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**EDITORS' INTRODUCTION**

# What Does It Mean to Be an 'International' Journal?: What Is Submitted to *TLI* Is What Shapes *TLI*

Our new editorial team—Co-Editors Nancy Chick and Katarina Mårtensson, and Associate Editors Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Lucy Mercer Mapstone, and Kelly Schrum—has been doing some collective soul searching in recent months. We've been scrutinising some of our taken-for-granteds, from how we conceptualise higher education and SoTL to how we talk about these things, and how these ways differ across contexts.

*Teaching & Learning Inquiry* is the journal of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL). By plenty of measures, it's a truly international journal. For instance, as of October of 2019, authors from 17 countries have been published in *TLI*. The members of our editorial team are currently based in Australia, Sweden, and the United States, and our Editorial Board is made up of colleagues from Australia, Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The institutions are also spread far and wide, with the greatest authorial representation in *TLI* are the University of Queensland (Australia), Mount Royal University (Canada), University of British Columbia (Canada), McMaster University (Canada), Elon University (USA), University of Otago (New Zealand), National University of Singapore (Singapore), Borough of Manhattan Community College (USA), Brock University (Canada), Karolinska Institutet (Sweden), University of East London (UK), and University of Sydney (Australia) (Hutchings, 2018, p. 2). We haven't yet seen this data for our reviewers and readers, but we think they would similarly span the globe.

So by some measures, *TLI* is succeeding at being an international journal. However, we recognize that these data do not represent the whole picture and certainly don't absolve us from trying to extend our reach and representation. Relating to the "*I*" in ISSOTL, we want to increase the international representation and inclusion of the journal. What is missing from *TLI* that would make readers (and potential but not-yet readers) describe it as international, without hesitation? As with other efforts toward greater inclusion, demographic diversity as described above is a useful benchmark, but only one. Some other meaningful measures are looking at *whose stories are being told*, and *how they're being told*. In a recent publication, Yahlnaaw/Aaron Grant (2019) shared their experiences of being part of the Students as Partners community and the ISSOTL Board of Directors, and encouraged further conversations about the subjectivity and relationships on these topics. As *TLI* editors, we want to contribute to such conversations by being more intentional about the following:

- who is included in the various roles (e.g., readers, authors, reviewers, and editors),
- how to include a greater variety of voices, and
- what it means to hear these voices.

These questions apply to the journal specifically, but—as indicated in ISSOTL's Strategic Plan—they also extend to ISSOTL and SoTL more generally.

Two current projects on the horizon represent our team's initial efforts in this direction. First, in our new and ongoing feature called "[SoTL Around the World](),we are proactively seeking out stories, studies, and voices that are *explicitly grounded in* contexts that are typically hitherto underrepresented in *TLI* and the broader narratives of SoTL:

> As the journal of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* invites colleagues from regions or groups typically underrepresented in SoTL narratives to submit descriptions of SoTL from within their specific geographical, national, and/or regional contexts.  The journal hopes to expand its representation of the diversity of SoTL experiences across the globe:  SoTL's origins and aims, the particularities of its practices and practitioners, and its successes and challenges.
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> Any of the following prompts may guide such submissions:
> - What are the origins of SoTL in your context, and how has it developed or built on that foundation?
> - How does your geographical context (e.g., cultures, languages, histories, values) inform SoTL in your region?  For example,
>   - how SoTL is understood, interpreted or translated, conducted, received, and/or institutionalised
>   - the most common areas of inquiry in SoTL
>   - the roles of students in SoTL
>   - how SoTL is made public
>   - any theoretical approaches, frameworks, or models that are important for SoTL
>   - how SoTL might expand
>
> We hope this diverse representation and the resulting depth of understanding will facilitate substantive conversations about SoTL across a range of contexts.
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> We particularly invite submissions from areas where SoTL occurs in languages other than English, but in order to reach *TLI* readers, they will need to be written in (or translated into) English. These pieces, which may be short, may be submitted at any time, as they will be an ongoing feature in *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*.

In these pieces, we hope to learn more about how SoTL is understood and enacted in different contexts, and what issues SoTL deals with in these contexts.  We hope to hear from a range of regions, like Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South America.  We hope to hear from institution types like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the United States and their equivalents around the world.  We hope to hear about SoTL in various language contexts, including beyond the English-speaking world—especially about what translations are crucial in order to contextualise SoTL in places where the language of communication is not the language of much SoTL literature. We strongly encourage *TLI* readers to share and respond to this call because, ultimately, what is submitted to *TLI* is what shapes *TLI*.

Secondly, we are developing a guide on writing for *TLI*'s international and diverse readership. This guide is in its final stages of consultation and will soon be available on the *TLI* website. We want to encourage all authors to write with *TLI*'s current and potential audiences in mind—and to make the

journal even more accessible, welcoming, transferable, and relevant to colleagues across contexts. We encourage all authors to be intentional in writing inclusively for a range of readers.

So, given our current metrics that allow us to call ourselves "international," why are we aiming for more? Why is this important? In this rapidly changing world of big and unknown challenges, education matters. If we work together toward the common goal of being knowledgeable and professional about teaching and learning in higher education, we can be a force against the spread of ignorance, oppression, isolation, and other harms in many of today's societies. We hope that *TLI* can be one—even if small—contributor to such a force. (As we put *TLI* issue 8.1 into the very final stages of production, the Coronavirus COVID-19 has officially become a global pandemic, and the uncertainty of the days and months to come is palpable. Our editorial team considered delaying publication, since celebrating seems inappropriate right now. After some deliberation, though, we decided to move forward in order to honor the work of the authors, reviewers, editorial assistant, copyeditor, and others, and to provide some sense of continuity amid the tsunami of changes we all face right now.)

As Poole, Iqbal, and Verwoord showed in the *International Journal for Academic Development*'s 2019 Article of the Year, we tend to relate mainly to like-minded colleagues in "Small Significant Networks as Birds of a Feather," as their title indicates. Dear readers, we hereby challenge you to avoid using *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* as an echo chamber, and instead read a piece in this issue that you otherwise might not have read. Take a chance and learn from a different experience and perspective. Be inclusive. And be well.

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