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SoTL and the Humanities: Navigating Tensions, Realizing Possibilities

ABSTRACT

In this article, we share themes and tensions experienced by humanities faculty undertaking a scholarship of teaching & learning (SoTL) project as part of a multi-campus, grant-funded initiative. Faculty participants in the project iteratively transformed a course to improve one or more aspects of their students' learning over a three-year period and documented the process and results in a course portfolio. To support their individual and collaborative work, each of the four campuses had a local leader, and participants met regularly with campus teams, convening with the full group annually for cross-campus knowledge exchange and peer review. At the project conclusion campus leaders gathered participant reflections and discovered a pattern of tensions that included: disciplinary ways of knowing, ways to represent knowing, and ways of writing and sharing. These tensions are similar to those identified elsewhere and can be potential impediments to this work for some in the humanities. Explicitly addressing those potential tensions while helping faculty see how their own disciplinary approaches can help them investigate their course practices is a useful first step toward more contributions from humanities scholars.

KEYWORDS

SoTL, humanities, course portfolios, student learning

INTRODUCTION

In their introduction to a special "Arts and Humanities" issue of *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, Bloch-Schulman and Linkon (2016) describe a dilemma from their perspective as humanities faculty and active SoTL researchers. They describe first-hand experiences with the mixed messages humanities scholars often receive about disciplinary expectations for scholarship and "rigor" in SoTL: on one hand, their work was criticized by reviewers or readers for not meeting social science norms for argument and evidence—for "not following a sufficiently data-driven, experimental model," "not [being] sufficiently committed to 'validity,'" or not using "qualitative methods based in the social sciences, like coding, rather than our own methods, such as close reading." On the other hand, humanities colleagues offered "scorn for the very idea of looking at 'data'" (1). Ultimately, Bloch- Schulman and Linkon argue that discussion of SoTL methodology "often feels futile and exasperating, not only because those not using social scientific methods are asked to justify their approaches but to do so in the terms laid down by social scientists" (3).

In this article, we share themes and tensions experienced by humanities faculty undertaking SoTL projects that both underscore and complicate Bloch- Schulman and Linkon's experiences. These themes emerged as we worked with faculty from different institutional contexts during a three-year, Teagle Foundation-funded project known as the "Collaborative Humanities Redesign Project" (CHRP). The granting agency and lead investigator were eager to demonstrate how courses in the humanities could contribute to and broaden SoTL work. In brief, the project involved humanities faculty from four universities in the United States and was led by a social scientist (the grant recipient). Faculty participants in the project each iteratively transformed a course to improve one or more aspects of their students' learning over a three-year period and documented the process and results in a digital course portfolio. The course portfolio has been shown to be a robust way to represent teaching and lends itself to promoting analysis and reflection (Bernstein 1998; Bernstein 2002; Bernstein et al. 2006).

Participants began the first year by articulating a set of questions about their students' learning prompted by reading student work produced in their courses. Instructors read that work looking for whether and how students were addressing the goals faculty had hoped for with particular assignments. Next, they designed and implemented at least two rounds of course or assignment modifications, looking at patterns of student performance to study the impact of their interventions on student learning. Along the way, they captured this work and their reflections on it in individual course portfolios, ending with a final reflection and public version of their portfolio. To support their individual and collaborative work, each of the four campuses had a local leader, and participants met regularly with campus teams, convening with the full group annually for cross-campus knowledge exchange and peer review.

During these annual meetings, the campus leaders and authors of this article—two of whom are from the humanities and one from the social sciences—began to observe some of the productive tensions experienced by participants as they worked to "tell the stories" of student learning in their own courses. Specifically, we noticed the challenges experienced by humanities faculty as they examined and documented student learning and enhanced their courses in a project that drew heavily on the norms and language of SoTL work coming out of the social sciences (e.g., identifying a problem or opportunity, designing an intervention, collecting "artifacts," measuring outcomes, and reflecting). As faculty participants navigated the project, they encountered these norms as operating within "a contested space," a space that they perceived as driven by social science methodology and terminology. Participants often questioned whether and why they had "to learn a new language" for a project "framed as an interdisciplinary endeavor" (Teagle Foundation 2017), even as they described their involvement in the project as successful and beneficial for student learning. While all elements of this project did not approximate what social scientists themselves would consider "research," it did ask participants to consider and represent their teaching in ways they were not used to.

One contributing factor to participants' awareness of the "contested space" the project occupied was the disciplinary backgrounds of those of us who served as facilitators and faculty developers on each campus. Two facilitators were social scientists (both psychologists) and two were from the humanities (one from writing and rhetoric, and one from literature). An unexpected dimension of the project that emerged from this difference was an ongoing analysis of the tensions we noticed and the possible contributors to them from positions inside and outside the disciplines represented. In this article, we attempt a hybrid model of reporting on this experience, building our claims around productive tensions

using evidence from a variety of primary sources. This includes our observations and notes from campus leader planning conversations, and through textual analysis of primary texts, including participants' course portfolios, focus group transcripts, and program reflections. Our analysis of these reflections was determined to be research with human subjects, and it was reviewed by the University of Kansas institutional review board (site of grant recipient). We analyze extended passages from these primary sources and secondary scholarship to emphasize these themes in the words of the original authors as well. In the following sections, we examine tensions that arose for program participants and possible factors that contributed to those tensions, as well as lessons learned throughout the project for supporting humanities faculty undertaking SoTL projects.

DISCIPLINARY WAYS OF KNOWING

As the project timeline and course portfolio writing asked participants to articulate, assess, and re-visit student learning in ways often unfamiliar to their training, many experienced a disconnect between their own disciplinary norms for teaching, thinking, reading, or "knowing" and the methods or ways of thinking and knowing of other disciplines (most frequently the social sciences, which participants viewed as predominant in SoTL). As a result, many participants engaged in productive resistance and critique of methods or epistemologies they perceived as foreign to the humanities, which, at times, led to reconceptualizing what it means to do SoTL in the humanities using the tools offered by participants' own disciplines.

Participant resistance was, ironically, often coupled with their appreciation for the ways the project helped them reflect on and refine their courses or assignments; their critiques demonstrated how disciplinary ways of thinking, then, "are not superficial features but partly inherent in the knowledge content" (Ylijoki 2000, 356) of the disciplinary cultures of "academic tribes and territories" (Becher 1989; Becher and Trowler 2001). In his framework, Becher (1989) argues that "the attitudes, activities and cognitive styles of groups of academics representing a particular discipline are closely bound up with the characteristics and structures of knowledge domains with which such groups are professionally concerned" (20). Academic behaviors, including teaching and learning practices, directly relate to disciplinary norms and assumptions about ways of knowing, discovering, and sharing new knowledge. A decade later, Ylijoki used Becher's framework in a comparative study of the core disciplinary culture or "moral order" (341) that students are socialized into during university study, arguing that "an academic tribe can reproduce itself only by being able to acculturate novices into its membership and its moral order" (359). Both Ylijoki and Beecher help us understand possible sources for some of the tensions we noted as both point out the ways that disciplinary teaching and learning environments, cultures (Becher and Trowler 2002), or "regimes" (Trowler and Cooper 2002) construct "moral orders," which hold "normative power" for students and faculty and influence the way the discipline is taught, learned, and reproduced.

One source of tension for most of the participants seems to have originated from the typically tacit dispositions, knowledge, and skills emphasized in the humanities—disciplines that generally focus on the study and interpretation of human culture, thought, and creative expression. In *Literary Learning*, Linkon (2011) offers a description of these dispositions and the "moral order" underlying the field of literary studies, which, she argues, is "fundamentally humanist" in the way contemporary scholars "embrace subjectivity (in all its meanings) and resist claims to objectivity" (12). This embrace of

subjectivity includes "an appreciation for complexity and ambiguity" (12) and relies on interpretations and analysis of such things as culture, language, creative production, and identity, typically within a historical or cultural context. Broadly speaking, humanities disciplines value divergence and arrive at knowledge "through contention rather than the empirical testing of theories" (Donald 2002, 236), whether through divergent readings of a narrative (e.g., "reading between the lines" or "reading against the grain") or in debating or "problematizing" pre-existing interpretive arguments by emphasizing complexity, multiple perspectives, and creative thinking.

These attitudes and dispositions complicated the work for some project participants. As one participant described it, "aspects of this project were uncomfortable," both because humanities scholars "feel under siege," and because the project timeline felt too "linear" or progressivist. Likewise, two different participants noted the following in interviews with the project-impact assessment consultants:

> *The linearity [of the three-year project] was also a problem. Things are not really linear, but the project asks you to present things that way . . . We needed space for problematizing in this project. Problematizing is a legitimate part of intellectual work in the humanities. We can overindulge in it, but it's also a part of our DNA, and outsiders don't get it.* (Teagle Foundation 2017, 5)

> *Some people figured out their innovation before they'd ever identified or measured what their baseline was. The linearity of the project was difficult. How can you take inherent messiness and create a logical, organized structure—that's hard for humanities faculty.* (Teagle Foundation 2017, 5)

Other participants perceived the project timeline as less uncomfortably linear, perhaps because they interpreted the instructions to set a baseline by teaching the first iteration of the course without making any changes more loosely than other participants. In a final, written reflection on the program, for example, one participant explained,

> *my first clear "aha" moment was in the first meeting [. . .] when we had to write about our courses on those large sheets of paper. Three things crystallized for me: where change needed to happen, how it needed to happen, and why the combination of those things was important. [. . .] it was as if a roadblock finally cleared.*

Another participant wrote, similarly, "it happened very early in the process as I figured out what exactly I wanted my focus to be. Once I had that clear, I knew how to proceed." For both, this clarifying moment happened during the first program meeting before they taught the first iteration of the course, revealing they were already considering possible interventions rather than just describing the course as it was.

WAYS OF REPRESENTING KNOWING

Lessons learned from our participants' reflections can be helpful to other leaders of humanities-focused projects. The range of responses to the project reminds us that while it is useful to interrogate how the values of the humanities may accord or discord with common methods of scholarly inquiry into teaching, it is important that in doing so we do not reinforce totalizing or otherwise singular views of the

humanities or humanities teaching, or, similarly, of the social sciences, which can easily serve as a foil in conversations about why humanists struggle with SoTL. Openly recognizing the diversity of the humanities disciplines was important to fostering open exchange among the project participants—as did making space to talk about complexities arising from differences in institutional divisions or reward structures. For example, at two of the participating universities, communication faculty were co-located with the humanities, while some of the participating history faculty were trained in traditional social sciences methods. Similarly, some participants viewed SoTL as an encouraged and recognized form of scholarship, for instance, because it was written into campus promotion and tenure processes. However, others reported informal advice from departmental colleagues to avoid focusing too much on teaching and learning.

At the same time, participants' anxiety about how to represent student learning in their projects also helped us to "recognize that this language—and much of the language of SoTL—isn't used in all disciplines" (Chick 2014, 3). Our experience affirms Chick's observation that the "pervasiveness of 'method' and 'methodology,' . . . 'data' . . . and 'quantitative or qualitative'. . . leaves many of our colleagues powerless in SoTL" (3). As project leaders it became important to provide a wide range of examples and to support participants in selecting methods of inquiry that most aligned to their project questions and goals. Similarly, it compelled us to more closely observe—and in some cases, revise—the language we used in facilitating conversations about the course portfolio and other ways participants could go public with their projects. We shifted from talking about "interventions" and "artifacts," for instance, to "intended changes," and "student work."

Many moments of productive tension arose as participants determined how to investigate and then represent student work as a form of evidence for their claims about the project outcomes. For some, the discomfort was pragmatic, stemming from the struggle to make explicit what resides on an unconscious level for so many humanities instructors—their criteria for evaluating student work. Indeed, developing rubrics or narrative descriptions to describe student performance levels was new to some participants and helped them discover insights into their teaching. As one participant reflected at the end,

> *I came to realize that while I was expecting my students to "compare," "analyze," and "synthesize" in order to engage in "critical thinking," that I didn't really have a firm idea of what each of these were. I knew at that moment that I needed to define my terms much more specifically because the ambiguity in my mind was creeping into my assignments . . . and into my students' work.*

For this participant, the act of defining key competencies within a disciplinary context and describing what student achievement of those looked like helped him

> *get beyond the magic of teaching the humanities model to break things down and see what worked and what didn't [. . .] what seemed sort of ephemeral or unexplainable turned out just to be a challenge of finding the right frame to put something into in order to understand it and overcome the obstacles.*

Other participants found it more challenging to represent student performance in ways that aligned with their disciplinary training; as one participant described, "one aspect [of the project] that seemed

difficult" was "developing quantitative and qualitative analysis or some kind of analysis that would be credible/acceptable in the field of the SoTL." Another explained,

> *I observed several people had used quantitative data and that is a methodology I am unfamiliar with. As a literary scholar, I rely heavily on qualitative data: textual analysis, reflection, "thick descriptions," etc. The very thought of using a more social science approach to my teaching was scary and off-putting.*

Still other participants expressed this skepticism of quantitative data as an even more fundamental difficulty with the notion of representing student work as evidence, particularly in discussions of designing a rubric to help assess the quality of student work and to quantify areas where multiple students were excelling or struggling. As one participant argued, the "idea behind rubrics is that a systematic way of looking at student work is important. But faculty [are] anxious about the idea of counting things . . . numerical data . . . is outside of what they do as humanists." Another remarked, "Sometimes when humanists look at a rubric, they think it's reductive, that it makes our work smaller."

These comments called our attention to an inherent unease with, and at times outright rejection of, making generalizable claims about learning from local, situated, and arguably unrepeatable data (i.e., student work). In her work on disciplinary variation, MacDonald (2010) offers one interpretation of this resistance: "The humanities tend to be rooted in phenomena, data, or texts which are potentially worth knowing about for their own sake, not simply as the necessary first step toward generalization" (35).

In their analysis of SoTL, Bass and Linkon (2008) offer another perspective to help clarify participants' concerns about how the focus of their individual projects would be affected when integrated alongside student voices. They observe that "evidence of student thinking and learning plays an important role in the overall argument, but the way that it plays that role is rather hidden, in ways particular to the Humanities" (254). While student learning "is pivotal to the close reading of practice," they point out that in many humanities SoTL projects, "student learning is not 'the text'. Teaching practices is the text" (257). The shift from practice-as-text to learning-as-text was not always an intuitive one. As one participant in our project remarked, the task of looking at her students' work as evidence led to the realization that

> *I have been too undisciplined in my pedagogical decisions [and] hardly ever base my changes on specific data. I would make changes based on my impressions or student feedback, and while those can be useful, assessing students' actual work is a stronger indicator of the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies.*

Many participants were not new to pedagogical inquiry; in fact, many had previously presented and published scholarship about teaching in the humanities. As project leaders, it became important to help participants complement close readings of their teaching practice with close readings of student evidence, a task directly enabled by working through questions of method. Fortunately, the project yielded several successful examples of externalizing the "ephemeral or unexplainable" features of successful student work in the humanities, such as Lester's course portfolio's (2017) "reading rubric," which he described as "an inductive close reading of the student work." The rubric not only provided a salient and accessible model for translating faculty expectations in student friendly terms, it also created

a framework that enabled the close reading of student work in ways that, for him, reconciled the tension between quantitative and qualitative by accommodating both. Returning to Bass and Linkon (2008), within the broader context of participants' portfolios and presentations at multiple conferences, we saw concrete examples of what occurs when humanities scholars "apply integrative close reading methodology to the texts of student learning as well as teaching practice" (260). Several participants comment in their course portfolios on the ways this close reading helped them see when students were demonstrating desired skills and habits of mind, such as a comparative cultural understanding (Choplin 2017; Essary 2017; Kikendall 2017), curiosity, grappling with ambiguous language, viewing music as a "whole body" experience (Attas 2017).

Although Lester's reading rubric represented an important milestone in his project, his writing candidly described his own conflicted relationship with appropriating a tool outside his disciplinary training; his rubric was successful, arguably, in traditional SoTL terms, not on his own terms. In his culminating reflection, Lester noted that he struggled most with "this issue of measuring student learning":

> *I developed a complex rubric that I believed could be used to tell me about how engaged my students were in their writing. Once I'd developed the rubric, I had trouble explaining it to others. And, once I used it to analyze big batches of student work, I realized what I've always known about rubrics: that they don't tell you much. Certainly not as much about the simple act of reading closely and generously. So, this has been a difficulty, but it's taught me that close reading as a methodology is a) one of the few "scholarly" things I know how to do, and b) a way to describe and discuss and think about the complexity of writing.*

As we will go on to explore, Lester's revelation about close reading as a disciplinary tool—one perhaps better suited to his inquiry than a rubric—is significant to the overall project narrative and our understanding of how humanities faculty acclimate successfully to this work.

WAYS OF WRITING AND SHARING

As we discussed above, tensions about the role of student work-as-evidence were often rooted in larger questions about quantitative and qualitative methodologies for collecting and portraying student work: How to make claims while also recognizing the situated nature of each iteration of their target course and how to represent student voices without co-opting them. Project participants negotiated these issues in cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary conversations with fellow peer colleagues. Listening in on these conversations allowed us as project leaders to recognize the significant influence of disciplinary norms around collaboration, authorship, and what "counts" as scholarly inquiry in the humanities.

In "Teaching as Community Property: Putting an End to Pedagogical Solitude," Shulman observes that teaching must become "community property" if it is to be treated with the same intellectual rigor and community as scholarship: "We don't judge each other's research on the basis of casual conversations in the hall [. . .] scholarship entails an artifact, a product, some form of community property that can be shared, discussed, critiqued, exchanged, built upon" (1993, 6). Participants

acknowledged the importance of public dialogue to the development of their projects, with remarks such as

> *you see all the interconnections in the humanities, which is the point, but you forget this. It can be isolating, and you wonder, "Am I the only one who does this?" You learn "no," we do the same things but just in different ways.*

Another participant echoed,

> *I have loved the collaborative nature of this project. While I am making changes, teaching, and assessing on my own, the opportunities to share my project with others has been very useful in terms of receiving feedback and simply articulating my goals. I have also learned from hearing from other teachers' projects and being inspired by the innovative and scholarly approaches they apply to their teaching. It is energizing to work within a community of practice.*

On the whole, faculty embraced opportunities to collaborate in the design, assessment, and redesign of their courses. But, as Shulman (1993) points out, to "make teaching community—and therefore *valued*—property," we must "recognize that the communities that matter most are strongly identified with the disciplines of our scholarship" (7). Indeed, a common theme in the project narrative was the benefit of cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional exchange; numerous participants commented on the value of what one participant described as "the community and the people—coming together for a common purpose and with a common passion." In the context of the project, this peer review component provided a productive space to explore how faculty from different humanities disciplines were negotiating, with varying ease, the expectations of the project—and also to identify shared intellectual challenges and tools. For those working with faculty in the humanities, such groups support the creation of shared language and approaches to understanding student learning, while also providing an opportunity to consider what aspects of student learning are being analyzed and represented and what kinds of methods and theories of learning are being reinforced and reproduced.

Though project participants recognized the value of collaboration, their discussions of making the work public reinforced that humanities faculty often privilege the (perhaps mythical) individual contributor in defining good scholarship. In their study of collaboration and authorship in the humanities, Ede and Lunsford (2001) argue the "ideologies of autonomous individualism and authorship" deeply shape how faculty in the humanities come to constitute their "primary academic identity"—and thus how faculty prioritize activities they perceive central or ancillary to that identity—despite widespread critiques of the solitary author. They argue that "everyday practices in the humanities continue to ignore, or even to punish, collaboration while authorizing work attributed to (autonomous) individuals" (357). While the intervening years since the publication of their work have seen a rise in humanities collaboration, most notably within the digital humanities, the image of the lone scholar still figures predominantly for some. Initially, many of the humanities participants did not readily identify their course projects as a form of scholarly inquiry, or, if they did, they openly questioned how the work would be received outside of the community of their project peers. In their closing reflections, specifically in response to questions about what factors would encourage or constrain them to sustain

their projects into the future, some participants expressed skepticism about the extent to which the work would be respected by their institutions in the tenure and promotion process.

Perhaps a factor contributing to participants' unease about the reception of this work in their disciplinary and institutional communities relates to the genres for making that work public. These genres—in particular the course portfolios they were asked to create for the project and many of the example SoTL articles they located as potential models for publication—did not necessarily adhere to the norms of discourse in which they were trained. Rhetorically, the "autonomous individualism" privileged by the humanities often means distinguishing one's contributions in response to the shortcomings or gaps within previous research, or in the context of unique applications of theory. In the "rhetoric of self-definition" rewarded in the humanities, "we set up 'isms' and then go about the task of distinguishing them from other 'isms'" (Simpson as quoted in Ede and Lunsford, 357–58). Often this self-definition happens as a framing device; however, these rhetorical means were not readily available for project participants in the course portfolio genre. Participants instead were asked to frame their project narratives by looking for patterns in student outcomes and what those patterns suggested about possible hypotheses for improving student outcomes through course redesign. Moreover, the course portfolio genre required participants to stay largely within the realm of the descriptive until the concluding analytical, reflective section of their portfolios. This rhetorical pattern represented a departure from that typically espoused in humanities in which writers foreground a novel core argument, or thesis, and then support that thesis with close reading and analysis. Far from simply a problem of organizing content, however, the conventions of the course portfolio signaled more significant differences in how humanities and social sciences-based writers prioritize, respectively, "exploratory v. interpretative goals" (MacDonald 2010) in their scholarship. In one case, a participant who was positive about the project as a whole, explained that the exploratory, iterative nature of the course portfolio writing was the most difficult aspect:

> *The most difficult/annoying part for me was the fact that I wrote a ton of stuff for my portfolio that I ended up not using, because we wrote a "new" one every year. I didn't like the palimpsest of myself, although I know the writing was valuable for my reflection.*

Some participants were keenly interested in translating their course portfolios into manuscripts for publication. For those participants from disciplines such as literature and philosophy, however, examining published teaching scholarship did little to help them integrate their identities as teachers and scholars. To these participants, some of the most readily available examples of published SoTL articles, like the course portfolio, appeared to reinforce rhetorical patterns native to the social sciences. In a conversation about presenting or publishing work from their course portfolios, one participant stated that the "standard citation style is APA, the inclusion of methods and findings sections, the use of subheadings—*it's all a signal about what matters.*" (A remark we found ourselves reflecting on as an interdisciplinary group of co-authors who were working on this SoTL article focused on humanities faculty relying on textual analysis to support our claims, yet using conventions largely associated with the social sciences.) Similarly, the focus on methods and findings coming out of an analysis of student work led others to feel their course portfolio was not engaging in a larger scholarly conversation in the same

way an academic article would: "I feel that if I were to publish this project, I would need to do literature review first and put it entirely within some academic/scholarly context."

As project leaders, this kind of comment was revelatory. Not ignorant of or insensitive to the exigency of tenure very much on the minds of many of the participants during the three-year project, we had each spent time within our campus groups investigating publication outlets and helping participants imagine what their experiences could contribute to larger scholarly conversations about teaching, including scholarly conversations within their fields. In retrospect, if we had included even more tactical approaches and pragmatic conversations about translating the course portfolio, either as a genre itself or into other scholarly genres, this may have persuaded some participants to see how their projects could "count" beyond the life of the grant. Emphasizing how participants could mold their projects to largely social sciences-oriented examples arguably did little to help them interrogate (and thus reconcile) the epistemological tensions at the heart of their struggles to represent their projects in ways meaningful to their disciplines or to their imagined audiences. More meaningful to their appropriation and transformation processes would have been to intentionally expose them to diverse examples of refereed scholarship, including genres native to the humanities disciplines.

CONCLUSION

The concluding stages of the three-year project did not neatly resolve the tensions and challenges participants experienced. On the contrary, and more importantly, we saw a more significant and sustainable transformation. Within the final iterations of participants' course portfolios and their presentations at the culminating, public conference associated with the project, we observed that many had made a more important turn: These participants had productively translated and transformed the received wisdom and codified examples of SoTL, which had represented barriers to them earlier in the project, and on terms that accorded with their disciplinary identities, methods, and metaphors. They demonstrated, in the words of Huber and Morreale that, if

> *we seek a universal method for conducting the scholarship of teaching & learning, we are fated to be disappointed. Methods of inquiry will vary as much as the methods of teaching students to understand the substance and syntax of diverse fields. As well they should.* (2002, ix)

For some participants, learning to move forward with the work of SoTL on their own terms meant decoding the genre of the course portfolio. It also meant understanding how it worked and what value it provided for their thinking about student learning and their teaching practice: Some remarked that it was "easy to take what I wrote from the portfolio and transform it into a manuscript," while others "found out early that some parts were static; the real work is in the implementation and reflection sections" or were left with a new set of questions about how to make the portfolio and its value visible for future "evaluators" (e.g., annual evaluations, tenure and promotion, etc.). For other participants, the "aha" leading to further transformation meant embracing the unique methods that humanists can bring to pedagogical inquiry. As one participant illustrated in his comment during a focus group at the end of the 2017 culminating project conference,

> *my disciplinary training is making stuff up, using creative writing. Every single [conference] presentation here has the elements of fiction—protagonists, getting to the universal through the particular, those are disciplinary values in making fiction. It struck me that, yes, in what we were asked to do—how are you going to measure/document this thing—that was something that caused me grief and angst. But I realize that I can use the one thing I am sort of good at to talk about what's happening in my class: narrative. It doesn't have to be social-science or about graphs.*

Understanding their teaching through disciplinary terms, frames, and metaphors was a tipping point for many humanities participants and perhaps affirms how to best promote this work among humanities faculty (and all faculty for that matter). In the final focus group, participants talked about how the project and their deepened understanding about student learning led to a desire to involve others on their campuses in discussion about SoTL and the inquiry process, particularly students, as well as their new willingness to "talk about failure and risk" or "take a risk" with a new SoTL project or teaching innovation.

Overall, the three-year collaborative redesign in the humanities project was successful in helping humanities faculty value this work. Being a part of a multi-institutional research project awarded status to their individual projects, the grant-funded stipends recognized the value of their time and teaching, and participants found value in being part of a community on campus as well as connected to a community from other campuses. The tensions identified by Bloch- Schulman and Linkon (2016) and Bass and Linkon (2008) are real and can be potential impediments to this work for some in the humanities. Explicitly addressing those potential tensions while helping faculty to see how their own disciplinary approaches can help them investigate their course practices is a useful first step toward more contributions from humanities scholars. Ultimately, the field needs to allow for diverse approaches to SoTL and to honor the differing disciplinary approaches suggested here.

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