

Descriptions of Humanistic SoTL Methods

Below, I highlight articles from philosophy, history, literary study, composition, anthropology (humanistic), and classics because each author describes two important parts of their SoTL projects:

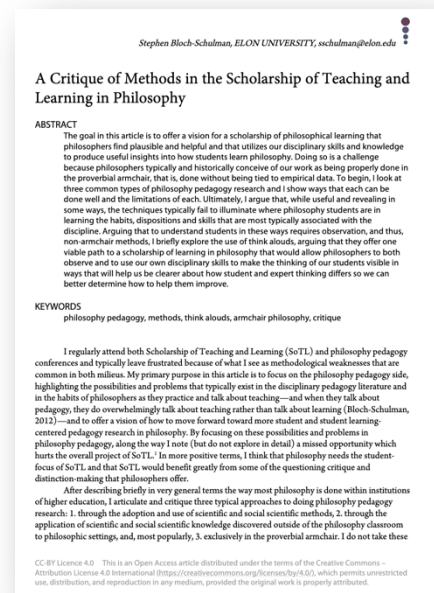
- 1) what they collected as artifacts or evidence and
- 2) their approach to meaning-making.

These projects illustrate a couple of key points from my chapter, both of which were noted by the ISSOTL Arts & Humanities Interest Group. First, because “Texts are ... broadly defined,” these articles show that SoTL artifacts and evidence can be oral, written, annotated, or even mapped. Second, the authors below devote significant portions of the articles to their analysis because meaning-making in humanistic SoTL projects “engages with nuance.”

[Stephen Bloch-Schulman](#) uses think-alouds to illustrate his “vision for a scholarship of philosophical learning that philosophers find plausible and helpful and that utilizes our disciplinary skills and knowledge to produce useful insights into how students learn philosophy” (2016, 80). In the following passages, he explains why he chose think-alouds to capture relevant thinking processes and how he will analyze them as a philosopher:

- The bottom of page 87, from “Here, I will advocate for a specific approach...” to “allows us to utilize our skills, values, and habits of mind.”
- The middle of page 88, from “Initially inspired by Sam Wineburg’s work...” to “hear students reason out a moral argument (that is, to do some classical armchair philosophy).”

He then carefully analyzes the think-alouds (with the transcripts and links to the videos) from a colleague and a philosophy student starting on page 89.

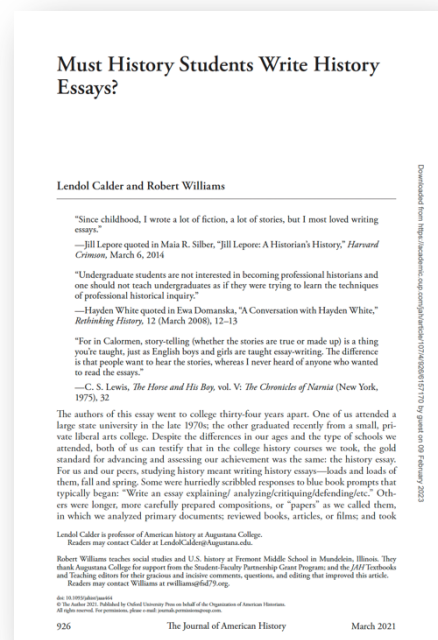


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In their article challenging what they argue is an over-reliance on essay-writing in history classes, [Lendol Calder and Robert Williams](#) collect artifacts of students' historical thinking through an external but familiar learning activity: making meaning from multiple related historical sources.

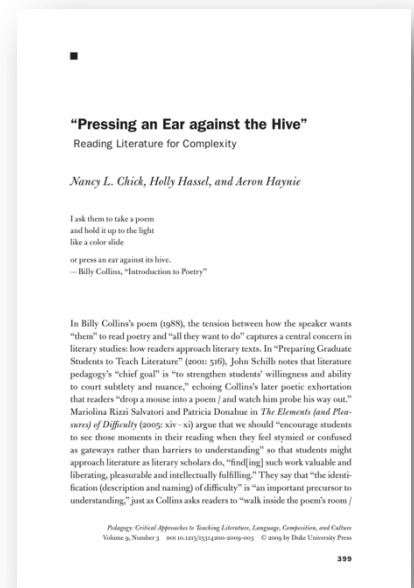
- At the bottom of page 935, they begin, “Our research design was simple.”

Starting in the first full paragraph on page 936 where they state their SoTL question, they explain why and how they use History Assessments of Thinking (HATS). This explanation spans multiple pages until the end of the “The Writing/Thinking Study” section on page 939.



In our article about students' responses to reading and making sense of complexity in literary texts, [Holly Hassel, Aeron Haynie, and I](#) collect students' short writings and annotations of a poem—both of which are ubiquitous in literary classrooms—and then analyze them through the disciplinary practice of close reading.

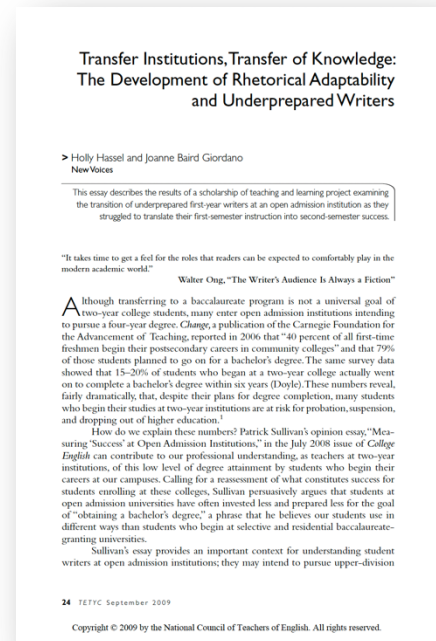
- In the middle of page 403, we note that our study uses “a systematic analysis of student language.”
- In the last full paragraph of page 405, we unpack “Our approach to data collection and analysis...” It’s worth noting that this article was published in *Pedagogy*, a disciplinary journal, so we don’t *define* close reading but instead focus on how we apply it to student texts in the same way that disciplinary experts regularly apply it to literary texts.
- We then *show* our close reading in subsequent pages:
 - From the middle of page 406, starting with “For example, two students saw the poem as...” to the end of that paragraph, we show our close reading of students’ pre-class writing.
 - We illustrate our close reading of students’ annotations of the poem in the paragraphs, starting at the bottom of page 409 (“The most contentious and controversial interpretation...”) and ending on the middle of page 411 (“...the progress is halted.”).
 - In the section on students’ after-class writing, we explore the implications of students’ repeated use of the word “unintentional” in the middle of page 413 (“In particular, seven students mentioned...”).



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[Holly Hassel and Joanne Baird Giordano](#) describe their project following students from a first-semester to a second-semester writing course. They use a typical writing rubric from the course to analyze student essays in the two classes and then focus on just three students, each of whom gets a four- to six-paragraph section devoted to the authors' discourse analysis and close reading of the first essay in the second-semester course.

- On the bottom of page 27, they explain how they conducted their study (starting with "Most important, our research methodology was designed with both the recognized practices in our field and disciplinary conventions in mind..." and continue to the end of that section on page 28 (ending with "used widely in the field of composition studies.")).
- The sections focused on a single student begin on page 29 ("Whitney"), 31 ("Jana"), and 34 ("Melanie").



[Ingie Hovland](#), a cultural and historical anthropologist of religion, self-identifies as "a humanities scholar" (2023, 425). In this article, she follows up on her earlier study inspired by Kandiko, Hay, and Weller's use of concept maps to make visible students' humanistic thinking. In this article, she asks herself "what it meant to say that the maps 'worked' ... in a way that was meaningful to me as a humanities scholar" (2023, 426). She then brings in new materialist theory, which guides her disciplinary research, as a "lens ... to consider the question about the maps' working" (426).

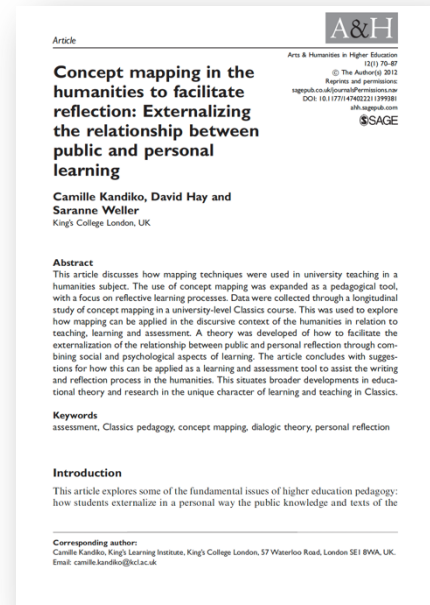
- She explains her disciplinary use of this theory and how she applies it to the students' work, starting at the top of page 426 ("This article presents my process....") through the end of this section on page 428 (ending with "how I might answer this question as a humanities SoTL scholar and a humanities teacher").
- She then chronicles her application of this theory to the students' maps from page 431 until the end of the article.



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In their article exploring the potential of concept maps “to facilitate the externalization of the relationship between [students’] public and personal reflection,” [Camille Kandiko, David Hay, and Saranne Weller](#) explain how they adapted the traditional analytical approach to a concept maps approach within their humanities context (2012, 70).

- In the section starting on page 73, they explore their search for how to analyze concept maps in a way that would surface students’ humanistic thinking in a Classics course. The traditional quantitative methods “tend to neglect the meaning in structures and the richness of personal understanding,” so they turn to a qualitative approach combined specifically with Hay’s prior use of concept maps, using “methods for measuring learning quality by assessing the integration of new information within prior knowledge structures” (74).
- In the section starting on the bottom of page 74, the authors explain and illustrate how they carefully applied this adapted approach to analyze one student’s work from the beginning, middle, and end of the semester mapping the central concept of the course, “The impact of Greek literature and culture on the Roman world” (74). This approach illustrates the student’s “move from a general, descriptive account of the subject matter, drawing on the presentation of public knowledge recalled from lectures and readings, to the development of personal understanding of the course” (76).
- At the beginning of the first full paragraph on page 77, Kandiko, Hay, and Weller confirm their humanistic method for analyzing concept maps: “The final maps moved away from traditional hierarchical, linked concept maps seen in other disciplines. The maps included many cross-links, but the students’ personal understanding of the concepts can only be assessed by reading the map as a whole, instead of as a set of linked and cross-linked concepts.”



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