Open Research Online

Creating allowable personal and professional identities: the impact of changing contexts on SoTL activities and structures

Conference or Workshop Item

For guidance on citations see FAQs.

Version: Accepted Manuscript

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:
http://www.propel.stir.ac.uk/conference2012/

oro.open.ac.uk

Creating allowable personal and professional identities: the impact of changing contexts on SoTL activities and structures

Hills, Laura, Open University, UK
Swithenby, Steve, Open University, UK

Abstract
From 2005 to 2010 the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs), a UK government-funded initiative to improve the quality of higher education teaching and learning in England and Wales, oversaw a vast expansion of activities related to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Concurrent to the existence of the CETLs, there has been increasing institutional recognition of SoTL as a valid professional activity for HE teachers, including greater opportunities for personal and professional development and promotion. The demise of the CETL initiative in 2010 and the recent radical funding changes within UK HE, have generated uncertainty about the durability of SoTL as a mass movement within HE. They also present challenges for the future development of the personal and professional identities of HE teachers which involvement in SoTL has brought about.

At the Open University UK (OUUK), the development of and support for the scholarship of teaching and learning has, to a great extent, mirrored the national context. One of four CETLs at the OUUK, the Centre for Open Learning in Mathematics, Science, Computing and Technology (COLMSCT), was succeeded in 2010 by the internally funded eSTEeM initiative. Both initiatives share the purpose of bringing academics together to develop new approaches to distance teaching and learning within the STEM subjects. The purpose of this paper is two-fold:
* to examine the effect of participation in the scholarship of teaching and learning on the personal and professional identities of those involved;
* to identify how changes in institutional and the external environmental contexts have affected perceptions of these personal and professional identities

This paper draws on a number of informal and formal sources: qualitative interviews with COLMSCT Fellows and eSTEeM project leaders, final and interim reports by Fellows and project leaders, internal COLMSCT and eSTEeM documentation and Open University strategic statements. These strands of evidence are brought together to identify whether the changing context is more or less favourable to the transformation of personal and professional identities through involvement in SoTL, and what the prognosis is for future development. The paper concludes that there has been a shift between externally and internally funded SoTL initiatives in how the development of personal and professional identities is perceived by both the individual and the institution. In particular, it argues that external funding provides an environment for innovative leadership and potentially greater outputs and dissemination of SoTL activity. However, it is also the case that *perceived* proximity of internally funded initiatives to the departmental and institutional strategy makes involvement more relevant and acceptable. In both cases, the value that individuals ascribe to their personal identities as HE teachers reflects the dominant discourse within the sector, with a rhetoric of individual excellence moving to one of strategic alignment.

Introduction
Although the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is still something of a diffuse term within Higher Education (Norton, 2009), its role in the professional development of HE teachers

has long been recognised. Kreber (2002, p.160) for example, cites the following features as key to the self-regulated learning it affords:

- Exploring relationships between teaching and learning, research, and integrating and applying knowledge
- Effective teaching through the wisdom of practice and standards of disciplinary scholarship
- Knowledge about teaching and learning through reflection on practice
- Specific research skills, attitudes and products
- Development of a pedagogical content knowledge through reflection
- Sharing of peer review of information and insight

However, the traditionally strong separation between teaching and research functions, in terms of policy, funding, operationalisation and perceptions (Fanghanel, 2007, p. 13) means that there has been, until quite recently, very little recognition of scholarship activities beyond the realm of personal professional development. As a result, although good teaching has been expected, it has been rarely privileged (Walker et al, 2008).

In the last ten years, however, SoTL has become a major movement within the United Kingdom Higher Education sector. Just as grass roots involvement in SoTL has continued to grow, so too has institutional and sector-wide recognition of SoTL as a valid academic activity. Most notably, in 2006, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in England published a set of standards, recently revised, which highlighted the need for HE teachers to incorporate research and scholarship into their teaching (HEA, 2006; HEA, 2011). The consequence has been a proliferation of teacher training programmes for new staff, the majority of which carry an expectation of HE teachers to conduct a piece of research into their own practice. Perhaps in an effort to meet the needs of the ever increasing numbers of scholars of teaching and learning, a number of UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have developed scholarship communities and organized teaching and learning conferences   After many years of SoTL being a largely unrewarded activity, scholarship is now increasingly recognised within cases for promotion (Palmer and Collins, 2006).

Perhaps the biggest driver in the development of SOTL in the United Kingdom, however, has been the establishment of the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, part of a government funded England- wide initiative to promote teaching and learning. The funding of 74 Centres for Excellence from 2005 to 2010 saw a huge rise in scholarship activity and an increase in the number and visibility of SoTL related conferences and journals. In 2010, however, the funding of the CETLs ceased and, in an increasingly difficult financial climate, many HEIs have been faced with the problem of how, and indeed whether, to continue to support SoTL activity.

The context for the development of SoTL at the Open University (OU) has, in many respects, mirrored its development within the wider HE sector. Prior to 2005, SoTL, and particularly action and practitioner research, was a relatively small scale activity within the institution and primarily undertaken by the many of the OU's part-time tutors, for whom it would eventually become a recognised professional development activity. More recently, there has been a formal recognition within the Open University as to the value of SoTL activity to the institution, and an explicit pathway to promotion for those involved in scholarship rather than research. Concurrent to this more formal development of the role of scholarship, the University secured funding for the establishment of four Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning within the fields of practice-based leaning, personalised student support, Physics and the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects in general. As in the wider HE sector, the existence of the CETLs saw a flourishing of SoTL activity within the Open University, with over 300 individual and collaborative projects, and with widespread effect on institutional policy and practice, as well as on the teachers involved. As the funding came to an end in 2010, discussion within each CETL focussed on how best to continue to support and promote SoTL activity within the OU. The focus

of this research is on the response within the STEM subjects to this issue, and in particular the CETL, the Centre for Open Learning in Mathematics, Science, Computing and Technology (COLMSCT) and its successor, eSTEeM, and whether the change in context made a difference to the outcomes for the individuals involved.

The research context: COLMSCT and eSTEeM

When it was established in 2005, COLSMCT sought, in line with the majority of other CETLS, to encourage and reward teaching excellence through involvement in SoTL activity and, given the Open University's status as a distance education provider, to contextualise this activity within online and distance approaches to teaching and learning. In particular, COLMSCT's aims were to:

- stimulate the development and widespread implementation of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment (including materials, student support and use of technology) that would benefit large numbers of OU Maths, Computing, Technology and Science students
- encourage excellent teachers to engage with a range of teaching, learning and assessment initiatives that were priorities for the MSCT Faculties and the OU, and to engage in pedagogic research timed particularly at the evaluation of those initiatives
- reward academic staff who had demonstrated excellence in teaching and/or learning support and who had participate in the work of the Centre
- disseminate information about good practice and new developments in MSCT distance teaching, learning and assessment to all members of the two Faculties, facilitate their transfer across module team and faculty boundaries, and provide advice and support to staff adopting these good practices and implementing new developments at the OU and elsewhere (COLMSCT, 2012).

All teaching staff within the fields of Mathematics, Science, Computing and Technology were invited to submit a proposal to complete a project on an issue of their choice but within pre-defined areas of relevance to the future development of teaching and learning the University. These were: Assessment and e-assessment, Online communities and identities, Mathematics Online and Online experimentation. A number of criteria were taken into account in the selection of projects to be funded. Firstly, it had to relate to an identified issue in teaching and learning; secondly, the proposal had to be reasonably sound in terms of its practicality and methodological approach; and, thirdly, prospective Fellows had to demonstrate an excellent track record in supporting student learning. In total, 63 projects, all which were of two years duration, were funded in three cohorts, of which 31 were by full-time academics, termed Fellows, and 32 were by part-time teaching staff, termed Associate Fellows. Fellows received a buy-out of up to 40% of their time while Associate Fellows were paid a total of sixty days consultancy over the two years to complete their projects.

eSTEeM was established in 2010 with support from the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology. The aim of eSTEeM, in keeping with that of COLMSCT, is to encourage and reward teaching excellence through involvement in SoTL. In contrast, however, its stated aims are explicitly external facing, with four key priority areas:

- Education for employment – working with employers, sector skills councils, professional bodies, HE STEM agencies etc.
- International STEM education – promoting conversations about international challenge in supply of STEM graduates, associated teaching and learning models, and scholarship opportunities.
- Engagement – promoting innovation, development and associated scholarship.
- Enterprise – identifying opportunities to use Open University expertise in STEM education in spin-out activities and resources (eSTEeM, 2012).

Since its establishment, a total of 27 projects have been funded, involving 31 members of teaching staff, termed Project Leaders.   Selection criteria are similar to this used within COLMSCT and the research areas of Assessment and e-assessment, Online communities and identities, Mathematics Online and Online experimentation are similar. Key differences to COLMSCT, however, are that the duration of the projects is shorter, at one year, and the time for the projects is taken from the individual's research leave and negotiated with Department Heads. In addition, funding is available for travel and some project development costs. As a result of this move from external to internal funding, eSTEeM has not been able to fund projects undertaken by part-time tutors and so all Project Leaders are core members of teaching staff.

Both initiatives have used broadly similar management and support structures. In both COLMSCT and eSTEeM, and in line with other similar initiatives (Gray et al, 2007; Kember, 2002), action research was chosen as an appropriate approach as it did not presume prior educational research experience. Furthermore, the action research cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting provided Fellows and Project Leaders with a logical method to conducting research of this kind. On-going help was provided by two educational developers in COLMSCT and one in eSTEeM, in the form of one-to-one support and through workshops on topics such as research planning, engaging with the literature, choosing an appropriate methodology, data collection and analysis, conference presentations and journal submission.

Methods and analysis
The research undertaken here draws on a number of sources and has been conducted in two distinct phases.

Phase one:
The research undertaken in phase one (Hills, 2010) involved interviews with 18 COLMSCT Fellows and Associate Fellows in July 2010, as the CETL was coming to an end. Interviewees were selected to reflect a variety of experiences and outcomes and subject areas.

The questions used in the interviews drew heavily on work within COLMSCT on 'spheres of effect' (Hills and Swithenby, 2010), which attempted to account for the different ways in which the research undertaken by COLMSCT Fellows and Associate Fellows might be perceived to be having an impact on practice. As a result the questions focussed not just on the individual, but students, colleagues, the institution and even the wider HE sector, so that a picture could be obtained of the effect of not just individual projects but also the COLMSCT initiative as a whole:
- What were your motivations in being a COLMSCT Fellow?
- What have been the effects of your involvement in COLMSCT at the level of:
    - Yourself or your practice?
    - Students?
    - Colleagues?
    - OU?
    - Wider HE sector?
- What were the contributing factors to these effects being achieved?
- How might these effects have been enhanced?

Phase two
Interviews with eSTEeM Fellows were undertaken in November and December 2011. As Project Leaders had only started their projects in April 2011, limited numbers were at a stage to be able to talk about their research.   As a result eight Project Leaders were interviewed, including three who had previously been COLMSCT Fellows.

In order to be able to compare data from both phases of the research, the same key interviews questions were used, with the addition of a further question asked of eSTEeM project leaders, focussing on anticipated effects over the two years, to reflect the early stage of many of the eSTEeM projects. eSTEeM Project Leaders who had previously been COLSMCT Fellows were also asked to identify differences in their experiences of the two initiatives. Both sets of interviews were analysed separately to identify key themes. The findings were then compared to identify any similarities or differences between the two groups.

In addition, the final and interim reports by COLMSCT Fellows and eSTEeM Project Leaders were analysed using the same approach to that identified for the interviews, and internal COLMSCT and eSTEeM documentation and Open University strategic statements were also scrutinized.

Findings
For ease of comparison, the findings from both phases were grouped into four areas, again drawing on the interview questions and the spheres of effect. These were: Motivations, Effect, Influencing Factors and Mitigating Factors. Of course these areas are not mutually excusive and the interrelationship between them will be explored. It should also be noted that, given the very different stages in each initiative at which the research was undertaken, the findings presented here are necessarily indicative and will be subject to further research.

Motivations
Three key motivating factors were identified by Fellows and Project Leaders, which could be summarized as a desire to extend the day job, to engage in research and scholarship and to make things happen.

Extending the day job
It is unsurprising, given the nature of SoTL, and the way in which both COLMSCT and eSTEeM in relation to SoTL, that both groups were united by an interest in teaching and learning and so a desire to further investigate teaching and learning, was the prime motivating factor amongst both Fellows and Project Leaders. This motivation was expressed in a number of different ways, however. Firstly, there was a clear pattern amongst the majority of those interviewed that teaching and learning was already a key interest. These were not people for whom the notion of investigating teaching and learning was a new or difficult concept. Instead, it was something that they had been interested, and to some extent, engaged in for some considerable time, but without a recognized means of doing so:

> I want to find things that help students get tutorials, get support via means that's portable and really useful for them and they could view it at any time basically. And that's ideal for the web. So that's what got me doing and I needed a vehicle and COLMSCT was the vehicle. And it was there waiting for me, absolutely ideal (COLMSCT Fellow H).

Although many had been engaged in investigating their teaching to some extent before their involvement in COLMSCT and eSTEem, their motivation was also expressed in terms of wanting to make that experience different to the 'day job'. It was not a question of carrying on as usual but of finding a new way of viewing their interest in teaching and learning. In COLMSCT, Fellows spoke of the hope that teaching and learning would now be valued:

> I was absolutely delighted that at long last there was going to be somewhere where interesting teaching and learning was going to be valued and recognised at the OU (COLMSCT Fellow A).

In a slightly different way Project Leaders saw eSTEeM as offering a badge of legitimacy:

My project was something I was working on anyway. … so I used the establishment of eSTEeM to bring it under the egis of eSTEeM but my feeling for doing that was … this legitimacy thing, that by getting an eSTEeM label on it what I wanted to do gained more legitimacy (eSTEeM Project Leader 4).

What was clear from talking to those in eSTEeM was that much of the way they expressed their motivation to focus on teaching and learning was influenced by what could be seen as the legacy of COLMSCT. Thus, although notion of legitimacy also featured in interviews with COLMSCT Fellows, almost without exception, this was found to be an effect of involvement in COLMSCT rather than a motivation for becoming involved. As such, eSTEeM was in a sense continuing the legitimacy around investigating teaching and learning which COLMSCT had begun.

Research and scholarship

Fanghanel (2007), cited above, highlighted the traditional distinction between teaching and research. However, it was clear from both COLMSCT and eSTEeM that research, and more latterly scholarship, were also key motivating factors. Within COLMSCT, the desire to be engaged in research was most strongly expressed by Associate Fellows. They are part-time tutors at the Open University and so not, unless they happen to work at another HEI, are not able to conduct research as part of their role:

> [I]t was essentially an opportunity for me to get access to research and full time staff at the university do research as part of their work day, produce papers, they attend conferences etc. But ALs don't do that cos it's a teaching only role (COLMSCT Fellow P).

Interestingly, very few COLMSCT Fellows, normally full-time members of core OU staff, mentioned research as a motivation, perhaps reflecting the fact that research already formed part of their role and so what they were engaged in as Fellows was something different. A striking distinction between how Fellows and Project Leaders expressed their interest in investigating teaching and learning was the use of the term SoTL itself. COLMSCT Fellows did not use the term SoTL, either as a motivating factor, describing what they were doing or referring to the broader scholarship agenda within the University. . Instead, the use of the term was entirely restricted to Project Leaders:

> I started doing dome work on [assessment] …. and at the same time eSTEeM was kind of getting up and I thought that "Actually, what I am doing is scholarship, it fits in with eSTEeM, so since I am doing this I ought to be in that particular group (eSTEeM Project Leader 6).

There is, of course, more than years between the establishment of COLMSCT and eSTEeM and so it may well be that growing institutional awareness and acceptance of SoTL meant that Project Leaders were more clearly able to identify what they were hoping to do within the context of eSTEeM as SoTL.

Making things happen

Even when COLMSCT Fellows, in particular, spoke of their motivation in terms of teaching and learning, there was a sense that COLMSCT was there to make things happen. As one Fellow stated:

> [W]ith COLMSCT you knew that if you needed somebody to do something for you it would get done and it wouldn't be a hassle (COLMSCT Fellow J).

For Project Leaders, the idea that eSTEeM could facilitate them in some way was part of the reason for their involvement. There was considerable publicity about the launch of eSTEEM within the

University, and particularly what it could offer to teachers in terms of collaboration and support, and it is clear that a number of Project Leaders were drawn to eSTEeM as a result:

> Well the project was basically born out of my kind of own itch that I have some data that I want to represent and …so when the eSTEeM call came through, I thought "I might as well also look into it and take the opportunity to do this within the eSTEeM project and through the eSTEeM framework get in contact with other people in the university (eSTEeM Project Leader 1)

Making things happen was also associated with eSTEeM in a more practical way by Project Leaders who saw their involvement in eSTEeM as providing a framework to enable them to more systematically investigate teaching and learning, and as means of evaluating projects which, in some cases, they had already begun. COLMSCT Fellows also identified the importance of the framework offered by COLMSCT, both in terms of systematic investigation, but also in ensuring that the research was completed. That Project Leaders identified this as a key motivator in becoming involved in eSTEeM is due in part to the legacy of COLMSCT.

Effect
For Project Leaders, it was perhaps too early to identify the full effect of their projects. However, they were able to express what had occurred so far as a result of their project and what they hoped would be the outcomes in two years' time.

Influencing practice
The notion of influencing practice manifested itself in a number of ways in both COLSMCT and eSTEeM and there were key differences between the two. In relation to the sphere of effect, mentioned earlier, it was clear that practice could be at the level of the individual, the student, the module or programme or even in the wider HE sector. At the level of the individual, influencing practice was expressed in terms of developing a better understanding how best to support students and to apply that to personal professional practice. At the level of the module or programme, the notion of influencing practice went far beyond individual practice and could mean making changes to assessment practice or student support which could have an effect on students, colleagues and, in some cases, university policy. Here the distinction between Fellows and Associate Fellows was quite marked. Fellows, by dint of their more central role within the University, were able to exercise greater influence on wider practice than Associate Fellows:

> I am in a position of influence on the course team and I have been all the way through … - it's meant that I've been able to actually get the being developed out there, get them into the course, evaluate their use (COLMSCT Fellow F)

The change in funding in eSTEeM meant that there was no formal involvement in eSTEeM by part-time tutors. As a result, all Project Leaders had a role in the development of modules and so their ability to influence practice was also considerable:

> So it will be able to investigate the effectiveness in the materials in TU100 because there is stuff in there some of which I have written. … And so if, you know, if it emerges that that's good or not good then we can ask in what ways and we can improve in the future perhaps (eSTEeM Project Leader 7).

Research and professional profile
Research and scholarship have been identified by both COLMSCT Fellows and eSTEeM Project Leaders as a motivating factor in their involvement in the initiatives. In terms of the effects or outcomes of their involvement, however, it was clear that the notion of research was also bound up with broader notions of expertise and professionalism.

For COLMSCT Fellows, there was clear identification of research as new or increased focus for their academic activity. In this they also expressed an awareness of the expectations of research, such as conference papers and journal articles.

What was striking was that research was also closely associated with the individual's identity as an academic. As such, although many COLMSCT Fellows presented and published their findings widely, they also identified the effects of research in terms of their personal professional development and identity, one referring to herself as having "a bit of a hat in the faculty as being the person who knows about feedback and assessment" (COLMSCT Fellow A). Another COLMSCT Fellow spoke of the expertise developed through his scholarship on assessment as providing him with the capacity to make decisions about the module was responsible for. As a result, SoTL became bound up with the teaching of his subject:

> So it gives us the knowledge to know how – if we were going to take on eAssessment of whatever and there were other aspects, we know what the technical constraints are and how it would have to be done (COLMSCT Fellow L).

Project leaders identified the effects of research in perhaps more traditional ways. The majority saw conference presentations and journal articles as an intended outcome of their involvement in eSTEeM, even if they were not at the stage yet to disseminate their findings.

Enabling Factors
The factors that have played a positive role in both the process and outcomes of engagement in SoTL are very much associated with the interplay between the individual, the SoTL community and the wider teaching context. As such, in some circumstances what are enabling factors for some could be mitigating factors for others.

Community
There was a definite dense amongst all Project Leaders and Fellows that being part of COLMSCT and eSTEeM offered a way for people to engage in what was a hitherto quite solitary task in a more communal and inter-linked way. COLMSCT Fellows, in particular spoke of the sense of shared enterprise and the value it had for their own research.

> So it was very important to actually involve yourself in the community and disseminate your ideas on what you were doing because it had the effect of broadening your outlook on the project because of the way people interacted with you and what they asked you (COLMSCT Fellow O).

This sense of community was particularly acutely felt by the Associate Fellows in COLMSCT, one of whom spoke of involvement in the initiative as being "invited to a party".

There was also a sense, as suggested earlier, amongst Project Leaders and Fellows that being associated with the COLMSCT or eSTEeM community also provided people with a certain degree of legitimacy and value:

> I think the other thing to say obviously that having the eSTEeM label, if you like, an eSTEeM project has helped with the discussions. It gives a bit of legitimacy, rather than just saying "Oh well I've just got this random good idea" (eSTEeM Project Leader 5).

For Project Leaders, community seemed to be used in a more instrumental way. Being part of eSTEeM afforded them opportunities to make contact with relevant technical staff or initiate collaboration with other.   Project Leaders spoke of eSTEeM as affording them contacts and collaboration with others and it has certainly been part of the operation of eSTEeM to

organize meetings based on the interests of the individual but also around the key aims of the initiative, such as internationalization and engagement.

Integration
A related theme to emerge from the interviews was the value of integration. This was expressed differently to the way in which people spoke about community. While a sense of community was something that operated within each initiative, and which eSTEeM, in particular, has done much to promote within the wider institution, it is nonetheless the case that much of the success of individual projects in being implemented was down to the extent to which the individual researcher and their research was able to be integrated within a particular module or programme. .

> I think the things that I was doing were probably more tightly meshed into a course team than things that I'd done before and so from that point of view they would have more direct impact on the students while the stuff was going on because it would involve students in things like questionnaires and interviews and so forth (COLMSCT Fellow J).

The role of the individual was important here. In COLMSCT, where many of the Associate Fellows had little direct involvement in module development, the role of the initiative in mediating between the individual researcher and the team who had the power to implement any project findings was key. Without this mediation Associate Fellows faced a difficult task of operating on the fringes of curriculum development activity and were often unable to fully test and implement their project.

> So I think I learned a great deal about the difficulties of getting things done in large organisations. And all the different people that are stakeholders that you've got to contact and try and get on board as it were. (COLMSCT Fellow I)

The majority of Project Leaders did not face such difficulties. Their roles meant that they already integrated within curriculum development teams. However, as will be seen, this did cause conflict for some between their teaching and scholarship roles.

Mitigating Factors
There were clear differences in what factors were felt by COLMSCT Fellows and eSTEeM Project Leaders to a negative role in both the process and outcomes of engagement in SoTL, and as with the enabling factors, these were also very much associated with the interplay between the individual, the SoTL community and the wider teaching context. In the case of eSTEeM the institutional context also made a difference. What was clear that a number of mitigating factors present in COLMSCT, such as the individual's role and the extent to which they were able to integrate within the teaching and learning structures of the university, were not felt by those in eSTEeM. As a result, there was one clear mitigating factor which emerged from interviews, and that was time

Time and value
Time, or the lack of it, is always spoken about in problematic terms. However, within COLMSCT and eSTEeM time has taken on something of a symbolic and well as practical significance. Within COLMSCT, time was effectively bought for Fellows and although the constraints of the 'day job' were seen to impinge on their ability to focus fully on scholarship, it was nonetheless accepted that they has scholarship time. In eSTEeM time is negotiated and this has had an impact on the extent to which Project Leaders are able to prioritise scholarship over other parts of their role.

> The thing that hindered is, as ever, time and there's a particular reason for that this year in that the whole enterprise is tied around TU100 which is a brand new course (eSTEeM project leader 7)

With the transition from external to internal funding, the time that can be spent on scholarship has effectively been taken from the control of the individual to the department. For Project Leaders, therefore, the extent to which their scholarship activity was valued within the department has had a major impact on the extent to which they have been able to engage in SoTL.

> So I think eSTEeM's got to keep banging away at the deaneries in trying to make sure that scholarship time is prioritised somehow. But I can't see heads of department thinking that it's got to be, that it's got to take priority over curriculum (eSTEeM Project Leader 4)

Thus, although being part of eSTEeM gave Project Leaders the legitimacy to use their time for scholarship, this did not always translate to the reality of negotiating workload. There were also faculty differences, with Project Leaders within the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology more likely to face this dilemma that those in Science. As a result, it is not just a question of departmental cultures but also subject cultures which may come into play.

Conclusions

This paper set out to examine whether the shift between externally and internally funded SoTL initiatives at the Open University has affected the development of personal and professional identities as perceived by both the individual and the institution.

It is clear that at one level that the experience and outcomes of SoTL for the practitioners involved in COLMSCT and eSTEeM are not dissimilar. Both groups speak of similar motivations, effects and enabling and mitigating factors. As such, the personal and professional identities of Fellows and Project Leaders have evolved in quite similar ways.

There are, however, some key differences. The strategic focus and direction of eSTEeM appears to have engendered amongst Project Leaders a more instrumental approach to their involvement in SoTL than that espoused by those involved in COLMSCT. At the same time, the closer integration of Project Leaders, and therefore of their projects, in curriculum development has undoubtedly made this involvement more relevant and acceptable within the institution as a whole. However, the picture painted here is a varied one and the role of the individual within their particular teaching and departmental context has, arguably, a greater impact on the process and outcomes of SoTL activity than does its increased acceptability.

In some respects, it is too early to identify clear implications for the future development and support of SoTL at the Open University. As eSTEeM emerges from the shadows of its predecessor, then the continued alignment of scholarship activity with the stated aims of the initiative may well lead SoTL in a more strategic direction. What the implications are for the development of the personal and professional identities of SoTL practitioners at the Open University, therefore, remains a subject for future research.

References

COLMSCT (2012). Aims and Outcomes. COLMSCT legacy website. Online resource accessed on 07/02/2012 at: http://www8.open.ac.uk/opencetl/centre-open-learning-mathematics-science-computing-and-technology/about-colmsct/aims-and-outcomes

eSTEeM (2012). eSTEeM homepage. Online resource accessed on 07/02/2012 http://www8-acct.open.ac.uk/about/teaching-and-learning/esteem/&samsredir=1331879960

Fanghanel, J. (2007). *Investigating university lecturers' pedagogical constructs in the working context*. Higher Education Academy, 2007.   Online resource accessed on 07/02/2012 at: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/research/fanghanel.pdf

Gray, K., Chang, R., & Radloff, A. (2007). Enhancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Evaluation of a Scheme to Improve Teaching and Learning Through Action Research. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 19(1): 21-32.

Higher Education Academy (2006). *The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education*. Higher Education Academy.

Higher Education Academy (2011). *The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education*. Higher Education Academy.

Hills, L. (2010). Supporting SoTL at the Open University: Overcoming the SOTL paradox?, Paper presented at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning conference, Liverpool, 19-22 October 2010.

Hills, L. and Swithenby, S. (2010). Practitioner research as experiential learning? : the case of COLMSCT. *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Networked Learning*, Aalborg, Denmark, ISBN 978-1-86220-225-2

Kember, D. (2002). Long term Outcomes of Educational Action Research Projects. *Educational Action Research*, 10(1): 83-103.

Kreber, C. (2002). Controversy and Consensus on the Scholarship of Teaching, *Studies in Higher Education*, 27(2): 151-167.

Norton, L.S. (2009). Action Research in Teaching and Learning. A practical guide to conducting pedagogical research in universities. London & New York: Routledge.

Palmer, A. and Collins, R. (2006), Perceptions of rewarding excellence in teaching: motivation and the scholarship of teaching, *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 30 (2): 193-205.

Walker, J.D, Baepler, P. and Cohen, B (2008), The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Paradox. Results without rewards. *College Teaching*, 56(3): 183-189.