

DEFINITIONS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (SoTL)

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Boyer (1990) does not define SoTL per se but, rather, discusses characteristics or aspects of the scholarship of teaching. For example, he writes “**As a *scholarly* enterprise, teaching begins with what the teacher knows... Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined, and relate directly to the subject taught.**” Many, today, would refer to this conception of the scholarship of teaching as scholarly teaching.

At Illinois State University, we have agreed (1998) to conceptualize SoTL as “**systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public.**”

In 1999, Hutchings and Shulman argued, “**A scholarship of teaching is *not* synonymous with excellent teaching. It requires a kind of “going meta,” in which faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning—the conditions under which it occurs, what it looks like, how to deepen it, and so forth—and do so with an eye not only to improving their own classroom but to advancing practice beyond it.**” And, “**The scholarship or teaching is integrating the experience of teaching with the scholarship of research. It is the ongoing and cumulative intellectual inquiry, through systematic observations and ongoing investigations by faculty, into the nature of learning and the impact of teaching on it.**”

Martin, Benjamin, Prosser, and Trigwell (1999) argue that the scholarship of teaching is three related activities: **engagement with the existing knowledge on teaching and learning, self-reflection on teaching and learning in ones discipline, and public sharing of ideas about teaching and learning within the discipline.**

Kreber and Cranton (2000) view SoTL as “**ongoing learning about teaching and the demonstration of such knowledge.**”

In his 2000 paper, Healey states, “**The scholarship of teaching shares these characteristics of excellent and scholarly teaching, but, in addition, involves communicating and disseminating about the teaching and learning practices of one’s subject. It also entails investigating questions related to how students learn within a discipline.**”

In work at the Carnegie Foundation and the American Association of Higher Education, the following definition has been used: “**problem posing about an issue of teaching or learning, study of the problem through methods appropriate to the disciplinary epistemologies, applications of results to practice, communication of results, self-reflection, and peer review**” (Cambridge, 2001). And, from the Carnegie web page, “**The scholarship of teaching and learning is rigorous and thoughtful investigation of student learning, with the results made available for public review and use beyond**

a local setting. It is first and foremost a commitment to the improvement of student learning, made possible through individual and collective knowledge-building.

While Richlin (2001) argues, **“The scholarship part of the process involves composing selected portions of the investigation and findings [or integration or reflection] into a manuscript to be submitted to an appropriate journal or conference venue.”**

Darling (2003) states that SoTL is **“work that encourages an empirical examination of teaching in relation to student learning. It is distinct from scholarly teaching in that it goes beyond teaching well, even superbly, to participating in a focused inquiry process and reflective practice about one’s own teaching.”**

And a view related to many above is **“The scholarship of teaching and learning goes beyond scholarly teaching and involves systematic study of teaching and/or learning and the public sharing and review of such work through presentations, performance, or publications”** (McKinney, 2004).

The following definition of SoTL is from the Buffalo State College Supplemental Policy on Scholarship section of the Directory of Policy Statements (DOPS). This policy was proposed by the Instructional and Research Committee of the College Senate and accepted by the President of the college on February 27, 2003. **“The scholarship of teaching involves integrating the experience of teaching with the scholarship of research and producing a scholarly product out of those integrative activities. It is the ongoing and cumulative intellectual inquiry, through systematic observation and longitudinal investigation by faculty, into the impact of teaching on learning.”**

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