



Foreword

The book in your hand represents an exciting moment in academic librarianship. Collectively, the work explicitly recognizes the deep connections between the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and the scholarly work of librarians. Individually, the essays and case studies demonstrate a remarkable range of how these connections support and strengthen our contributions to academic and student learning. SoTL provides a way of grounding our scholarly teaching within theories of learning both established and developing. It is a framework for contextualizing the learning we see (or don't) through research conducted across the disciplines and a portal through which we can enter wider discourses about teaching. In turn, participating in SoTL work, from informal discussions to publication, showcases our expertise in teaching to the broader academic community and perhaps helps us see ourselves differently.

In writing this preface, I'm drawing on many sources, not least rich conversations with Peter Felten and Joan Ruelle as we worked on our essay on professional development. We talked a lot about why reading, research, and writing in SoTL were important, often coming back to a central question: What does SoTL work bring that differentiates it from other engagement with scholarship? From our Google Doc record of conversations, synchronous and asynchronous, comes a statement that ultimately didn't make it into our piece but that answers the "Why SoTL?" question for me:

SoTL provides a useful framework and communities of practice in which to rethink academic librarianship—to claim and recognize the authentic scholarship happening in libraries. . . . In librarianship, professional development is often understood as development of the individual professional. SoTL can be a meaningful pathway for both development of the individual professional and the profession as a whole.

SoTL certainly made a difference in my development. Although I had dabbled around the edges of SoTL since 2007, it was the 2010 Symposium on SoTL in Banff that changed how I thought about my work as a librarian. The questions presenters were asking resonated

and the approaches opened up new possibilities. Most of all, I was drawn to the cross-disciplinary discussions that happened after the presentations and continued over meals and walks in the snow. You could feel the desire for mutual understanding across boundaries as scholars explained their disciplines' values and codes and compared terminologies and epistemologies. Articulating the assumptions I made and the meanings I saw for a non-library audience required me to think through my project with more critique and clarity than any other stage in the research process had and challenged me to think about my work from fresh perspectives.

The welcoming community I found at the symposium engaged me with SoTL in a way that reading papers hadn't. Engaging in SoTL led me to a deeper commitment to understanding student learning and using that knowledge effectively in the classroom. The case studies in this book reveal that I am not alone in seeing SoTL as a means to do better research or in appreciating it as a way of facilitating better learning for the students I work with.

Over the next few years, I became more involved in SoTL associations and conferences but met very few fellow librarians engaging in these generative venues. On the flip side, while SoTL researchers were always welcoming, often they were somewhat surprised to see librarians there and curious about what we could offer to the conversation. In the literature, it seemed like there were two solitudes. Papers in SoTL journals, even when based on aspects of learning that librarians know well (e.g., undergraduate research, integrating source material) rarely cited work by librarians. SoTL work in the library literature was rarely labeled explicitly as such, and rarely drew on SoTL work outside of library journals. We have much in common, but it is only relatively recently that we have become part of each other's communities and conversations, as Cara Bradley noted in 2009 when SoTL as a term first hit mainstream academic library literature.¹

Since then, there has been a steady growth in references to SoTL in library discussions and publications. Key writers and thinkers in academic librarianship (many of whom have contributed to this book) have also worked deliberately to explicitly link SoTL and library scholarship, building a growing community around #librariansotl. In the past three years, there have been presentations on SoTL at key conferences including LOEX, LIW, and ALA Midwinter; within ACRL, support for SoTL is evident in the packed room for the panel on SoTL at ACRL 2017, a dedicated website, two webinars, and the launch of this book. There has been an increasing number of library presentations at SoTL gatherings, including the Symposium on SoTL, the SoTL Commons, and the annual International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) meetings. The 2017 ISSOTL conference saw a record number of presentations and posters by librarians at the premier event in the field, and there is more work in the pipeline for ISSOTL 2018. Recently, the ISSOTL Board approved a SIG for Information Literacy that will foster ongoing conversations. It has been wonderful to watch SoTL and library scholarship come together, share strengths, and develop new ideas reflective of both fields.

This book marks the state of the integration of SoTL and academic librarianship in 2018 and lays the groundwork for the future. The essays by leading SoTL scholars, both within

and outside librarianship, draw connections between our work and SoTL as manifested in the theories we use, the teaching we do, the research we conduct, and the professional development we undertake that leads to growth across these aspects of our work. The case studies in each section provide vivid illustrations of the differences this work makes in practice across a range of academic settings, disciplines, and purposes. Each case study also shows the process of SoTL integration, the many paths into this work taken by librarians. We see the effects of personal relationships that develop into collaborations, the impacts of teaching and learning centers that foster communities of practice, and the determination of individuals to explore new academic territories. We understand the questions that led researchers to engage with SoTL and the changes SoTL work made to the questions they asked. We note how external drivers like the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, institutional initiatives, and concerns around assessment sparked engagement with SoTL. We are presented with evidence that participating in SoTL benefits librarians, libraries, institutions, and higher education. Above all, we learn how SoTL work changes how others see us and how we see ourselves.

—Margy MacMillan

ENDNOTES

1. Cara Bradley, “The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Opportunities for Librarians,” *College & Research Libraries News* 70, no. 5 (2009): 276–78.

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Bradley, Cara. “The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Opportunities for Librarians.” *College & Research Libraries News* 70, no. 5 (2009): 276–78.

