

From the Editor

Lori Bradford

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From the Editor

Lori Bradford

This semester, I received a big surprise when I was anonymously nominated for our institution's undergraduate student association teaching excellence awards. This nomination was a first for me at the University of Saskatchewan. Though I didn't end up being one of the ten superb instructors who were eventually selected, the nomination itself is incredibly gratifying. It reinforces the risks and novelty I am purposely taking as a part of my teaching practice. Some of the innovations in my teaching include an expansion of the variety of assessment techniques I use, such as inbox exercises, fact-checking exposés, and artistic assignments in technical fields (like engineering and water security). I set out to engage students in purposive decision making about how they might demonstrate their learning for the greatest impact on others, not just for impressing me into receiving an "A". I wanted students to work with each other to decide on deliberate actions that recognize each person's unique strengths as they together demonstrate their learning—for example, two students commented on collaborative art as a process by co-creating an assignment directed by the background research of one which was expressed in the incredible painting of another and then reflected on in a co-written account of the partnership as it progressed.



Lori Bradford

While many of the articles published in the Engaged Scholar Journal (ESJ) report on fieldwork, research, and collaborations, we do often have works devoted to teaching, pedagogy, and curriculum, and lessons from each of the pieces we publish can usually be transferred to teaching contexts. In this issue, the first essay by Hill, Whintors, and Bailey is from the context of teaching and learning. Their piece takes academics, educators, and scholars back to our primary years and narrates place-based learning from the lens of children, their teachers including Elders and the Lands and Waters as sentient beings. The work describes how the children grow to be stewards of the land, the water, and each other. The authors nudge engaged scholars towards postcolonial scholarship and their own reflections on such, guiding us to consider how we teach, at all levels, about caring for each other. The theme of caring is important to ESJ, as our upcoming thematic issue in Spring 2023 is about Care and Climate Change. In this issue's second essay, in the post-secondary context, engaged scholars and educators are also nudged to get back to basics through planning for community-university developmental processes to grow certificate-based programming. DeSantis and Tremka describe, for example, how using a variety of engagement tactics, in the co-creation of a certificate on Non-Profit Organizations, makes a better product that will produce graduates who are ready, technically

and interpersonally, to work for and with NPOs. This piece demonstrates the versatility of community-engaged scholars. The authors show how our innate drive to use multiple ways of knowing and doing for community engagement (they list seven tactics) benefit equity-deserving groups and ultimately, in the certificate program, those seeking to support equity-deserving groups through NPOs.

The Reports from the Field of this issue are incredibly intuitive in outlining areas for scholars and educators to direct our attention: that is, data and its preservation, and preserving learning through doing at the meta-level when scholars face barriers to research and education. On the latter, these reports provide enriching accounts of adapting and innovating students' experiential learning offerings during and despite the COVID-19 and other technological restrictions. On the former, these reports expand the utility and meaning of disaggregated data for social justice, thereby giving us pause to consider critical gaps in the evidence used in engaged scholarship and who benefits from data; and combining the strengths of archaeology and oral stories to curate Indigenous pasts and artifacts for future generations.

I believe in reinforcing da Cruz's (2018) push for academic institutions like universities to fulfill their civic mission to advance the public good by encouraging faculty to investigate public issues in their courses, issues brought forward and requested by community groups and members. Doing so models ethical citizenship and care for others, something university graduates should come away with as a part of their degree training. How could a university encourage faculty to embrace community-university partnerships driven by community needs in their course development and teaching? One way could be to build teaching awards around community engagement in coursework, rather than around a standard of excellence that rests on students to feel so moved to nominate an instructor without specific criteria. Another way would be redeveloping promotion, tenure, and merit criteria around engaged scholarship (for a commentary on that, see Bharadwaj's piece in ESJ, Vol. 5 No. 2 (2019): Fall 2019).

Our cover art this month is called The Ripple Effect by Canadian artist Cindy McMath. It strikes me that one small act, such as bringing kids to care for their local school environment, can have a ripple effect on the choices they make for the rest of their lives. As engaged scholars, teachers, and community members, we pass that ripple of motivation on to others through our nominations: nominations for awards or recognition, nomination for change put out as challenges to society based on critical reflection, and nominations of pieces to publish here in ESJ through your peer-review. I know that I now feel even more motivated, after my nomination, to include community needs in my teaching. I hope you do too.

Reference

- da Cruz, C. G. (2018). Community-engaged scholarship: Toward a shared understanding of practice. *The Review of Higher Education* 41(2), 147-167. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2018.0000>