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[Home](#) / [Posts](#) / [Scholarly Communication](#)

/ [Exploring Open Journals: An Open Access Article Showcase on the Empathetic Classroom](#)

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Scholarly Communication

# Exploring Open Journals: An Open Access Article Showcase on the Empathetic Classroom

October 20, 2017 | [Sarah Hare](#)

*This post was written by the Scholarly Communication Department's graduate assistant, Jenny Hoops.*

This is our second post in a series that aims to highlight and showcase interesting, integral, and open scholarship at Indiana University. The Office of Scholarly Publishing (OSP), a partnership between the IU Libraries and Indiana University Press, continues to facilitate the creation and preservation of open and accessible scholarship through the Open Journal Systems (OJS) publishing platform. Through OJS, the OSP has helped numerous editorial teams publish over a dozen open access journal titles on a variety of subjects. One of the Office of Scholarly Publishing's most widely-read titles, [Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(JoSoTL\)](#), demonstrates the impact that open access research can have.

The *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (JoSoTL)* has been dedicated to the publication of research examining contemporary problems, both practical and theoretical, in the teaching of higher education since its first publication in 2001. *JoSoTL* includes countless articles, essays, critiques, literature reviews, and case studies, authored by scholars around the globe. *JoSoTL* is indexed by several integral education databases including ERIC, Education Source, and Education Research Complete. All of *JoSoTL*'s journal content is immediately accessible, as open access is core to its mission. The journal's editor-in-chief is Michael Morrone, lecturer in IU's Kelley School of Business and director of the [Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching \(FACET\)](#).

One example of the quality of work that *JoSoTL* publishes is the article "[Managing Student Self-Disclosure in Class Settings: Lessons from Feminist Pedagogy](#)," a piece from this year's first issue of *JoSoTL*. The article is authored by IU South Bend's Catherine Borshuk, a social psychologist and Director of the University's Women's and Gender Studies Program. Borshuk engages with a rising issue in higher education classrooms, particularly within the humanities and social sciences: the need to balance empathy with professionalism. The old feminist ideal "the personal is political" has entered the college classroom in unexpected ways, as students, encouraged by patterns developed from social media, feel more willing to share highly personal and occasionally upsetting anecdotes related (or sometimes not) to classroom lectures and topics. Borshuk argues that this impulse to share and create a more understanding classroom must be met with measured compassion, and attempts to foster empathy while still maintaining academic discipline and ethics are key.

After a review of the problem and its theoretical background, Borshuk offers potential solutions for this challenging task. She suggests several initial strategies for teachers engaging with her work: avoiding "othering" students by avoiding assumptions about student backgrounds and experiences and using the pronoun "we" rather than "they" or

“them”; building diverse materials and subjects into class readings; and finally, focusing on societal and institutional narratives rather solely the personal (pgs. 80-82). Borshuk concludes with her own experiences of utilizing such techniques and encourages other educators to engage with feminist pedagogy to solve issues of student disclosure. Work such as this article provides philosophical explanations for educational issues while also beginning discussion on how to solve such problems to benefit both the teacher and the student.

The improvement of education relies on communication and collaboration between instructors. Further, in order to develop the best educational techniques, instructors must learn from mistakes and elaborate on successes. The Office of Scholarly Publishing is excited to assist *JoSoTL* in their work to improve both instruction and education.

Tags: [josotl](#), [journal of the scholarship of teaching and learning](#), [Miscellaneous](#), [open access](#), [publishing](#)

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