

Chapter 9

SoTL Trends in Japanese Academia: Insights From Teikyo University

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, two scholars, Takashi Yasuoka and Fumiko Inoue, detail their journey in introducing and promoting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at Teikyo University, Japan. Teikyo University is a private institution that has been focusing on SoTL since 2005 under the leadership of the president. In 2017, the university started the SoTL project operated by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The authors have promoted CTL's SoTL project as directors. At CTL, they implemented a SoTL program for faculty members and recognized that the program participants were transformed into researchers in the field of class improvement and development. The SoTL was effective in further improving the quality of education at the university. The authors also found a lack of community discussion about education, mainly due to a cultural background long rooted in Japan, and suggested that working on SoTL is a shortcut to stimulating discussions on education at Japanese universities

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the university's journey in introducing and promoting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at Teikyo University, Japan. We elaborate on the policies and efforts undertaken to foster SoTL, while also providing insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives both within and beyond Teikyo University. Throughout the chapter, we offer comprehensive guidelines derived from various activities, such as roundtable conferences and engagement with diverse practitioners of SoTL in Japan. We share our insights on the benefits of SoTL practices, highlighting their importance in training researchers to enhance class improvement and development, and their impact on becoming

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effective researchers in a classroom setting. Additionally, we identify and analyze barriers to promoting SoTL and suggest forward-thinking strategies for advancing SoTL within the Japanese context.

Who we are as SoTL Practitioners in Japan

Takashi Yasuoka

After graduating from Tokai University, I worked at the School of Science, Tokai University, until March 2008 and at the Institute for Teaching and Learning, Ritsumeikan University, from April 2008 to March 2018. Presently, I am a professor at Teikyo University, and I am promoting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) as a director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

My specialty is chemistry. As a student nearly 60 years ago, I experienced numerous chemistry classes that were very interesting and many that were not. At that time, I thought that university faculty members needed to be trained in how to speak because it was challenging for me to stay engaged in the classes of teachers who could have been more effective speakers. My position changed, and I became a university faculty member myself. Then, around 1983, I came across class evaluations by students that could help my colleagues and me improve our teaching skills, especially in effective speaking. Therefore, I made a serious effort to spread the concept of class evaluation of teaching at Tokai University, which was carried out systematically throughout the university. I am proud that this initiative also contributed to the further introduction of the class evaluation system in other Japanese universities. Meanwhile, in the year 2000, I compared the research achievements (number of published papers) of each faculty member at Tokai University with the results of class evaluations of teaching by students. The research achievements were divided into papers related to class improvement and other papers (Of course, there are far fewer papers on class improvement). As a result, I found that faculty members with a higher number of papers on class improvement tended to receive higher evaluation scores from students. Thus, I clearly recognized the importance of the research on class improvement and development.

In 2018, when I was appointed as a visiting professor at the Teikyo University CTL, I discovered the SoTL project being conducted by the CTL. Therefore, I joined the SoTL project immediately and have been actively promoting it by recruiting participants, hosting workshops, mentoring faculty members selected for the SoTL program, and so on. When Dr. Inoue, my co-author, retired in March 2023, I became a full-time faculty member and the director of the CTL.

Dr. Fumiko Inoue

As a specialist in higher education, I have expertise and experience in teaching and learning.

I hold a doctorate in education from Eastern Asia University in Thailand and a master's degree in school education from Yamaguchi University in Japan. My research interests include educational development and student involvement in universities.

I am currently an auditor at the Japan Association for Educational Development in Higher Education (JAED), vice-chair of the Research Skills Development Committee of the Japan Association for College and University Education (JACUE), and a board member of the Japan Society of Educational Information. I am a member of the Japanese Association of Higher Education Research and the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL). I served as the director of the Center

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