Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

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The SoTL movement

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL; pronounced so'del or SO T and l) is a growing movement in post-secondary education. SoTL is scholarly inquiry into student learning which advances the practice of teaching by sharing this research publicly.

SoTL necessarily builds on many past traditions in higher education, including classroom and program assessment, K-12 action research, the reflective practice movement, peer review of teaching, traditional educational research, and faculty development efforts to enhance teaching and learning. Terms closely related to the scholarship of teaching and learning are good teaching, that which promotes student learning and desired outcomes and is recognized by student satisfaction, peer review, etc., and scholarly teaching, for which teaching is regarded as a 'second' profession and the teaching and learning knowledge base is regarded as a 'second' discipline in which to develop expertise.

Research methods in SoTL include reflection and analysis, interviews and focus groups, questionnaires and surveys, content analysis of text, secondary analysis of existing data, quasi-experiments (comparison of two sections of the same course), observational research, case studies, among others. Evidence may be published and reviewed in journals, at conferences, on websites, or in other media. Evidence may also be reviewed by local and national peers, who have a role in the research's validity.

The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) was founded in 2004 by a committee of 67 scholars from several countries and serves faculty members, staff, and students who care about teaching and learning through various intellectual work. ISSOTL has held annual conferences since 2004, attended by scholars from around the world. The conferences are typically held in different countries around the world. The conferences sites include Melbourne, Australia (2004); Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (2005); Washington, DC; USA(2006); Sydney, Australia (2007); Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (2008); Bloomington, Indiana, USA (2009); Liverpool, UK (2010).

External links

* The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL)
* SoTL Commons Conference: A Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
* "Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal"
* International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning
* The Role of Online Communities in Developing SOTL
* Illinois State Univ SoTL website
* Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
* Carnegie Foundation's Knowledge Media Laboratory
* Indiana Univ SoTL website
* Visible Knowledge Project and Index
* Univ of Wisconsin System SoTL website

Readings

* Bass, R. 1999. "The scholarship of teaching: What is the problem?" Creative Thinking about Learning and Teaching 1(1). online

Differences and overlaps....
Integrating and Supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Through Annual Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure Documents AAHE/Carnegie Cluster Team-Organizing to Foste SoTL

An important goal of advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is to incorporate it into the faculty evaluation system. We offer the following language to help campuses incorporate SoTL into the faculty evaluation system in order to provide faculty with additional scholarship options and opportunities.

"SoTL is integrating the experience of teaching with the scholarship of research. It is the ongoing and cumulative intellectual inquiry, through systematic observations and ongoing investigations, by faculty into the nature of learning and the impact of teaching upon it" (Hutchings & Schulman, 1999). At Illinois State University, SoTL has been defined by a large, diverse group of ISU faculty, staff, and students as "systematic reflection/study of teaching and learning made public." This definition shapes the following evaluation standards.

Evaluation Standards:

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is a form of the scholarship of discovery and/or the scholarship of integration. SoTL that is methodologically rigorous, makes a significant contribution, receives peer review, and is made public as described below should be rewarded as the scholarship of discovery or integration and, thus, by ISU ASPT guidelines under "scholarship and creative productivity." The relative value of SoTL compared to other forms of scholarship may be less, equal, or greater depending on factors such as institutional mission, department/discipline characteristics and culture, and individual assignments.

1. SoTL exhibits methodological rigor
   - Systematic and deliberate study of teaching and learning
   - Qualitative and quantitative methods are appropriate
   - Evaluation is based on the standards of qualitative and/or quantitative traditions in the discipline

2. SoTL has substantive implications/outcomes as evidenced by any or all of the following
   - Results of research are applied to the practice of teaching
   - Applicability and utility of research extend beyond the site of research
   - Results of research enhance the quality of teaching and learning
   - Development of new or significantly revised theoretical understanding or applied knowledge
   - Illustrates how traditional course issues/materials can be addressed in new ways

3. SoTL is peer reviewed
   - Qualified scholars in relevant fields constitute peers
   - The reviewers critically evaluate the work’s rigor and implications

4. SoTL is made public
   - Scholars share the work to affect practice of others
   - Scholars use conventional academic venues appropriate to the discipline to disseminate the work including presentations, journals, juried exhibits, etc.

Figure 5.1. The Ongoing Cycle of Scholarly Teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching

Scholarly Teaching

- Check results against baseline

Consult literature

Choose and apply an intervention

Conduct systematic observation

Document observations

Analyze results

Obtain peer evaluation

Knowledge Base of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Add to

Disseminate, publish, present

Submit for peer review

Prepare manuscript

Place into context of knowledge base

Synthesize results

Identify key issues

The Scholarship of Teaching

Use what?
- Past work in SoTL in your discipline or more generally
- Classroom Assessment results
- Classroom Research results
- Course Assessment results
- Program Assessment results
- Program Research results

To impact what? (all in an effort to improve teaching and learning)
- Course objectives
- Course content
- Course method pedagogy
- Integration of courses
- Curricular reform
- Program review
- Formal assessment
- Resource planning
- Faculty development activities

Features important to the process?
- Communication
- Faculty involvement
- Inclusiveness
- Opportunities for feedback
- Public sharing and discussion
- Continual evaluation
- Involvement of students

Resources for doing this work?
- Disciplinary association small grants
- Internal grants from teaching centers or other programs
- Alumni donations
- Large scale projects might be funded via foundation, state, or federal grants (e.g., Spencer Foundation or Carnegie Foundation or NSF Division of Undergraduate Education)
- Reassigned faculty time for doing and applying SoTL
- Graduate assistant
- Class research project

Barriers to overcome?
- Fear of "evaluation"
- Fear of making teaching public
- Fear of change
- Different interpretations of the data and its implications
- Limited resources
- Insufficient administrator support