

CTLs Help (Sites of Engagement): A Message from the Editor-in-Chief

John Paul Tassoni
Editor-in-Chief

On one level, I consider this volume to be arguably the most practical relative to the 14 issues of *JCTL* that have preceded it. Readers will find, in Huong T. Duong, Andrea Aebbersold, and Matthew Mahavongtrakul's "Pedagogical Wellness," rationale for and advice toward privileging wellness efforts in faculty development. Through the next article, Singer-Freeman et al.'s "Track, Map, and Measure," Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) workers can examine ways Hurney et al.'s (2020) Appreciation of Pedagogy Scale helps staff gauge degrees to which participants' engagement with a CTL's diverse types of programming (e.g., learning communities, consultations, workshops, and reading groups) shapes faculty views of pedagogy. Maria Gallardo-Williams, Erica Kosal, and Diane D. Chapman, in "Faculty-Driven Design," follow with an account of their evolving certification program on core teaching principles and with advice regarding the management of such programs. Taking account of the pressures that can attend such aspects of faculty development, Todd Zakrajsek's "CTL Directors Need to Be Centered" concludes this issue with practical advice as to how center directors might avoid burnout, all the while (de)familiarizing for us the institutional factors that make such efforts necessary.

On another level (although, all at once, the same level), the articles collected in this issue underscore for me a CTL's role in curating what mediated discourse theorist Scollon (2001) would call sites of engagement. I have come to see CTL work as a "nexus of practice," a "site of engagement" where a school's values and expectations, histories, materials, and discourses "come together to form an action in real time" (Scollon, 2001, p. 28). The CTL-focused articles here and in past issues of *JCTL* never lose contact with the faculty and broader institutional factors that shape life in higher education. The authors seek participant feedback, they monitor the discourse of their administrators, they mark effective use of time and resources, as well as the

lack thereof. Articles here are also sensitive to interests and concerns of faculty of various ranks from across the institution, and express awareness as to ways different departmental structures, as well as institutional and disciplinary lore, shape faculty attitudes toward teaching.

Faculty might be all at different points in an institution's efforts to enhance teaching and learning and/or at varying distances from those efforts, but these faculty impact a school's approaches to teaching and learning nonetheless. As Jones (2014) points out, "The same configurations of tools at the same moments in time and the same points in space may for some people function as sites of engagement for particular actions, whereas for others they may not" (41). For CTL workers, the idea is to help faculty members situate themselves with some degree of intentionality in regard to forces they might marshal toward advancing teaching and learning in their classrooms and across a school's broader ecology. What a CTL does is help educators locate themselves in a nexus of best practices, draw attention to available tools and approaches, interrogate institutional histories and pertinent discourses, articulate and reexamine values and expectations; a CTL configures sites of engagement through which such resources can come together to form action in real time.

In light of the story Todd Zakrajsek unfolds as part of his "Special Feature" in this volume, I must admit that, in my initial foray into faculty development, I too was unaware that CTLs functioned as part of an established field. Like Todd, I saw my center co-coordinator role as relatively ill-defined. I found the lack of form rather generative, but I felt that generative aspect boosted as I became more familiar with other CTLs and the genre(s) of the work. Subsequently, I collaborated with other faculty developers at our university to establish this journal, which I have come to see as a site of engagement for the field's workers, another place where our vast resources can come together to (in)form our actions. In an earlier volume, my introduction makes a brief comparison between CTL work and a passage from Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (1946/1989), the one where its protagonist continually scrutinizes and rescrutinizes items in a prison cell, discovering more detail each time, and more detail within each detail. I highlighted there that this journal's mission was not, like Camus's character, "to kill time or compile endless inventories; [but] rather, to translate [such] deep scrutiny into discovery, and that discovery into new teaching and learning spaces" (Tassoni, 2016, p. 2). I think *JCTL 15* takes us further down those intersecting paths of continual scrutiny/rescrutiny and further into those discoveries we find around each

turn. I hope that you'll find the articles collected here, and those in the previous volumes, and those still to come (continually) helpful along these lines.

Acknowledgments

If all goes as planned, a new editor-in-chief will be cycling into this role for volume 16. I wanted to take this time/space to thank everyone who helped support the journal over the past 15 years, especially our authors, external reviewers, library staff (thank you Jody!), and our editorial board members, some of whom have been with me for the entire ride. Talking about sites of engagement, I have appreciated more than anything the ways each review process regarding each submission taught me something new about teaching and learning, about how CTLs can advance teaching and learning on college campuses, and the various ways those CTL efforts could be represented here.

References

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