

SoTL Chronicles [Volume 4, number 1]

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SoTL CHRONICLES

Newsletter of the SoTL at Georgia Southern Initiative

Southern-Style SoTL Goes to Canada

In the crispness of the autumn air, delegates from around the world convened in Hamilton, Ontario for the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) Conference, October 23-27, 2012, hosted by McMaster University. The theme of the conference was "Research on Teaching and Learning: Integrating Practices." I had the honor of presenting two papers. In the first, I urged the field to strengthen the theoretical and sociopolitical contexts of SoTL works. In the other, I presented part of my GSU SoTL Fellowship research project: assessing higher level learning through analysis of resonant concepts. Both were well received with the first presentation having over twenty-five attendees, including Tony Ciccone, coauthor of *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered*, one of the works chronicled in

the piece.

One of the keynote panels was headed by SoTL scholar Mick Healey who offered a keynote address during the 2012 SoTL Commons conference at GSU. The



Dr. Lorraine Gilpin

Hamilton panel included students and former students and focused on students as change agents. As Healey told me, the work built on what he shared on our campus in March. The presentation was engaging traversing themes of students as pedagogical consultants and ambassadors; co-designers of courses; SoTL practitioners; and strategy developers and

advisors. The session offered examples from across the globe of students in these roles and solicited additional examples from the floor. The session was dynamic and interactive with questions and comments from the floor as well as questions that were sent in advance. In Healey's usual style, there was think-pair-share and, of course, pictures of Tess and all things dog! Healey and the panel left attendees with a solid theoretical model for students as change agents.

The conference was intense with presenters honing in on a number of key issues in SoTL ranging from theoretical through methodological to practical. Yet, there was time to network as highlighted in the banquet at the historic Liuna (Train) Station Banquet and Convention Center complete with music, art, and delicious treats.

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"What would academic life look like in ten years if the principles and practices of the scholarship of teaching and learning were to take hold at the deep level?"

~Hutchings, Huber
& Ciccone

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6th Annual SoTL Commons Conference

The **6th annual SoTL Commons** will be held March 27-29, 2013 at the Coastal Georgia Center in Savannah with the keynoters being Lynn Taylor (University of Calgary), Brian Coppola (University of Michigan) and Dan Bernstein (University of Kansas). Presenters come from schools such as University of Regina, Mercer, Aarhus University, UGA, BYU, University of Minnesota, University of Hawaii, Vanderbilt Uni-

versity, University of Missouri, Central Florida, James Madison University, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Miami University, UAB, University of Northern Colorado, New York City College of Technology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Mount Royal University, West Virginia University, George Mason University, University of Cincinnati and Georgia Southern University. It is the first time the international conference will be held in

Savannah after being held at Georgia Southern for five years. The conference website is at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstotl/conference/2013/index.htm>.



Early Introduction to Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

"While I have heard anecdotes from colleagues about others being resistant to SoTL, my experience luckily has been the opposite. From the beginning of my doctoral degree to my current position as a new faculty member I have been surrounded by people and programs that encourage the scholarly investigation of teaching and learning. Without such people and programs my career would not be

as rich, my research program not as satisfying, and my classroom practice not as informed. My hope is that more institutions continue to recognize the value of SoTL so that faculty members can be both introduced to SoTL and supported in such endeavors. Shulman (2011) has suggested that SoTL should become a component of doctoral programs, and I could not agree more. Registering for that one course

in university teaching and finding a professor who values SoTL has made a great deal of difference in my development as an academic. And now program support available to me, as a faculty member, will ensure that SoTL remains an important part of my career."

~April McGrath, July 2012.

"An Early Introduction to SoTL and the Shaping of an Academic Career," *IJ-SoTL*, Vol. 6, No. 2

SoTL Resources

What is SoTL?: <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/reflecting/sotl/>

Tutorial on the What/Why/How of SoTL: <http://www.issotl.org/tutorial/sotltutorial/home.html>

SoTL Publication Outlets: <http://ilstu.libguides.com/sotl>

Online Resources: http://www.mtroyal.ca/ProgramsCourses/FacultiesSchoolsCentres/InstituteForScholarshipOfTeachingLearning/RelatedLinks/Online_Resources.htm

Georgia Southern SoTL Initiative: <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/sotl>. Serve as the portal for the activities and resources of the Initiative.



SoTL Fellows Program



In April, 2012, there was a call for applications to become **SoTL Fellows for 2012-2013**. The purpose of the program is to encourage and assist faculty members engaging in scholarship that focuses upon teaching and learning (SoTL) and then applying the results of that scholarship to courses for the improvement of student learning. The new SoTL Fellows program emphasizes individual and collaborative SoTL research, and disseminating the fruits of that research to others

and to the campus. Faculty were invited to apply to be SoTL Fellows by describing a significant SoTL project that is either underway, or will be begun and completed during the Fellowship period. Also, the Fellows are to be available to serve as SoTL mentors to colleagues, while joining with the other Fellows in fostering SoTL at Georgia Southern.

Each SoTL Fellowship will be an award of \$3,000 that may be taken either as salary, or as

release time for a three-credit course (at the discretion of the recipient and with approval of department chair). The funds for the award are provided by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Scholarship.

The SoTL Fellows for 2012-2013 are **Lorraine Gilpin** (Teaching & Learning), **Katt Blackwell-Starnes** (Writing & Linguistics), **Diana Sturges** (Health & Kinesiology), and **Adrienne Cohen** (Sociology & Anthropology).

International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning



The 12th issue of *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning* was published in July 2012 by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Scholarship. The journal is an open access, double-blind peer-reviewed, academic electronic journal and is international in its Review Board, authors, and readership.

The issue included Invited Essays, Research Articles, Essays about SoTL, and personal reflections. A continuing feature is the SoTL Mentors to the World consisting of SoTL scholars available to mentor colleagues anywhere in the world about their SoTL ideas, projects, and applications. The SoTL Mentors are from Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, UK and US (including one from Georgia

Southern). Authors in the issue came from Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the U.S. The submission deadline for the January 2013 issue of IJ-SoTL was November 15, 2012. The new issue will be published online by January 10th. The current issue of IJ-SoTL is available at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsoTL/v6n2.html>

CFLS Hosted 3rd Annual SoTL Symposium of the South

The 3rd annual SoTL Symposium of the South was held on Friday, October 12, 2012 at Georgia Southern University for faculty and administrators at private and public colleges and universities in the southeastern region of the United States. The main focus of the Symposium is on ways to develop, design and complete SoTL projects

(including dissemination via publication, presentation, etc., as well as practical applications to one's teaching and students), and practical ways for working to foster, support, and recognize SoTL. Invited presenters were Tris Utschig (Georgia Tech), Tom Pusatari (Kennesaw State University), Trent Maurer (Georgia Southern University), and Melody

Bowden (University of Central Florida). Participants came from the states of Georgia, Illinois, South Carolina and Florida. Visit <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/sotlsymposium.html>



Faculty Awards for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

The Faculty Awards for SoTL have the purpose to encourage and recognize faculty members engaging in scholarship that focuses upon teaching and learning and then applying the results of that scholarship to courses for the improvement of student learning. The awards emphasize the integration of research about teaching and learning and the practical application of that research to the teaching and learning process. There are two annual awards of \$2,000 each provided by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Scholarship (CTLS). The application process will take place in February 2013.



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SoTL on the Web

A website for the SoTL at Georgia Southern Initiative is at <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/sotl>. It serves as the Initiative's portal for activities and resources.

Lift the Fog—Light the Way to Transformational Change

"Every faculty member has surely had the experience. Immediately following a vivid and lucid explanation, setting the relative importance of issues and evidence in clear relief, a student raises his hand and asks 'Will this be on the test?' Or if you have specifically warned against that formulation, perhaps it will take the form of 'What are the most important points here?' Or, after leaving ample time for questions, no one has any, only to confirm on the quiz or in the papers that none of them really understood the concepts. It is a commonplace in faculty conversations that students, at least some students, seem to 'walk around in a fog,' can't get their bearings, ask the obvious questions but never ask the important ones. 'What are they doing here?' we sometimes ask, 'What are they thinking?'. . .

"The fog of learning—obscuring the vision, slowing the progress, and deadening the hope of nearly everyone connected with colleges and universities—is not an inevitable feature of the academic climate. It is a product of the failure to cast a light on what is important and relevant to student learning. One of the chief means of shining the light where it properly belongs is the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). But if SoTL is to disperse the fog and make the learning process more visible, we should pursue it with that priority in mind. . . .

"We have adopted the word curriculum from Latin, where it referred to a race or a racecourse. Today, we ask students to run the race in the fog, without a clear view of either the course or the finish line, and too

often they wander aimlessly—because they can't see what to aim at. SoTL can help us to show them the way, but if it is to do so we must put the parts of it together and follow the lessons it teaches, to cast light on the whole, not just the parts of this great enterprise. When they were surveyed in 2004, half of the participants in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) believed that in the next ten years SoTL would 'contribute to widespread change in how student learn in postsecondary classrooms' (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. 126). That should be the project: not to muddle through a little better, but to light the way to transformational change."

~John Tagg, July 2010.
"Dispelling the Fog of Learning through SoTL," *IJ-SoTL*, Vol. 4, No. 2