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Letter from the Editors

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Letter from the Editors

Abstract

This issue of The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 13(3) presents nine research articles and one essay on SoTL. The disciplines considered in these studies are disparate: Interior Design, Civil Engineering, History, Architecture, Computer Information Systems, Entrepreneurship, Human Resources Management, and Preservice Teacher Education. One study offers a multi-disciplinary analysis of “competence” in ten different professions. The sole essay here discusses the interstices of SoTL and the promotion of social justice on campus. As editors, we have strived to offer you a wide variety of subject disciplines in which studies take place, but we insist that authors firmly ground their work not merely within the pedagogy of their field, but within the discipline of SoTL itself. We are always heartened by the quality and quantity of work that reflects on our instructional practices, both in and beyond our disciplines. But we’re especially excited when SoTL itself can be connected to particularized historical moments and movements, as it is in the essay here on social justice interventions.

With this issue, IJSoTL concludes our transitional volume (13). We’ve now officially moved from publishing in July and January to publishing in May and November. So our next volume (14) will contain our usual two issues, published within a timeframe that is more aligned to the traditional academic semester schedule. When we were planning this issue, over a year ago, we worried that pushing out three issues in one volume might cause us to dip too deep into our pool of submissions, and we would thus be forced to accept work of lesser quality just to fill the volume. But our fears were unfounded, as is evidenced by the articles in this issue.

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Dear Colleagues,

This issue of *The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 13(3) presents nine research articles and one essay on SoTL. The disciplines considered in these studies are disparate: Interior Design, Civil Engineering, History, Architecture, Computer Information Systems, Entrepreneurship, Human Resources Management, and Preservice Teacher Education. One study offers a multi-disciplinary analysis of “competence” in ten different professions. The sole essay here discusses the interstices of SoTL and the promotion of social justice on campus. As editors, we have strived to offer you a wide variety of subject disciplines in which studies take place, but we insist that authors firmly ground their work not merely within the pedagogy of their field, but within the discipline of SoTL itself. We are always heartened by the quality and quantity of work that reflects on our instructional practices, both in and beyond our disciplines. But we’re especially excited when SoTL itself can be connected to particularized historical moments and movements, as it is in the essay here on social justice interventions.

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In our last letter (vol. 13, no. 2) we reviewed our readership data and were rightly proud of our wide international distribution. We noted that half of the countries with the highest readership can be considered part of the Global South. With this issue, those readership numbers have shifted a bit. Over 100,000 *IJSoTL* articles were downloaded from November 2018 to November 2019, which is a bit of a dip for us. But our international audience has broadened significantly. In the trailing year, six of the ten countries where we have the greatest readership are within the Global South.

It’s no surprise that readers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia downloaded over 47,000 articles in the previous year. They’re English-speaking, developed, and part—if not the bulk—of the Global North. But they are joined in the top ten by readers from countries where those qualifiers are only partly true: the Philippines, Indonesia, India, South Africa, Nigeria, and Malaysia. Readers from these countries accessed over 21,000 articles last year.

There’s a reason why that information has such outsized importance for us. Beyond nodding to the necessities of our own individual career paths, where many of us must produce scholarship and publish it in order to maintain or improve our academic positions, scholarship is essentially service. It’s a very rarefied type of service, but since it does not exist solely to promote our own careers, it is service nevertheless. No author publishes hoping that their work will not be read. If an academic author publishes in peer-reviewed journals for the untold wealth and fame that accompany such an endeavor, then surely they’ve been deceived about both the cultural significance and the financial rewards of this life. And yet, week after week, issue after issue, this journal continues to receive quality submissions from around the globe, with little or no fanfare, solid material that will help us to more effectively guide a generation who will inherit local, national, and international problems that are inevitably expanding into crises. We can’t think of a global concern (food insecurity, climate change, water scarcity, human trafficking, pollution, etc.) that does not have a far greater negative impact on the Global South than on the Global North. Students from these countries will need to be equipped to address issues we can’t even imagine yet. So every effort at improvement, every nuanced method of instruction, every tip, tweak, twist, or thought that positively affects the work of educators in the Global South is a small addition to the collection of material that is slowly being shaped into the foundation of our hope for the future.

We’re not delusional about our own position in this state of things. We don’t think that any global crisis will be solved by a mixed method double-blind stratified random study of the negative effects on student learning caused by the smell of food wafting from the school’s dining hall. But we, and you, are nevertheless doing something meaningful; authors allow readers to become more effective instructors, and more effective instructors better empower the students who will confront the challenges we are leaving for them. Circumstances conspire to make concern about the effectiveness of education a more urgent issue for the Global South than it is for the Global North. The fact that more and more educators, administrators, and policy makers from the Global South are turning to evidence-based methods and solutions as they seek to improve their post-secondary institutions offers hope for development at both the national and international levels. We think of this journal as a vehicle aiding that process in some small way.

But we’re also not doing this by ourselves. The members of our Editorial Board are crucial partners in maintaining our high standards for academic rigor and writing in *IJSoTL*. If you’re interested in joining us as a member of the Editorial Board, or know of a colleague who might be, please post to us at sotlij@georgiasouthern.edu.

Respectfully,

Delena Bell Gatch, Delores D. Liston, and Joe Pellegrino
Editors