

SOTL AT ISU

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University
“systematic reflection/study on teaching and learning made public”

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Are Webtexts the Future of SoTL Publishing?

Maria A. Moore and Cheryl E. Ball, Illinois State University with Laura Cruz, Western Carolina University (ISSOTL Panel Session, October 2011, Milwaukee, WI)

Many SoTL journals have invested the time and effort to go online in the last decade, following an approach of translating current and archival texts from paper to electronic form primarily through PDFs. While this approach has vastly increased accessibility and made distribution more efficient, it has not advanced the form of scholarship publication to truly take advantage of the multimodal capabilities of Web technology. It is possible to augment text-based content with video, animation, sound, 3-D images, simulations and reader-directed interactivity; yet few journals in any discipline have embraced the technological advances many of us demand from other areas of interaction with the internet. Multimodal webtexts combine the essence of traditional academic writing with the conventions of the Web--graphics, links, video, animation, etc.

Several online journals that focus on pedagogy have been publishing webtexts for more than a decade. (*Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, which Dr. Ball edits, is the most longstanding journal publishing in this field, having started in 1996. More recently, *Mountainrise: The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, which Dr. Cruz edits, is one of the newcomers.) Should the future practice of SoTL publishing include a home for electronic communication like webtexts?

Multimodal publication presents tremendous opportunities for the SoTL scholar. Concepts can be visualized more effectively. Participant voice can be more authentically represented. Demonstrations can add to explanation. Music or animation can underscore key

concepts. Reader participation is no longer passive nor linear as interaction with the webtext requires reader choice and the choices are led by reader interest and inquiry rather than by sequential pages. The reader becomes an interactive collaborator with the subject and the webtext.

However, preparing a webtext for submission, review, and publication also presents many unique hurdles that are new for authors and editors alike. Blind review may not be possible as an author's identity and institution may be revealed in media files or URLs. Participant consent and institutional review procedures are more complicated because identities are often revealed in images, video, or audio. Copyright and permissions for media files can be a quagmire. Peer-review has to change to include considerations of technology, media, and content -- a skill-set new to most academic reviewers. Collaboration significantly increases among the author, designer, editors, reviewers, and programming or technical staff. Readers' needs and expectations—both scholarly and technological—become intertwined with accessibility and usability issues, not just readability issues. And easy preservation of the scholarly record is challenged when the knowledge production is a webtext rather than a printed, tactile object fixed in time and place.

There are no easy answers for any of these – and many other – publication issues related to webtexts, although many fields (particularly the sciences) have at least made the hurdle of *digital* scholarly publications and data dissemination less scary for scholars in the last decade-and-a-half. The humanities and some social sciences are farther behind nationwide.

...And a Related Upcoming Spring Event

On March 6 at 2:00p.m. in the CTLT Resource Commons of the Instructional Technology and Development Center, there will be a panel presentation/discussion on nontraditional ways (beyond journal articles and conference presentations) to make SoTL work public such as through videos, web representations, and edited books. The session will be facilitated by Cheryl Ball, Kathleen McKinney, and Maria Moore.

Fall SoTL Events Successful

The August 10 **Workshop on Moving Teaching-Learning Development (TLD) Projects into SoTL Projects** was attended by eight recent recipients of TLD grants. This four-hour workshop offered by the Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL was co-sponsored by CTLT. The focus of the workshop was to cover the basics of doing and making public SoTL work and how to take a TLD project and make it into a SoTL project, or start a new SoTL project that extends or is suggested by the TLD project. A worksheet format was used. Participants received a \$100 stipend and lunch for their time and effort.

The November 1 **Intermediate SoTL Session: Strategies to Measure Learning in our SoTL Projects** was attended by fourteen instructors and three facilitators (Kathleen McKinney, Ryan Smith, and Wendy Troxel). This 90-minute session offered information, strategies, examples, and resources related to measuring student learning in SoTL projects. Participants also engaged in three active/interactive tasks discussing their specific measurement needs. Each participant received lunch and a book on SoTL or teaching and learning.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Travel Grant Reports*

Howard P. Parette, Jr., Special Education

I presented at the 13th International Conference on Education, conducted by the Athens Institute for Education and Research, May 23-26, in Athens, Greece. The presentation was based on a new course, *Assistive Technology for Young Children with Disabilities*, that was developed for early childhood majors in the College of Education and implemented in Spring, 2011. Based on previous work reported by Parette and Peterson-Karlan (2011), a universal design for learning (UDL) framework for integrating readily available technologies in the context of classroom lessons was used in design of the course. This framework sequentially developed student understanding enabling them to (a) identify the standards used in a learning activity; (b) select available technologies to support a learning activity that addressed specific benchmarks; (c) make decisions about instructional methodologies to deliver the activity; (d) identify assessment strategies used to evaluate child performance and monitor progress; and (e) identify assistive technology (AT) to be used to support the participation of children with disabilities.

Each week during the Spring semester, students were presented with hands-on experiences using targeted technologies having UDL features that could support the curriculum. These included (a) Microsoft[™] PowerPoint[™]; (b) Boardmaker with Speaking Dynamically Pro; (c) Clicker 5; (d) Voicethread; (e) Tuxpaint; (f) SmartBoard activities; (g) exploration of nine early literacy apps for the iPad; (h) use of webcams; and (i) an array of websites. These structured weekly activities enabled students to develop familiarity with features of the targeted technologies and create 'products' that were archived in personal digital folders on a shared classroom drive to document their effort and acquired skills. After two months of such experiences, students were divided into learning teams, each having to develop a small or large group early childhood classroom UDL-based learning

activity supported by a minimum of *five* readily available technologies. A dedicated class wiki (<http://www.wikispaces.com/>) was used for each learning team to archive narrative and links to resources/products.

Once learning teams developed and presented their UDL activities, they were presented with a case study of a young child having moderate cognitive and physical disabilities. Students were to analyze their UDL activities and to identify what children were expected to (a) DO; (b) SAY; and (c) REMEMBER. Once these expectations were clearly identified and information entered into a table on their learning group wiki they could then identify the specific challenges presented by the case study child in participating in the UDL activity. This allowed them to then make decisions about AT solutions, which were posted on their respective wikis.

The structured and sequenced learning approach used in this class appeared to develop needed knowledge and skills for students to develop both operational *and* functional competence in using targeted readily available technologies. Instructor demonstration and modeling of targeted readily available technology features and their applications, coupled with print-based instructions for creating products during hands-on activities, contributed to effective skill set development among students. As a result of these structured experiences, the UDL lessons developed and presented by students in the class reflected both creativity and application of readily available technology skill sets developed during the first part of the semester. The curriculum integration model used in the course was easily understood by students, who seemed to apply their understanding in meaningful and creative ways in developing both their UDL activities and AT solutions for a case study child having disabilities.

(Parette, H. P., & Peterson-Karlan, G. R. 2011. *Media rich classrooms and readily available technology to support universally designed curriculum implementation*. Unpublished manuscript.)

Dr. Jennifer Robinson of Indiana University Coming to Speak on SoTL and Environmental Literacy

What would it mean to have every college graduate be environmentally literate? What would they know? What pedagogies would help them learn? This talk, “The Ecology of SoTL...” will discuss the mutually generative interplay of an environmental literacy initiative and the scholarship of teaching and learning. The investigative and scholarly approach to environmental literacy used by a multidisciplinary learning community of faculty, staff, and students at Indiana University created a productive intersection of these two lasting, high impact, and institutionally supported teaching and learning initiatives. The experience illuminates some best practices—and some knowledge gaps—for SoTL and for teaching environmental literature.

Jennifer Meta Robinson is a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University teaching courses on performance and ethnography in America, centering on cultural approaches to interpersonal communication, food, place, and nature. She publishes and speaks widely on the scholarship of teaching and learning. She co-edits the Indiana University Press book series, *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, and is co-editor of *Teaching Environmental Literacy across the Curriculum* (with Reynolds and Brondizio,

2010). She has served the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning since 2003, as a member of the founding board, as regional vice president for the United States, and in 2009-2010 as president. She coordinated two consortia convened by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that related to scholarship of teaching and learning, 2003-2009. She is the principal investigator for the Collegium on Inquiry in Action, funded by the Teagle Foundation to develop a model multi-disciplinary approach to preparing graduate students to be reflective teachers who base their teaching on appropriate learning theory and evidence of student learning. She served as director of Indiana University’s Campus Instructional Consulting office and coordinator of the scholarship of teaching and learning initiative 2001-2008, which received a TIAA-CREF Hesburgh Award for faculty development in 2003. She earned her doctorate in English from Indiana University.

Jennifer Meta Robinson’s presentation on SoTL and Environmental Literacy occurs **March 2 at 10:00 a.m.**, in the **Old Main** at the **Bone Student Center**. It is open to all, as is the discussion following and a reception in her honor. This event is co-sponsored by the Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL and a Sage Grant from ISU Foundation.

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Anu Gokhale, Technology

I was a keynote speaker at the 2011 International Conference on e-Education, e-Business, e-Management and e-Learning held in Mumbai, January 7–9. I spoke on “Web 2.0 for 4e” focusing on: 1) technical aspects of Web 1.0, 2.0, and now 3.0; 2) how Web 2.0 social interaction is being capitalized by businesses; and 3) research related to e-education and e-learning. This report specifically addresses the educational research.

With the advent of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) age, it is imperative that students acquire critical thinking skills to manage information overload. The explosion of information through Web and e-media has altered the characteristics of the learning environment; higher education continues to adapt to the digital culture and changes in student learning styles. Electronic delivery of content has become a norm even in classroom-based classes. I therefore decided to extend my research in student learning of technical matter to determine effective ways to enhance students’ critical thinking skills when I am teaching online. I have been teaching a partially technical, non-laboratory based general education course in the classroom environment during fall or spring and completely online in summer. This gave me an opportunity to conduct a study of instructor-guided small-group discussions

conducted in-class versus online, and their role in student learning.

A pretest-posttest control group design was used with the classroom-based class serving as the control group. The topics being discussed and instructor guidance were the same for both groups. It was found that student participation was much greater in online discussions, and the quality of online discussions was also significantly better with more students referring to published work. A test on the subject-matter consisted of both knowledge and critical-thinking items.

The experimental group did significantly better on critical-thinking items, while both groups did equally well on knowledge items. On a self-assessment of participation in discussion, students mentioned that they find it easier to put forth their viewpoints in a non-threatening online forum, can refer to published work while a discussion is ongoing, and can ‘copy & paste’ information from referenced work, making it easy to participate in online small-group instructor-guided discussions.

Also, there was a difference in students’ motivation to participate in the discussion, with the experimental group being more motivated than the control group. That motivation may have stemmed from the fact that students taking online courses have little opportunity for

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interaction in class. It is concluded that motivation and active involvement in learning help to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Additionally, online classes can be made more effective through guided discussions so the mechanisms for conducting discussions need further study.

Katherine J. Lewis, Music

I participated in two National String Project Consortium (NSPC) presentations during the ASTA National Conference in Kansas City (March 16-19) related to part of my position at ISU as the Master Teacher for the ISU String Project. The first session, "Best Practices: Spotlight on the Undergraduate Teachers in the String Project," included four short presentations prepared by eight ISU undergraduate student teachers. The students, freshman Matt White, sophomores Abbi Cash and Gillian Borth, junior Carrie Schrader, and seniors Andrew Francois, Brittany Johnson, Alex Anlas, and Josh Stewart shared their experiences on our campus teaching many of the 115 3rd-8th graders we have in our four orchestra classes. Topics of their presentations, which I helped them to prepare, included "Model teaching: Teaching a parallel first year class to students at our satellite location in Chenoa," "Flexibility of working with "pods" or small homogeneous

groups to supplement the orchestra class," "Working with multi level classes to find a balance between repertoire, technique and theory," and Private lessons: Establishing an individual curriculum and relationships with parents."

In addition to the student presentation session, I was part of a panel session made up of four NSPC Master Teachers titled "Building Foundations: Sequenced Instruction for Students and Pre-Service Teachers." During this session, I addressed several initiatives that I've instated at ISU to both help aid in training our student teachers while creating a unique curriculum for our secondary students. The handout I prepared included several documents I've created including our application for student teachers, teaching contract, private student lesson plan, and 2nd year curriculum chart. Feedback from other site directors and master teachers was overwhelmingly positive as I addressed several challenges that newer sites are struggling with, and shared our experiences rebuilding the program at ISU over the past five years.

Other conference highlights included watching our ISU Student ASTA Chapter win the 2011 "Most Improved Student Chapter" award, and attending several sessions by well known pedagogues from around the world.

Selected Opportunities for Involvement in SoTL at ISU

SoTL Travel Grants: Up to \$500 per grant is available to partially support travel related to SoTL in FY12. Round 2 applications are due by 4:00 pm on February 6. The Call for Applications is available at <http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/pdf/travGrantFY12.pdf>.

SoTL NETWORK: The SoTL NETWORK is a group of Illinois State faculty, students, and staff members interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning at ISU. Last year some members participated in a reading group (*Engaging Student Voices in the Study of Teaching and Learning*, Carmen Werder and Megan Otis, eds. Sterling, VA: Stylus); others participated in a circle working on SoTL writing. In addition, several members of the Network presented their SoTL work in a session at the ISU Teaching-Learning Symposium. If you are interested in this group, please email kmckinne@ilstu.edu and you will be added to an email list (for announcements only).

ISU SoTL Resource Group: Do you need some assistance on a SoTL project related to design or analysis or literature or theory...? Check out your colleagues who have volunteered to help as part of the ISU SoTL Resource Group (<http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/resource/index.shtml>).

If you are interested in, willing to, and have expertise useful for serving on the ISU SoTL Resource Group please send a private email to me at kmckinne@ilstu.edu with your name, title, department, phone number, and brief description of your expertise.

Write a Summary of your SoTL Work at ISU for the Newsletter feature, "Spotlight on a SoTL Publication: Have you recently finished and published a SoTL project on the learning of ISU students? Write a short summary (200-400 words) highlighting your research question(s) or teaching-learning problem studied, the nature of your evidence, and key findings and applications. Please include the citation for the publication or web representation. Send this in a word file, electronically, to kmckinne@ilstu.edu. Articles are due every August 1 or December 1.

Send Your Recent SoTL Article Citations: Have you published a paper since 2000 about the field of SoTL or reported on SoTL work you have done? If so, please check <http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu/examples/isupub.shtml> to see if it is cited. If it is not, please send the citation to kmckinne@ilstu.edu and we will add it to our list of example SoTL publications by ISU community.

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