Impact of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

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Overview

Impact of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

- Defining SoTL
- Enabling and enriching SoTL
- OU SoTL culture and context
- Differences to discipline research
- SoTL impact evaluation initiative
- Impact Evaluation Framework
- Examples Impact Case Studies
- Embedding a Theory of Change approach into SoTL projects
- Values of SoTL practitioners
What words do you associate with the phrase ‘Scholarship of Teaching and Learning’?

Defining the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

...why does SoTL matter to us?

- OU definition: “Systematic practitioner-led inquiry into student learning that advances the practice of teaching in higher education by making inquiry findings public.”

Teaching

Scholarly teaching
- Evidence informed teaching

SoTL
- Evidence informed teaching made public and open to critique

Research
- Discipline based educational research
What enables and enriches  
...the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?

- Culture / enablers
  - Funding: Covering expenses and enabling conference participation
  - Training/development: Resources, guidance and peer-support
  - Community: Internal and external groups (i.e., publics)
  - Impact: Making a difference
  - Promotion: Reward success

- The Open University, UK
  - Four faculty based SoTL centres (established)
  - Pan-university scholarship (new)

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What enables and enriches  
...the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?

- eSTEeM: The OU Centre for STEM Pedagogy (Dec 2010)
  - Management Team: Director 0.4 FTE, Deputy Director 0.3 FTE, Scholarship Manager, Support Assistant and Project Officer
  - School Scholarship Leads
  - Student Reference Panel (meet quarterly)
  - Advisory Group (meet annually)

- Biannual call for project proposals (Jan and Jul)
- Project portfolio: over 60 projects in progress (over 200 completed)
- Professional development and support for teams (HEA Fellowship)
What support do you need for SoTL in your context?

What’s different about SoTL compared to disciplinary research?

- Disciplinary research approaches
  - Reasoning: *Deductive* (theory, hypothesis, observations, confirmation) versus *Inductive* (observations, patterns, tentative hypothesis, theory) reasoning
  - Methodology: Quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods research

- Implications for educational research approaches in SoTL
  - Evidence mindset
  - Research methods training
  - Discipline boundary crossing
  - Recognition by peers
What impact
...does SoTL have on Learning and Teaching?

- The Open University, UK Impact Evaluation Initiative (2021–22)
  - An executive summary
  - A compendium of 16 case studies
  - A guide for educators
  - Workbook 1. SoTL impact evaluation
  - Workbook 2. Planning for SoTL impact

SoTL Impact Evaluation Framework
Four categories and 12 facets of impact

- **Learning and Teaching**
  - What has been the impact on student experience?
  - What has been the impact on student retention and progression?
  - Is there evidence of excellence in teaching?

- **Transfer to others**
  - Has there been an influence on discipline-based teaching, research and practice?
  - Have you disseminated the project’s outcomes?
  - Have the outcomes of the project been adopted by other educators?

- **Stakeholder benefits**
  - Has the project enhanced mutual stakeholder understanding?
  - Has the project facilitated the personal and professional development of project team and associated stakeholders?
  - Has the project led to the recognition of project team members and other stakeholders?

- **Cultural and economic benefits**
  - Has the project helped to foster SoTL culture?
  - Has the project had any financial implications?
  - Has the project led to funding opportunities?
Values of SoTL practitioners
...that facilitate uptake and impact

- Curious – ask questions and seek answers
- Open minded – be open to unanticipated findings
- Ethical – being open, transparent and fair
- Strategic – align with relevant initiatives, policies and plans
- Empathetic – consider the perspectives of stakeholders
- Generous – share your findings and experiences

Where
...can you find out more?

- eSTEeM website (OU)
- Free Badged Open Course
  - SoTL in STEM (OpenLearn)
- Professional associations
  - ISSOTL: International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Accreditation
  - HEA Fellowship (UKPSF)
- Conferences
  - ISSOTL
  - Horizons in STEM Higher Education
- Journals
  - Teaching and Learning Inquiry
  - Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Bibliography