

There is a story about Hui-neng, one of the primary figures of Zen philosophy, and the legendary Sixth Patriarch of the Chan tradition. One day, a nun came to him and said, "Oh, great master! I have been studying the sutras for many years, yet there are parts that I still do not understand. Can you enlighten me?" Hui-neng said, "Of course. Since I myself cannot read, if you will read these passages aloud to me, I will do my best to reveal their truth to you." The nun was shocked. "How can you know what the texts mean if you do not even know the meaning of the characters?" she asked. Hui-neng replied, "Truth has nothing to do with the words. The truth is like the moon in the sky, and words are like a finger pointing toward it. It is helpful to have the finger to point out the moon, but the finger is not the moon. To see the moon it is necessary to look beyond the finger."

This story illustrates what SoTL scholars grapple with every day: how do we bridge the gap between what is taught and what is learned? How do we make sure our students are seeing the moon, and not our finger? How do we cultivate students' autonomy so they can use the tools that we give them to forge their own path toward true knowledge? This issue of Mountain Rise presents articles by teachers wrestling with these questions.

Our first article by Janelle Wilson and Carmen Latterall explores the gap between teaching and learning by investigating the experiences of non-mathematics students in general education math classes. Engaging students with the subject matter and asking them to participate in their own learning process, both key to effective learning, can be challenging in required general education courses. The gap between teachers' perceptions of their subject matter and students' perceptions is often wide. In order to make mathematics more relevant and engaging to their students, Wilson and Latterall set out to discover what exactly their students think mathematics is. The study they design and administer on the first day of class reveals not what knowledge students bring into the classroom, but what students think the purpose of that knowledge is. Their research finds a starting place, solid ground on which to build a bridge across the gap between how students understand math and how mathematicians understand math. By deepening their students' understanding of the relevance of mathematics, these researchers hope to engage their students and invite them to participate in their own learning process.

Actively using students' experiences outside the classroom to bridge the gap between teaching and learning is the foundation of sending students abroad to study. By surrounding students with a new

language and culture, these programs aim to expand the classroom beyond its walls. When students study abroad, their experiences outside the classroom should support and deepen their experiences inside the classroom. But what happens when it doesn't work this way? Claire O'Reilly, a German language teacher who sends Irish students to study abroad, finds that her students don't meet their goals regarding language acquisition and cultural competency. By carefully evaluating student feedback and her observations, she diagnoses a set of barriers to student success. Then she considers what can be taught to students prior to, and during, their study abroad to overcome these barriers. O'Reilly's proposed curriculum encourages students to reflect as they learn both inside and outside the classroom. She wants students to stretch beyond their comfort zones to actively engage with the culture of their host country. Her research suggests that having former students who share their experiences prior to the year abroad and faculty mentors who work with students during their year abroad are key to helping students meet their self-selected learning goals. To help her students reach their goals, O'Reilly recruits peer and faculty mentors to help students bridge the gap between their daily experiences and classroom experiences.

The practicum year of student-teachers is specifically designed to help them bridge the gap between their course studies in pedagogy, content, and classroom management to their work in a K-12 classroom. Fostering successful, collaborative relationships between student-teachers and their mentor-teachers is important to helping new teachers reflect on what they are teaching and what their students are learning. Shanna Graves studies the efficacy of using dialogue journals between student-teachers and mentor-teachers to enrich the student teaching experience. While this focused study found some differences among the mentorships it studied, dialogue journals hold great potential for enriching the learning experience of student-teachers by developing alternative communication paths between student-teachers and mentors. The dialogue journal also produces a valuable written record of effective teaching strategies. By codifying anecdotal information usually exchanged in informal conversations, student-teachers have valuable information at their fingertips. Interestingly, Graves' study suggests several aspects of the mentorship relationship that could use further study. First, the varied responses to her study suggest that there is no singular form of communication that will work between all mentors and student-teachers. Further work must be done to match students and mentors appropriately. Secondly,

mentors' responses to this study implied that the dialogue journal also enriched the mentors' teaching, bridging a gap in their own learning processes as well as their students'.

The importance of building bridges across campus in order to serve student learning was an unexpected, but crucial, insight in our final article. Jie Zhang, Barbara LeSavoy, Lauren Lieberman, and Leah Barrett began their work by exploring what faculty can learn in order to identify student leaders and help them fully realize their potential. They used a Faculty Learning Community, a cross-campus collaboration involving faculty and staff from more than eight different departments, to identify 20 students who they mentored for a year. Exploring what Faculty Learning Communities can do to foster student leadership, they found that extending learning beyond the classroom through extracurricular activities and internships was essential. Again, a strong mentoring program, with both peer mentors and faculty mentors, benefitted both the student leaders and the mentoring faculty as well. The Faculty Learning Community identified a need to make mentorship a more common part of the academic experience. They also found that building collaborative relationships among faculty members opened up new avenues to help students bring their learning experiences to more aspects of their lives.

Mentorship, dialogue, and collaboration help bridge the gap between teaching and learning. As evidence supporting this pours in from across disciplines and departments, we have been wondering how we can use these tools to benefit the development and publication of SoTL research. With this in mind, we are revamping our publication strategies here at Mountain Rise. Rather than reviewing submissions with the old "accept or reject" paradigm, in which accepted submissions are returned to authors with a set of (often cryptic) notes and an injunction to "revise and resubmit," we are changing things up.

Our dynamic new peer-review model will incorporate collaboration between authors and SoTL mentors. Contributors will submit abstracts for completed, in-progress, or future SoTL projects and be matched with a team of dedicated SoTL scholars and editors. This group will collaborate to develop, refine, and produce the final article to be published in the next issue of Mountain Rise. This will open the field of SoTL scholarship up to new contributors, and discover new methods for refining research and producing excellent scholarship. We are confident this work will benefit the authors, mentors, and the future of SoTL itself.

Join us in this exciting new approach to academic publishing! We are assembling an amazing group of collaborators, and looking for authors eager to deepen their scholarship, improve their teaching, and help propel our discipline to new heights.