EDITOR'S NOTE: SCHOLARSHIP OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING STREAM

Lisa Fedoruk

The University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
E-mail: lisa.fedoruk@ucalgary.ca

1. DISCOVERIES IN THE ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Welcome to the scholarship of online teaching and learning (SOTL) stream. Articles in this stream explore "blue-sky" teaching and learning practices in an online environment. The field of SOTL is inclusive and provides a platform for perspectives from instructors and students alike. Grounded in literature from teaching and learning, some examples of SOTL articles might address:

- Conflation of COVID online learning with established online learning practices;

- Continuity of teaching and learning practices and support in online environments; and

- Online/virtual assessment strategies.

Since teaching and learning practices are the ties that bind all disciplines, we accept interdisciplinary articles that take up challenges, report on innovative ways to address them, and promote collaborations across disciplines and schooling levels. Please read further for more information about the field of SOTL.

2. INTRODUCTION

The scholarship of teaching and learning is an emerging movement of scholarly thought and action that draws on the reciprocal relationship between teaching and learning at the postsecondary level (Boyer, 1990). An important goal of SOTL is to enhance and augment

learning among and between individual learners by investigating the many features of discipline, specific expertise, and best pedagogical practice (McKinney, 2006).

The formal origins of SOTL began in 1990. In an effort to define the scholarship performed by professors in academia as more than just "teaching versus research," Boyer (1990), in his influential book, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, concluded that "the work of the professoriate might be thought of as having four separate, yet overlapping, functions" (p. 16). They include scholarship of integration, scholarship of teaching, scholarship of application, and scholarship of discovery.

3. PRELIMINARY INTERPRETATIONS OF SOTL

Hutchings and Shulman (1999) explained that (see the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, https://www.stlhe.ca/sotl/what-is-sotl/):

> a scholarship of teaching (and learning) is not synonymous with excellent teaching. It requires a kind of 'going meta,' in which faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning—the conditions under which it occurs, what it looks like, how to deepen it, and so forth—and do so with an eye not only to improving their own classroom but to advancing practice beyond it. (p. 13)

Cambridge (2001) suggested that this work "entails problem posing about an issue of teaching or learning, study of the problem through methods appropriate to disciplinary epistemologies, application of results to practice, communication of results, self reflection, and peer review" (p. 13, see the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, https://www.stlhe.ca/sotl/what-is-sotl/). Finally, Gale (2008) maintained that scholarship of teaching and learning (see the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, https://www.stlhe.ca/sotl/what-is-sotl/)

> involves the gathering and interpretation of evidence of student learning. It invites peer review and 'going public' with insights about how, where, and why students learn. In its dissemination, scholarship of teaching and learning influences teaching, learning and scholarship beyond the local context. (p. 13)

4. SUMMARIZING HOW SOTL CAN BE DEFINED

The excerpt below, from the Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta (https://www.mtroyal.ca/ProgramsCourses/FacultiesSchoolsCentres/InstituteforScholarshipofTeachingLearning/index.htm), summarizes:

> The scholarship of teaching and learning generally includes: rigorous, systematic, and evidence-based study of student learning in one's own course; the understanding and improvement of student learning and/or teaching practice as its ultimate goal;

commitment to disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary peer-review and appropriate public dissemination; impact beyond a single course, program, or institution—advancing the field of teaching and learning to build collective knowledge and ongoing improvement.

5. PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN SOTL

As Felten (2013) asserted, common principles of good SOTL practice are necessary "to be recognized as significant intellectual work in the academy" (p. 122). The diversity of SOTL across disciplines and school levels requires adherence to guidelines to maintain understanding and credibility in evaluating teaching and learning practices. The following are recognized as principles of good practice in SOTL:

- Inquiry focused on student learning;

- Grounded in context;

- Methodologically sound;

- Conducted in partnership with students; and

- Appropriately public.

6. STUDENTS AS PARTNERS IN SOTL

Commonly referred to as SaP, students as partners in SOTL is "a reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis" (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, p. 6). This is a way of thinking that repositions instructors and students as collaborators in diverse teaching and learning processes, empowering students to share their voices through active engagement and a shared responsibility in their own learning. Some examples include active engagement in the design, delivery, evaluation, and decision making to enhance teaching and learning. Respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility are the three guiding principles required for SaP in SOTL to ensure collaborative partnerships, community property, and an equal voice in an effort to support learning (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

7. SCHOLARSHIP OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

As a global response to COVID-19, we have seen the field of education at all levels pivot and adjust to various combinations of content delivery through remote, blended, and hybrid methods of online learning. Never before have instructors and learners had to quickly learn such an abundance of new skills to incorporate and embrace technology in order to meet educational goals and curricular outcomes. These experiences have led

many of us to expand our roles from instructors and students into areas such as online course and instructional design, technologies strategists, and software development. Within this SOTL stream we hope to hear about your experiences in an online world as a means of disseminating new, curious, and interesting practices that contribute to impacting teaching and learning across disciplines.

REFERENCES

Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate.* Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Cambridge, B.L. (2001). 1: Fostering the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Communities of Practice. *To improve the academy*, *19*(1), 3–16.

Cook-Sather, A., Bovill, C., & Felten, P. (2014). *Engaging students as partners in learning and teaching: A guide for faculty*. Jossey Bass.

Felten, P. (2013). Principles of good practice in SoTL. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry: The ISSOTL Journal*, *1*(1), 121–125. https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.1.1.121

Gale, R. (2008). Points without limits: Individual inquiry, collaborative investigation, and collective scholarship. In D. R. Robertson & L.B. Nelson (Eds.), *To improve the academy: Resources for faculty, instructional, and organizational development*, *26* (pp. 39–52). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Hutchings, P., & Shulman, L. S. (1999). The scholarship of teaching: New elaborations, new developments. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *31*(5), 10–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091389909604218

McKinney, K. (2006). Attitudinal and structural factors contributing to challenges in the work of the scholarship of teaching and learning. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *129*(2006), 37–50. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.170