

The SoTL Conversation

The idea behind a SoTL conversation is rooted in the perspective that “knowledge is a relational process” (Amrov & Simpson, 2023). For the diverse and emerging SoTL literature, sharing knowledge is a central, fundamental orientation to how we approach research, teaching, and reflections of how knowledge is created, shared, and reproduced. Our relationships with each other, our students, our discipline, our ethics, all shape how we know what we know, and how we come into new knowing.

From the outset, *Pedagogical Inquiry and Practice (PIP)* was rooted in the relational. As a journal it emerged from a community of scholar-teachers who began to share with each other the innovations, questions, and experiments from their classrooms. To grow from this origin, we have created a standing section in our journal devoted to relational dialogue among educators, “The SoTL Conversation.” These conversations will and can take many forms—some read like a transcript of an interview, or letters to a pen pal, or thoughts woven through and over each other—and as an exciting conversation, it may have interruptions, exclams of agreement (or disagreement), and enthusiasm.

These conversations will be focused on current and emerging teaching practices in the Canadian context, grounded in theoretical and methodological principles for learning. We will accept submissions that can range from 3,000–5,000 words, including references.

What is a SoTL conversation?

The SoTL conversation is a scholarly conversation that authors can opt for if they would like to engage with another scholar about a teaching and learning topic. Roxa and Martensson (2009) emphasized the need for academics to engage discussions about teaching and learning. With the rise in academic podcasting, the time is apropos to bring the conversation style to our SoTL scholarly work. We have also been inspired by several recent articles published in this style, including Maynard et al. (2021), Spady (2017), Cooper et al. (2018), and Amrov & Simpson (2023).

The SoTL Conversation is both format and method. Bojesen (2019) recommended that conversation as method for educational research offers understanding that other linear types of knowledge construction may obstruct. The spaces in between utterances are just as essential to meaning-making in conversations, and in an article form, the reader can be invited to co-construct meaning with author–interlocutors. For SoTL, this is an important space, where the reader—a teacher, scholar, or student—can engage with the conversation as an active participant. To extend Felten’s (2013) principles for SoTL including a) going public, and b) valuing collaboration, the SoTL conversation engages both.

For the SoTL conversation, we can expect to see a dialogic exchange with at least two scholars, similar to duoethnographic work by Santucci and Vaccaro (2024). The SoTL conversation is expected to be about teaching and learning practices, informed by a guiding question around a complex subject for higher education, including the literature around the subject, and discussion around the implications for other disciplines in higher education.

For example, a suggested topic can be a conversation between faculty from different departments about the feasibility of flexible deadlines for their courses. The conversation can also be between faculty and students. The guiding questions for composing for this type of submission are as follows:

- Is the SoTL research question sufficiently complex to engage multiple perspectives, with implications for multiple disciplines in higher education?
- Is the discourse situated in previous conversations about SoTL?
- Is the manuscript current and attempting to engage with future directions for SoTL?

Why should you choose the SoTL Conversation?

Have you thought of engaging with scholars out of your discipline for insight about practices for your teaching and learning? The purpose of the conversation is to acknowledge that there are diverse approaches to teaching and learning questions and resultant inquiry.

Are there examples of SoTL conversations that I can consult?

Examples of the scholarly conversation can be seen in examples of published scholarship in critical ethnic studies (Cooper et al., 2018); meanings of Indigeneity (Amrov & Simpson, 2023); disciplinary interrogation of English studies (Shann & Cunneen, 2011); and how storytelling is increasingly valued by scientists who are interested in how the brain is wired to this mode of communication (Suzuki et al., 2018). You can also see the articles that inspired this format (listed above) for creative ways to structure a conversation as an article.

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