

# What is Scholarship? Faculty Knowledge and Perceptions of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

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*The purpose of this study was to determine faculty members' knowledge and perceptions of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at the University of Florida. Faculty with appointments in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Emerging Pathogens, Genetics, and Water multidisciplinary institutes served as the population for this study. The objectives of the study were to describe characteristics of faculty in regard to teaching, determine knowledge of the definition of the SoTL, describe faculty involvement in the SoTL, and determine faculty members' perceptions about the value of and attitudes toward the SoTL. Nearly one-third of respondents were not familiar with the SoTL. More than 80% indicated that they had never, on their own or through collaboration, completed research about the SoTL. Almost 60% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that SoTL is a valid form of scholarship, yet less than one-third of respondents felt that conducting research in the SoTL would be useful to their tenure and promotion dossier. In general, most faculty were neutral or positive in regards to the SoTL with almost two-thirds indicating they would like to learn more about the topic.*

## **Introduction/Conceptual Framework**

In many classrooms across the nation, teaching occurs behind closed doors. The act and products of teaching have remained a sole endeavor among the students and the instructor. Unlike traditional forms of scholarship, teaching as a scholarly pursuit is rarely based upon an intellectual inquiry, subject to peer review, and made available to a broader public. Thus, many universities across the nation have been reluctant to accept teaching as a valid form of scholarship (Shulman, 1993). Since the introduction of the concept of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) more than 15 years ago, the notion of teaching as a scholarly endeavor equal to more traditional forms of scholarship has been the topic of much debate (Witman & Richlin, 2007). The basic concepts surrounding the SoTL were originally proposed by Boyer and have been further refined through many research articles and books over the past ten years (Kreber, 2005).

The move toward documenting the SoTL has been driven by market demands and public concern over the quality of teaching in the classrooms and laboratories of American universities (Kreber, 2007). As such, much attention has been paid to the SoTL, and slowly faculty across disciplines are beginning to recognize its value (Witman & Richlin, 2007). Often, the SoTL means different things to different faculty members. When Boyer proposed the original concepts surrounding the SoTL he did not provide a definition, rather a set of characteristics that served as an outline for conducting the SoTL work (Defining SoTL Hand-out, 2008). The literature has indicated several working definitions of the SoTL, in addition to some disagreement in the SoTL communities of practice, regarding one single definition. In describing the SoTL, Boyer (1990) stated that “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” (Defining SoTL

Hand-out, para. 1). While this description describes scholarly teaching, it does not serve as the basis upon which most other definitions are regarded (Defining SoTL Hand-out). According to Lee Shulman (1999), a teaching act is scholarly when it is made available to the academic public, when it is critically reviewed and evaluated by an academic or teaching discipline, and when said discipline utilizes or develops new work as a result of it. Several variations of this definition exist today; however most center around notions of public availability, peer review, and contribution. For the purpose of this study the researchers adopted the definition used at Illinois State University (ISU) in Normal, Illinois and will define the SoTL as *the systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public* (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, n.d.).

The process described by Shulman (1999) is quite common when referring to one's research activity and findings; however, teaching has often been considered a much more private enterprise (Herteis, 2006). As a more consumer-driven, business-model of education emerges, higher education faces increasing pressure from stakeholders regarding program quality. Not only is the value of the curriculum taught being questioned but teaching quality is coming under increasing scrutiny as well. As a result of a more consumer-driven, high stakes notion of American education, "the scholarship of teaching and learning is an imperative for higher education today, not a choice" (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. 13). Disciplines attempt to adopt SoTL practices in different ways. Many faculty members do not engage in the SoTL because of "the absence of support and reward for doing so" (Witman & Richlin, 2007, p.4). While some disciplines have embraced efforts in the SoTL more than others, in general, there is still room for improvement. Ultimately, the reward for conducting work in the SoTL will come from the respective researcher's discipline; therefore it is important for studies in and about the SoTL to be conducted across disciplines (Witman & Richlin, 2007). By conducting the SoTL work, a researcher is able to "explore how to create the vital connection between themselves and the 'subject,' themselves and the students, and students and the 'subject'" (Kreber, 2007, p. 3).

Much of the current work being conducted on the SoTL has focused primarily in regard to the status of the SoTL movement itself. Witman and Richlin (2007), in an assessment of the status of the SoTL across different disciplines, found that they first had to address the differences between *scholarly teaching* and the *scholarship of teaching and learning*. They noted that, while scholarly teaching and the SoTL shared similar elements, they differed in goals and in their final output (Witman & Richlin). The SoTL aims to "result in a formal, peer-reviewed communication in an appropriate medium, or venue, which then becomes part of the knowledge base" (Witman & Richlin, p.2). In contrast, scholarly teaching aims to impact teaching and learning in a classroom in the immediate sense (Witman & Richlin). Much variation between the disciplines studied was found both in how the SoTL is interpreted as well as how it is valued. Among the professions, and more specifically within higher education, it has been posited that the SoTL is slowly becoming more widespread. Yet, for many years the professions have focused on providing teaching tips to faculty members rather than rewarding scholarly work in the areas of teaching and learning (Witman & Richlin, 2007).

Kreber (2005) suggested several goals or focus areas be considered and applied to the SoTL. In particular SoTL work should be focused on defining the SoTL and those "whom we see as practicing the scholarship of teaching" (Kreber, 2005, p. 402). Also, it has been suggested that practitioners broaden their focus and look at larger issues facing curriculum and the overall college mission rather than focusing simply on how students learn (Kreber). Traditionally, colleges of agriculture have prided themselves in being student-centered and often home to the best teachers on campus. As a result, one would expect to find a high level of awareness of the SoTL and an equally high level of participation in the SoTL research. Unfortunately, data to support these claims do not exist, nor does an abundance of research exist on how faculty perceive the SoTL and/or conduct work in the scholarship of teaching and learning, either within colleges of agriculture or university-wide. In order to increase programming in the SoTL, to make the results of teaching more public as opposed to an isolated

event behind a closed classroom door, and to create a sense of value for the SoTL as equal to scholarship in research, more research is needed regarding what faculty know about the SoTL, how they conduct work in the SoTL, and how they value the SoTL in specific colleges.

### **Purpose/Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to determine faculty members' knowledge and perceptions of the SoTL. The following objectives guided the stated purpose:

1. Describe faculty members' rank and levels of experience at the University of Florida.
2. Determine faculty members' knowledge of the definition of the SoTL.
3. Describe faculty members' involvement in the SoTL work.
4. Determine faculty members' perceptions regarding the value of and their attitudes toward the SoTL.

### **Methods/Procedures**

This applied, mixed-method, survey research was conducted in an entirely electronic format. Notices were sent via electronic mail to faculty in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Emerging Pathogens, Genetics, and Water multidisciplinary institutes. The survey instrument was developed for use with the online service SurveyMonkey™. Email-based surveys present unique challenges for some groups. According to Dillman (2007):

Certain populations, such as university professors, federal government employees, workers in many companies and corporations, and members of some professional organizations, generally have Internet addresses and access. For these populations, e-mail and Web surveys may have only minor coverage problems. (p. 356).

Despite their access to internet, a recent study of faculty members showed an average response rate for email surveys of 32% compared to 47% for postal-delivered surveys (Shannon & Bradshaw, 2002). Despite this lower rate, the researchers chose to deliver the survey

electronically using multiple contacts due to budgetary and time constraints.

After receiving approval for exempt status from the University of Florida IRB, participants received a pre-notice email message informing them that they will soon be asked to complete a questionnaire (Dillman, 2007). Following the pre-notice email, participants received an email message containing a cover letter explaining the study with a link directing them to the SurveyMonkey™ website for the instrument. According to Dillman, the email containing the actual link to complete the survey should follow about two to three days later. In total, participants were contacted four times. Studies have shown that when email surveys are used, a four-contact strategy produces response rates similar to surveys conducted using the postal-delivered format (Dillman).

A group of 855 faculty in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Emerging Pathogens, Genetics, and Water multidisciplinary institutes served as the final population of this study. Lists containing faculty names and emails were obtained for each group. A census of the accessible population resulted in 287 questionnaires returned. A total of 90 recipients declined to participate in the study, and an additional 12 were not reached due to invalid email addresses. This resulted in a final response rate of 38.1%. It should be noted that due to missing data, tables presented in the findings of this study will report differing n's based on the number of faculty who responded to each item. Due to the nature of this study, results should not be generalized beyond the population studied.

To control for non-response error, early and late responders were compared in regard to two select demographic variables. These comparisons were made on the assumption that those participants that respond later, often after additional requests for participation, are more like non-responders (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). After comparison, no significant differences existed between the groups; therefore there was no reason to believe that non-respondents were different than respondents. Table 1 outlines participation and response rates in this study.

The survey instrument was developed by the research team based upon a review of literature of similar knowledge and perception studies.

Many questions were based on a previously developed instrument used at Illinois State University (ISU) in Normal, Illinois. The research team received written permission from the developer of the ISU instrument to use it as the basis of the instrument for the study. To establish face and content validity the instrument

was reviewed by an expert panel of selected faculty in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication who were experts in survey design as well as the SoTL work. The reliability of the instrument was analyzed post-hoc, and the instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient score of .86.

Table 1  
*Response Rates*

Response Categories	Counts
Total	855
Responded	287
Opted Out	90
Invalid Email	12

All data were collected and stored on SurveyMonkey™ until participants were contacted using Dillman's (2007) four-contact method and been given ample opportunity to respond. Data was then transferred and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Standard statistical measures were performed to describe the results and determine relationships between variables. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were determined and used to describe the respondents' perceptions. Recurring themes were identified in the open-ended questions within the survey, and were coded by hand using highlighter markers. An

audit trail, a reflexive journal, and peer debriefing was utilized in order to maintain trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

**Results/Findings**

The first objective of this study was to describe characteristics of the faculty population. The respondents had an average of 13.90 years teaching at the university level. Table 2 contains information regarding total years teaching for respondents. Frequencies and percentages of respondents were reported for each category.

Table 2  
*Faculty Members' Total Years of Teaching (n = 216)*

Years Taught at University Level	<i>f</i>	Percent
0-5	58	26.8
6-10	44	20.3
11-15	28	12.9
16-20	23	10.6
21-25	25	11.5
26-30	18	8.3
31+	17	7.7
Other	3	1.3

Table 3 provides data regarding the position held by each of the respondents. Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated they were tenured or tenure track professors. The

remaining 17% were lecturers, instructors, and individuals holding research titles.

The second objective of this study was to determine faculty knowledge of the definition of the SoTL. In order to assess this objective,

participants were asked to provide their own personal definition of the SoTL. In addition, they were asked to discuss the similarities and differences between the SoTL and other types of scholarship. In regard to the ways that faculty members described the SoTL through their own personal definitions, three themes emerged. Such themes included definitions explicitly stating that they didn't know how to define the SoTL, definitions of the SoTL as an individual activity to improve teaching and learning, and,

finally, definitions of the SoTL as a comprehensive form of scholarship.

More than one-third of the respondents who were asked to define the SoTL wrote that they had never heard of the SoTL and thus could not define it. Comments such as "I have not heard of the concept before now" clearly indicated that a number of the individuals in the study could not define the SoTL in absence of a researcher-developed definition.

Table 3  
*Faculty Members' Title (n = 234)*

Title	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Professor	62	26.5
Associate Professor	53	22.6
Professor	79	33.8
Adjunct Faculty Member	2	0.9
Assistant Instructor	1	0.4
Lecturer	6	2.6
Other	31	13.2

The second theme in regard to the ways in which faculty members defined the SoTL involved responses that defined the SoTL as about improving teaching and learning. Among these definitions, the SoTL was defined more as a process of trial and error undertaken on an individual basis rather than a systematic approach to evaluating teaching and learning and then sharing it through presentations and peer-reviewed publications. A representative quote of "It is the use of certain teaching methods by professors that have been determined to be effective by research in the field of education" supported this theme.

The third theme regarding the ways in which faculty members defined the SoTL included a small portion of respondents who provided an understanding of the SoTL as moving beyond teaching tips, investigating teaching in systematic and scholarly ways, and making the results of such investigations as well as the creative works products of teaching subject to peer review and available to a larger public. One respondent provided the following definition: "the process of developing research questions, collecting and analyzing data, making inferences and drawing conclusions, and publishing these results on or about teaching and

learning." Yet another stated that "SoTL is the study of process, methods, accomplishments (including, assessment of student learning) and the synthesis of this information to share with others in the form of publications, presentations, workshops, etc."

In addition to formulating a general definition for the SoTL, faculty members were also asked to describe the ways in which scholarship in teaching was similar to or different from more traditional forms of scholarship. The major theme that emerged from the data was the difference between what ought to occur and what actually occurs in faculty work. In general, respondents found many more similarities between SoTL and other types of scholarship than differences, with one respondent stating simply that there "should be none if done well." Statements similar to this were repeated several times but were often followed by qualifying statements such as "in an ideal world." Responses such as these seem to indicate that, while the SoTL may be technically no different than other forms of scholarship, it is often perceived as different. According to one respondent, the only differences lie in the "perception of academic peers." The same respondent went on to state, "The overall feeling

is that high SoTL does not grant tenure whereas research scholarship does.” Despite an overall sense that there is no real difference between the SoTL and other types of scholarship, nearly one third of respondents again answered that they did not know enough about the SoTL to answer the question.

After participants answered the above questions they were provided with a definition of the SoTL which they were to keep in mind as they completed the questionnaire. For the purpose of this study, the researchers adopted the definition used at Illinois State University and will define the SoTL as *the systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public* (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, n.d.).

Based on this definition, objective three was to describe the current level of faculty involvement in the SoTL. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their

involvement with the SoTL. Table 4 outlines responses to each of four forced choice questions. In response to the first three questions, more than 80% of respondents indicated that they had never conducted, collaborated, or published SoTL research. Nearly 7% of respondents indicated some other form of participation in the SoTL. Faculty that indicated being involved in the SoTL in some other way most often listed serving in some capacity as a journal editor or reviewer. The majority of this involvement dealt with regional and national journals in their respective disciplines. There was some mention of grants that had been received to fund projects relating to the SoTL. However, most faculty involvement seemed geared toward the review of others work as opposed to generation of their own work in the SoTL.

Table 4  
*Faculty Members’ Involvement in the SoTL*

Question	Yes	No	n
	f(%)	f(%)	
1. Have you conducted or been involved in SoTL research?	37(17.9)	170(82.1)	207
2. Have you collaborated with colleagues on SoTL research?	38(18.4)	168(81.6)	206
3. Have you ever published SoTL research?	33(16.1)	172(83.9)	205
4. Is there any other way you are involved in SoTL research?	14(6.9)	190(93.1)	204

For objective four, participants were asked to respond to a series of questions and statements to determine their perceptions about the value of and attitudes toward the SoTL. Table 5 presents faculty responses when asked “What type of impact, if any, does or would conducting the SoTL have on your professional career?” While 50% responded neutral to the question, more than 44% indicated that conducting work in and about the SoTL would have a positive or very positive impact on their professional careers.

Table 5  
*Impact of the SoTL on Professional Career (n = 178)*

Question	VP	P	Neutral	N	VN
	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)
What impact does or would conducting SoTL research have on your professional career?	12(6.7)	67(37.6)	89(5)	10(5.6)	0(0)

Note. Data Coding: VP=Very Positive, P= Positive, N=Negative, VN=Very Negative

Next, participants were asked where published or presented SoTL research would “count” in their annual department or unit

evaluations for purposes of promotion and tenure. Table 6 contains participant responses.

Nearly 45% of respondents indicated that presenting or publishing SoTL research would

count in the teaching area of their annual evaluation. Of the remaining responses, less

than 30% indicated that SoTL work would count in the area of Scholarship/Research.

Table 6  
*Impact of the SoTL on Professional Career (n = 150)*

Question	Service/ Extension <i>f</i> (%)	Teaching <i>f</i> (%)	Scholarship/ Research <i>f</i> (%)	I would have a choice <i>f</i> (%)
If you present or publish SoTL research, where would it “count” in your departmental annual evaluation?	18(12.0)	66(44.0)	43(28.7)	23(15.3)

Finally, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding their motivation for and value of the

SoTL. Table 7 shows response frequencies and percentages for each of the statements.

Table 7  
*Faculty Perceptions of the Value of the SoTL (n = 175)*

Statement	SA	A	NA/D	D	SD
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
1. SoTL has practical value for teachers.	44(25.6)	82(47.7)	43(25.0)	2(1.2)	1(.6)
2. SoTL has practical value for institutions of higher education.	43(25.3)	81(47.6)	43(25.3)	1(.6)	2(1.2)
3. SoTL is important.	40(23.3)	82(47.7)	47(27.3)	2(1.2)	1(.6)
4. SoTL has practical value for students.	35(20.3)	87(50.6)	47(27.3)	2(1.2)	1(.6)
5. Participation in SoTL research would make me a better teacher.	31(18.1)	67(39.2)	66(38.6)	4(2.3)	3(1.8)
6. SoTL is a form of “real” scholarship.	29(17.0)	72(42.1)	63(36.8)	6(3.5)	1(.0)
7. Participating in SoTL research would be personally rewarding to me as a faculty member.	27(15.9)	60(35.3)	70(41.2)	10(5.9)	3(1.8)
8. SoTL would take away time from my other responsibilities as a faculty member.	26(15.1)	69(40.1)	55(32.0)	18(10.5)	4(2.3)
9. SoTL has practical value for the community.	25(14.5)	61(35.5)	80(46.5)	4(2.3)	2(1.2)
10. I would like to learn more about SoTL.	21(12.1)	84(48.6)	48(27.7)	15(8.7)	5(2.9)
11. Knowing SoTL research in ones discipline is important for good teaching.	19(11.2)	74(43.8)	66(39.1)	6(3.6)	4(2.4)
12. Everyone should do some SoTL research.	10(5.8)	40(23.4)	82(48.0)	28(16.4)	6(11.4)
13. SoTL is valued in my College.	9(5.2)	42(24.4)	87(50.6)	27(15.7)	7(4.1)
14. SoTL is valued in my Department.	9(5.3)	31(18.1)	87(50.9)	35(20.5)	9(5.3)
15. I am not interested in participating in SoTL research.	8(4.7)	16(9.4)	66(38.8)	55(32.4)	25(14.7)
16. SoTL would be useful to my tenure and promotion dossier.	7(4.1)	39(23.1)	85(50.3)	22(13.0)	16(9.5)
17. SoTL is valued in my University.	4(2.3)	33(19.2)	95(55.2)	32(18.6)	8(4.7)
18. Results from SoTL research are used/applied in my department.	4(2.4)	33(19.6)	91(54.2)	24(14.3)	16(9.5)
19. There is adequate funding for SoTL.	3(1.8)	12(7.1)	98(57.6)	48(28.2)	9(5.3)

*Note.* Data Coding: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NA/D=Neither Agree nor Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Nearly 75% percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the SoTL was important and had practical value for teachers, students, and institutions of higher education. Respondents were evenly split when asked if the SoTL was valued in their department, college, and university. About 50% were neutral in regard to these statements with roughly 20–25%

of the remaining respondents either agreeing or disagreeing. Almost 60% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that SoTL is a “real” form of scholarship and participating in the SoTL research would make them a better teacher. Despite this, less than one-third of respondents felt that conducting research in the

SoTL would be useful to their tenure and promotion dossier.

### Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications

Objective one of this study was to describe selected characteristics of the sample, in regard to rank and years in the profession. Respondents represented faculty at various departmental ranks and years of service. Comparisons of these groups indicated no significant differences based on demographics, suggesting that study participants are representative of the faculty population. It might be intuitive to assume that faculty members of higher ranks and/or more years toward tenure would know more about the SoTL, be more supportive of the SoTL, and be more engaged in conducting work in the SoTL. The results of this study were unable to support that anecdotal claim. Thus, faculty in general are largely unengaged in and unaware of the SoTL, and it is recommended that faculty development programming in the SoTL be inclusive of and responsive to the needs of faculty members across rank and years of service.

The goal of objective two was to determine faculty knowledge of the definition of the SoTL. After reviewing responses, three themes emerged from the data. Due to the fact that more than one-third of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with or had never heard of the SoTL and that only a small minority of faculty members could provide an accurate, in-depth definition of the SoTL, it was concluded that faculty are limited in their knowledge of and exposure to the SoTL. While not surprising, it is somewhat unfortunate that more than 15 years after the call to action regarding efforts toward creating a more comprehensive model of scholarship that includes scholarship in and of teaching, still more than one-third of faculty are not aware of its existence or meaning. The implication of this finding is that Boyer (1990) was well ahead of his time, almost twenty years ago, when he suggested a model that moved well beyond the scholarship of discovery as the only valid form of faculty work.

In addition to faculty members' inability to form a definition of the SoTL, a group of respondents who were familiar with the term provided definitions that were more consistent

with the idea of scholarly teaching. Thus, it was concluded that some faculty members do not make a clear distinction between scholarly teaching and the SoTL whereas this distinction is clearly documented in the SoTL literature (Richlin, 2001). While scholarly teaching and the SoTL certainly have similarities, they ultimately have different goals. The goal of scholarly teaching is an immediate impact on teaching and learning in a classroom while the latter results in peer-reviewed work that ultimately adds to the knowledge base (Whitman & Richlin, 2007). The implication of this finding is that perhaps faculty development efforts aimed at providing teaching tips to faculty members and helping them become more versed in the teaching and learning literature, while valid in their own right, do not help faculty make a distinction between becoming a more scholarly teacher and systematically investigating the inputs, process, and outcomes of teaching and learning. It is recommended that research be conducted on how faculty members learn to teach, become scholarly teachers, as well as how they conduct the SoTL.

It was clear from the results of objective two that more research and faculty development efforts are needed to increase awareness about the SoTL. Previous studies have indicated a wide range in the levels of acceptance of the SoTL across disciplines, and this study seems to support that research (Witman & Richlin, 2007). It would appear that the opportunity exists to build support for the SoTL through in-service programming for faculty, perhaps utilizing those individuals who have a record of producing SoTL research. Given that more information is needed on how faculty members think about their work in regard to the SoTL, it is recommended that more in-depth qualitative research be conducted to produce grounded theory on faculty work in the SoTL as well as to provide more information for the design of future quantitative instruments.

In addition to forming a definition of the SoTL, a more comprehensive description of faculty members' knowledge of the SoTL was gleaned by asking faculty to describe the similarities and differences between scholarship in research, or more traditional forms of scholarship, and scholarship in teaching. It was concluded by the ways in which faculty members described such distinctions that the

perceptions by faculty members of what should be and the perceptions of the reality of their professional expectations are different. Qualifying statements made by faculty members such as “in an ideal world” support this conclusion. Faculty members feel that the SoTL may be technically no different than other forms of scholarship but it is often perceived as different.

The implication of this finding is that for scholarly work in teaching to become more prevalent, it must carry equal weight in the minds of faculty members in regard to promotion and tenure expectations. It is recommended that research be conducted regarding department chairs, deans, and other university level administrators knowledge and perceptions of the SoTL. In addition, future studies should focus on how the SoTL is perceived by tenure and promotion committees across disciplines. There appear to be some contradictions between responses regarding this issue. Responses to other questions indicated that a majority of faculty perceived that the SoTL is a “real” form of scholarship, yet less than one-third indicated it would be useful to their tenure and promotion dossier. Further study on this issue will help to refine faculty perceptions about the SoTL and provide insight into what could be done to increase the perceived value of conducting and publishing SoTL research.

Objective three sought to determine faculty involvement in the SoTL. Based upon the results, it was concluded that faculty members by and large were not involved in SoTL work, and those who described involvement in the SoTL indicated that the nature of their involvement was to review teaching related articles within disciplinary journals. This finding implies that while faculty members described the SoTL as important, they are not involved in the SoTL work for some reason. Perhaps, faculty are not involved due to lack of awareness about the kinds of work they might conduct as a part of the SoTL, they feel that SoTL work is not a part of their expectations, or they are not supported to conduct SoTL work in terms of funding or through administrator approval. Universities should provide faculty development programming efforts for faculty to learn about opportunity areas in the SoTL. More recognition opportunities as well as resources

and support for faculty who are actively engaged in the SoTL should be created and given at the college, university, and national levels.

Objective four was to determine faculty perceptions about the value of and attitude towards the SoTL. Based upon the findings, it was concluded that faculty perceived the potential for SoTL work in a positive light; however, with 50% of respondents indicating a neutral opinion regarding the value of the SoTL, it is suggested that further research be conducted regarding faculty members perceived motivation for and task value of conducting work in the SoTL. The need for education about the topic is evident based on responses to questions in objective two of this study. Quality in-service opportunities should be well received by faculty with more than 60% indicating they would like to learn more about the SoTL.

A wide range of responses were received when asked where the SoTL research would count in a departmental evaluation. Despite indicating that the SoTL was a “real” form of scholarship, less than one-third of faculty members indicated that they would receive credit for the SoTL in the area of Scholarship/Research, and nearly half of faculty members indicated that SoTL work would count under the Teaching category. Thus, it was concluded that there is a discrepancy in how faculty characterize the nature of scholarly work in teaching. This seems to indicate the need for more uniformity in the area of evaluation as well as promotion and tenure. Future studies should focus on the promotion and tenure process and determine similarities and differences across disciplines as well as indentifying what criteria are used to determine if a work is considered scholarly.

It was further concluded from the results of objective four that faculty members viewed the SoTL work to have practical value for teaching within their disciplines. This finding further implies that there could be a potential to expand faculty work in the SoTL through their willingness to improve teaching and to document the results of such teaching improvements in systematic ways. While improving learning is the ultimate goal of the SoTL, and the previous finding is a positive one, the finding further implies that faculty members do not make clear distinctions between scholarly teaching and the SoTL. Faculty development

efforts should focus on providing faculty members teaching tips and ways to become a more scholarly teacher, as well as assisting them in documenting teaching in systematic and scholarly ways, and delineating the differences between the two.

The final conclusion in regard to faculty members' perceptions of and attitudes toward the value of SoTL work was that faculty members are neither positive nor negative in regard to their view of the SoTL as personally rewarding. This finding implies that more value and respect for the SoTL is needed at all levels. Future efforts should focus on developing clear guidelines for how SoTL research can help faculty members experience personal growth as teachers and feel a sense of accomplishment. Additional efforts should be made to recognize and reward faculty who are actively engaged in the SoTL.

This descriptive study was undertaken to provide baseline data for future studies on the

SoTL. The results, while descriptive in nature and limited to this specific population, seem to provide ample areas for future study. They also seem to indicate the need for faculty development initiatives focused on building awareness about the SoTL. Additional study regarding faculty roles and responsibilities may be warranted with more than 55% of respondents indicating that participating in the SoTL research would take time from their other responsibilities as a faculty member. It is clear that much more work is needed to accurately determine the status of the SoTL across disciplines and universities. Previous studies have indicated, and these results seem to support a very wide range of acceptance and participation in the SoTL (Whitman & Richlin, 2007). It is hoped that this baseline data will serve as a springboard for future studies about the SoTL.

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