



Sri Lanka Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness

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SLAIHEE Newsletter

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Material from this Newsletter may be used with due acknowledgement.
Opinions expressed are personal to the author/s.

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Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)

Academics, as professionals in their specialties, strive to master their field of study by following academic and training courses and obtaining suitable qualifications. They engage in continuous professional development and keep up to date in their area of expertise by reading journals, attending refresher courses and workshops, accessing online resource etc. They interact with other professionals in their field of study by joining professional colleges and associations. They also strive to advance knowledge in their specialty by engaging in research.

Academics of all disciplines, however, are also professionals in teaching in higher education. To an academic, the profession of teaching demands an equal commitment

as the profession of his/her specialty. This means that teachers in higher education should strive to gain expertise in teaching in higher education, including obtaining suitable qualifications. They should engage in continuous professional development and keep up to date by reading journals on teaching and learning, attending refresher courses and workshops, accessing online resource etc. They should interact with other professionals in their field of study by joining professional colleges and associations, such as SLAIHEE. They should, also, strive to advance knowledge of teaching and learning in higher education by engaging in educational research.

“Scholarly teachers view teaching as a profession and the knowledge base on teaching and learning as a second discipline in which to develop expertise”

Kathleen McKinney

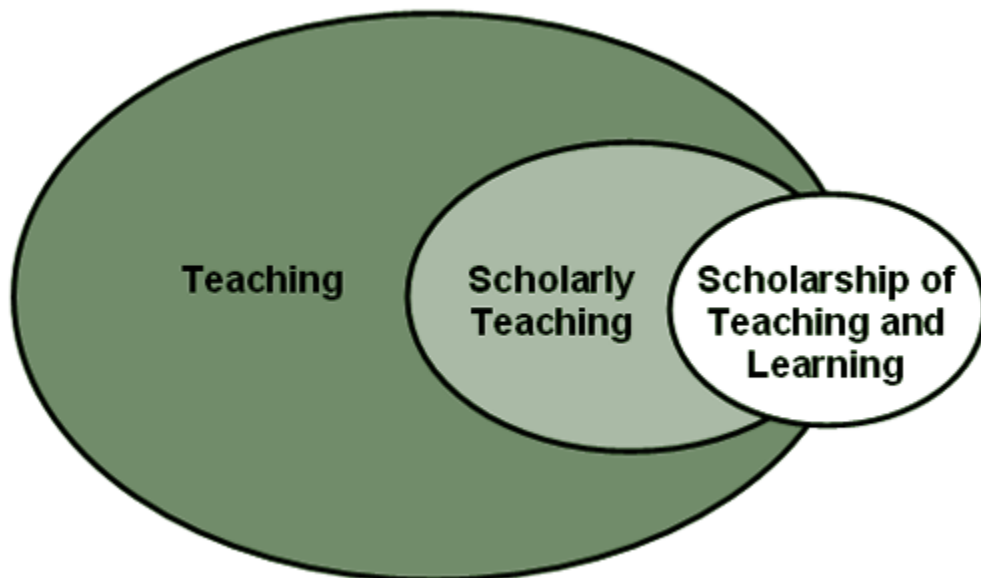
This is the crux of the SOTL movement, which is a growing movement in tertiary education. The term was coined by Ernest Boyer in a famous monograph, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. (1990 Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).

The path to SOTL usually starts with an academic making an effort to be a good teacher, by reading, learning and applying existing knowledge on teaching and learning with a view to enhancing student learning and achieving desired outcomes. The next stage is where the academic engages in reflection on his / her teaching and its impact on student learning, tries new techniques and engages in actively evaluating his /her teaching by student and peer review. SOTL is achieved when the teacher views teaching and learning as an

area of research and engages in active research and disseminates the findings, at conferences or through publications, for public information and peer review.

“SOTL is scholarly inquiry into student learning which advances the practice of teaching by sharing this research publicly”
Wikipedia

“In the following schematic, the field of teaching is represented by the large oval. Within teaching, some faculty engage in scholarly teaching (i.e. review relevant literature, innovate new pedagogies). A subset of scholarly teaching also includes the scholarship of teaching and learning, wherein faculty publish and present evidence of student learning. *Thompson, Samuel B, (2001) (taken from www.ctl.calpoly.edu/faculty/scholarship)*



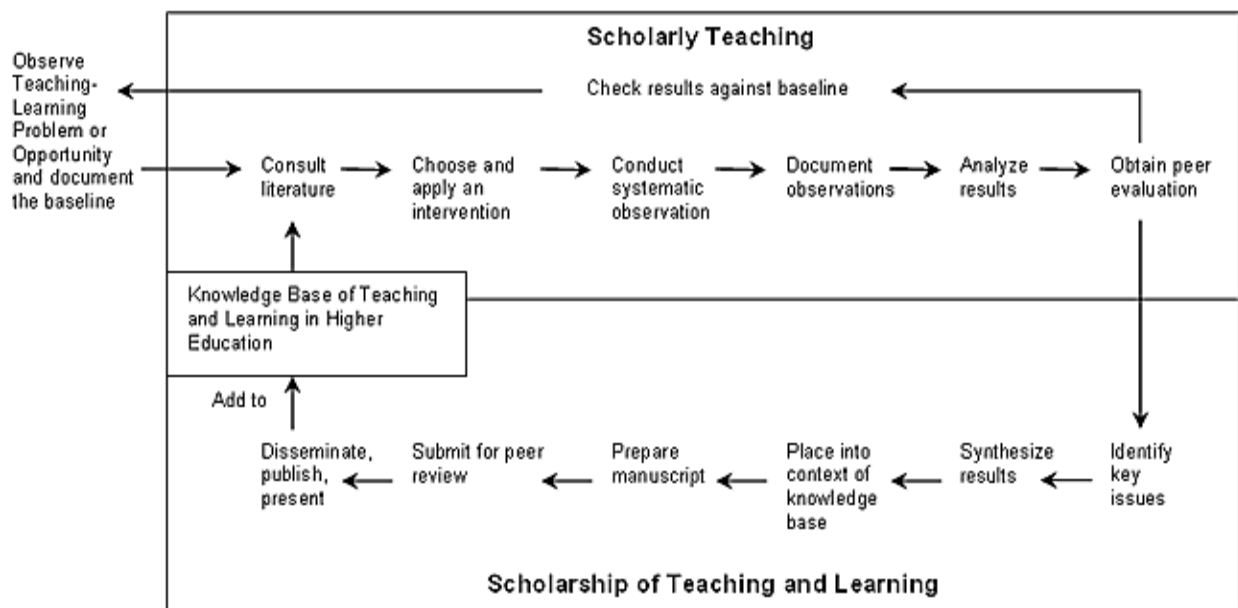
SOTL is based on teaching, but goes further, by requiring deliberate and methodical investigation of questions regarding

teaching improvement and student learning that results in generating original, generalisable knowledge that other

teachers can use to inform their practice. SOTL is movement that is attractive both to faculty members who enjoy teaching as well as to those faculty members who consider themselves as, primarily, researchers. Some prefer to replace the

term 'scholarship of teaching and learning' with the term 'teaching-as-research'.

Richlin (2001) distinguished between the cycles of scholarly teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning with the following conceptualization:



How does one do research in higher education? Conducting research into higher education is no different to conducting research in other areas. It includes posing a problem with regard to teaching and student learning. Questions worth posing include "How do I know that my students are learning?" or "Will my students' learning last?" This is followed by systematic evaluation of student learning using an appropriate study design. Study methodology could include both qualitative and quantitative methods including reflective practice and analysis, questionnaires and surveys, interviews and focus group discussions, experiments, observations and case studies. The results

are then disseminated for peer review and application.

Introduction of SOTL into academic communities, such as Universities, results in improvement of teaching effectiveness, promotion of student learning and transforming academic culture. Failure to do is tantamount to abandoning our responsibilities to our students and the public.

As Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori and Patricia Donahue have suggested, it is time to "apply to teaching the same standards of professional accountability that govern more traditional scholarship ... [and reconfigure] teaching from an amateur to an expert activity."

Further Reading

1. Boyer, Ernest L. (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
2. Bruff, Derek (n.d.). *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)*. Vanderbilt University.
3. Hutchings, Pat (2000). Introduction. In P. Hutchings (Ed.), *Opening Lines: Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. Menlo Park, CA: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
4. Hutchings, Pat and Shulman, Lee S. (1999). The Scholarship of Teaching: New Elaborations, New Developments. *Change*, 31(5).
5. Richlin, Laurie (2001). Scholarly Teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching. In Kreber, C., (Ed.), *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* (86). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
6. Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass Inc.
7. Thompson, Samuel B. (2001). *Tutorial on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)*. International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
8. Salvatori M.R. and Donahue P. (2002) "English Studies in the Scholarship of Teaching," in Mary Taylor Huber and Sherwyn P. Morreale, eds., *Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Exploring Common Ground*. Washington, D.C.

Report on workshops (WS) conducted by SLAIHEE in February and March 2011

Workshop (WS) on Effective Teaching and Learning through Constructive alignment ELTU, Faculty of Humanities, University of Kelaniya

The first of these WS was conducted in the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) of the University of Kelaniya on 18th February, from 9 to 1 pm, to 12 permanent and temporary academic staff of the ELTU. The meeting and the WS was organized by Hasitha Pathirana who undertook to advertise and recruit academic staff from the ELTU for the WS. A comprehensive handout encompassing all the presentations was prepared for distribution to the participants.

The event started off with a presentation by the President of SLAIHEE to talk about the

association. She spoke about the vision and mission of SLAIHEE, its aims and values. She gave prominence to conducting workshops and courses for professional development of university staff as the hallmark of all SLAIHEE activities. The participants were encouraged to join the membership of SLAIHEE and also participate in the 7th joint SDC-SLAIHEE conference scheduled on 13th May 2011 in the University of Colombo by sending in research abstracts and attending the conference. The WS commenced next. The outcomes of the WS were highlighted where the participants will describe the

principles of constructive alignment, apply constructive alignment in teaching and learning and formulate objectives and identify teaching learning methods and

assessments to constructively align teaching and learning.

The plenaries and activities done in the WS were:

Plenary - Levels of thinking about teaching; Constructive alignment and its components

Plenary/interactive session on Curriculum - general and specific objectives /Blooms taxonomy.....

Group activity - Participants will develop general and specific objectives for a teaching activity of their choice

Plenary/interactive session - Teaching Learning methods

Group activity - participants will design a lesson plan for a teaching activity of their choice.

Tea

Plenary / interactive session on Assessments – Variety, reporting results, blue print, myths

Group activity - Participants will design relevant assessments for the teaching activity

Plenary /interactive session - Climate we create for interaction with students, role modeling, mentoring, discipline

Group activity – participants in their subject groups will prepare the curriculum objectives, T/L methods and assessments to constructively align all components.

Debriefing – Each groups constructively aligned components were presented and discussed with the resource persons

Feedback & close of WS

The feedback obtained from the participants indicated that they found the WS very useful and they hoped to incorporate what they had learnt on constructive alignment in their day to day teaching and learning activities.

The resource persons were *Prasanna Ratnaweera, Nilukshi Abeysinghe, Enoka Corea, Hasitha Pathirana and Nelun de Silva.*



Reflections on the WS

The enthusiastic participation made up for the few number of participants, perhaps due to the long weekend. The longer time for participant activities was good. However a full day workshop would allow further time for active participation and for presenting the total outcome of constructive alignment of curriculum, teaching learning methods and assessment and allow more detailed feedback to the participants. Although membership forms were given to the participants, the

constitution does not allow temporary staff to become members.



Workshop (WS) on Scholarship of Teaching & Learning and Reflective Practice University of Wayamba

The second WS was conducted on 11th March 2011 from 9 am to 1 pm. Prof. Udith Jayasinghe, Director SDC, Wayamba University was responsible for advertising the WS among the academic staff, preparing the files containing the WS handouts and organizing the facilities at the WS venue. Probationary lecturers who have enrolled for the staff development course of Wayamba University were the main participants numbering 25.

The event started with an address by Prof. Udith Jayasinghe who welcomed everyone and explained the circumstances leading to the WS. Thereafter the President of SLAIHEE spoke about the association and the many activities undertaken by it, giving prominence to workshops conducted for professional development of university academic staff.

She also spoke about the vision and mission of SLAIHEE, its aims and values. The participants were encouraged to join the membership of SLAIHEE and also participate in the 7th joint SDC-SLAIHEE conference scheduled on 13th May 2011 in the University of Colombo by sending in research abstracts and attending the conference. The outcomes of the WS were highlighted next where the participants will be motivated to engage in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in addition to their discipline-based research for enhancement of the quality of higher education, understand the theory underpinning reflective practice and apply and engage in reflective practice as teachers in higher education for their continuing professional development.



The plenaries and activities of the WS were:

Plenary - Research in Higher Education; Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Group activity to generate research ideas and develop an action plan to formulate proposal, conduct research and develop as an abstract for the 2011 conference (tea to be served)

Plenary – What is reflective practice

Plenary- Active reflection

Plenary – Writing a reflective log.

Group activity - Participants will develop reflective logs and prepare for discussion

Debriefing – Participant groups were asked to present their reflective logs for discussion

Summing up, Feedback and close of WS

The resource persons were *Prasanna Ratnaweera, Nilukshi Abeysinghe, Enoka Corea* and *Hasitha Pathirana*.

Reflections on the WS

The arrangements made by the SDC Director of Wayamba University for the WS on SOTL and Reflective Practice at Wayamba University were excellent. The

enthusiasm of the WS participants was highlighted. The participants had requested more activities. Many participants had requested more examples during the presentations. It was discussed that the response and understanding of participants was very dependent on their professional backgrounds.

NOTICE

The Annual Conference and AGM of SLAIHEE will be held on Friday, 13th May 2011, at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, from 8.30 am onwards.