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Editors' Introduction

This 2023 spring volume of *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies* starts with the sad recognition that on January 15 of this year we lost yet another champion and international leader of our field—Julie Thompson Klein. We recently mourned Association for Interdisciplinary Studies founder and longtime Executive Director, William H. Newell (1943–2019), and our dear colleague, *Issues* co-editor for many years, Gretchen Schulz (1943–2022).

We are all humans and scholars. As humans, we grieve. As scholars, we write to work through our grief. This is what we have done in previous volumes, for ourselves, for Bill and Gretchen. The current volume starts with a way to remember Julie as humans and scholars, a Special Section titled “Julie Thompson Klein (1944–2023)—Beyond Appreciation.” Five AIS members who have worked with Julie over the years—Sven Arvidson, Tanya Augsburg, Machiel Keestra, Roz Schindler, and Bianca Vienni-Baptista—contributed and “tributed,” each in their own way, to appreciating Julie as a person, scholar, mentor, teacher, and friend. They show how Julie managed to integrate those roles in a highly personal and remarkable way, combining cordiality with an unwavering interest in understanding and promoting boundary-crossing—doing so in conversation with her many friends and colleagues in the fields she helped to shape. Since there is an Editor’s Introduction to the Special Section, we now describe the rest of this spring 2023 volume.

The first article after the Special Section is a response to Julie Thompson Klein’s last article to appear in this journal in 2021, which was a “call” for the establishment of “alliances for inter- and transdisciplinarity.” The response is “The Value of Regionalism in Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Latin America,” co-authored by María Goñi Mazzitelli from the University of the Republic, Uruguay, and Bianca Vienni-Baptista from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Switzerland (who happens to be one of the contributors to the Klein Special Section). The authors are inspired by Klein’s call and by a 2016 Special Section in this journal that Klein contributed to, and guest edited by Vienni-Baptista, on “Interdisciplinarity in Latin America.” A main concept that emerged in the work by authors in that Special Section, and that our current authors take as inspiration, is “regionalism”—a kind of common or collaborative ground among researchers and practitioners in a particular region. The Latin American collaboration Mazzitelli and Vienni-Baptista document has resulted in the founding of “Nodo de Estudios sobre Interdisciplina y Transdisciplina” (Nodo ESIT) in 2018. As the authors say, “The aim of this collective . . . is to promote, connect, and strengthen inter- and transdisciplinary teaching and research in different countries within the region.” Mazzitelli and Vienni-Baptista use the descriptions of the five international organizations (including AIS) that Klein (2021) articulated in the original “call,” and expand on the exciting work and the nature of that work in Latin America.

They ask and respond to two important questions for interdisciplinarians interested in expanding the conversation about interdisciplinarity globally (as all should be, in our opinion): “How can inter- and transdisciplinarity be supported and enhanced in marginalized contexts?” and “What are the best practices already implemented to foster inter- and transdisciplinarity in Latin America?” As they articulate it, Nodo ESIT is a boundary-crossing organization that can be an example for how to found and sustain interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research in regions where securing consistent support and collaboration in research can be especially challenging. The authors describe how they created five working groups to establish a “network of practice” and conclude with a valuable reflective section on “lessons learned.”

The second article after the Special Section is “Interdisciplinary Integration as Information Work,” by Ciara Zogheib from the University of Toronto, Canada. Since integration is so, well, integral, to interdisciplinary research, many articles or chapters on the subject can be found through a number of decades in this journal and in other venues. Zogheib’s approach, however, is unique. She points out the ongoing problem that academia has in evaluating interdisciplinary research, a problem with which many of us are familiar since the difficulty in evaluation can complicate funding and career advancement. Zogheib understands the general evaluation problem as a function of evaluating integration in the more fundamental practice of interdisciplinary research, like recording observations in a notebook or taking soil readings. Her solution is to extend ideas from the field of information studies to change the way we look at evaluating integration, and thereby interdisciplinary research. Zogheib reviews three current conceptions of interdisciplinary integration: integration as collaboration, as a conceptual syntheses, and as an outcome. After showing some shortcomings in each, she proposes that we can better evaluate our work by “adopting data- and information-management perspectives to articulate and evaluate the practices of interdisciplinary integration” to “provide tangible and easily understandable ways of demonstrating the rigor of interdisciplinary research.” Integration as information work is not meant to replace current ways of evaluating integration, but to augment them, especially in a practical way, as Zogheib illustrates. For example, with the idea of “information objects,” such as a written art history description of the artefacts of an archeological dig in a field notebook and the biochemical metrics of soil characteristics, she shows how the focus shifts to the “stuff” of interdisciplinary integration and becomes practice-focused rather than a reconstruction after-the-fact. “From this perspective, we conceive of integration as a set of data and information management practices, and we take as our objects of focus the research data holdings and information assets being generated and analyzed during interdisciplinary research” and this shift in focus resolves some problems with other ways of evaluating integration since it “frames interdisciplinary integration as a demonstrable and concrete research practice, a process that can be explicitly planned for in research proposals and evaluated by the reviewers of said proposals.” Zogheib describes three ways that

integration can be discerned with this information approach—administrative integration, methods integration, and content integration—and concludes with some limitations and reflections on integration as information work.

The final article will be of interest to anyone who teaches in or directs interdisciplinary programs. “Stacked High-Impact Practices (HIPs) and Applied Learning in the Interdisciplinary Classroom” is by Katharine Schaab from Kennesaw State University, in Georgia, USA. Probably every college teacher has heard of active learning and is expected to incorporate it into their teaching. Schaab is no exception. But as an interdisciplinary scholar teaching a course on sustainability, she also asks what combination of high-impact practices—activities that promote student engagement and deep learning—works best in that kind of context. Schaab documents three HIPs that many of us use in course design: writing intensity, collaborative assignments, and community-based learning. She “stacked” the HIPs by using them in a thoughtful arrangement, contiguously and overlapping, as she explains, in the senior-level course. For the article, she reports the use of HIPs and the learning and other outcomes as a case study that also includes student voices. The case study includes a course overview and “explanation of the HIP assignments, documentation of students’ work and reflection on the HIPs, and my reflection on successes and limitations of the featured HIPs for student engagement and enthusiasm about the course and its content.” Schaab hopes that “the student work and commentary on the value of HIPs helps other faculty strengthen the case for integrating these experiences into interdisciplinary courses.” Meanwhile, throughout the article, she documents a concern about faculty workload, namely, that HIPs are often time-consuming and demanding in many ways, and she ends with a call for more faculty resources for development of HIP-centered courses.

We will be happy to welcome you to the 2023 AIS conference this fall, held for the first time at Texas Tech University, home of our journal publisher.

Just Sven speaking now . . . As AIS loses leaders, this journal also gains two highly-respected AIS and interdisciplinary studies leaders, Khadijah Miller and Tanya Augsburg. They are stepping into new roles for them that are vital for the organization (and me!). Khadijah Miller, as you can see below, is co-editor of this volume of *Issues*, and Tanya Augsburg is associate editor. I welcome them both as we carry on the delightful and stimulating adventure that is editing *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies*!

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