The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

(2020-2024)

SOTL over the years:

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - 2020

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly of Student Assessment of Learning

Written by Dr. Laura Ziska

The purpose of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) events is to understand, improve, and share teaching and learning practices across disciplines and schools to prepare a new generation of lifelong learners.

The second SoTL conference took place on February 6 at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne under the heading 'The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly of Student Assessment of Learning'. 20 participants from 4 different schools wrestled with questioning the theories and practices of how to grade, support and enhance student learning and its assessment. It was a lively, interactive affair that often resulted in much head scratching and open-ended conclusions. Therein lies the magic of a SoTL conference: In the world of teaching and learning, things are rarely binary and prescriptive. Reassessing and refreshing teaching methods must become regular practice.

Four different insights and approaches as to how teachers could effectively employ student assessment of learning were presented during the conference.

1. New approaches to grading student internships

Ruth Puhr, Faculty Development Advisor at Les Roches started off proceedings with a look at how to best apply a flexible, formative approach to grading first year internships in hospitality education.

After noticing increased dissatisfaction regarding Pass or Fail grading, Ruth decided to research more holistic grading methods that could lead to better pedagogical and learning outcomes. All her findings led to a more adaptive approach based on:

- Inquiry-based, reflective learning
- Adaptive content
- Flexible timing
- The choice of cooperative learning
- Assessment as a cycle of formative feedback

The Pass or Fail method is admittedly a fast and easy option to implement as a teacher, but surely the grading of internships necessitates a broader benchmark if the student's work is to be properly valued? The learning curve during an internship touches both the practical and the personal, content is organic and ever-changing, timings are fluid and the demonstration of learning requires more than just a test. How to value a student who has truly exceeded? How to dissuade a student from doing the bare minimum just to scrape by?

Some of the suggestions put forward for the SoTL participants included:

- Following a template case study
- Formulating a grading rubric that includes clarity, validity, reliability and consistency
- Highlighting the best student work and putting it on show
- Grading to include variations, e.g. color schemes
- Offering regular feedback sessions rather than a final summative approach

Throwing in the famous Einstein quote "Knowledge is experience. Everything else is information", Ruth effectively highlighted the fact that internship experience and its assessment is worthy of a rethink.

2. Demystifying critical reflection

Laura Zizka and Kader Hegedüs discombobulated a few brains with the question: What's the difference between critical thinking and critical reflection. Indeed, a few beads of sweat broke out as most participants realized the uncomfortable truth: there is no real, definite answer. Participants tentatively agreed that reflection is the

process that leads to the thinking … or thereabouts. Again, the magic of SoTL: Opening up and facing the enigmas hidden in the teaching process.

In a course like Academic Writing, teachers demand critical thinking from their students, but is the concept ever thoroughly explained and taught? What are the analytical tools required to elicit the critical process? Laura and Kader assisted the many aching heads with the following infrastructure: the best way to answer the question is to set a critical thinking task, (for example analyze a text, justify the sources and write a paper) and guide the students to use these cognitive skills:

- Clear understanding of the assignment's purpose
- Accurate identification of the core issues
- Evaluation of significant points of view
- Gathering sufficient, relevant research
- Including information that opposes as well as supports
- Accurately identifying assumptions and inferences
- Assessing the most significant implications and consequences

Another exercise in teaching critical thinking is to steer students towards personal rather than external criteria, i.e. self- assessment rather than course assessment. In other words, when asked to analyze how the Academic Writing course has impacted their critical thinking, research and writing skills, students should be guided to reflecting upon themselves, their progress and their understanding. After all, where better to start the practice of evaluating information to reach a judgement than with oneself?

3. Co-constructive assessment

Francesco Screti and Andrew Keohane from Glion Institute of Higher Education described their alternative approach to grading Academic Writing tasks based on co-constructive methods. Simply put, using an online tool like Google Docs, students work on their assignment with continued help, feedback and assessment from teachers. This open and cooperative approach strengthens the learning outcomes and eliminates a lot of anxiety associated with the challenging task of critical writing. There is increased scaffolding offered from the offset where students feel supported by the regular personalized guidance. An essay can be built over a period of time, taking into account and modifying accordingly to the feedback offered. Google Docs stores the students' work, becoming a reference point for progress and checking.

Admittedly, a few students may feel intimidated having their work stored online, open to teacher ('Big Brother') scrutiny. Some of the weaker students may succumb to laziness and lack of autonomy, safe in the knowledge that help is constantly on the

way. Similarly, stronger students could feel under-challenged by this apparently 'too involved' approach.

This method has been in use for three semesters and has so far proven successful in improving the quality of the work and the students' confidence in a task they normally find extremely daunting. While this approach has enhanced student performance in this particular subject area, it may not be totally suitable to all subjects.

4. Using testing more effectively

Sébastien Fernandez rightly mentioned that "We don't learn Salsa from reading a book, but from practice." So why not make information retention more playful, practical and dynamic in the classroom? If learning is going to be assessed based on memory recall, then strategies need to be taught - and they needn't be painful. The SoTL participants were challenged to remember a list of 20 words guided by a method laid out in the Joshua Foer book 'Moonwalking with Einstein' that assists memory storage and retrieval. Thanks to the well-laid out strategy, the mission was successfully completed.

Sébastien underlined how teachers often underuse student testing effectively in class. It can be done without the pressure of grades or evaluation in a more dynamic, consistent and useful way. Methods for on-going learning testing could include:

- Using spontaneous recall in class
- Holding off taking notes
- Giving more informal quizzes
- Offering mini mock exams
- Giving more context to trigger memory

To conclude, it's best to train students to use the information where possible, not just to listen and learn it.

SoTL key takeaways

The question of how to best adapt the student assessment of learning resulted in many descriptive and adaptive conclusions. It was generally agreed that pedagogical practices need to evolve into something fairer and more holistic, but that unfortunately in some cases, the functionality of certain 'old fashioned' methods was going to be difficult to totally eradicate.

- The Good: When student assessment can be flexible, adaptive. Assessment that makes positive use of technology and resources. Enhancing pass or fail methods to be more representative of student knowledge.
- The Bad: Tests based on memory recall. Student demotivation caused by a bad grade. The joy of learning VS the stress of exams. Grades not representative of knowledge.
- The Ugly: Lack of resources resulting in mechanical assessment methods. Easy to use testing methods that benefit the teacher, not the student. Testing based on pass or fail that offers no nuanced feedback.

Feedback from the participants:

"I am taking two main insights from the SoTL conference. The first relates to how the assessment of student learning can facilitate changes in the pedagogical practice and approach of an institution. A great deal of analytical work is required to assess student exam results, assessment methods and teaching approaches in light of the particular learning outcomes. The second relates to the complexity involved in assessing assess critical thinking in a way that benefits student development." Dr Amrita Zahir - Head of Faculty Development, EHL.

"The discussions raised many fundamental points regarding the various delivery formats for a course. In particular, a questioning on the "playful" dimension to be included in a course and its impact on students' learning. There's still a lot to think about in terms of "gamification" and the student learning processes." Dr Stefano Borzillo - Associate Dean Undergraduate program, EHL.

"To me, SoTL felt like what a true conference should be: it was more about sharing what we do not know, rather than what we think we know. This created an ideal environment to rethink our role as practitioners and to address questions we usually tend to avoid." Mr Kader Hegedüs - Lecturer, EHL.

"I really enjoyed the very practice-oriented and thought-provoking format of the sessions. It's with this philosophy in mind that I designed my presentation that was about the fascinating topic of the testing and its long-lasting effect on information retention. I wanted the audience to realize that we underuse testing students in our classes. It can be done without the pressure of grades for students and without the high workload of grading for teachers." Dr Sébastien Fernandez - Associate Professor, EHL.

"The SoTL conference was an invaluable opportunity to present the preliminary findings of our ongoing research on co-constructed assessment and discuss them with colleagues who teach the same subject as well as other subjects.

Sharing teaching practices, critically evaluating them, questioning ourselves, giving/receiving feedback, discussing with colleagues is crucial for teachers' improvement, which in turn is a way to ensure our students the best learning experience." Dr Francesco Screti - Professor of Academic Writing, Glion Institute of Higher Education.

"For me, SoTL represents an opportunity to share and gain insights into a range of teaching and learning practices. But, more importantly, the questions raised by other conference participants as they interact with my working practices offer useful and sometimes challenging perspectives which can really improve curriculum design." Ms Ruth Puhr - Faculty Development Advisor, Les Roches.

Educators in higher education should definitely consider participating in or hosting a SoTL event at their institution if they want to further understand and improve teaching and learning practices. At EHL, we are already looking forward to the next SoTL conference.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - 2021

Higher Education and Beyond: Promoting Lifelong Learning through SoTL

Written by Dr. Laura Ziska

The purpose of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) events is to understand, improve, and share teaching and learning practices across disciplines and schools to prepare a new generation of lifelong learners.

On Feb 4 and 5, 2021, EHL hosted its third annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) conference with the theme: 'Higher Education and Beyond: Promoting Lifelong Learning through SoTL,' Having completed the spring semester online and beginning the autumn semester in HyFlex mode, EHL, like many other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was faced with new challenges and opportunities brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A post-Covid education

Unique challenges included immediate transfer onto online platforms, remote final exams, and technology glitches. New opportunities offered the possibility for re-thinking about the courses, the materials, and the types of assessment being used.

As we are moving forward to a post-Covid-19 education, we wanted to encourage SoTL enthusiasts to share their reflections on the direction HEIs could be taking in the future.

SoTL involves new and critical interpretations of what is already known about teaching and learning, and promotes a professional engagement with teaching and learning to support teachers and students at various moments in their learning journeys. Whereas the learning journey has typically 'ended' with the granting of a degree, our focus this year was on examining how to encourage our teachers and learners to consider education as a lifelong journey. Instead of seeing the degree as a final destination, a degree should be considered as a rest stop before the learning journey continues.

The journey of lifelong learning

Let's use this journey as a premise for this article. Before leaving on a trip, we carefully plan where we want to go, when, and with whom. We consider practical implications such as timing and budget. We inform ourselves about any travel constraints, including Covid-testing and potential quarantines when arriving at our destination. We weigh all of these decisions, take a decision, and anxiously await our departure.

When beginning the journey with feelings of joy and apprehension, we absorb everything that is new. Our learning journey includes:

- Seeing the campus for the first time.
- Meeting our classmates and teachers.
- Getting used to the 'time difference' between when we want to wake up and when we need to be in class.

A community environment is created based on comfort, engagement, and empowerment in a short time upon arrival. The HEI becomes a 'safe' place where students and faculty can share knowledge and experiences without the risk of judgment or disdain. When participants can communicate freely without fear, the process of lifelong learning has begun. This is the 'Kumbaya' moment of the journey.

The travelers on their respective learning paths can question their beliefs, philosophies, and practices in an open and trusting climate. Through partnerships with others, innovative solutions to existing problems can be found, and working together becomes a memorable experience, a precious souvenir to keep with them forever. They will soon realize that they learn as much by sharing their own experiences as the experiences of others and will be surprised that so much learning can and will be done outside of the traditional classroom setting. In fact, more learning may take place within their community.

Yet, the journey is not necessarily a straight line from point A to point B. Some students will take shortcuts or a completely different path. Some will get lost, only to find their way back. Still, others will enjoy the voyage as much as the actual destination. The most important lessons students learn can often derive from the journey itself more than the actual course content. It is more about how they got there than what they did when they arrived.

Question the journey's end

At the end of 3 years, a degree is granted, and the learning journey is seemingly over, or is it? In our SoTL conference, we focused on 'lifelong learning,' that is, continuing to seek out new challenges, knowledge, and competencies. In the Covid-19 lockdown, we saw that learning could be done in a 'different' way; courses could be taught online; exams could be completed remotely.

The learning curve was great and a bit bumpy for some of the students and faculty. We never really knew what to expect around the bend. But that was part of the excitement. Not knowing what awaits us is exciting. As we have seen with our newest graduates, many have chosen to continue their lifelong learning immediately by applying to official Master's programs. Other students have chosen a more practical learning path by entering the workplace. This aligns with the SoTL philosophy of transformative learning or education that helps individuals see themselves relative to larger social structures. The larger social structure could be another HEI or the workplace… and the learning journey continues.

For SoTL enthusiasts, learning becomes emancipatory as imaginative speculation explores new ways of thinking to challenge our current ways of knowing. Some knowledge opens the mind to new learning experiences. There is a wanderlust for further information and opportunities. Embrace that road not taken. You don't want to miss out on the learning adventure of your life… it's always the 'next' learning journey that is the best one yet!

Educators in higher education should definitely consider participating in or hosting a SoTL event at their institution if they want to further understand and improve teaching and learning practices. At EHL, we are already looking forward to the next SoTL conference in 2022.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - 2022

The Human Touch: Engagement and Creativity through SoTL

Written by Dr. Laura Ziska

The purpose of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning -SoTL- events is to understand, improve, and share teaching and learning practices across disciplines and schools to prepare a new generation of lifelong learners.

The 4th annual international Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) conference was held on February 3, 2022, at EHL Hospitality Business School in Lausanne and online. After almost two years of "everything online", the topic for the conference was "The Human Touch: Engagement and Creativity through SoTL". While the expectations had been to have humans engaging with other humans in person, the sanitary conditions (again) affected our plan. Thus, this conference was offered in a HyFlex manner, synchronously to all participants onsite or online.

Can online learning be as effective as the traditional classroom?

The conference began with an activity entitled Speed SoTL 1. Four "Speed SoTL" activities were dispersed throughout the day to help the participants identify a potential problem/issue/area of interest in teaching or learning that could serve as a possible SoTL research project in the future.

Some of the comments cited by the participants included finding new assessment methods, understanding how learning happens in the asynchronous study, and dealing with low attendance. The majority of the questions, however, focused on the return to onsite presence: "How do we keep the momentum of the positive elements of online learning (i.e., autonomy, flexibility, self-efficacy) when returning to face-to-face courses?", "How can we ensure a smooth return to face-to-face teaching?", "How do we help students learn to learn in a classroom again?". One participant suggested that we could, perhaps, reconsider a full return onsite: "Should we continue in hybrid/HyFlex modes for the benefit of the students?" It seems that the long-awaited return to the traditional classroom has led to more questions about the necessity of all courses going back to "pre-Covid" modes.

Skills gap and competency check for higher education

These questions led seamlessly into the morning's sessions which began with a presentation on skill gaps and competency checks for higher education. Amrita Zahir compared three types of competency checks: SkillsFuture (Singapore), Joint Information System Committee (JISC) from the UK, and DigCompEdu, the European Framework for Digital Competence in Education. The audience was buzzing with questions and comments regarding these frameworks. How do you verify that participants have the competencies? How much faith can you have in these self-reported lists? How can you use these checks to develop personalized training?

How to create an active learning environment

In the second session, Gaby Probst addressed the question of engagement through active learning. Gaby likened the relationship between teaching and learning to a

volleyball match rather than a game of ping-pong. Instead of going back and forth between faculty members and individual students (like ping-pong), Gaby suggested including the other stakeholders in the exchange. The faculty member then becomes the coach of the learning process, not the all-knowing guru in front of a passive audience.

There was nothing passive about THIS audience in the following presentation by Sebastien Fernandez. In his session, Sebastien helped us rethink how to connect with the students. Through a series of exercises, participants reflected on what is appropriate to share with students and how faculty members can establish the human touch moving forward.

The afternoon sessions began with a story about curriculum design and implementation from Alain Imboden from HES-SO Valais. Alain presented an innovative approach to tourism studies, from co-creation with tourism stakeholders and students to a competency-based curriculum and the use of a portfolio to showcase student achievements. One of the best quotes of the day came from Alain regarding assessment: "We try to devise tasks that make the students FORGET about the grade." Don't we all wish we could devise those tasks to encourage authentic learning in our students?

On an equally serious note, we were then privy to a presentation by Lauren Hays and Lindsay McNiff on humanizing secondary research. They introduced us to the SIFT fact-checker, a four-step process to determine if a news source or claim is factual and trustworthy. Simply put, SIFT stands for: Stop (question the source), Investigate the source's veracity, Find the original source to confirm the information, and (look for) Trusted sources. A great resource to use moving forward.

The human touch and the power of play

After all of this fact-checking, it was time for some fun, and Sharon Lauricella and Keith Edmunds gave us plenty of that. In their presentation (which felt more like a game than work), we learned about ludic pedagogy based on four pillars:

- fun (motivation),
- play (behavior),
- playfulness (attitude),
- positivity (good humor)

They demonstrated the power of play in a series of activities that seemed to end too quickly. We won't publish the winner's name; we were all winners in that session!
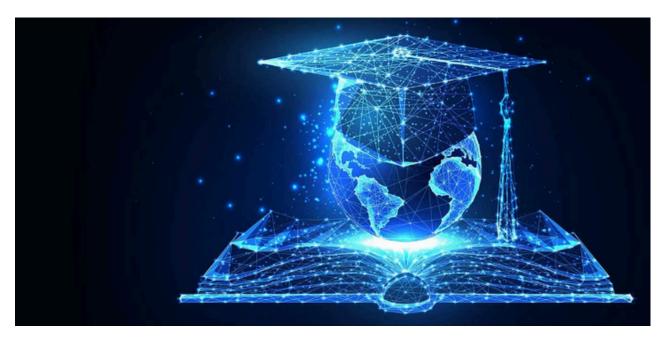
Nearing the end of the afternoon, we had a presentation from Mandy Frake-Mistak, Brian Nairn, and Ameera Ali on expanding institutional-wide SoTL programming. Their SoTL initiatives have already resulted in drafting the SoTL Interactive Guidebook, planning writing retreats, and preparing a Teaching Scholars Hub. We will have to wait until next year to hear how that's coming along…

Our final presentation was a group effort (really!). In a session entitled "The Human Touch from Afar: Building Professional Relationships Through a Digital Divide", six participants (Patrick Maher, Mandy Frake-Mistak, Anita Acai, Roselynn Verwoord, Cherie Woolmer, and Melanie Kotowich-Hamilton) spanning the whole of Canada presented their strategy to keep in touch during this pandemic. They found a peaceful and safe haven far from Covid-19 worries but focused on the mental well-being of scholars in the 21st century.

The sessions of the day embraced the spirit of SoTL. Participants discussed these topics and shared their concerns, apprehensions, excitement, and innovative solutions with others. We are already looking forward to the 5th edition of SoTL in Feb. 2023. Feel free to share your ideas for a conference theme or a session… or why not join us next year. We are the most inclusive group you will ever meet!

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - 2023

The future of higher education

Written by Dr. Laura Ziska

The 5th annual international [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)](#) conference took place both online and onsite at EHL Hospitality Business School on February 7, 2023. The theme for this event was the future of education through research, community, innovation, teaching, and learning. The purpose of SoTL events is to understand, improve, and share teaching and learning practices across disciplines and schools to prepare a new generation of lifelong learners.

The question of personalized faculty development

After welcome words from the organizer, [Dr. Laura Zizka,](#) the participants followed their first session on faculty upskilling, presented by Dr. Amrita Zahir.

While reskilling entails developing new competencies for internal mobility, upskilling involves an accelerated progression to meet career and lifelong learning goals. Discussion revolved around skill building and skill development and which should be offered in the workplace. The overarching question was whether personalized faculty development was a feasible option for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The group was quite divided in their response.

Some participants questioned if their HEI had the necessary resources to ensure personalized training. Other participants pondered what 'personalized' would actually entail: Would they be responsible or accountable for any training they received? Would they receive certifications or evidence of the trainings they embark upon? Clearly, there are many questions that need to be sorted before implementing this type of personalized development.

Learning is a social activity, but also tangible and playful !

Session 2, led by Ms. Gaby Probst, focused on the timely topic of the use of collaborative tools for the classrooms of tomorrow. Research has confirmed that learning is a social activity, thus encouraging this type of activity is crucial in HEI classrooms. According to Gaby, collaboration must be interactive, but interaction is not always collaborative. To demonstrate, she shared the advantages and disadvantages of three collaborative tools commonly used in HEIs: Edupad, Padlet, and Mindmeister.

To continue the collaboration, in the third session, participants onsite were privy to a lesson in LEGO. In fact, two researchers from EPFL, Dr. Natascia Petringa and Dr. Ingrid Le Duc, animated a session on using tangibles to reinforce transversal skills in university teaching. Transversal skills are not specific to a domain, position, or job. They are skills such as communication, project management, ethics, etc. that are needed for every career. After explaining the theory of using tangibles to illustrate complex problems, participants were asked to create their own classroom issue through a LEGO representation. What was most interesting were the explanations that were given to accompany the visuals. By using tangibles, students are obliged to communicate with each other or their visual risks being misunderstood. Quite a bit of food for thought!

After lunch, participants continued to play with Mr. Francesco Reale in a session entitled 'Game as a didactic tool'. Francesco offered numerous examples of games used in psychology, art, languages, and sciences. As a passionate game player and creator, he shared his passion for using games in HEIs. He differentiated between pedagogical games where participants learn something and recreational games

where participants break from reality. According to Francesco, a 'game is defined by its rules'; otherwise, it is just play. Near the end of the session, we played a few games as well.

Giving feedback digitally

The next session was animated by Dr. Michelle Amos and Dr. Dawna Lisa Buchanan from UCMO, U.S. They presented a session on formative feedback through technologies that maximize impact with minimal effort. The tool they presented was Notability, a new technology for giving feedback digitally. In their cases, they use this tool to annotate students' written work. They can share with each other, keep a record, and offer more timely and useful feedback to their students.

From an idea to a question

The conference concluded with a session on moving from an idea to a SoTL research question, given by Dr. Lauren Hays from the U.S. Dr Hays offered the most traditional SoTL session that included the core questions of the SoTL philosophy: What works? What is? Visions of Possible? New Conceptual Frameworks? Participants reflected on what works well with their students and what can be done to improve the learning environment. The core question for faculty members remains: What do I need to change to help my students learn more effectively?

And with that thought in our heads, our 5th annual SoTL conference came to a close. A big thank you goes out to all of the presenters and participants. We had over 50 participants onsite and online, a great success for our humble SoTL community.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - 2024

Embracing Technology in Education

Written by Dr. Laura Zizka

The purpose of SoTL events is to understand, improve, and share teaching and learning practices across disciplines and schools to prepare a new generation of lifelong learners. The 6th annual international Scholarship of Teaching and Learning conference took place at EHL Hospitality Business School, Lausanne, on February 1, 2024.

This year's theme revolved around the significant role that technology has taken and will continue to take in education, and particularly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and its relevance in HEI community, innovation, teaching, and learning. After three years of blended SoTL conferences, this year, participants were back on site! From the welcome coffee through the closing apero, the buzz of the participants and the enthusiasm that they exuded was contagious.

AI in Academic Writing

The keynote speech was given by [Dr. Iain MacLaren](#). Don't be put off by the title; the presentation was a cracker! Dr. MacLaren took us through the opportunities, challenges, risks, and implications of AI in HEIs. Over the past year, we have been inundated with workshops and seminars that discussed 'best practices' for using AI in HEI classrooms. Dr. MacLaren showed us many of the most popular tools and provided concrete examples of how they work. For example, did you know that Chat GPT can pretend to reflect? Or that it can be persuaded to agree with you if you are insistent enough that you are correct?

Of course, while we were amused by the image of salmon filets floating in the river (as opposed to live salmon swimming in a river), Dr. MacLaren also warned us of potential downfalls: AI cannot handle mathematics (yet), its responses may be biased, and it is poor at original responses. In fact, unlike the common rumor that AI is great for brainstorming, we were cautioned that those same ideas may be the same ideas that anyone and everyone else is receiving as well. Nonetheless, like a placebo, if you believe that AI has helped you in brainstorming and it actually gets you started in your work, then believe it!

As a key takeaway, Dr. MacLaren discussed the future of education in something he referred to as the Human(e) University where the focus is on learning as a type of 'sense-making', where students learn to critique knowledge regardless of its origin. A place where research is seen as a long-term journey rather than a race to publish (the antithesis of 'publish or perish'). Education where technology has a role of experimentation, exploration, and innovation but is guided by critical digital literacy. This is the education of the future that SoTL envisions as well. Thank you Dr. MacLaren for kick-starting our SoTL conference.

Find your unique teaching signature

EHL's [Dr. Sebastien Fernandez](#) followed the keynote with a reflection on technology and our jobs as teachers. Do students still need us? Can we be replaced by AI? Luckily, he was able to convince us that our jobs are (still) safe! In his interactive session, Dr. Fernandez provided us with criteria for identifying one's personalized teaching signature, from being engaging, organized and caring, to having good material and a sense of humor. Based on a study by Fisher (2022), Dr. Fernandez described the various personalized teaching signatures and, in groups, we first completed and then discussed our own. Such a simple yet effective way to spark dialogue around someone's teaching signature. This is a keeper for the future!

Learning sustainability through a blended approach

The final morning session was presented by Dr. Estefania Amer from University of Lausanne. Although a first time participant and presenter at our SoTL conference, Dr. Amer fit in perfectly! She presented the new course she is currently developing and asked the SoTL family for feedback. That is what we do best. We asked pertinent questions about how the new course is organized (predominantly asynchronous with three on campus touchpoints over the year) and made suggestions on how to improve it for the future cohorts. We hope to hear more about Dr. Amer's project next year at SoTL 2025!

Re-imagining online assessments in a digital world

After lunch, participants digested the topic of online assessments presented by Ms. Melanie Bonvin, Dr. Henrietta Carbonel, and Prof Jean-Michel Julien (all representing UniDistance Suisse). Through a series of handouts, participants brainstormed innovative ways to assess their students' learning. In groups of three, they imagined new assessment formats with no constraints. What great ideas emerged! Four top tips we took away from that session: Physical exams cannot just be put online; there is no 'ideal' assessment; students should be integrated into assessment decisions; and effective assessments should encourage autonomous motivation.

(More) course interactions with students

In a follow-up session from last year, Ms. Gaby Probst shared strategies about designing effective questions using technology by using technology to ask us questions. Through one QR code to WooClap, participants responded to a variety of questions in different question formats. This helped us to see the potential of using WooClap in our courses. The key message was clear: No matter what tool or what type of question asked, faculty members need to slow down and allow everyone the chance to respond. In a world where information is practically instantaneous, Ms. Probst reminded us that silence can lead to reflection which leads to deeper learning and self-awareness. Of all of the tools, my personal favorite was the Wheel of Choice (literally an automatic spinning wheel that helps decide who speaks or presents first), which I intend to use in my classroom in the spring.

Creative future of education

The final workshop was led by Dr. Laura Zizka but based on the PhD work and expertise of Dr. Auréle Boulos. Participants were asked to define creativity and the environment they needed in order to be creative. Like assessment, there is no 'ideal' definition of creativity or what it entails. In small mixed groups, they were asked to come up with ONE creative course that encompassed all of their areas of expertise. Participants imagined a title of the course, one task that could be done, and a way of measuring its success (i.e., assessment). The best title had to be the one that began with 'Mission Impossible'! We were all ready to take that class.

After the final session, the day wound down with a summary of the sessions and the opportunity to provide potential topics and themes for next year. Another great SoTL experience; will we see YOU next year?