

Title: **Exploring the impact of learning and teaching cultures on experiences and perceptions of SoTL**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify the role that the L&T culture can play in influencing the engagement with and purpose of SoTL;
- Consider the impact of this for individuals and institutions seeking to promote and encourage SoTL for the purpose of enhancing student learning;
- Recognise the relevance of these issues in their own situational context.

Session Outline

According to Brew and Ginnis (2008, p535) the primary purpose of SoTL is to 'infuse teaching with scholarly qualities in order to enhance learning'. Several studies, including Knight and Trowler (2000) and Gibbs et al. (2008), have drawn attention to the impact of the nature of departmental L&T cultures on the success of strategies to enhance teaching and student learning. Within the UK the development of sector standards in L&T (UK PSF, 2011) and the increasing focus on professional recognition has refocused the spotlight on teaching enhancement. Indeed, many institutions have set targets for recognition. In their study of academic microcultures, Roxa and Martensson (2011) caution that such attempts to improve teaching and learning by coercion may generate a culture of compliance that does not result in enhancement. What impact could these macro and micro developments have on the engagement, purposes and quality of SoTL which already suffers from an 'amateur culture' (Felton, 2013, p121)?

This study explores the impact of micro learning and teaching cultures on experiences and perceptions of SoTL

The study is located in the context of a UK university with a clear teaching mission that has recently introduced consistent targets for UKPSF recognition. A multiple methodological approach has been adopted that includes: analysis of institutional data for a range of SoTL activities for patterns of staff engagement; semi-structured interviews with staff exploring their perceptions of the L&T culture and motivations for engagement with SoTL; an online survey of staff experiences and perceptions of, and motivations for engagement with, SoTL.

The analysis has shown a marked increase in levels of engagement with SoTL since the introduction of targets for professional recognition. However, considerable variation in engagement persists within and across departments. Results indicate that L&T cultures influence staff engagement with and perceptions of SoTL.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

25 minutes presentation of study and results

10 minutes discussion of findings and implications

- What issues emerge for individuals and/ or institutions?
- Are these findings relevant in your own situation/ institution

10 minutes conclusion: addressing the issues

References

Brew, A. And Ginnis, P. (2008) The relationship between engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning and students' course experiences. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 33, no.5, 535-545.

Felton, P. (2013) Principles of Good Practice in SoTL, *Teaching & Learning Enquiry*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 121-125.

Gibbs, G. (2008) Departmental leadership of teaching in research-intensive institutions (Final Report), Leadership Foundation.

Knight, P. And Trowler, P. (2000) Department-level cultures and the improvement of learning and teaching. *Studies in Higher Education* 25, no.1: 69-83.

Roxå, T. and Martensson, K. (2011) Understanding strong academic microcultures – an exploratory study. Lund University, April 2011.