

## Editorial

### ***Faithfulness and fidelity* across identities and contexts for SOTL in the global South**

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#### **Abstract**

Issue 5.2 of *SOTL in the South* features four peer-reviewed articles, one reflective piece and one book review. The peer-reviewed articles include two articles about broader concerns related to the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education, namely the discursive and negotiated work of producing SoTL work and the importance of considering diverse worldviews regarding research ethics. In addition, there are two detailed accounts of *instances* of SoTL, one from Lesotho, addressing the challenges facing students from rural contexts, and the other from South Africa, investigating the implementation of collaborative learning in a fourth-year social work classroom. The issue concludes with a reflection on an action-oriented workshop held in Aotearoa New Zealand aimed at increasing the number of Māori and Pasifika academics, and a review of *The Bloomsbury Handbook of the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Global South*.

It has been almost two years since the detection of COVID-19. Globally and locally, we are still grappling with the disruption the virus has caused our everyday lives, and for some it has had a major impact on their physical, psychological, and economic health and wellbeing. The consequences and implications the virus has on and for education have been similarly drastic. In a short span of time, teachers, students, administrators, and parents have pivoted to different approaches to ensure that learning continues. Home-based learning has replaced classroom learning and use of technology has become even more ubiquitous. At tertiary institutions, teachers too have had to adapt promptly to this sudden change. Some have begun to publicly share their experiences, journeys, challenges and creative practices that they found effective for teaching and learning in their contexts. This sense of responsibility, moral and pragmatic, and motivation to share is what Shulman (2000) terms *faithfulness* and *fidelity* of teachers to their disciplines, to student learning, to the community at large, and to their identity and sense of self.

What better way to start this issue of *SOTL in the South* than to have Coleman and Morris draw our attention to scholars' endeavour to make public their inquiries into teaching and learning. Through autoethnography, they carefully examine how they separately construct their identities through writing for publication. Their narration of this exercise is characterised as discursive and negotiated and provides significant insight into the sharing of SoTL work. Importantly, Coleman and Morris surface the discussion on enculturating emergent SoTL scholars, especially disciplinary experts, into the SoTL, which is a core aim of this journal. Doing so not only requires literacy practices that may be different from what domain specialists are used to, but it also raises questions related to identity and context.

Keane's article on research ethics in the global South further underscores identity and context in SoTL work. She eloquently discusses different worldview perspectives and presents a synthesised model based on three frameworks which may not resonate with standard ethical processes and procedures. Central to her argument is that ethical protocols for research should consider local or indigenous understandings of the world. Approach to data collection should also recognise diverse cultural values and complexity of contexts.

The remaining two articles reflect a shift in focus – towards instances of SoTL. Shulman (2000) predicted that by the mid-2000s, investigations into good teaching would not just be an add-on but would be practised by faculty throughout American universities. Shulman argued that there would be an increase in faculty asking questions (and finding ways to address these questions) about teaching and learning. The next two articles in this issue attest to these visionary words and demonstrate that higher education teachers' commitment to SoTL – and to interrogating fundamental issues in their own contexts – has expanded well beyond North America.

Lefoka and Tlali's study on the needs of rural students transitioning into higher education is a timely reminder of the need for accessibility and inclusiveness in higher education which have been severely hindered by the current pandemic. As their findings reveal, besides limited competency in the use of technology for remote or online learning, the home background, support, and exposure of students from rural settings, academic demands at university that seem to privilege certain educational backgrounds, and rural students' navigation of social relationships have significant influence on their experiences of learning at university. One may venture to argue that, if not appropriately addressed,

these factors will continue to hamper rural students' success in higher education. Given this, Lefoka and Tlali call for interventions and systemic reform to be made to the pre-tertiary school system as well as drawing attention to the need to revisit teaching and learning approaches in higher education.

Nel's investigation into collaborative learning amongst her fourth-year social work students reminds us that besides preparing students for intellectual demands, teachers at higher education also prepare their students for the workplace. One of the key implications of her findings is that while it is not surprising that collaboration remains a key aspect of the workplace, the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace expects colleagues from different parts of the world to work effectively on online platforms and, in many instances, without the opportunity to meet in-person. As alluded to by Nel, this may require concerted efforts to cultivate effective relationships in transnational, multicultural online environments.

In addition to the four peer-reviewed articles, this issue also features a reflective piece from a group of students and staff at Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa New Zealand. In response to the structural bias and institutional racism still prevalent in higher education institutions in New Zealand (and, we note, elsewhere), Funaki and colleagues designed, organised, hosted and researched an action-oriented workshop aimed at transforming the hiring practices of their institution so as to increase the representation of Māori and Pasifika academics. It is encouraging to note that their intervention has already yielded positive steps in the direction of greater inclusion and representation.

Finally, the issue concludes with a detailed review of *The Bloomsbury Handbook of the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Global South* written by Carolina Guzmán-Valenzuela. This book features 36 chapters and over 600 pages, written by 32 authors from across the global South. In her review, Guzmán-Valenzuela praises the book for its depth and breadth of contribution to the topic of internationalization of higher education, but also draws attention to the complexities associated with defining both *internationalization* and the *global South*, this latter point being something that this journal also grapples with consistently.

### Acknowledgments:

We would like to thank the authors and reviewers who have contributed their time and intellectual effort to this issue of SOTL in the South. We would also like to express our gratitude to our out-going managing editor, Milton Milaras, whose insight and efficiency will be sorely missed.

### References

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