

Evidence-Based Inquiry in a Post-Pandemic World: Lessons Learned about Implementing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Initiatives

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Royal Roads
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL LANDS

Royal Roads University acknowledges that the campus is located on the traditional lands of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Lekwungen (Songhees) ancestors and families who have lived here for thousands of years.

This land has been part of the fabric of the life of Indigenous communities long before Hatley Castle was built, and it will be long into the future. It is with gratitude that we now learn and work here, where the past, present and future of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff come together.

Hay'sxw'qa si'em!

The Problem

In-class
Instruction



Emergency
Remote Teaching



???

Covid-19

How can we learn from the experiences of faculty who have adapted innovative teaching and learning strategies during Covid-19?

The Opportunity

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) SOTL can be defined as

“The process of intentional inquiry into one’s own learning, teaching and assessment practices with a view to enhancing those practices and improve the learning of our students.”

-- University of Edinburgh, 2020

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- Structured
- Systematic
- Rigorous
- Evidence-Based
- Publicly-Shared

Institutional Benefits of SOTL



Institutional Benefits of SOTL



The Question

How can universities begin to develop an infrastructure of support that enables faculty to engage, share, and learn from their SOTL-based inquiries?



Definition:

Institutional Supports for SOTL

Any form of formalized support that is offered at the departmental, institutional, provincial, or national level to encourage faculty members to systematically study, analyze, and report on their own teaching practice or study student learning in their own courses.

A Typology of Institutional Supports



Three Stages of Progression



Types of Support:

Institutional 'Leverage Points'

1. Leadership

- Individuals and groups that can exercise the right kind of influence and oversight to productively support the growth of SoTL work

2. Policy

- Protocols, principles, guidelines and academic regulations

3. Organizational Structure

- Organization of lines of authority, communication, service delivery, and academic management to align SoTL initiatives with the organization's mission and provide centralized support

Awareness Building Strategies



Leverage Points for Stage One: Developing Expertise



Leadership

- Leading by developing a critical mass of SOTL scholars
- Building awareness by holding SOTL conferences and symposia
- Sponsoring SOTL development workshops
- Inviting outside SOTL experts to present and share lessons learned
- Develop partnerships with other local and international universities

Policy

- Targeting institutional funds to support attendance at SOTL conferences and engaging in overseas university visits

Organizational Structure

- Linking new SoTL initiatives to existing faculty development priorities
- Enlisting the support of the teaching centres in providing funding for conference attendances, hosting events, inviting visiting scholars, etc.

How Do We Get Started?

Appendix A

A Typology of Institutional Supports for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

	Leadership	Policy and Planning	Organizational Structure
Developing Institutional Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making pedagogical literature available to faculty via library or circulated directly via email or in mailboxes (Weimer, 2006). • Developing pedagogical reading lists for new faculty (Weimer, 2006). • Implementing faculty-wide or campus-wide-reading groups on important topics related to learning and teaching (Weimer, 2006). • Placing teaching topics on meeting agendas to stimulate faculty engagement, sharing of perspectives and asking of important questions (Hamilton, 2008; Weimer, 2006). • Inviting experts to speak about SoTL topics on campus (McKinney, 2007). • Organizing a learning and teaching symposium that includes a focus on SoTL (McKinney, 2007). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an institutional definition of SoTL (Cambridge, 2004). • Conducting an audit of SoTL projects and support strategies already in place (McKinney, 2007). • Incorporating SoTL themes into institutional frameworks, mission statements, and strategic plans (McKinney, 2007; Glick, 2004). • Generating longitudinal data about SoTL practices and research to provide a baseline and to assess impact over time (McKinney et al., 2004). • Providing course release time to mentor other colleagues who are engaging in pedagogical inquiry (Weimer, 2006) • Develop SoTL awareness building sessions with tenure and promotion committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an institution-wide SoTL steering or implementation committee (Robinson, 2004). • Enlisting the help of the institutional teaching and learning centre in developing institutional priorities and expertise-building initiatives related to SoTL (Nelson & Kleinsaaser, 2004). • Developing a SoTL website with helpful information for prospective scholars (McKinney, 2007). • Linking new SoTL initiatives to existing faculty development priorities (Cicccone, 2004).

How Do We Get Started? (cont'd)

	Leadership	Policy and Planning	Organizational Structure
Developing Institutional Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading by example – having senior leaders know the pedagogical literature and be willing to ask questions about their own teaching (Weimer, 2006). • Developing department and faculty-wide norms that encourage participation in SoTL (Cox et al., 2004). • Promoting SoTL with new faculty as part of their institutional orientation (McKinney, 2007). • Conducting SoTL awareness-building sessions with departmental chairs and deans (McKinney, 2007). • Bringing national leaders to the institution to help with developing capacity-building strategies (Lieberman, 2004). • Engaging the campus community to help determine what is both unique and essential in the institution's learning and teaching identity (Hamilton, Marquez, & Aggar-Gupta, 2013a). 	<p>(McKinney, 2007; Ravaioli & Shaffmaster, 2004).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering SoTL expertise in selection and hiring committees (McKinney, 2007; Roen, 2004). • Including SoTL as a priority in the seeking of research funding (McKinney, 2007). • Offering faculty development funds for attendance at SoTL conferences, workshops, and institutes (McKinney, 2007). • Commissioning faculty to prepare white papers on pedagogical issues identified as important across the institution and then discussing these across the institution (Weimer, 2006). • Creating a positive institutional research agenda that actively inquires into learning and teaching issues that are important across the campus (Weimer, 2006) 	

Taking Further Steps: Getting to Stage 2 and 3

- Value and practice “teaching as intellectual work” (Hutchings et al. 2011)
- Develop a “localized” model of SOTL, not necessarily one that has been ported over from the US (Liu, Cai & Pang, 2018)
- Support inter-institutional collaborations (Hamilton 2014)
- Modify faculty reward and recognition structures to support SOTL-based inquiries (Hutchings et al. 2011)
- Provide more linkages between national policies and local opportunities to develop SOTL (Hamilton, 2021)
- Developing teaching development centers as an important support center (Nelson & Kleinsaaser, 2004)
- Get departmental chairs on board as agents of change (McKinney, 2007)

“[SOTL’S real power] comes from understanding how it values and practices seeing teaching as intellectual work, treating classrooms as sites for inquiry, and using what is learned to improve student learning.”

-- Hutchings, Huber & Ciccone (2011)



THANK YOU!

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