Reflections on Developing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

‘The scholarship of teaching and learning is about making transparent how learning is being made possible’

(Trigwell, 2004)

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Brief Biography

- Educational Developer and Geographer
- HE Consultant and Researcher
- Emeritus Professor University of Gloucestershire; Honorary Professor University of Queensland; Visiting Professor Edinburgh Napier; Visiting Professor University of Wales, Newport
- Director Centre for Active Learning
- Director HE Academy project on Undergraduate research
- Ex-VP for Europe International Society for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- National Teaching Fellow and Senior Fellow HE Academy
- Geography Advisor to HE Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (2000-)
- Advisor on linking research and teaching to Canadian Federal Government (2006); National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (Ireland) (2007-11); Australian Learning and Teaching Council Project on the teaching-research nexus (2006-08); and League of European Research Universities (2009)
- Research interests: scholarship of teaching; linking research and teaching; active learning; developing an inclusive curriculum; supporting the learning of disabled students; bringing about change in teaching and learning at institutional and department levels
The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)

‘The very concept of a scholarship of pedagogy is still very unfamiliar to many university teachers’

(Baume, 1996: 4)
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Curtin University

“The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Curtin is systematic inquiry, critique, research and development in teaching, learning, and the broader educational context which advances and publicly provides educational benefit to students, staff and the higher education sector.”

The scholarship of teaching and learning

‘One of the key ways in which to engage colleagues in their development as critical and reflective teachers, in a way that goes beyond the hints and tips they may need at the beginning of their teaching careers, is ... to stimulate their intellectual curiosity. ... The asking of questions is at the heart of intellectual curiosity and engaging staff in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).’

Breslow et al. (2004)
The scholarship of teaching and learning

I  Identifying issues
II  Case studies
III What is SoTL?
IV  Issues in developing SoTL
V   Designing a SoTL project
VI  Conclusion
I IDENTIFYING ISSUES
I want you to position yourself on a line according to the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Talk to the person next to you about why you have positioned yourself where you have and as a consequence you may need to move.
I believe that pedagogic research and scholarship should underpin the learning, teaching and assessment strategy of any HEI aspiring for an outstanding reputation for its teaching.

Strongly agree  Strongly disagree
My university strongly encourages, supports and rewards engagement in pedagogic research and scholarship

Strongly agree  Strongly disagree
The scholarship of teaching and learning

‘The time has come to move beyond the tired old teaching versus research debate and give the familiar and honorable term scholarship a broader and more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work’

(Boyer, 1990, 16)
The four types of scholarship

- Scholarship of Discovery
- Scholarship of Integration
- Scholarship of Teaching
- Scholarship of Application

See: Table 2 Engaging learners with Boyer’s four scholarships
II  CASE STUDIES
Case studies

Exercise:

In pairs each please scan a *different* case study (1 - 10) on pp3-13:

Identify ONE idea from EACH case study you examine which you think may be applicable here
III THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
Key features and components of the scholarship of teaching and learning

Exercise:

Please scan Table 2 entitled “Statements about the scholarship of teaching”

To what extent do you agree with the statements on the sheet?
Key features and components of the scholarship of teaching and learning

77 participants completed all or parts of the exercise:

- There was a full range of views on each of the statements
- Care is needed in interpreting the findings. However, only quotation 10 (Richlin, 2001) caused more than one in five of the delegates to 'sit on the fence'
- Over 90 percent of delegates agreed with statement 4 (Martin et al., 1999); over three-quarters of the group agreed with statements 1 (Boyer, 1990), 2 (Cross & Steadman, 1996), and the three quotes from Healey (2000a, b) (5, 8 and 12)
- Less than half the delegates agreed with the two statements from Richlin (2001) (3 and 10) and Ramsden (1999) (6)
The scholarship of teaching involves three essential and integrated elements:

• engagement with the scholarly contributions of others on teaching and learning;

• reflection on one’s own teaching practice and the learning of students within the context of a particular discipline; and

• communication and dissemination of aspects of practice and theoretical ideas about teaching and learning in general and teaching and learning within the discipline.

(Martin et al., 1998)
The relationship between T, R and SoTL

Source: Thompson (2001)
The relationship between Ped R, Ped D and SoTL

Source: D’Andrea and Gosling (2005)
Defining SoTL

“the systematic study of teaching and learning, using established or validated criteria of scholarship, to understand how teaching (beliefs, behaviours, attitudes, and values) can maximize learning, and/or develop a more accurate understanding of learning, resulting in products that are publicly shared for critique and use by an appropriate community.”

Potter and Kustra (2011, 2)
Levels of pedagogic investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of investigation</th>
<th>Evidence gathering will be verified by</th>
<th>Investigation results in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  To inform oneself</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>Personal knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  To inform a group within a shared context</td>
<td>those within same context</td>
<td>Local knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  To inform a wider audience</td>
<td>those outside of that context</td>
<td>Public knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV ISSUES IN DEVELOPING SoTL
Issues around an evolving concept

1. Is the scholarship of teaching best developed through the disciplines?
2. How may the status of the scholarship of teaching be raised?
1. Is SoTL best developed through the disciplines?

“For many academics the concepts and practices of the scholarship of teaching are far removed from their disciplinary ways of understanding research and so are less valued or appreciated”

(Chalmers 2011, 11)
1. Is SoTL best developed through the disciplines?

SoTL needs to be embedded in disciplines and departments/schools:

- Learning goals vary between disciplines
- The primary allegiance for most academic staff is to their subject or profession

Others argue disciplinary allegiance is only one factor. With an increase in specialisation within disciplines and the growth of inter-disciplinarity, discipline boundaries are dissolving.
1. Is SoTL best developed through the disciplines?

Different disciplines have distinct styles and approaches to teaching and learning. E.g. the Anthropology Network has attempted:

– to develop an anthropological language to studying teaching and learning
– to 'translate' the language of educational development into an anthropological context so that they can identify the values that they want to privilege in teaching anthropology
– to develop an anthropological approach to the scholarship of teaching
1. Is SoTL best developed through the disciplines?


Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance Subject Centre

www.business.heacademy.ac.uk
2. How may the status of SoTL be raised?

To be scholarly teachers, academics need to use the same kind of thought processes in their teaching that they apply to their research

(Elton, 1992)
2. How may the status of SoTL be raised?

If teaching is to be valued equally with research then, like research, teaching must open itself to the scrutiny of theoretical perspectives, methods, evidence and results

(Martin, *et al.* 1999)

For every process which supports quality in research, there is a parallel process which can be used to support quality in teaching

(Gibbs, 1995)
2. How may the status of SoTL be raised?

The most significant of the processes for enhancing quality is the reward for teaching excellence, for both individuals and departments

(Gibbs, 1995)

There is “no substitute for action to promote good teachers if universities want their staff to accept that good teaching is properly recognised”

(Ramsden & Martin, 1996)
Duties appropriate for ‘teaching’ staff at Curtin

Level D – Includes ‘significant scholarship in teaching and learning locally or nationally’

Level E – Includes ‘significant scholarship in teaching and learning nationally or internationally’
Other issues in engaging with SoTL

What other issues face staff in engaging with SoTL?
IV DESIGNING A SoTL PROJECT
Designing a SoTL project

Source: University of Glasgow
Designing a SoTL project

In threes, each of you should skim read a different case study:

- Implementing a process of peer feedback (psychology) p14
- Development of experimental design skills (biosciences) p17
- An evaluation of the utility of computer-based courseware (dentistry) p19.

What are the main issues which arise about designing a SoTL project?
What is the role of pedagogic research / development in SoTL?

Boyer (1990) saw research as the cornerstone of the scholarship of teaching

‘The improvement of learning and teaching is dependent upon the development of scholarship and research in teaching’

(Prosser and Trigwell, 1999: 8)

‘Higher education will benefit if those who teach enquire into the effects of their activities on their students’ learning’

(Ramsden, 1992: 5)
What is the role of pedagogic research / development in SoTL?

Research into learning ranges in a continuum:
• from an evaluation of a session, or a whole module
• to a major educational research project

Much educational research is ‘action’ or ‘classroom’ research
What is the role of pedagogic research / development in SoTL?

“Research on teaching is neither a necessary nor a sufficient component of the scholarship of teaching.

Investigation / enquiry / evaluation of one’s teaching, or teaching context is an essential part of the scholarship of teaching.

If the scholarship of teaching is to enhance learning and the status of teaching, then that scholarship must apply to the act of teaching, not something that is essentially about research.”

(Trigwell, 2003)
Example of a SoTL project

Identifying ‘bottlenecks’ (Pace & Middendorf, 2004) and ‘troublesome knowledge’ (Entwistle, 2001; Meyer & Land, 2006; Perkins, 1999).

Key Q about whether learning is taking place is:

“What do the students have to do to show that they understand?”
Example of a SoTL project

Freshman Learning Project Steps

– Identify a bottleneck to learning
– Define expert thinking needed to overcome bottleneck
– Model these form of thinking for students
– Give students a chance to practice and get feedback
– Motivate them to stay with the process
– Assess their learning
– Share what has been learned

Source: Pace (2006)
Example of a SoTL project

Exploring the disciplinary unconscious of Historians

- Interviews with 17 Faculty with the assistance of a Dean of Faculties Grant
- Defining bottlenecks
- Exploring the response of professional Historians to these bottlenecks

Source: Pace (2006)
Example of operations automatic to professional Historians but foreign to many students

Ask basic questions when presented with a historical source

- Why was the material created? When? Where?
- For whom was it created?
- In what circumstances would it have been experienced?

Source: Pace (2006)
Example of operations automatic to professional Historians but foreign ...

- Ask basic questions when presented with a historical source
- Reconstruct the decisions made in the creation of a map, a poster, or a folk epic in order to see the values and attitudes that underlie these choices
- Construct an idea of what a person in that era would likely know and “forget” all that they could not have known
- Recognize that a text may have more than one meaning
- Consider what has been left out of a source and think about the significance of that act

Source: Pace (2006)
Developing SoTL

“To be successful any approach must have:

– Specificity
– Relevance to one’s discipline
– Assessibility” (Pace, 2006)
Exercise

In groups of threes and fours design a SoTL project that one of you would like to undertake. The others can act as critical friends.

- Title
- Problem
- Aims / SoTL questions
- Methods

Please display on a flip chart
VI CONCLUSION
Conclusion

• SoTL in HE is a young field of enquiry and arguably theoretical approaches and concepts are limited

• A lot of emphasis in Europe and Australasia is put on a few approaches and concepts (e.g. deep and surface learning, constructive alignment)
Conclusion

‘Stimulating intellectual curiosity is ... a powerful mechanism of engaging academics in SoTL, students in inquiry-based learning, and educational developers in improving their own field.’

Breslow et al. (2004)
Conclusion

• Teachers in HE need to learn how to adopt a scholarly approach to teaching and how to collect and present rigorous evidence of their effectiveness as teachers
• Good teaching needs to be better understood, more open to scrutiny, and better communicated
• The scholarship of teaching and learning will only be developed if it is appropriately recognised and rewarded with respect to the other forms of scholarship
Reflections on Developing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

THE END

Thank You