

I would like to take the opportunity here to thank those who walked with me in making this journal a reality: the editorial board (Karen Manarin, Erika Smith, Deb Bennett, and Cherie Woolmer); our copyeditor, Angela Waldie, and our production assistants Julianna Gagliardi and Bree Smith. A thank you too to the support of the Library at MRU in creating an open access journal, and in particular, Richard Hayman.

We have had to postpone the 10th annual Symposium for SoTL to 2021. We look forward to seeing you there.

Michelle Yeo, PhD

Editor-in-Chief

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