Academic Development Services

Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)

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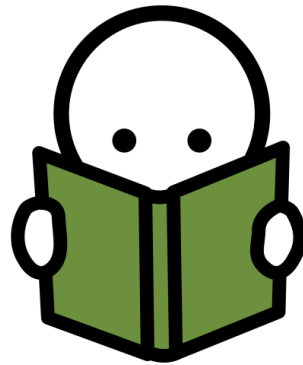
Academic Development and SOTL

Australasian Advancing Academic Development Event

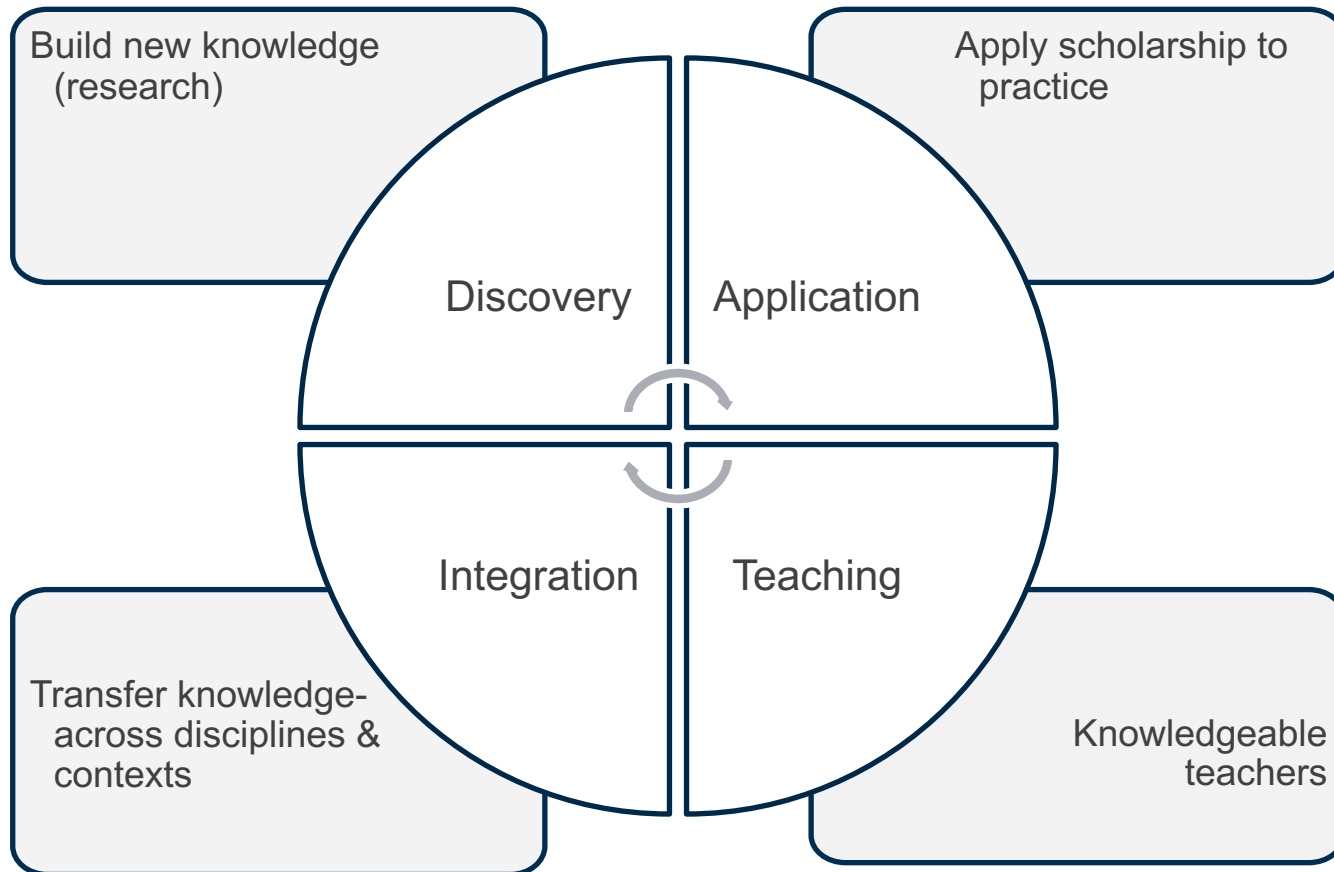**Bond University**

7th November, 2018

Why SOTL?

Extract

(Lister & Edwards, 2010 pp3-4)

What is SOTL?

Scholarship Of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)

Build new knowledge (research)

Apply scholarship to practice

Discovery

Application

Integration

Teaching

Transfer knowledge-across disciplines & contexts

Knowledgeable teachers

(After Boyer, 1990)

- **asking meaningful questions** about student learning, and about the teaching activities designed to facilitate student learning,

- answering those questions by making relevant student learning visible to gather evidence of thinking and learning, and then systematically analyzing this evidence, and

- sharing the results of that analysis publicly to invite peer review, and to contribute to broader bodies of knowledge on student learning , and

- aiming to improve student learning by strengthening the practice of teaching (one's own *and* others').

Asking clear, unambiguous and useful questions…

Is the language simple?

Can the question be shortened?

Is the question double-barrelled?

Is the question leading?

Is the question negative?

Is the respondent likely to have the necessary knowledge?

Will the words have the same meaning for everyone?

Is the question ambiguous?

Do you need direct or indirect questions?

Asking clear, unambiguous and useful questions…

Do you need a direct or an indirect question?

To answer the question "Have you murdered your partner?"

a. The casual approach: "Do you have happened to have murdered your partner?"

b. The numbered (card) approach: "Will you please read off the number of this card which corresponds with what became of your partner?"

c. The everybody approach: "As you know, many people have been killing their partners these days. Do you happen to have killed yours?"

d. The other people approach: "Do you know any people who have murdered their partners? Pause for reply and then ask "How about yourself?"

SOTL methods – Activity 1. Critique

In pairs

Critique the 9 sample questions (handout).

Critique
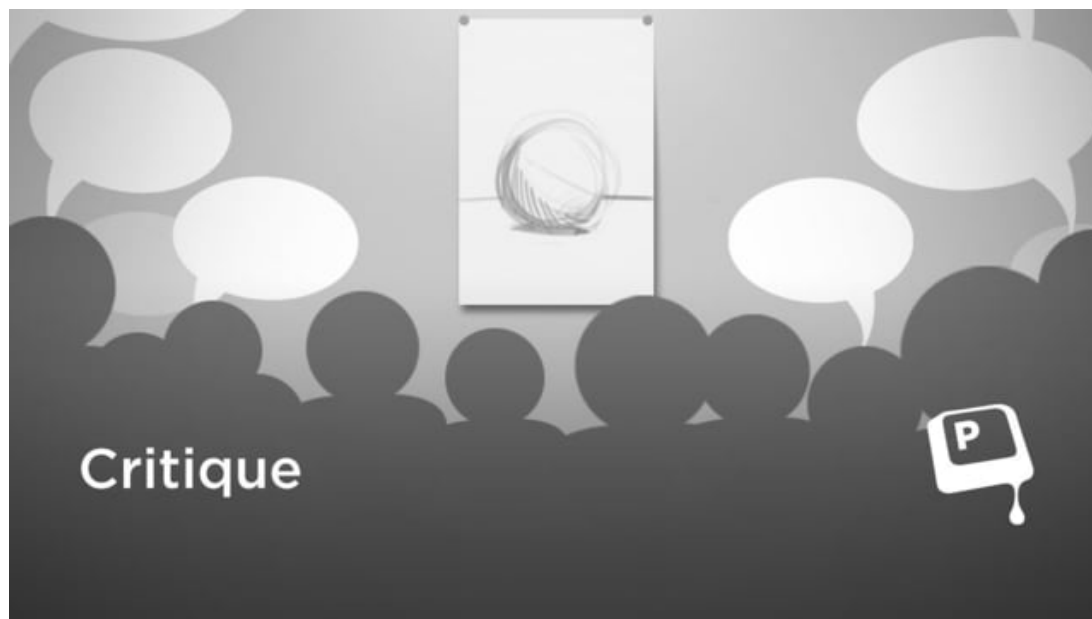
SOTL methods *or how do we ask the questions?*

Case studies

Focus groups

Survey

Student evaluations of teaching or courses

Interviews

Observations (participant observation)

Reflective narratives (e-portfolios, biographies, journals)

Reports

SOTL issues – *what do we want to ask questions about?*

SOTL issue	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

SOTL methods – Activity 2. Roll the dice

SOTL issue	SOTL method
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6

UNSW
SYDNEY

Key tips for Academic Developers

1 SOTL is about asking questions

2 Academic Developers need to model a scholarly approach

3 Scaffold our colleagues as they adopt scholarly thinking and a scholarly approach

References

Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

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TEQSA. (2014). *TEQSA Guidance Note: Scholarship of teaching and learning*.

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TEQSA Guidance Note: Scholarship of teaching and learning

Overview

Scholarship underpins a provider's capacity to deliver quality higher education, and encompasses enquiry into teaching and learning practices, and maintaining currency in the discipline area/s of the provider's course/s of study.

Specific Threshold Standards referencing scholarship are:

▸ Section 1.4 of the Higher Education Provider Category Standards: *The higher education provider's academic staff are **active in scholarship that informs their teaching,** and are active in research when engaged in research supervision.*

▸ Section 2.5 of the Australian University Category Standards: *The higher education provider demonstrates **sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.***

▸ Section 1.3 of the Provider Course Accreditation Standards: *The content of the course of study is drawn from a **substantial, coherent and current body of knowledge and scholarship** in one or more academic disciplines and includes the study of relevant theoretical frameworks and research findings.*

▸ Section 4.2 of the Provider Course Accreditation Standards: *The higher education provider ensures that staff who teach students in the course of study … have a sound understanding of **current scholarship** and/or professional practice in the discipline that they teach …*

▸ Section 4.3 of the Criteria for authorising self-accrediting authority: *The higher education provider demonstrates **sustained scholarship** in respect of the course(s) of study, which informs teaching and learning for the course(s) of study.*

The AQF Qualification levels are defined in terms of advanced knowledge and inquiry; academic freedom; broad skills and knowledge; depth; analytical capabilities; capacity to act independently; and integration of knowledge/disciplines – all integral components of scholarship.

This guidance note provides TEQSA's interpretation of the above Threshold Standards, and includes initiatives to support approaches to scholarship in the context of: institutional practices to develop, nurture and sustain scholarship; as well as scholarly teaching and activities by academic staff.

Points of Guidance

What is scholarship?

TEQSA recognises diversity and the need to support innovation in the higher education sector. Consequently, TEQSA acknowledges that scholarship is practiced differently and is different in nature and form across different providers. The importance of scholarship to effective teaching and learning is widely agreed and a range of strategies have been identified in the literature and

in evidence presented to TEQSA to develop, support and sustain scholarship both at an institutional level and at the individual staff level.

There are various aspects to scholarship, but at its core are the maintenance of knowledge of current developments in the discipline, and transmission of this knowledge through effective, contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.

According to Clement and Grant (in Robinson and Hougaz, 2013:16) scholarship contributes to "intellectual curiosity, rigorous argument, judicious use of evidence, a depth of understanding gained through serious engagement with the work of others...." – for academics and students alike.

The Boyer Model of Scholarship (Boyer, E., 1990) provides a framework for institutions to consider scholarship using four discrete but interdependent themes or elements: discovery, integration, application and teaching.

▸ **discovery** – building new knowledge through traditional research to contribute to the stock of human knowledge and also to the intellectual climate of a higher education institution

▸ **integration** – interpreting the use of knowledge across disciplines; connecting research so that it is useful beyond discipline boundaries and can be integrated into a larger body of knowledge

▸ **application** – using knowledge to aid individuals, society and the professions in solving problems; connecting scholarship with practice

▸ **teaching** – a central element of scholarship involving well-informed and knowledgeable teachers; teaching that promotes active and critical learning in students; and recognition that teachers are also learners (Boyer, 1990:24).

Rice (in Robinson and Hougaz, 2013:16) expanded Boyer's framework by incorporating the additional perspective of *learning*:

▸ **learning** – the impact of teaching on the student's learning experience and scholarly enquiry into how students make meaning from what the teacher says and does.

These definitions illustrate the importance of knowledge being distilled and integrated into teaching – both in terms of curriculum content and of teaching practices/processes.

Scholarship in practice

The Threshold Standards require providers to be able demonstrate scholarship in relation to both institutional practices and processes and the systemic implementation of those practices and processes. In assessing the standards relevant to scholarship, TEQSA would expect that each higher education provider develops an approach to scholarship that involves all its academic staff, and is specific to its institutional mission, the learning needs of its students and its staffing and discipline profile. Objectives and targets to support the development and embedding of scholarship should be clearly defined within an academic or teaching and learning plan or similar document. Resources to support the approach should be identified and demonstrably deployed with progress against the objectives regularly monitored through academic governance committees, normally through the Academic Board or similar body, as evidence of implementation.

Institutional practices and processes to support scholarship

TEQSA interprets section 2.5 of the Australian University Category Standards and sections 1.3 and 4.2 of the Provider Course Accreditation Standards as requiring that institutional practices and processes – dependent upon the range of higher education courses delivered – are in place to support **scholarship across the institution and its discipline areas**.

The literature identifies, and providers have demonstrated through evidence submitted to TEQSA, a range of such practices and processes. These include:

Establishing policies and procedures that

▸ embed activities to support scholarly teaching and scholarly activity within staff workplans, with **systematic review and evaluation of progress** against measures

▸ embed scholarship within **academic promotion policy** with clear measures of achievement to support scholarly teaching and learning activities

▸ ensure appropriate **academic leadership** at the discipline level, including of teaching and learning (see guidance note on Academic Leadership)

▸ ensure a **core of appropriately qualified staff at the discipline level** to provide continuity, experience and critique

▸ establish advisory committees with **external and internal discipline expertise** to provide leadership in curriculum review and development

▸ involve academic staff in **evidence-based processes** for planning, developing, monitoring, reviewing and improving higher education courses

▸ **encourage research** publications in refereed journals, book chapters, conference papers, and contributions to other materials etc

▸ **benchmark approaches** to scholarship with other providers.

Devoting financial and other resources to support scholarship activities for teaching/academic staff (including those employed on a casual basis), like

▸ sourcing guest speakers for staff conferences/workshops/information sessions

▸ facilitating professional development opportunities such as higher level qualifications/graduate certificates or similar in higher education; secondments, conference attendance, research seminars, or workshop srelating to teaching and learning or the relevant discipline area, or community engagement activities

▸ assisting with grant applications

▸ awards recognising good teaching and learning practice

▸ conducting workshops for staff on topics such as: introduction to scholarship; curriculum design; assessment; development of marking rubrics; learning theories and teaching strategies

▸ facilitating electronic research discussion groups/email groups such as Yammer and LISTSERV

▸ promoting the establishment of communities of practice across the institution

▸ actively linking research and teaching through: learning about and from other's research; learning to do research (research methods); learning in research mode (enquiry-based); and pedagogic research (enquiring and reflecting on learning).

Sufficient financial resources will need to be allocated to ensure the effective implementation of activities.

Supporting scholarly teaching

Scholarship is manifest in scholarly teaching, which lies at the core of higher education, encompassing both aspects of scholarship - the maintenance of knowledge of current developments in the discipline, and transmission of this knowledge. At an individual level, demonstrating scholarly teaching includes:

▸ being familiar with **the latest ideas, debates and issues** relating to the subject being taught, for example by reading relevant journals and publications on a regular basis and using this knowledge to shape teaching practice

▸ being informed by **current ideas for teaching the subject/discipline, such as improved pedagogies, learning processes, curricula, academic policies and learning materials**

▸ **evaluating and reflecting on teaching practice and student learning** (for example through peer assessment of teaching; reflecting on student feedback and actively engaging with students about learning outcomes) in order to challenge assumptions and consider alternative and/or different perspectives on teaching practices

▸ stimulating students and **fostering their learning in a variety of ways**, **to engage with current ideas** in the discipline area

▸ exploring, testing, practising and communicating understanding of who the learners are, how they learn and what practices are most effective in the **context of the discipline** (pedagogical content knowledge).

Some institutions require staff to maintain an academic portfolio or similar record to capture scholarly teaching activities and provide evidence for summative purposes, such as when applying for a teaching award or academic promotion.

Supporting scholarly activity

TEQSA does not expect to see every category of scholarly activity demonstrated within each provider; rather that providers should support all academic staff to undertake scholarly activities that are appropriate for their own professional growth and for the mission of the institution. At an individual level, scholarly activities include:

▸ **professional practice** such as: membership of discipline journal editorial boards and/or professional societies/associations; consultancy work; involvement in academic societies, peer review processes and/or communities of practice; presentation of conference papers; chairing forums at relevant conferences

▸ conducting **original research** in the relevant discipline/s or in teaching and learning practice

▸ involvement in **curriculum development and review** processes

▸ conducting/presenting **staff professional development workshops** to support the advancement of knowledge and disseminate new practice-based and theoretical knowledge to colleagues and others

▸ engaging with **external communities** such as through the provision of academic services

▸ undertaking **secondments that facilitate scholarship** such as academic management/ leadership positions

> undertaking **higher level qualifications**.

The degree to which scholarly activity is undertaken will be influenced by the level/position of the academic staff member. It is common to make the results of scholarly activity public and open to critical and peer review.

Things to consider

There is a range of issues in developing institutional practices and processes to support scholarship that are relevant for providers to consider. These include:

- Is scholarship, as it applies to the provider, clearly understood and defined through articulated objectives or measures in a teaching and learning plan or similar document? Is progress against these objectives regularly monitored and reported through academic governance committees?

- Is there academic leadership at the discipline level, and is it vested appropriately to foster scholarship at the discipline level?

- Is the development of scholarship based on activities within and supported by the provider?

- Are staff, including casual staff, adequately supported to undertake professional development and scholarly activities such as professional practice?

- Is scholarly teaching supported though peer and critical review or other mechanisms?

- Are scholarly activities and scholarly teaching formally recognised and rewarded? Is there a balanced value given to research, service and quality teaching?

- Are academic staff involved in curriculum development and review activities in their discipline area/s?

- Wherever possible, are staff able to experience teaching across the curriculum to gain a breadth of knowledge and experience in the discipline and associated pedagogy?

- Are staff formally encouraged to capture scholarly teaching activities and provide evidence for summative purposes, for example, through maintaining an academic portfolio?

Resources

The **Office for Learning and Teaching's Resource Library** contains a collection of higher education learning and teaching materials flowing from projects funded by the Commonwealth of Australia, including those from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. See <http://www.olt.gov.au/resources/good-practice>.

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK has funded a large number of projects and subject centres to work with and provide support and resources for their discipline areas. See their resources page at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources>.

The **International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning** (ISSOTL) has resources about the scholarship of teaching and learning. See <http://www.issotl.com/sotl-resources-2/>.

TAFE NSW: *Scholarship and its application: 2 views from Higher Education*. Presentation by Professor Shirley Alexander to TEQSA Provider Briefing, October 2013, at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/ScholarshipAndItsApplicationInPractice.pdf>.

THINK Education Group: Presentation by Linda Brown on THINK's Scholarship Framework to TEQSA Provider Briefing, October 2013, at
<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Think%20Education%20Group%20Scholarship%20Oct%202013.pdf>.

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TEQSA Contact

For further information about or discussion of *scholarship* please contact your case manager in the first instance.

Critic these example questions

NB. These questions are not linked. They are not intended to represent a complete survey.

1. **How old are you?**

   Under 20
   18-21
   21-33
   33-50
   50-65
   65 and over

2. **How much do you earn?**

3. **How much do you drink per day?**

   Less than 1 unit
   5-10 units
   More than 10 units

4. **Have you committed a crime in the last 12 months?**

   Yes
   No

5. **Do you spend a lot of time watching television?**

   Yes
   No

6. **Do you feel influenced by your peer group?**

   Yes
   No

7. **Do you find your job satisfying?**

   Yes
   No

8. **'Everybody knows that equality for women is unnatural nonsense.'**

   Agree
   Disagree

9. **Nuclear weapons should be scraped.**

   Very strongly agree
   Strongly agree
   Agree
   Disagree

Suggested Answers

Question 1.

a. Categories are not even (3 years between 18-21 and 12 years between 21-33). Categories need to reflect what we are trying to find out.

b. Categories overlap. A person could be in two categories (e.g 21 year olds).

Question 2.

a. This is a sensitive issue – people don't like to say how much they earn. Better to provide a categories that offer a range such as $50000 - $60000; $60001 - $70000.

b. It is also ambiguous. Are we asking for hourly, weekly, monthly, yearly income; before or after tax income; or, income derived from all employment or primary employment

Question 3.

a. Categories are too restrictive. What about people who do not drink?

b. Use of technical term. Not everyone will know what a unit means.

Question 4.

a. Ambiguity. What is meant by the term 'crime'?

b. Not everyone would answer this question. Would need to use a series of questions or even another means by which to get an answer to this question.

Question 5.

a. Vague – 'a lot' needs to be defined. Better to use category choices.

Question 6.

a. Specialised term. Respondents may not know what 'peer group' means.

b. Ambiguity. Respondents may not agree upon the meaning of 'influence'.

Question 7.

a. Categories are too restrictive. What about respondents who *sometimes* find their work satisfying.

b. Presumption. Implies that all respondents will have a job.

Question 8.

a. Bias. Uses emotive ('unnatural nonsense') and suggestive ('everybody knows') language that implies the writer is correct which could influence some respondents.

Question 9.

a. Leading question. The extra agrees implies that agreement is the right answer.

b. Unhelpful distinction. In the analysis of this data there is little to nothing gained from asking 'very strongly' and 'strongly'.

c. Mis-spelling of "scrapped". It is definitely not advisable to consider "scaping" a nuclear warhead!

d. Bias. Even if the spelling had been correct the term 'scrap' implies 'rubbish' which may influence some respondents to agree with the proposition.