

Chapter 18

Embracing SoTL in Malaysia: Redefining My Role From Traditional Researcher to Reflective Educator

Hadijah Jaffri

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8620-6445>

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the author's own experience as a SoTL practitioner which begins with description of the educational background which came from a part of a culture that emphasized traditional research and publications, with teaching viewed as knowledge transmission. As a student the notion of the teacher as an expert was reinforced which leading to initially focus on knowledge transmission as a university lecturer. Through SoTL, the author realized the importance of examining one's teaching practices and identifying areas for improvement and this shift made the author to become a more intentional and reflective educator. While the author still navigates the challenges of integrating SoTL into a culture that prioritizes disciplinary research, it is believe that sharing her SoTL journey can contribute to the dialogue of SoTL practice in our Asian regions.

INTRODUCTION

When I began my academic career as a university lecturer in educational psychology, I was immersed in a culture that prioritized traditional research and publications within my discipline. Conversations with colleagues often centered around specific research areas, and teaching was primarily viewed as a means of knowledge transmission. Even though I attended numerous professional development trainings relating to teaching which were primarily conducted by the institution where I work, but my perspective on the importance and possibility of research on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) which emphasises on research on teaching shifted dramatically in 2013 when I was introduced to SoTL during a professional development training. Shulman's (1987) concept of teaching as inquiry of three domains: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of students, challenged my existing assump-

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-3727-1.ch018

tions. I realized that teaching was not merely about transmitting knowledge but also about reflecting on and improving my practice.

I should challenge my belief from my experiences as a student which reinforced the notion of the teacher as an expert and knowledge provider. I had observed that many of my university lecturers focused primarily on research within their specific fields, often relying heavily on lectures to deliver content. This perspective, coupled with my initial understanding of teaching as knowledge transmission, led me to believe that my primary role as a university lecturer was to transmit knowledge rather than engage in research about my teaching. Through my exploration of SoTL, I came to understand that a more reflective and inquiry-based approach was essential. By examining my teaching practices, I could identify areas for improvement and develop more effective strategies. This shift in perspective has allowed me to become a more intentional and reflective educator, committed to enhancing student learning and contributing to the field of SoTL. However, I admit that I am still struggling to immerse myself in the practice of SoTL because the culture that focusing on research of one's own specific discipline could always divert myself from looking into my teaching practice due to limited resources and time constraints. I believe that my struggle is not unique among SoTL practitioners, but I hope that my sharing in this chapter about my SoTL journey would contribute to the dialogue of SoTL practice among our Asian regions.

MY JOURNEY TO SHAPE MY IDENTITY AS A SOTL PRACTITIONER

My journey as a SoTL practitioner is inextricably linked to my evolving understanding of my role as a university lecturer. In this section, I will explore how my personal experiences as a student, combined with my professional growth, have shaped my teaching philosophy and led me to embrace SoTL as a transformative framework for enhancing student learning and my own pedagogical practices.

As a university lecturer, I believe that my teaching practice is influenced by how I was previously taught and how I learned as a student. From primary school through to my tertiary education, I was immersed in a traditional teaching culture that heavily emphasized rote learning and exam oriented. This was considered the norm, with lecturers delivering lectures and students passively absorbing information. Independent learning primarily consisted of reading textbooks without much additional guidance which depended on student's own effort and motivation. Class discussions were infrequent, and I adapted to this style of teaching without significant difficulty.

My own undergraduate experience was primarily teacher-centered, with lectures as the primary method of instruction even though there were assignments that demand independent and self-regulated learning. I initially accepted the traditional approach of lecture-based instruction as a culture of teaching and learning highly theoretical courses like abnormal psychology, personality psychology and such. I believed that while lectures can be useful for introducing complex, theory-heavy concepts, they alone may not be sufficient to foster deep understanding, practical application and personal insight. To supplement those lectures, I delved into the works of renowned psychologists, seeking their original theoretical propositions. By reading their original works, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of their theoretical frameworks and discover real-world examples that illustrated their applications. For instance, reading *Walden Two* (Skinner, 1948) helped me grasp the practical implications of operant conditioning in a real-life setting.

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/embracing-sotl-in-malaysia/365229

Related Content

Incorporating Physics Principles in General Biology to Promote Integrative Learning and Thinking

Tennille D. Presley, Noelle A. Harp, Latrise S. Holt, Destini Samueland Jill JoAnn Harp (2021). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-19).

www.irma-international.org/article/incorporating-physics-principles-in-general-biology-to-promote-integrative-learning-and-thinking/278401

Examining the Benefits of Teaching Active Study Strategies as a Part of Classroom Instruction

Melissa McConnell Rogers (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 41-55).

www.irma-international.org/article/examining-the-benefits-of-teaching-active-study-strategies-as-a-part-of-classroom-instruction/260948

Best Practices and Strategies for Outsourcing Coaching Services and for Designing and Developing an Internal Coaching Department

(2019). *Coaching for Student Retention and Success at the Postsecondary Level: Emerging Research and Opportunities* (pp. 108-132).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/best-practices-and-strategies-for-outsourcing-coaching-services-and-for-designing-and-developing-an-internal-coaching-department/207104

Pedagogical Innovation in Higher Education: Defining What We Mean

Jae Major, Sandi Lynne Tait-McCutcheon, Robin Averill, Amanda Gilbert, Bernadette Knewstubb, Anita Mortlockand Liz Jones (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-18).

www.irma-international.org/article/pedagogical-innovation-in-higher-education/265504

Ethical Communication and Argument-Centered Education Can Enhance Transnational Education and Promote a More Ethical and Civil World

Rahman Kevin Smith (2023). *Handbook of Research on Developments and Future Trends in Transnational Higher Education* (pp. 66-91).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/ethical-communication-and-argument-centered-education-can-enhance-transnational-education-and-promote-a-more-ethical-and-civil-world/316905