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Y. Mari

Reflecting on a Transformative Conference Experience: ISSOTL Conference 2023

As I sit down to reflect on the recent ISSOTL Conference 2023 in Utrecht, including ISSOTL's International Collaborative Writing Group (ICWG) on-site sessions, I am filled with gratitude for the incredible experience and the opportunity to be a part of such an enriching event. The dedication and hard work put in by the organisers and everyone involved was heartwarming down to the smallest detail. Among the various reflection tools such as poems, videos, collages, etc., I have chosen to create a collage to express my gratitude since I have loved 'zip-locking' happiness in this way.

It has been a great honour to be selected as one of the Emerging Scholars Fund (ESF) awardees and now, to be able to pass on the baton to the next group of potential applicants through sharing my experience. I first learnt about ISSOTL in my acceptance letter to ISSOTL's International Collaborative Writing Groups (ICWG), where I received valuable information about ISSOTL Conference and the ESF programme. Among the generous offerings, as a student approaching the final phase of my doctoral programme and studying academic development, ISSOTL's dedicated support for students to engage in and learn about SoTL through sharing ideas and networking was especially an exciting prospect (please see <https://issotl.com/awards/emerging-scholars-fund/>).

One of the highlights of the Conference was the immediate sense of collegiality among the participants— as you may also feel from the ISSOTL photographer's group photo of us included in this collage. I was instantly drawn to the passionate and collaborative spirit that permeated every session and interaction. The genuine enthusiasm for SoTL and the willingness to share knowledge and experiences created a supportive environment that enhanced the overall learning experience.

I wholeheartedly encourage post-secondary students interested in SoTL to consider applying. The connections and insights gained have not only expanded my academic horizons but have also fostered a sense of community within the global network of individuals passionate in SoTL. There have already been exchanges of emails for future collaborations! The impact of this experience will undoubtedly echo throughout my academic journey.

Once again, I extend my sincere gratitude to the organisers and everyone involved in making this whole event a memorable and transformative experience. I look forward to returning the precious experiences to the community and beyond as I carry the knowledge and connections gained into my future endeavours.

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