SoTL for Responsive Teaching:
Managing Issues and Challenges

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While many studies have acknowledged the positive impact of the scholarship of teaching and learning, also known as SoTL, issues and challenges in implementing SoTL at public universities, particularly in Malaysia, are not fully understood. Building on this gap, it is felt that there is a need to conduct a study on the SoTL grant recipients in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). This study chose the samples who could provide "rich and relevant information" to answer the research questions. The findings include issues related to (1) time constraints, (2) understanding SoTL concept, (3) SoTL inquiry, (4) student learning, (5) publication as an output, (6) difficulty in convincing others to change, (7) workload and (8) reflective practice. It is recommended that more trainings be given to SoTL recipients from various discipline areas, to ensure completion of the project and continuous mentoring be provided for them to ensure sustainability of SoTL. SoTL in UUM, it can be concluded, has empowered academicians in pursuing their academic endeavor.

INTRODUCTION

What Is SOTL

Boyer's *Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990) called for efforts to broaden the scope of scholarship to include discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Boyer, 1990). The integration of research and teaching is the key towards enhancing, developing, and informing the teaching practice both within and beyond an institution of higher education (Dobbins, 2008; Hutchings & Shulman, 1999). The above definition for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning known as SoTL was echoed by Darling (2003),

who viewed SoTL as tasks taken to encourage empirical examination of teaching in relation to student learning. Bernstein (2010) claimed that the true method of SoTL is to have every teacher treats every course as an opportunity to learn how to create better learning environments and generate richer educational experiences. He called upon the faculty to re-assert the inherent value of teaching as a mission of the university in which effective teaching should be rewarded and honoured because it is important, not because it resembled discovery research. Besides that, institutions might better improve the learning of our students by making the faculty's intellectual work in teaching visible for discussion and collaboration by inviting colleagues to discover new frontiers in educational practice or theory. Similarly, Gayle et al. (2013) used a variety of faculty development activities at campuses engaged in the Carnegie Campus Cluster programme to enhance the participation in SoTL where the main focus was on faculty learning of distinctive developmental stages that lead to both cognitive and affective transformation for the professors' and students' learning. The findings of Gayle et al.'s study indicated that it provided professors with advanced strategies for engaging students in their own learning. Additionally, it promoted reflection, awareness of common goals, and public dissemination of SoTL practices which should be the basis of on-going professional growth. Besides that, practice in discovery, co-creating, learning by doing, application of skills, training, developing muscle-memory, and engaging in activities beyond the classroom context.

Why Do SOTL

Based on a study by McNiff (2017), it is to connect instruction to scholarship, to learn about how others have approached teaching as a scholarly activity through the SoTL literature, and to become more reflective and intentional teachers as they embark on their careers. The advantage is it is more engaged and dedicated teaching. Besides that, it promotes reflecting on effective teaching, testing new approaches, and focusing on student learning. Moreover, it makes teaching more transparent. The impact of SoTL on teachers is the critical reflection on teaching where it is carried out to identify and test their teaching assumptions. The impact of SoTL among students is it familiarizes students with a branch of study of which they may have been unaware of. Besides that, it gives students a way to think about teaching as a scholarly act and become advocates for scholarly teaching. Moreover, it helps prepare students for the teaching in higher education. Additionally, students become more critically reflective and intentional teachers.

How Can SOTL Benefit Instructors

The role of university and higher education is changing and will continue to change in unexpected and unforeseen ways. Academicians need to realize that the role as teachers in higher education has shifted from being the providers of knowledge to the facilitators of students' learning. The fundamental processes of knowledge creation, preservation, integration, transmission, and application will continue to change. It is argued that the new focus of teaching and learning in higher education is on designing less traditional classroom teaching and relying more on students' learning experiences, processes, and environments. Huber (2006) claimed that "undertaking complex classroom research to enhance practice can be both epistemologically challenging and empowering" (as cited in Hubball and Clarke, 2009, p. 2). On the one hand, it is challenging as an academician must carry over arching responsibilities in teaching, research,

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