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Making Substantial Contributions: Looking Ahead to ISSOTL Annual Conference

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The annual conference is fast approaching. Submissions have been completed. Reviewing is about to start. The Organising Committee and the Planning Committee are working hard to ensure that we have another excellent conference. But what is, or should be, the role of a conference on the scholarship of teaching and learning?

In an article published in 2000, Keith and I and our colleagues Elaine Martin and Joan Benjamin described how academic staff experienced the scholarship of teaching and learning. We identified 5 ways in which it was conceived. They were that the scholarship of teaching and learning is about the following:

- A. knowing the literature on teaching by collecting and reading the literature;
- B. improving teaching by collecting and reading the literature on teaching;
- X. improving student learning by investigating the learning of one's own students and one's own teaching;
- Δ. improving one's own students learning by knowing and relating the literature on teaching and learning to discipline-specific literature and knowledge;
- E. improving student learning within the discipline generally, by collecting and communicating results of one's own work on teaching and learning within the discipline.

The key thing to note in these ways of conceiving the scholarship of teaching and learning is the increasing complexity, the move from focusing on teaching to students' learning, and the move from receiving other people's scholarship to creating and making known one's own scholarship.

We would like to think that our annual conference makes a substantial contribution to scholarship as outlined in conceptions E. That is, the conference is a forum in which scholars of teaching and learning within their disciplines and professions make available to their colleagues and peers the results and outcomes of their own scholarly attempts at understanding and improving teaching and students' learning within their own disciplines and professions. At the same time they hear about others' attempts at improving and understanding their students' learning and engage in critical discussion about these attempts.

We would also like to think that the conference is a place where participants are challenged about the way they think about teaching and learning. We would hope that all participants find something that they strongly agree with and something that they strongly disagree with and that they will change their thinking about some aspect of teaching and learning.

We look forward to seeing you all at the conference in October.

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SOTL in the Australasian Region

Michelle Kofod and Jan MacLean, *ISSOTL Australasian Countries Regional Co-VPs*

As many of you will fondly remember, the ISSOTL 2007 conference was held for the first time in the Southern Hemisphere, at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Since then, the Australasian region has continued to be active in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Immediately following the ISSOTL conference, the Higher Education Research and Development Society (HERDSA) held their annual conference, *Enhancing Higher Education, Theory and Scholarship* on 11-15 July 2007, in Adelaide, Australia. For those of you who might be interested in another trip to the southern hemisphere, HERDSA will be holding their conference, *Engaging Communities*, in Rotorua, New Zealand on 1-4 July 2008.

One of the hot topics in SOTL in the Australasian region at the moment is *Threshold Concepts*. As described by Meyer and Land (2003) once these concepts are understood, they are similar to 'passing through a portal, or conceptual gateway, thus opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something.' It was said that these concepts lead to a transformation in the way of understanding, viewing, or thinking in a particular disciplinary context. In 2007, Eric Meyer, one of the founders of *Threshold Concepts*, visited Australia to present several workshops on the topic and was keynote speaker at the 2007 National UniServe Conference (26-28 September). In 2008, the Threshold Concepts Conference will be held on 18-20 June, at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. This conference is expected to attract a lot of attention from the Australasian contingency.

In the effort to extend the international recognition and engagement in learning and teaching, the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite), held their 24th annual conference for the first time in Southeast Asia, at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (2-5 December 2007). The theme for the conference was *ICT: Providing choices for learners and learning*, and it focused on the providing engaging learning environments for a diversity of learners, through use of ICT in higher education.

Another area of interest, hot off the press, is the Australian Council for Educational Research Limited (ACER) report on *Attracting, Engaging and Retaining: New Conversations about Learning* (April 2008). This report presents an overview on the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) which was administered for the first time in 2007 and to over 25 institutions across Australia and New Zealand. This survey will enable powerful international benchmarking against the US National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is conducted in over 1,200 US and Canadian higher education

institutions. The full AUSSE 2007 report can be found at www.acer.edu.au/ausse/.

At the ISSOTL 2007 conference, a recurring theme was that we should be encouraging and supporting student involvement in SOTL. Thus, arising from the discussions at the ISSOTL 2007 conference and under the initiation of Kathy Takayama (ISSOTL 2007 conference convener and previous Australasian VP), scholarships have been established to assist postgraduate students' participation in SOTL and their attendance at international SOTL conferences in the future. It is hoped that investing in our future colleagues will ensure the expansion and longevity of SOTL in the Australasian region.

One of the hot topics in SOTL in the Australasian region at the moment is Threshold Concepts.

Australia's national body in learning and teaching, The Carrick Institute in Higher Education, has recently been renamed the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. They will continue to actively support SOTL in the higher education sector with support in the following:

- Funding discipline-specific research into the teaching and learning, e.g. Science in Australian Universities, Physics, Psychology and Biotechnology;
- Providing recognition in excellence in teaching and learning in higher education, e.g., Carrick Citation Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning, Carrick Awards for Australian University Teaching (CAAUT);
- Providing funding opportunities for SOTL activities, e.g., Competitive Grants, Priority projects and Leadership funding; the Launch of the Learning Networks Initiative, which is designed to strengthen the opportunity for people with similar interests to collaborate; and
- The instigation of a new program, Promoting Excellence Initiative, which is designed to increase the quality of SOTL applications for grant and awards.

Finally, but definitely not least, the Australasian Region welcomes Emeritus Professor Adrian Lee as the new Australasian Regional Vice-President for ISSOTL commencing in July 2008. We have both worked extensively with Adrian during his years as Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) at the University of New South Wales. The enthusiasm and dedication that he will bring to the position will be of benefit to everyone who will be involved in ISSOTL during his reign. We wish him all the very best in his new role.

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To submit SOTL news, stories, events, photographs, or responses to articles in *The International Commons*, email editor Nancy Chick at Nancy.Chick@uwc.edu.

Some Reflections from Early ISSOTL through Tomorrow

Mick Healey, *ISSOTL European Countries Regional VP*

After five years working with ISSOTL, my roles as a founding member and then Vice President (Europe) are coming to an end, so it seems an appropriate time for a little reflection.

I well remember in 2003 receiving an email from Craig Nelson inviting me to join a SOTL group he was proposing establishing, which at the time was largely a North American venture. I wrote back enthusiastically and suggested it was a good opportunity to establish an international society and said I could give him emails of 50 or more potential members, largely from UK and Australasia. So was born the idea, which in October 2004 was formalised into ISSOTL at the inaugural conference at Bloomington, Indiana (US).

Since then we have held three more conferences in Vancouver (Canada), Washington D.C. (US), and Sydney (Australia), and we are shortly to return to Canada to Edmonton for the fifth annual conference. Much of my job as VP Europe has been encouraging colleagues to engage with ISSOTL, and I am delighted that we attracted approximately 60 people from the UK to each of the last two conferences. In Sydney, I think my own university won the prize for the most people (eight) from one institution outside Australasia participating at the conference.

An important development for ISSOTL was the development of its newsletter, *The International Commons*. Nancy Chick, as editor, has done a grand job in attracting a wide range of short interesting pieces. As well as persuading colleagues to write for the newsletter, I've contributed articles on a range of topics including "SOTL in the UK: Some Unsung Developments," "International Collaboration as a Way of Exploring and Writing about Teaching and Learning: A Discipline-Based Model from Geography," "Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: A Model for National Investment in Higher Education," and "Discipline-Based Approaches to SOTL."

As ISSOTL matures as a scholarly society, it will need to continue to strive to be a truly international society. One of the main challenges my successor Dr. Joelle Fanghanel (J.Fanghanel@city.ac.uk) faces as Vice-President (Europe) is extending membership in Europe beyond the UK, Eire, and Scandinavia, where most are currently based. This task will be helped in 2010 by the location of the ISSOTL Annual Conference in Europe for the first time. Please support Joelle in her new role, and pass her the names of your European contacts.



Review of Symposium *Unspoken Interactions: Exploring the Role of Emotions, Interactions, and Embodied Knowledge*

Alison James, *London College of Fashion (UK)*



CREATIVE LEARNING IN PRACTICE
CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN
TEACHING AND LEARNING

Explicit recognition of the emotions in learning can sometimes be seen as radical territory and an area sometimes either reserved for those in pastoral roles, or better left alone as delicate ground. In the creative arts, however, the emotions are inextricably intertwined with the process of self-actualisation; this was clearly demonstrated in December 2007 at the CLIP CETL (Creative Learning in Practice Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) one-day symposium entitled 'Unspoken Interactions,' which explored the role of emotions, interactions, and embodied knowledge in practice-based subjects. The international significance of the event was embodied in the keynote speaker, Dr. Noam Austerlitz, who created a framework for the day with his excellent opening lecture on the outcomes of his Ph.D. research. This centred on the role of emotions in the design studio and raising awareness of the role of emotions and social interactions in art and design pedagogy. Following his theoretical starting point, 140 participants were able to choose from 20 presentations and workshops delivered by presenters from UAL (University of the Arts London) as well as a variety of other universities across Britain, Ireland, Israel, and Canada. These covered affectivity and effectivity in teaching and learning as well as movement, embodiment, and reflection.

The plenary discussion at the end of the day posed interesting questions as to how to move forward. Staff feedback on the event was overwhelmingly positive, with many calls for more time and repeat symposia on this theme. An offshoot of the symposium is the publication of an anthology of writings by UAL staff and edited by Dr. Austerlitz. Due out in summer 2008, this will include papers based on individual observations and research into the role of emotions in different teaching and learning situations, with commentaries from readers. There will also be a special issue of the *Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education* journal entitled, *Unspoken Interactions: exploring emotions and social interactions in art, design and communication in Higher Education*. Both the anthology and the special issue of the journal will provide a fitting conclusion to this first symposium and ample material to lead to future events.

Defining SOTL: Conceptions Across Disciplines?

Nicola Simmons, *Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo (Canada)*

In the October 2007 *International Commons*, Trigwell and Prosser asked, "What is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?" What is the best way to answer this? There is Boyer's (1990) idea that SOTL is primarily about planning, assessing, and modifying one's teaching. There are Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff's (1997) six criteria for scholarship: evidence of clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. Or perhaps Huber and Hutchings' (2005) description of a process of "framing questions, gathering and exploring evidence, trying out and refining new insights in the classroom, and going public...in ways others can build on?" (p. 21).

Or, turning back to the October 2007 *The International Commons*, what about Trigwell and Prosser's recommendation that SOTL must include "an awareness and articulation of relevant existing scholarship" (p. 1)? Or, the definition proposed by Martin and colleagues (1998), and cited by Healey, that SOTL involves "engagement with the scholarly contributions of others on teaching and learning; reflection on one's own teaching practice and the learning of students within the context of a particular discipline; and communication and dissemination of aspects of practice and theoretical ideas about teaching and learning in general and teaching and learning within the discipline" (p. 10)?

Are these, in fact, simply variations on the same theme? Are there common principles that can be agreed upon? Pondering this question reminds me that SOTL grows from the disciplines (Healey, 2008; Trigwell & Prosser, 2008). I think of the importance of disciplinary frameworks, and of how language and metaphor can frame our understanding. I recall working with a faculty member in chemistry and how her interest in creating collaborative learning groups prompted me to talk about conceptualising the study as being about bonding. Or, suggesting to a physicist that we could play with the idea that the angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection as he considered his teaching practice. It made me think about the importance of having linguistic and conceptual points of entry into disciplines other than my own familiar territory of education and psychology.

This also leads me to wonder whether we should seek a tight definition of SOTL. Would a definition that tends towards guiding principles allow more points of entry for those coming into the work from multiple disciplines, bringing diverse epistemologies and methodological frameworks? I suspect that my disciplinary background, with its associated paradigms, would likely lead me to define SOTL in a way that may not resonate with those from science, arts, engineering, or medicine; definitions that these colleagues might write may or may not resonate with me.

So, my invitation to you is this: Please send me your personal definition of SOTL, perhaps with a short example of the kind of research you pursue (or might pursue) within this framework. Include your discipline, institution, country, and name, and I'll compile them for a future newsletter column so we can celebrate the multiple lenses on SOTL that these varied perspectives provide.

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'On Increasing Representation of People of Color in SOTL': A Response

Kathleen McKinney, *Illinois State University (US)*

I read with interest Janice Liddell's comments on the lack of representation of people of color in SOTL and ISSOTL in the January 2008 issue of *The International Commons*. I agree with her observations and analysis about this issue. She argues that people of color around the world are underrepresented and under involved and that there are two primary reasons: limited resources and lack of knowledge about SOTL and its "transformative potential."

I believe, however, that these same two barriers exist for many individuals at many institutions in many parts of the globe regardless of color or institutional type. It is likely these problems are greater for people of color and at HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities), but



the reasons for limited involvement are a matter of degree. In addition, it seems there are other underrepresented groups in SOTL work and our organization. These groups might include graduate students, faculty/staff from various parts of the world, and faculty/staff from certain types of institutions.

That said, I think Liddell is also correct that ISSOTL and its members can help with this underrepresentation. Below I offer a few possible ideas leaders in ISSOTL might consider. These ideas are not particularly original; models in other professional organizations already exist. Of course, “the devil is in the details,” but we should be able to adapt and manage some of these strategies.

- Those of us who have contacts and networks in other nations should use these to reach out, informally, to people of color and encourage involvement in SOTL and ISSOTL. We should consider collaborative projects and the sharing of resources.
- On a somewhat more formal level, members could be financial sponsors or mentors of a colleague or graduate student in terms of working on a SOTL project or helping someone attend the meetings.
- ISSOTL could offer partial travel awards to the annual meeting via an application or competitive program.
- As we had in Sydney, practical SOTL workshops could be offered at the annual meetings. We should consider offering these at no cost to the participants and, perhaps, during the heart of the meetings (evenings?) rather than before the meetings begin which increases travel costs.
- We can help provide useful materials such as books on doing SOTL to members of underrepresented groups.
- ISSOTL could assist in funding workshop facilitators to travel to schools and give workshops or assist new SOTL researchers.

How would such initiatives be funded? There are numerous sources of funding—especially using partnerships—though they all rely on the generosity of individuals, ISSOTL, and sponsors such as publishing companies and host universities or communities. A few that readily come to mind include the following:

- authors donate books on SOTL purchased using their author discounts;
- meeting hosts (universities or communities) offer registration discounts;
- ISSOTL members contribute via the membership renewal system to a foundation that awards various travel or membership grants;
- publishing companies that work with members of ISSOTL donate SOTL books or sponsor travel grants to ISSOTL;
- authors donate a percentage of book royalties to various programs;
- partnerships between ISSOTL and corporate sponsors for various programs such as speaker travel or fees; and
- workshop facilitators waive honorariums.

One way to get involved with ISSOTL is to form an ISSOTL Interest Group: organize 10 or more ISSOTL members with shared interests such as discipline, pedagogy under study, nationality, region of residence, educational status, and institutional type. The Society particularly encourages Interest Groups with international membership and non-traditional groupings based on research interests. Go to the ISSOTL website (www.issotl.org), and clicking “Get Involved.”

ISSOTL is still a young organization, and we face a variety of opportunities and challenges. We would do well to consider the underrepresentation of people of color and other underrepresented groups in SOTL work and in ISSOTL, and strategies for improving this situation.

Creative Tension: Shepherding the Evolution of a Community of Practice

Phyllis S. Gleason, *Middlesex Community College (US)*

“Never use the word suddenly just to create tension—Writing Fiction’ Suddenly, you were planting some yellow petunias/ outside in the garden,/ and suddenly I was in the study/looking up the word oligarchy for the thirty-seventh time.”

—“Tension,” Billy Collins

When one thinks of scholarship, an image of isolation often occurs. We suddenly imagine the scholar slumped over a stack of books, glued to a computer screen oblivious to the world around him, or apart from the world in some other way

attached only to some esoteric topic that no one else is either interested in or fully understands. We don't see the tension that he feels; we don't realize the tension between his vision for his work and the goals that he has for it. Because he is alone, we don't feel anything until he finishes his work and we read about it or hear about it at a conference.

The scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL), on the other hand, should evoke a totally different image. Shulman (1993) said SOTL requires "community...an artifact, a product, some form of community property that can be shared, discussed, critiqued, exchanged, built on" (p. 7). Communal by its very nature, SOTL, therefore, while respecting disciplinary differences, transcends them, thereby breaking down many of the academic isolating factors.

Creating and Sustaining the Community of Practice

In 1998, Middlesex Community College (MCC) began a journey that has lasted for 10 years. Beginning with the enthusiasm of one Carnegie Scholar, Donna Duffy, the group became well established over the first five years (Gleason and Klein, 2004); it's interesting to reflect on the factors that enable this group to continue and to grow.

Whereas the individual scholar evokes an image of isolation, the scholarship of teaching and learning evokes several different images and metaphors: the Community of Practice (CoP) follows the stages of development outlined in Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002). New CoPs, for instance, explore "potential." The metaphor here is often like a journey, where there are stops and starts, and sudden turns; the "coalescing" stage evokes an image of Henri Matisse's "The Dance." The creative tension involves both ideas and personalities: ownership, sharing, and empathy. When the group is "in step," it goes forward smoothly.

As the group "matures," Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) note, it becomes focused and expands; it also personifies Senge's (1994) description of a learning organization because if it is to be sustained, it must rely on creative tension, and shared vision. According to Senge, "Shared visions emerge from personal visions. This is how they derive their energy and how they foster commitment" (p. 211). People who are compliant accept the vision, whereas people who are committed want the vision. It is theirs. SOTL is a shared vision, and few "forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision" (206).

Unlike Billy Collin's suggestion that the writer refrain from using words alone to create tension which then becomes artificial, creating and balancing CoPs are fraught with various kinds of real tensions. "Stewardship" (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002) during the evolution of a CoP, for instance, involves tensions between continuing senior scholars' motivation and interest in the group and continuing to expand, while at the same time indoctrinating, acclimating, and edu-

cating scholars who are new to the CoP.

For the SOTL group at MCC, the vision is creating more effective teaching and learning, and reflecting on the value that that work can have. There is what Tony Ciccone (2008) described as the tension between the "dual purpose" of SOTL: seeking to *understand* teaching and learning and trying to *improve* teaching and learning (emphasis mine).

At MCC, our CoP is definitely changing how teachers teach. We currently have two Teaching, Learning and Reflection Centers—one at each campus—where institutes and workshops are ongoing to "reflect" on teaching and learning practices. One member of the group works in Professional Development, which is reaching out to both curricular and co-curricular areas to help folks create intentional learning experiences for students both inside and outside of the classroom. Our SOTL group has expanded to include a disability support specialist who works with Asperger's students and is completing research on how best to help those students acclimate to college life. We have an assessment specialist whose work includes classroom assessment but also encompasses program and institutional level assessment. Broadening the scope of our research areas increases our possible impact and "reflects a healthy tension within the SOTL community in defining the works as both a scholarship of discovery and a scholarship of application" (Ciccone, 2008).

Shared vision does not always result in concord. According to Senge, creative tension between the vision and current reality (which could be the academy or a particular college or university) is demonstrated by using a metaphor of a rubber band, which is held tautly between two hands held in front of you. One hand should be putting tension in an upward motion (vision) while the other pulls in a downward motion (current reality). The creative tension is just at the point when the elastic goes beyond being taut and is almost stretched to breaking.

Senge says that if you want to alleviate this tension, you either have to lower the vision or raise the current reality. At MCC, we are definitely raising the current reality.

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On any given day, you may suddenly walk into the Teaching, Learning, and Reflection Center at MCC and come upon a group of SOTL Community of Practice scholars who, through their shared vision, are grappling with issues and challenging

ideas and assumptions while at the same time engaging in mutual respect, support, and commitment. They are indeed shepherding the evolution of a CoP.

Broadening SOTL Involvement and Application through Grants: Moving Toward Greater Impact

Kathleen McKinney, *Illinois State University (US)*

At Illinois State University, as in many institutions of higher education, we offer small grants for conducting SOTL research. Our SOTL grant program began in the mid- to late 1990s and was originally quite flexible in terms of eligible applicants and the definition of the SOTL “tent.” Over time, the program has evolved and been used as a push toward social change on campus. This is possible by structuring various aspects of the grant guidelines—who is eligible, topic priorities, level of funding, and required obligations in terms of making the work public.

Thus, we began by shifting the grants from a very wide view of SOTL that actually included SOTL, scholarly teaching, and teaching improvement/techniques to SOTL as the systematic study/reflection of teaching and learning made public (our campus definition). Next, we made the decision to move from individual to small team grants requiring, in various years and depending on our goals, a colleague from another discipline, a colleague from the same discipline/department, and/or an undergraduate or graduate student on each research team. As Illinois State University became more explicitly involved with wanting the student voice in SOTL, the requirement of at least one student research partner remained. We also began by leaving open the topics or teaching problems addressed in the studies. We then moved to requiring that the topics explicitly link to other university goals or initiatives such as the values in our new strategic plan. When we as an institution became especially interested in learner autonomy due to our latest strategic plan and faculty teaching concerns, for three years the topic of the SOTL grants was limited to learner autonomy, broadly defined.

As we began to think more about impact, we made two additional types of changes in the grant program. First, we strengthened the required “making public” aspects of receiving a grant. We moved from the single and local requirement of filing an internal report to adding the requirement of making a local or other presentation to adding to both of these the submission of a newsletter or journal article (or discipline-appropriate product). Most recently, recipients must also create a KEEP Tool Kit web snapshot that is linked to our SOTL web page.

Second, after several years of individual and small team grants, we believed that our impact was still limited to just a

few individuals in some departments doing SOTL work related to their classes. This is, of course, critical work but we wanted to move beyond this relatively isolated work with important but limited impact. We also wanted to make this work more visible to the broader campus community. Thus, our latest grant program is the Department/School Initiative in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant Program. Applications must come from departments or schools (a minimum of three faculty/academic staff and two students must be involved) and awards go to the department/school. Department SOTL initiatives include work that provides the opportunity and resources for multiple people in a department/school to be involved in one or more connected SOTL projects. The initiatives will provide information on teaching and learning at the class, course, or program level which will be applied to improve student learning in the discipline. These initiatives may involve engaging in original SOTL research and application and/or conducting thorough literature reviews, integration and synthesis of existing SOTL work, and application of that knowledge to the department/school. For example, a department heavily invested in the use of a new pedagogical strategy in several courses may propose a set of original SOTL studies on that strategy. Or a school may propose to search, read, summarize, and apply the extant SOTL work on an issue critical to student learning in their field. Or a department might apply disciplinary best practices in curriculum and pedagogy based on the literature, then conduct an original SOTL study(ies) to measure faculty and student perceptions of these changes or learning outcomes related to the changes. Results and applications must be made public in local presentations (department and university levels), disciplinary appropriate outlets/products, and a web snapshot.

We hope this latest version of our SOTL grant program will broaden and strengthen the impact of SOTL on campus, and we continue to think about how to use grant funds to create social change. The guidelines for these department/school level SOTL grants are available at www.sotl.ilstu.edu/funding/sotIDSinit.shtml. A copy of recent small team SOTL grant guidelines is available from me at kmckinne@ilstu.edu. Project titles and/or brief reports or web snapshots of some of our past SOTL projects can be found at www.sotl.ilstu.edu/examples/.

The Future of Research about Teaching and Learning in Canada?

Nicola Simmons, *Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo (Canada)*

In Canada, post-secondary education operates in a bifurcated system: funding for research is primarily provided by the national government through its agencies, while matters pertaining to teaching and learning at all levels are the purview of the provincial governments.

The week of April 24-26 may have seen the beginnings of strengthening connections between the two. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), in conjunction with the national Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), held an event in Ontario to seek input and recommendations from scholars of teaching and learning about future directions for higher education (HE) in Ontario. The event focused on research about student learning in HE, the connection to teaching practice, and what implications might be derived from the symbiotic relationship between the two.

Also in Ontario, the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) has mandated the implementation of learning outcomes for all undergraduate degree programs in the province (see ocav.uwaterloo.ca/). This initiative grew from a desire to put post-secondary accountability measures in place prior to being mandated to do so by the provincial government. How these outcomes will affect student learning remains to be researched.

HEQCO's mandate is to make recommendations to government. STLHE's president, Joy Mighty, and past-president, Julia Christensen Hughes, have the weighty task of synthesizing roundtable discussions from the symposium's two days of keynotes, panel presentations, and group interactions of international and local scholars, including ISSOTL's co-presidents, Mike Prosser and Keith Trigwell.

SOTL Poster Sessions Build Communities of Practice

George Rehrey, *Indiana University (US)*

For the sixth year, the Office of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculties of Indiana University sponsored a springtime event that offered faculty, graduate students, and staff a chance to come together and share their scholarship of teaching and learning. "Recent Work: The SOTL Poster Sessions" was the last in a series of SOTL events taking place during the academic year on the Bloomington campus. Over time the annual poster session has become an informal and interactive way to recognize and celebrate the richness and complexity of a scholarly community dedicated to using evidenced-based practices to understand and improve teaching and learning both within their departments and schools and across the disciplines as well. Scholars were on hand to share their SOTL projects and acknowledge each other's accomplishments while at the same time holding cross-disciplinary conversations in order to build upon each other's findings and to seek out future collaborations.

As in the past, a number of this year's research projects were funded by the Office of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculties and included two multidisciplinary teams that each received SOTL Leadership Awards. These leadership projects exemplify the innovative contributions being made by faculty and staff within the IU-SOTL Commons as well as the variety of approaches taken to address the teaching and learning challenges of the 21st century.

One example of such work is *Food for Thought: An Action Agenda for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, which received a SOTL Leadership Award in 2006. At this year's poster session, they presented the preliminary results of their research, which involved 145 students whose class rank ranged from freshmen to graduate level. Along with the support of George Rehrey from Campus Instructional Consulting, the faculty who worked on this research project included Whitney Schlegel from the Human Biology Program, Victoria Getty from the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Diane Henshel from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Heather Reynolds from the College of Arts and Sciences Biology Department and James Reidhaar from the School of Fine Arts. The purpose of the study was to determine how a unique, multidisciplinary, integrative service-learning model supports and enhances student change in thinking about food and the diverse intersections of food and community. Food literacy was chosen as a model interdisciplinary theme having social, economic, and environmental dimensions at personal to global scales. Student teams drawn from the four courses engaged in both volunteer service and project-based service-learning, with evidence captured from student electronic portfolios analyzed within faculty electronic course portfolios, facilitating a synthesis of student learning and civic engagement outcomes across the four areas of course study. Results to date indicate a transformation in students' understanding of the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of food, a shift in their awareness about the consequences of everyday food choices, and an increased sense of connectedness to the Bloomington community. Furthermore, the multidisciplinary student teams enhanced the quality of service-learning products created for the community partners.



Well over 100 people visited the event this year with 49 presenters collaborating on a total of 17 presentations. As the IU-SOTL Commons continues to expand, the annual poster session has become a tradition for faculty, graduate students, and staff as they bring the spring semester to a close, take stock of the progress made with their scholarship of teaching and learning over the past year, reflect upon the work of their colleagues, and look toward new and exciting intersections and possibilities.

History Learning Project Funded to Help Students with History 'Bottlenecks'

Arlene Díaz, Joan Middendorf, David Pace, and Leah Shopkow, *Indiana University (US)*

Arlene Díaz, Joan Middendorf, David Pace, and Leah Shopkow (three History and one Higher Education Administration faculty members) have been awarded funding for a three-year project to document and improve student learning in history from the Spencer and Teagle Foundations' initiative for Systematic Improvement of Undergraduate Education in Research Universities. Indiana University will also support the project.



These four faculty members created the History Learning Project (HLP) in 2006 to define the kinds of critical thinking required in college history courses. Using the "decoding the disciplines" model, the HLP conducted extensive interviews with history faculty to define critical thinking in the field of history and in the process identified seven main "bottlenecks," places where large numbers of students are unable to master basic concepts or perform crucial operations. These obstacles range from misunderstandings about the nature of historical reasoning to discomfort with historical topics that engender emotional conflicts, and they involve both writing skills and cognitive processes.

The grant project will explore strategies to get past two significant bottlenecks: a) the ways that undergraduates learn to analyze primary sources, a particularly important step in the development of historical reasoning, and b) the creation of original and persuasive written arguments. They anticipate examining not only cognitive but also affective barriers to the clear historical thinking and argument that are a prerequisite to full civic engagement.

The first project team will prepare and teach 100- and 200-level courses to ready students for more advanced work.

They might, for example, create a strategy to help students understand how the same primary document or image could have had a variety of meanings and a rubric for evaluating the extent to which this skill had been mastered by students at various points in the semester. The second team will work in our small, upper-level writing-intensive courses, because of the crucial link between argumentation and writing in history. With the assistance of the Campus Writing Program, the team would devise criterion-based rubrics for judging student success in marshalling evidence in support of their own written arguments across the semester.

For more information on the project, contact Leah Shopkow at 812-855-1938 or shopkowl@indiana.edu. For a fully detailed description of this research project, go to an article in the *Journal of American History* (www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/94.4/diaz.html).

Both the Spencer and Teagle Foundations are strongly committed to advancing the quality of student learning in the liberal arts and sciences, have joined to test this idea by funding efforts to "install a systematic process for evaluating progress, identifying problems, and experimenting with potential improvements." The primary aim of this project is to foster a culture of experimentation and evidence for undergraduate education such that iterative approaches to curricular and pedagogical efforts to enhance student learning become the standard of practice. For more information on the grants, see www.aas.duke.edu/assessment/grants/.

ISSOTL Secretary's Report

Lisa Kornetsky, *Membership & Communications Committee Chair and ISSOTL Secretary*

As my term winds down, I am busy archiving information and communication about Society business and conferences and getting everything ready to pass on to Jeffrey Bernstein, the incoming ISSOTL Secretary. We expect this to be a seamless transition and I know that Jeffrey will do a terrific job.

With the inauguration of the ISSOTL Digest, we now have a

vehicle for members to communicate with one another in multiple ways. Our membership lists have been cleaned up, and we are always looking to improve the way that the Society functions to serve you well. If you have suggestions on ways that we can improve either communication or record-keeping, please feel free to email me at lkornetsky@uwsa.edu.

Festival of Scholarship: Celebrating Collaborative Inquiry

Carmen Werder, *Western Washington University (US)*

The Western Washington University contingent of the CASTL (Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) Institutional Leadership Program's Student Voices themed group sponsored a special conference to explore and celebrate co-inquiry with students. Held at WWU on April 10-12, the event offered sessions co-presented by faculty and students and drew 225 participants from the US and Canada. The program also featured a collaborative keynote, student-facilitated dialogue segments in each session, and a closing artifact-making activity to visualize what participants had learned about doing co-inquiry.

The photo to the right shows one of the groups creating their artifact entitled "Bridging the Gap," suggesting both the risks of leaping into the unknowns of co-inquiry and the beauty of doing it.



Join the Activity on the ISSOTL Digest

Lisa Kornetsky, *Membership & Communications Committee Chair and ISSOTL Secretary*

The ISSOTL Digest is ready and waiting for your participation! Check it out by clicking the sidebar link at www.issotl.org. In order to make this blog active, we need people to subscribe and start posting!

If you are already a member of ISSOTL and would like posting rights to the Digest, e-mail your request to Lisa Kornetsky, ISSOTL Secretary, at lkornetsky@uwsa.edu and you will be issued an email invitation to become an author/contributor to the ISSOTL Digest Blog.

Having posting rights allows you to make announcements, send inquiries to fellow members, and to start and/or participate in any discussions related to the scholarship of teaching and learning. As with other blogs, all readers can simply check the site when they wish, or they can subscribe to a

Digest newsfeed and receive notification of all new postings through the newsreader (or newsfeed-enabled email application) of their choice.

While this is a pilot for us, our hope is that the blog will serve as a helpful communication mechanism, allowing members to post SoTL-related material and reach a broad audience, receive and distribute information in a timely manner, establish relationships, and dialogue about issues that are important to Society members. We hope to see you there!

Recent Postings:

- *Transformative Dialogues* CFP
- E-Portfolio Research as SOTL
- Pedagogical Research in Higher Education (PRHE) Conference CFP

Biologists Investigate Student Learning

Kelly Gull, *American Society for Microbiology (US)*

Twenty biologists have been selected for the National Science Foundation-funded Biology Scholars Program to transform undergraduate biology education through the leadership of life science professional societies. Established in 2007, the Program seeks to enhance biologists' understanding and practice of evidenced-based teaching and learning. "I expect from this program to learn how to conduct the same caliber of research in the classroom using my students as my subjects as the bench-side research I have been conducting for the past 15 years to ask worthwhile questions to explore their learning," reports one Scholar in her application to participate.

The Program is a national laboratory for biologists from all sectors of higher education and all subdisciplines of the biological sciences. Four participants come from community colleges, seven from undergraduate colleges, and nine from doctoral institutions. One participant from Australia will join the 2008 cohort. Each participant will commit up to two years conducting research. Some examples of the 2008 projects are understanding students' ability to 1) overcome misconceptions in cell biology and genetics, 2) grasp difficult topics in physiology with writing assignments requiring different levels of understanding, 3) acquire critical skills for a nursing profession from a virtual laboratory course in biology, 4) internalize complex relationships in microbiology through role playing and concept maps, and 5) understand and apply their own learning



preferences to benefit from group discussions, simulations, and independent research in general and plant biology.

The first cohort was selected from a highly competitive pool of biologists seeking a community. One applicant describes her situation, "There are very few science academics who are involved in educational research and thus it is nearly impossible to find advice on campus about how to proceed when we have a problem."

The Biology Scholars Program is a collaborative project of the American Society for Microbiology, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, and American Association for Advancement of Science. Professional society affiliates are the American Institute of Biological Sciences, American Physiological Society, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, American Society for Cell Biology, Ecological Society of America, and Genetics Society of America.

Biologists Selected for the 2008-2009 Research Residency

Holly Ahern, Adirondack Community College, NY
 Teri Balsler, University of Wisconsin, WI
 Daron Barnard, Worcester State College, MA
 Patricia Baynham, St. Edward's University, TX
 Christopher Burke, University of Tasmania, Launceston
 Jeff Carmichael, University of North Dakota, ND
 David Dunbar, Cabrini College, PA
 Anne-Marie Hoskinson, Georgia Institute of Technology, GA
 Carol Hurney, James Madison University, VA
 Samantha Kerry, St. Mary's College of Maryland, MD
 Lucy Kluckhohn-Jones, Santa Monica College, CA
 Jenny Knight, University of Colorado, CO
 Min-Ken Liao, Furman University, SC
 Sherri Morris, Bradley University, IL
 Pushpa Ramakrishna, Chandler Gilbert Community, AZ
 James Smith, Michigan State University, MI
 Bethany Stone, University of Missouri, MO
 Mangala Tawde, Queensborough Community College, NY
 Didem Varder-Ulu, Wellesley College, MA

Meet the Newly Elected ISSOTL Officers

President-Elect: Jennifer Meta Robinson

The President Elect chairs the Vision and Planning Committee and serves on the Conferences and Convenings Committee. In the absence of the President, the President Elect presides at meetings of the Board of Directors and the face-to-face business meeting of the Society. The President Elect provides counsel and service to the President and other members of the Board of Directors. The President Elect is responsible for creation and maintenance of the archives of the Society. The President Elect commits to three years of service, one year each as President elect, President, and Past President.—ISSOTL Bylaws

Jennifer Meta Robinson is a senior lecturer in the Indiana University Department of Communication and Culture. As director of Indiana University's Campus Instructional Consulting office 2001-2008, Robinson focused on building a supportive, critical community of inquiry in which exemplary scholarship of teaching and learning can be produced. Those efforts were recognized with a Hesburgh Award for faculty development in 2003. She is a founder and inaugural conference organizer of ISSOTL and has served the Society as regional vice president (U.S.) and chair committees since 2005. She coordinated the AAHE/CASTL international cluster of research institutions (RUCASTL) and the current Carnegie-sponsored consortium of both teaching-priority and research-priority colleges and universities "expanding the SOTL commons." Her disciplinary work on ethnographic studies of how individuals express themselves in social contexts informs IU's communities of inquiry, fostering places where scholars can do their best and most rewarding SOTL work. In the Department of Communication and Culture, she teaches courses on how people communicate and perform their relationship to the environment, and she directs a dozen graduate-student teachers in a 500-student course on cultural approaches to interpersonal communication.

Robinson plans for her next three years of service to ISSOTL to include special emphasis on tapping the diverse disciplinary, institutional, and national contexts that the Society's members offer. She believes the Society will flourish as we find additional and innovative ways to tap into members' wisdom, creativity, and volunteer spirit. New members and diverse voices will strengthen our Society. She also plans to support continued work on important, practical matters such as maintaining lists and communications accurately and working closely and supportively with conference hosts.

Members who would like to take a direct role in the Society in any of these areas are encouraged to contact Jennifer (jenmetar@indiana.edu). Also, if you have other interests, including working toward making our collective voice heard, promoting the visibility of members' scholarly publications, co-sponsorship of topical symposia, contributions to important public discussions, and other SOTL field-building activities, please contact her. More information is available at www.cfkeep.org/users/Jennifer_Robinson/robinson.



Regional Vice President, Australasian Countries: Adrian Lee

Regional Vice Presidents represent their respective regions on the Board of Directors. Regions include Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North America, South America, and Other Regions. The Board of Directors has authority to alter the designation of regions. If no one from a region is nominated and selected by the Leadership and Elections Committee in a particular election, that region will not have a representative for the following term of office. Regional vice presidents serve for three years.—ISSOTL Bylaws



➔ Adrian Lee did a BSc (Hons) and PhD in Microbiology at the University of Melbourne a hundred years ago. He then travelled to New York where he did a postdoctoral fellowship at the Rockefeller University with Professor Rene Dubos, one of the world's great microbiologists. He joined the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney in 1968 as a lecturer, progressing to the position of Professor of Medical Microbiology and Head of the School of Microbiology and Immunology from 1990 to 1999.

At UNSW, he led a major research team studying *Helicobacter pylori*, the bacterium that causes most peptic ulcers and gastric cancer and has published 250 articles on his research. Throughout his time at UNSW, Adrian Lee was interested in teaching. He taught medical and science students for thirty-three years with a special focus on small group teaching. He was one of the first to receive the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence at UNSW and was the inaugural recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award of the Australian Society for Microbiology. He was one of the first Associate Members of the WHO Regional Teacher Training Centre based at UNSW and has been a WHO consultant in Medical Education many times; running staff development workshops on teaching throughout the world. It was this commitment to improving the quality of teaching at UNSW that made him forsake his beloved gut bacteria and he crossed to the dark side and became the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education and Quality Improvement) from 2000-2006.

Following his retirement in 2006, Adrian Lee remains interested in working with others to help them improve their teaching and in creating optimal learning experiences for their students. As Regional Vice President of ISSOTL, he will encourage acceptance of scholarly teaching by devices such as the "Guidelines on learning that inform teaching at UNSW" (www.guidelinesonlearning.unsw.edu.au/) as a pathway to SOTL by a wider group of academic staff. This is consistent with the Lee Shulman aspiration "How do we become part of a larger conversation, rather than just talking at the family table?"

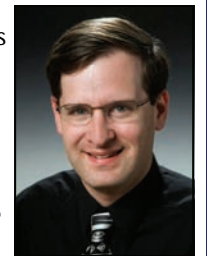


Regional Vice President, European Countries: Joëlle Fanghanel

Joëlle Fanghanel is Director (Research & Policy in Higher Education) of the Centre for Educational and Academic Practices at City University London. She advises on academic matters across the university and has a consultative role on teaching and learning cross-university initiatives. She is also involved in an expert capacity on Educational Development issues at international level and has undertaken a number of international consultancies on Quality Enhancement in Higher Education.

She has extensive experience of HE teaching, programme direction, innovative curricula, supervision, project management and policy development. She has published on educational matters, both in English and in French. She is a reviewer for *Studies in Higher Education*, *Higher Education Quarterly*, and *Perspectives in Education*, co-editor of the *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Proceedings, Volumes 2 and 3*, and on the Editorial Board of *Teaching in Higher Education*. She is the Convener and Chair of the editorial board for the London Scholarship of Teaching and Learning International Conference. She is also on the Governing Council of the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE).

Her research interests include innovation in teaching & assessment, e-pedagogies, professional development, research and teaching linkage, disciplines in higher education, HE policy and change management. Her PhD was completed at Lancaster University and examined the impact of context on pedagogical constructs and the implications for strategic educational development input. Recent publications include a chapter on teaching excellence, and a chapter on socio-cultural approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, a chapter on departmental leadership and papers on professional development, disciplinary identities, and local interpretations of policy.



Secretary: Jeffrey Bernstein

The Secretary keeps minutes of the Board of Directors meetings and of the annual face-to-face Society business meeting. The Secretary serves on the Going Public Committee and chairs the Membership and Communication Committee. The Secretary is responsible for content of a Society newsletter and contributes to content for the Society website. The Secretary serves for three years.—ISSOTL Bylaws

Jeffrey Bernstein is Associate Professor of Political Science at Eastern Michigan University. He holds a B.A. from Washington University and an M.A. and Ph. D. from the University of Michigan. His primary research and teaching interests include civic education, political learning and public opinion. Professor Bernstein was a 2005-06 Carnegie Scholar. His Carnegie project, entitled "Cultivating Civic Competence: Using Simulations to Enhance Learning in an Introductory Government Class," explores how pedagogical innovations can be used to teach and inspire students to gain the *skills* that enhance their role as democratic citizens; this work has been published in the *Journal of Political Science Education* and in a recent volume on *The Scholarship of Multicultural Teaching and Learning* (Jossey-Bass New Directions in Teaching and Learning series). Bernstein's current work involves using think-alouds to understand the political cognition process used by political experts and novices.

COMMONS

ORNER Seeking a Problem-Based Learning ISSOTL Interest Group

Problem-based learning (PBL) is an active learning pedagogy in which students collaborate in groups to solve complex problems. We wish to start an interest group within ISSOTL for those who are interested in problem-based learning. This group will offer opportunities for members to discuss all aspects of PBL as it relates to the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is our desire that this will be an interest group with an international membership representing diverse disciplines.

In addition to establishing an electronic mailing list, it is our intent that we will meet annually at the ISSOTL conference to discuss our scholarly activity and provide support for colleagues. Attendance at the conference is not a requirement; however, members of the PBL Interest Group must be ISSOTL members in good standing. If interested, please contact Ellen Lynch (University of Cincinnati) at ellen.lynch@uc.edu or Susan Polich (Virginia Commonwealth University) at smpolich@vcu.edu. We look forward to talking with you and seeing you in Edmonton!

Participate in Survey on Teaching and Learning in the English Major

As part of a project on teaching and learning within the English major, I've put together a survey about what teachers of literature want students to learn, the teaching strategies they use, and their ideas about how to approach the interpretation of a literary text. The survey is anonymous and brief. If you teach upper-division literature courses or literature courses for English majors, please take 10 minutes to complete the survey, available online at www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eUdOaPRg4QOUklwIh7q79w_3d_3d. If you have questions about the project, please contact Sherry Linkon at Youngstown State University (sllinkon@ysu.edu).

SoTL Journals

IJ-SoTL

The current issue of *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning* (IJ-SoTL) is accessible online at www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsoTL/issue_v2n1.htm. Submissions are sought in the following areas:

- Research articles (3,000 - 8,000 words) focusing on higher/tertiary education and original research about teaching and learning topics. The results of the research are to be analyzed and evaluated for their meanings, implications, and applications for the improvement of student learning in higher/tertiary education today.
- Essays (2,000 - 5,000 words) on such topics as how SoTL can directly improve student learning outcomes; how SoTL has transformed an academic community/culture; the connects between SoTL and other forms of scholarship; how best to integrate SoTL into higher education today, or into a college or university community; the problems and benefits of international collaboration in doing SoTL and applying the results to college teaching (classroom, online, or in combination)
- Personal reflections (1,000 - 1,500 words) on how SoTL has affected one's attitude and/or approach to teaching and student learning and what the results have been for teaching effectiveness and student outcomes

Transformative Dialogues

The third issue of the peer reviewed Kwantlen e-journal *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*—and its first international issue—is available at www.kwantlen.ca/academicgrowth/TD/. The theme of this edition is Change and Transition: Change in our Lives and Life in our Changes. We invite all of you to read, consider, and join in the dialogue.

Future ISSOTL Conferences

2008 Alberta, Canada
2009 Bloomington, Indiana, US
2010 United Kingdom

The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (ISSOTL) serves faculty members, staff, and students who care about teaching and learning as serious intellectual work. The goal of the Society is to foster inquiry and disseminate findings about what improves and articulates post-secondary learning and teaching. ISSOTL is organized to

Annual Membership Fees (US\$)

Administrators, Faculty, Staff	\$40
Retired or part-time faculty/staff	\$30
Student	\$25

Join ISSOTL at www.issotl.org

- Recognize and encourage scholarly work on teaching and learning in each discipline, within other scholarly societies, and across educational levels
- Promote cross-disciplinary conversation to create synergy and prompt new lines of inquiry
- Facilitate the collaboration of scholars in different countries and the flow of new findings and applications across national boundaries
- Encourage the integration of discovery, learning and public engagement
- Advocate for support, review, recognition, and appropriate uses of the scholarship of teaching and learning.



*Join us in Edmonton for
"Celebrating Connections:
Learning,
Teaching,
Scholarship"
October 16-19*

Upcoming SOTL Events

Date	Event and Location
June 18-20	"From Theory to Practice," Threshold Concepts Conference (Queen's University: Kingston, Ontario, Canada) thresholdconcepts.appsci.queensu.ca
June 18-21	"A World of Learning," 28th Annual Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) Conference (University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario) www.stlhe.uwindsor.ca
July 1-4	"Engaging Communities," Higher Education Research and Development Society (HERDSA) Conference (Rotorua, New Zealand) conference.herdsa.org.au/2008/
Sept 24-27	4 th International Conference on Research in Access and Developmental Education (San Juan, Puerto Rico) www.ncde.appstate.edu/researchconf3.htm
Oct 16-19	"Celebrating Connections: Learning, Teaching, Scholarship," 5th International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) Conference (Alberta, Edmonton, Canada) www.issotl.org
Jan 16-19, 2009	4 th annual National Teaching and Learning for Empowerment Conference: A Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference for Minority Serving Institutions and Institutions Serving Minorities (Clark Atlanta University: Atlanta, Georgia, USA) www.caucetlinfo.org
Mar 6-9	"Innovations in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the Liberal Arts Colleges," (Wabash College: Crawfordsville, Indiana, USA) www.wabash.edu/Sotl/
Mar 11-13	"The SoTL Commons," 2nd Annual International Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (Georgia Southern University: Statesboro, Georgia, USA) academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstl/conference/2009/
May 18-20	"SOTL Academy: A Closer Look" (Eastern Michigan University: Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA) www.emich.edu/sotlacademy