



SoTL as Transformation.

A Review of the 2017 EuroSoTL Conference

The Faculty of Engineering at Lund University, Sweden, played host to the 2nd EuroSoTL conference, which welcomed over 200 scholars from 19 countries. Many delegates were able to cross borders and discover new territories not only in metaphorical spaces but physical ones too. The journey to Lund enables colleagues to travel from Copenhagen across the sea to Sweden. This feat of engineering, building a bridge that spans two countries, illustrates the ingenuity in human creation and co-creation. Not only did the journey route through different landscapes, but so too did the presentations and keynote addresses. It was clear that SoTL acts as a railway to transport those who are willing to explore ideas and new surroundings into a world that focusses on transformation of practice, and development of innovation in teaching and learning.

This year the conference theme embraced the notion of transforming patterns through SoTL, and expanded the understanding of how SoTL scholars and practitioners use shapes and patterns to generate research and explore ideas. The EuroSoTL conference not only brought international scholars together but further built a greater community of practice by introducing the pillars of SoTL to more discipline-based practitioners. The conference attempted to enhance the impact of SoTL on both people and practices by carefully considering the value and purpose of SoTL in an ever-changing Higher Education landscape. This was achieved through two important strands:

- 1) SoTL in the disciplines and
- 2) Impacts of SoTL on teaching excellence, research into SoTL as a vehicle for change.

What was evident is that SoTL is expanding by exploring innovative practices in teaching and learning. The conference introduced new ideas to established academics whilst simultaneously explaining the principles and dynamics of the scholarship of teaching and learning to those new to this area of study.

Katarina Martensson and Torgny Roxa introduced the conference and welcomed the main keynote for the first day. Catherine Bovill, from Edinburgh University painted a wonderful picture of co-creation through SoTL. Her presentation emphasised the importance of using students to design, create, and deliver learning content. The audience was able to consider changes in practice to better accommodate a co-created curriculum. Through the keynote address a sub-theme of student-centred learning was created to promote the individual sessions that followed.

The individual sessions were punctuated with presentations exploring connections between micro, meso and macro components of the Higher Education environment. It was interesting to witness the conversations that occurred during break sessions and lunch. Colleagues not only came together in a common space but more importantly established links to continue conversations, engage research, and develop ideas for future dissemination and publication.

This year saw the introduction of the Joanna Renc-Roe Award. Joanna sadly passed away last year. She was a SoTL scholar and strong advocate for student engagement. The award recognised a conference presentation that captured the passion of Joanna's work which illuminated the innovation

within SoTL and how SoTL can be used to move into new territories and reshape teaching and learning practice.

Apart from the academic space, the conference dinner and more informal spaces provided a wonderful opportunity to meet with colleagues and share visions, research, and ideas. Many new partnerships were established which will serve to further enhance the contributions SoTL makes towards advancing Higher Education pedagogies. This was evident in the keynote address for the second day which narrated the storyline for developing SoTL in new places.

Like the previous conference, we were reminded that there is still work to be done to expel myths, define a common language, and develop metrics for evaluating the impact of SoTL on people and practices. The conference not only provided answers to teaching and learning practice related problems, but further triggered new ways of asking questions.

In summary, the 2nd EuroSoTL conference was a great success that planted the SoTL seed firmly on European soil. We look forward, with anticipation, to the fruits that will nourish future SoTL meetings.

Mark Van Doren, the American poet, best summarised the outcome of this conference when he wrote: The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.

As the journey began in Sweden it appears fitting to end in Swedish:

Tack för att vi kan lära oss och upptäcka varandra, så att vi lär oss att orkestrera förändringar.

Translated this equates to: Thank you for enabling us to learn and discover together, so that collectively we learn to orchestrate change.



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