9

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

ITS CONSTITUTION AND ITS TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

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The aim of this closing chapter is to bring together the other chapters of the book in an analytical way in order to respond to the two questions implied by the title of the book: What constitutes the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and what is its transformative potential. In seeking to analyse and describe the constitution of SoTL we looked not only at our own chapters but also at other work in the field and work dealing with higher education in more general terms. The authors of the chapters have described scholarly work of various kinds in specific contexts of teaching and learning. As such, each chapter has implicitly or explicitly illustrated aspects of the nature of scholarship in those contexts and the impact of that scholarship on individuals, institutions and/or society. The chapters provide a range of perspectives on the questions and issues that are being debated about SoTL in general and the issues and questions that have been raised in our collaboration.

From Chapter 1, which reviewed the development of SoTL and the range of different views about its nature, it is evident that attempts to formulate a single, broadly accepted, “common definition or unifying conceptualization” of SoTL (Trigwell 2013:95) have not been successful. The diversity of SoTL activity and interest, as exemplified by the work reported in this book, and the diversity of views about its nature appear to defy such attempts. Nevertheless, as Trigwell and others have pointed out, the need for clarity about the nature of SoTL remains, so that, for example, an appropriate basis exists for communicating effectively about SoTL and for evaluating its work meaningfully. In addition, the point needs to be made that the emergence of SoTL is not so much a paradigm that has shifted but the emergence of a new paradigm of work within higher education; and as such it has reached a stage where its constitution needs to be clarified.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

It is further evident from Chapter 1 that any attempt to provide an appropriate basis for the desired clarification must embody and accommodate the diversity that makes the development of a single, broadly accepted definition of SoTL elusive. Our approach to this has been to attempt to build a conceptual understanding of the constitution of SoTL on the basis of the work reported in the chapters of this book, and informed by the literature at large. But how to analyse the multi-faceted nature of these projects was not immediately obvious from what we read in the literature.

Our analysis went through several phases. The first focused on themes – themes that were evident in SoTL activity and interest generally and particularly in our own SoTL work. We found two sets of themes to be interesting: the *concerns* that have driven the emergence of SoTL and the *purposes* of SoTL. Both have been mentioned in Chapter 1 but are listed again here.

With regard to the concerns behind the SoTL movement, the following six major themes were identified:

- a concern for the status of teaching in higher education;
- the need to recognise and promote excellence, expertise and scholarship in teaching;
- a growing focus on learning in today's university and on research and reflection on the effectiveness of teaching to support learning;
- communication and the development of resources to support communication in and between the communities of practitioners that have influence on teaching and learning in higher education;
- production of knowledge that provides the fundament of the profession of higher education teaching; and
- the imperative for quality teaching that derives from the educational mandate of the university.

The first two concerns relate to practical and pragmatic issues of the institution; the third and fourth relate to the internal life of the university; and the fifth and sixth relate to the profession and society.

With regard to the purposes of SoTL, we reproduce here the list articulated in Chapter 1. The first nine purposes, listed by Trigwell (2013), are as follows:

- a way to enhance university teaching;
- a way to raise the status of teaching;
- a means through which teachers may come to teach more knowledgeably;
- a means through which the quality of teaching may be assessed;

CHAPTER 9 • THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING – ITS CONSTITUTION ...

- a way to enhance students' experience of learning;
- a means by which the research profile of an individual or department may be enhanced;
- a way of stimulating interest in teaching;
- a means of strengthening development programs for higher education professionals; and
- a means of informing changes in institutional policies and procedures.

A further four purposes of SoTL were identified as follows:

- a means of furthering the development of professionalism in teaching (Kreber 2006; Shulman 2000);
- a means of building the community of practice associated with teaching in higher education (Gilpin & Liston 2009);
- a means of facilitating critical aspects of the educational mandate placed on tertiary institutions by society, e.g. the development of citizenship (Kreber 2006; Shulman 2000); and
- the development of 'authenticity' and generic graduate attributes in students (Kreber 2013a, 2013b).

Although neither of these sets of themes – concerns or purposes – answered the question of the constitution of SoTL, either as a movement among academics or in terms of its conceptual framework, they did help to highlight significant issues in the movement and to suggest a second approach for the analysis. This approach was based on two observations.

The first was a shortcoming we saw in that the focus on themes, such as the concerns and purposes associated with SoTL, had the effect of separating the producers of SoTL work (with their intentions or purposes) and the products of the work (grounded in disseminated form). We take a general relational view of knowledge, where the knower and what is known, or the learner and what is learned, are ontologically one; the knower embodies the known and the knowledge is nothing without being known. This translates in our context to SoTL being constituted of the SoTL practitioner with their purpose, the SoTL outcome with its theme, and SoTL activity as the relation between them. We needed to find a way to communicate this constitution in a more carefully analysed form that reflected this more holistic and relational perspective.

Our second observation was that there were a number of characteristic aspects of SoTL activities and interests that were to be found in the projects described in this book and in the SoTL movement as a whole, and that any particular piece of SoTL work included some of these aspects but not necessarily all of them. This suggested

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

that what was needed was a conceptual framework that articulated these aspects, and hence embodied the diversity evident in SoTL, but did so in a way that was not categorical or definitional in nature and recognised that different kinds of SoTL work might manifest a different mix of aspects that are characteristic of SoTL.

We noted further that to focus attention on SoTL activity in this way went a long way towards doing justice to both poles of the SoTL relationship – practitioners and their purposes with outcomes and their themes. Both the intentions behind SoTL work and the products of SoTL work are to some degree implicit in the nature of a particular kind of SoTL activity.

We therefore discarded the idea of ‘aspects of SoTL’ as being too vague and general for the analysis. We also rejected *dimensions* or *perspectives* of SoTL as alternative ideas because of their perceptual overtones: they failed to imply that different kinds of SoTL activity might overlap; and, as descriptors for different kinds of SoTL activity, they were semantically not as appropriate as the idea of *domains*. And so we decided on *domains of SoTL activity* as a feasible, ontologically appropriate, and analytically viable framework for the analysis.

THE DOMAINS OF SoTL ACTIVITY AND INTEREST

The set of domains we have arrived at, through a consideration of inclusivity and comprehensiveness, consist of the five core domains and the two contextual domains depicted in Figure 9.1. At the core of SoTL activity we see the didactic, epistemic, the social, the moral/ethical, and the societal domains, the nature of which are described and illustrated below. Further there are two domains that surround the core: the domain of disciplinary knowledge that underpins all higher education, and the domain of the profession of academic teaching, which in its turn rests on the knowledge base and identity to which SoTL contributes.

FIGURE 9.1 The core and contextual domains that constitute SoTL

CHAPTER 9 • THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING – ITS CONSTITUTION ...**The didactic domain of SoTL**

The didactic domain of SoTL refers to its deliberate focus on the processes and practices of teaching and learning for specific disciplines and professions. This is possibly the most common form of SoTL practice, building as it does on the everyday reflections of university teachers, raised to the level of rigorous study and peer-validated dissemination. Pitso's work (Chapter 3) lies strongly in this domain, in its application of 'invitational pedagogy' and the development of innovative ways of bringing awareness of creativity in engineering work to the attention of both teachers and students. The work of Woollacott (Chapter 4) also lies in this domain in its attempt to enhance a particular aspect of student learning by developing a pedagogy suited to the particularities of the context. Different kinds of didactic work are evident in these two examples of SoTL activity. The first involves work that was theoretically framed and carried out by an academic developer in conjunction with two teachers and their students, whereas the second was empirically based and involved pedagogical development carried out by an individual teacher in the context of their own work. Additional nuances in the didactic domain are evident in Woollacott's work in that it had three discernible phases: the teacher reflecting on the effectiveness of his teaching and acting on the outcomes of those reflections; the teacher referring to literature and his pedagogical knowledge and experience to make what seemed to be appropriate further pedagogical modifications; and, as the broader significance of the work became more apparent, the communication of the outcomes of the work in forums that ranged from local presentations to international publication. These phases correspond to Kreber's three categories of excellence, expertise and scholarship in teaching (Kreber 2002). Interestingly, in the case of this work, these categories are more descriptive of phases and levels of SoTL work than they are descriptive of a teacher.

The epistemic domain of SoTL

By 'epistemic' we are referring to the processes of scholarly knowledge production – generation, integration and application, to use Boyer's categories of scholarship (Boyer 1990). It embraces the sorts of questions being raised by SoTL practitioners, the ways they go about addressing them, and the sorts of outcomes they are aiming at. Further it embraces the implications that are drawn for practice. For example, in Chapter 6, Larsson *et al.*, wishing to understand the effects of a long-term investment in academic development through the judgement of portfolios for career advancement and conferences to share experience of teaching, developed an approach to analysing their available data – the contents of portfolios and abstracts for conference presentations – that could reveal any change in focus away from teachers' teaching

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

and towards students' learning. In Chapter 5, Booth presents the phenomenographic research approach as a particularly appropriate way to come to an understanding of the learners' experience of learning, whether in higher education or in professional practice, exemplified in reference to the health sciences. Pitso in Chapter 3 draws extensively on relevant theory as a background to generating educational artefacts, namely "learnshops" on creativity, and evaluating their effect using a professionally established tool. In Chapter 7, Cameron, wishing to examine the effect of her peer review sessions with science educators, designed a study grounded in a similar study from another SoTL project that had been reported in conferences and journals, and surveyed her colleagues' reactions to the experience with an instrument developed there. The epistemic domain is particularly evident in these four chapters in the book, though it is inherently a feature, whether focal or taken-as-given, of all SoTL work.

The social domain of SoTL

The social domain of SoTL deals with the communication and dissemination of the knowledge produced, in line with an emerging paradigm. It can be related to the communities of practice and learning within the faculty and across institutions where issues of teaching and learning can be aired and discussed with common conceptual frameworks. The study reported by Larsson *et al.* in Chapter 6, is grounded in such a situation, since part of the data for analysis comes from the abstracts for papers that were submitted to an institutional conference where the teachers from a large engineering faculty were presenting their innovations and studies. Pitso's work (Chapter 3) has a social dimension in that he, an academic developer, is working with lecturers from his institution and their students in examining models of creativity. Equally, the social domain can relate to the conferences and journals where SoTL practitioners meet and present their work – and gain inspiration for further work. The local symposia held within the project that gave rise to this book offers one example, where some 40 university teachers, in addition to the project group, took part. Papers were also presented at international conferences including the SoTL Commons conferences held annually in Savannah, Georgia, the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED), and the International Society for SoTL (ISSoTL) which move their venues from year to year. Though none of the chapters have been published in their current form, articles from journals such as *Higher Education*, *Studies in Higher Education*, *Higher Education Research & Development*, *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, the *International Journal for Academic Development*, the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, and *Teaching in Higher Education* all contributed to our discussions.

CHAPTER 9 • THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING – ITS CONSTITUTION ...**The moral and ethical domain of SoTL**

This domain refers, in its broadest sense, to the moral mandate of higher education, and in its more limited sense to the ethical issues related to teaching and learning. Its essential component lies in the relations that pertain between teachers, students and the knowledge they are sharing. Such relationships can be interpersonal, as Kindeberg (Chapter 2) focuses on in her work in which the communication between teachers and students that creates a learning environment grounded in trusting relationships, conceptualised within a framework drawn from Aristotle's philosophy and pedagogical rhetoric. Pitso's work, in Chapter 3, also exemplifies this domain through his development of "learnshops" in which students and teachers together came to an understanding of creativity that could be exercised in engineering design through participation in invitational pedagogy.

The societal domain of SoTL

In a broad sense the 'societal domain of SoTL' refers to the societal mandate for higher education, which has both socio-political and socio-economic ramifications. All SoTL work has the potential for critiquing the status quo, whether at the institutional level or at the classroom level, which implies a socio-political aspect; the role of higher education as a driver of national well-being adds to SoTL a socio-economic aspect. Whereas the previous domain, the moral and ethical domain, encompasses relationships and values within the institution, focusing on student-teacher-knowledge interactions, the present domain is one which refers to the interactions between the institution and society. All the studies underpinning this analysis relate to this domain in a general way in as much as any effort to enhance the quality of education has (or should have) an intention to enhance the capabilities of graduates and their preparedness as active citizens in society. However, the work from Osman and Booth in Chapter 8 has a specifically societal interest, focusing their conceptual vision of SoTL in teacher education towards a goal of improving South African school education and thereby improving the lives of South African citizens. In Chapter 3, Pitso also indicates a societal drive to his work, in that offering better understanding of creativity among lecturing staff and greater practice of creativity for students was thought to improve the career opportunities for new graduates as well as promoting economic development in the community. Even Booth in Chapter 5 touches on societal concerns in proposing that SoTL enquiry can have a follow-on effect on professional practice.

Those are the five core domains we have identified for SoTL practice, which are embraced by two contextual domains – the disciplinary and the professional.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The disciplinary domain of SoTL

The disciplinary domain of SoTL can be seen as underpinning the first five domains, in as much as the teacher's disciplinary and/or professional knowledge is an essential factor in university teaching. Disciplinary experience can even influence the SoTL practices of SoTL practitioners, as for example, Woollacott's work (Chapter 4) that mirrors the engineering practice of prototyping, evaluating and tweaking for repeated refinements of a design. In another realm, Kinderberg's work (Chapter 2) is underpinned by her philosophical disciplinary background in pedagogy and rhetoric. Herein lies the main difference between the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and research on higher education from an educational perspective. SoTL is essentially carried out by those who are engaged in teaching within a disciplinary or professional context and who have the disciplinary knowledge and/or professional experience to bring to bear on issues of teaching and learning. On the other hand, as the studies related in the chapters of the book demonstrate, SoTL collaborations between practising teachers and educational researchers or educational developers can be very fruitful for all concerned.

The professional domain of SoTL

The professional domain is the overarching domain of SoTL, referring to the knowledge and practice basis of the profession of teaching in higher education, and identifying the extent to which members of that profession have jurisdiction. We can safely say that all SoTL work is related to the knowledge base of the profession of teaching in higher education, and some studies might even refer directly to issues in the jurisdiction of the profession. Building the profession of higher education teaching is one of the general aims of the SoTL movement, by paying attention to the quality of teaching and learning, and by raising awareness of standards and values through academic development, accreditation as well as local and global dissemination of results. All of these aspects of the professional domain can be seen to some degree in the work of Larsson *et al.* (Chapter 6) that was conducted in the context of the Pedagogical Academy, which functions at the engineering faculty at Lund University as an institutionalised vehicle for recognising and rewarding teachers who can offer varied evidence of consistently good teaching. This has in turn led to local and global dissemination of the work of the Pedagogical Academy as well as raising awareness of standards and values.

CHAPTER 9 • THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING – ITS CONSTITUTION ...**THE DOMAINS OF SoTL AND THE CONSTITUTION OF SoTL**

Table 9.1 summarises the seven domains that have been identified. Together they provide a framework for conceptualising the contexts of SoTL work and the kinds of activities and interests that it involves.

TABLE 9.1 Summary of the SoTL domains

	DOMAIN	Focus of the domain
CORE DOMAINS	Didactic	Research and reflective activity aimed at improving the processes and practices of teaching and learning for specific disciplines and professions.
	Epistemic	Attention to the processes and quality of knowledge production within SoTL activities.
	Social	The activities of the community of SoTL practice, including the communication and dissemination of the knowledge produced by SoTL activity.
	Moral and ethical	Attention and reflective activity relating to the moral mandate of higher education, and to ethical issues related to teaching and learning and SoTL activity.
	Societal	Attention and reflective activity relating to the societal mandate for higher education, including both its socio-political and socio-economic ramifications.
CONTEXTUAL DOMAINS	Disciplinary	The disciplinary context with its specific professional knowledge and discourse base that underpins any area of university teaching and its associated SoTL activity.
	Professional	The professional context of teaching in higher education with its overarching concern for professionalism in teaching in each of the core domains and disciplinary contexts of SoTL activity and for the exercise of appropriate jurisdiction of the associated mandates, values and practices.

This completes our analysis of the constitution of SoTL – five core domains and two contextual domains. While they have been derived from the work published in our chapters and in the SoTL literature, they also reflect the academics who produce the work against a background of their disciplinary and professional worlds, and even the activities they engaged in under the influence of their disciplines and professions, in accordance with our relational view of knowledge. Our collaboration included academics from a range of backgrounds, and the SoTL work at large is produced by an even broader range; for example, there is a move to involve students directly as partners in SoTL projects (Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felten 2014; Healey, Flint & Harrington 2014).

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

SoTL is, however, a developing field and work can emerge that demands a reconsideration of the domains we propose. For the time being they provide us with a framework for communicating the breadth of the field and for assessing the value of work produced within it. And in the longer term they provide the SoTL community with a basis for further analysis. In the context of this book, they provide a convenient framework for a discussion of the transformative potential of SoTL.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF SoTL

We have now performed an analysis of SoTL – giving our answer to the question of what it is. We now need to ask, what is it good for? Our next question is, then, to what extent can SoTL as constituted underpin transformation with reference to higher education, for individuals, institutions and society? The constitutional analysis gives us a framework to address the questions: transformation of what, to what end, by what means? “Transformation” brings to mind change, improvement, progress – and in the South Africa context it also brings to mind the long-term shift from apartheid to democracy and socio-political and socio-economic impacts more generally. We now take our domain-based framework as a starting point to move to the question of the transformative potential afforded by work in the different domains, and at the individual, the institutional and the societal levels.

Transformation as qualitative change

Transformation at the individual level would imply a qualitative change of some kind in the individuals who are involved in and/or affected by a piece of SoTL work. For the academic who engages in SoTL work, it can mean a change in their way of seeing teaching and students’ learning, and thence tackling their teaching in new and well understood ways; such a change of teacher identity is akin to what Kreber (2010) refers to as authenticity. For a student who is involved, either as a participant in a study or at the receiving end of a teacher who has investigated some aspect of teaching relevant to this student, it can mean a greater insight into the content of the subject matter, or a strengthened identity within the relevant discipline or profession, or a better understanding of life outside the university.

Transformation at the institutional level would imply a qualitative change in the conditions that prevail in the institution, whether at the department or the university levels. These conditions could be seen in a change in the ways in which teaching is discussed, with more space and time given to issues of curriculum development, assessment and evaluation of environmental contexts for learning. It could be seen in

CHAPTER 9 • THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING – ITS CONSTITUTION ...

greater sharing of ideas and concerns about teaching and about learning. It could be seen in greater status being given to teaching through recognition with awards and acclaim being given to teachers who lead scholarly work, or who show leadership in putting scholarly work into practice. It could be seen in processes of recruitment and promotion, in models for equitable workloads, and in ways in which support is given to teaching staff in order to better understand and to improve their practices. And ideally it could be seen in time and funds being given to the scholarly studies of teaching and learning in situ, in the institution.

Transformation at the societal level is essentially about the output of higher education, about the quality of the learning that students entering the workplace or the professions have encountered during their years of higher education. This would be seen in the ways new entrants are able to tackle new and complex tasks unlike anything they had met before and the ways in which they could take their competence to new levels on their own initiative. It would be seen through new relationships between academics in the institutions being forged with members of society who had a vested interest in the competence of graduates, and who could instigate continuing education for their staff.

The transformative potential of the core domains of SoTL

If we now return to the domains that constitute SoTL we see that different domains offer different potential for transformation at the three levels – while acknowledging that all SoTL work (and indeed all teaching) can hold transformative potential at all three levels. The core domains will be considered first, and the contextual disciplinary and professional domains will be considered separately as transformation in these domains will be more general in nature.

First, at the individual level it is the didactic domain that holds most promise for transformation for students, as teaching takes more professional and more learning oriented forms thanks to SoTL initiatives. SoTL studies that aim to critique, to understand, and to improve teaching in one way or another are most likely to achieve enhanced individual outcomes for the students who are affected. And the didactic domain also gives the opportunity for academic staff who come into contact with such studies to transform their own teaching, whether they participate in the study or see its implications for their own practices. Both the “learnshops” that Pitso devised (Chapter 3) related to invitational pedagogy, and the MIG pedagogy that Woollacott devised (Chapter 4) offer ways for other teachers to work with issues they experience – respectively enabling teaching staff and their students to grapple with new and

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

previously unconsidered concepts such as creativity in engineering practice, or enabling students in large classes to meet challenging discussions both directly and vicariously. The moral/ethical domain also offers a strong transformative potential for both academic staff and their students, in particular for teachers who come to an understanding of the power of creating trustful relationships, as Kindeberg relates in Chapter 2, and for students who experience such relationships. On the other hand, we see the epistemic domain as offering a transformative potential for the academics who in the first place engage in SoTL studies, whether they devise a framework in accepted theoretical or methodological approaches or devise their own ways of coming to understand the questions they have posed. Such devices can in their turn inspire other colleagues to find similar or related ways of going about their studies, as illustrated by Cameron's adaptation of existing SoTL work (Chapter 7), or Booth who, in Chapter 5, brings an educational research framework to SoTL issues.

At the institutional level, greatest transformative potential is to be seen in the social domain of SoTL, involving as it does individuals working together, communicating and disseminating their work. Communities of SoTL practice form around and within conferences and journals, where SoTL work from different disciplines and cultures, as well as with different goals, can be debated and refined. Pitso's work in Chapter 3 led to two colleagues from the engineering faculty and their students tackling together possible approaches to creativity in engineering practice, and engaging in projects in workplaces to find creative solutions to genuine problems; thus new relationships were formed with the character of a community with a shared interest, goals and language. The work of Larsson *et al.* (Chapter 6) focused on what was already a loose community of engineering educators, which had been created through measures that encouraged a scholarly approach to teaching within a framework of recognition and reward, and strengthened that community by identifying ways in which it had developed its perspective on student learning.

At the societal level it is clear that the greatest transformative potential lies within work that has a strong focus on the socio-politico-economic aspects of higher education, namely the societal domain of SoTL. In the first place, an enhanced quality of education would be expected to have a strong transformative impact on society in general. The work on teacher education from Osman and Booth (Chapter 8) where scholarly work in teacher education in the university should have a concomitant scholarly effect on school teaching, and thence on learners' learning and their development as citizens, is directly in line with this argument. Another example comes from the work of Pitso (Chapter 3) in that the new pedagogy and modified curriculum has the potential to improve the creativity of graduates and thereby their employability in society.

The contextual domains of SoTL: The issue of professionalism

The profession of teaching in higher education has emerged as an important consideration in our analysis. In the history of university education, the profession was one of professing fundamental and trusted knowledge in a number of well established disciplines: hence the title of Professor, while the titles of Lecturer and Reader point to the reading and production of given texts. The Swedish title corresponding to lecturer is *föreläsare*, which can be parsed as meaning a reader for, or in front of, others. Then, students were self-selected to pursue personal interests and prepared through rigorous schooling. The situation today, as all know, is somewhat different. Higher education is still intended to pass on fundamental and well-trusted knowledge to the younger generation and to prepare them to create their own knowledge in future careers, but two distinct changes can be seen from earlier times. On the one hand, members of the teaching profession are largely selected on the basis of their research, which might concern the production of texts but more likely concerns empirical or philosophical studies of relevance to their disciplines. Teaching comes, then, as an auxiliary activity that follows the patterns prevalent in the host institution and among colleagues. On the other hand, there are many more students entering higher education as a stage in a career development rather than for personal fulfilment, and in all probability their schooling has been broader and less rigorous. How can we imagine, then, that the traditional mix of lectures, tutorials and examinations grounded in set texts can satisfy the educational needs or wishes of the modern students?

What would the character of the “profession of university teaching” be? There are mixed reports of professions, professionalism and being professional, largely confused by the semantics of the use of the terms in everyday language. But there are sets of criteria that might be appropriate here, such as these which Carr cites:

- (i) that the occupation in question provides important or valued public service; (ii) that it requires substantial knowledge and skill involving extensive education and/or training; (iii) that it embodies something like a moral or ethical code spelling out the nature of professional duties; (iv) that its workers have appropriate scope for the exercise of independent ('autonomous') thought and judgement in complex circumstances; (v) that it is organised on a self-regulating basis for purposes of recruitment and discipline.

(Carr 2013:8)

There is little room for dispute that the academic occupation of tutor, lecturer or professor accords with the criteria (i) to (iii), at least with respect to the disciplinary reaches of the work. The last criterion can clearly be seen as appropriate for those

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

professions in which workers are traditionally (though not necessarily the case today) self-standing, such as lawyers, doctors and architects; but in what ways would it apply to the profession of university teaching? If the organisation of university teaching were put on to a self-regulating basis it would mean that the power of a teaching profile would be on a par with a research profile when appointments and promotions are made, and the discipline of university teaching would be regulated by a body that comes from the teaching corps with responsibility for researching and articulating the ways in which the profession can and should be carried out, assessed and developed. But those are political issues that cannot be readily addressed through SoTL engagement, though academics with a SoTL background of critiquing and enquiring into the practices of teaching and learning would be well equipped to take up the political challenge.

The fourth criterion is more problematic, and it is that which we primarily address here: that university teachers should be equipped with the competence to “exercise independent thought and judgment in complex circumstances”. We can go further and state that the body of knowledge on which such independent thought and judgment rest needs to be grounded in research and ongoing reflection in the context of teaching of one’s discipline to the students of one’s institution. And that is where the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning has an important role to play in the life of the institution of higher education. The criteria for appointment and promotion, as well as the disciplinary regulation would then have a rigorous basis in scholarship.

The professions can also be defined as those areas of work where not only do the workers determine the basis on which the work is conducted, assessed and developed, but also where they can clearly delimit their area of jurisdiction. To unpack that statement in this case, university faculty bear responsibility for researching and articulating the ways in which their profession can and should be carried out, assessed and developed. The aspect of “researching” is important, to distance the quality of teaching in higher education from the transmission of experience through an apprentice-like entry to the field, following one’s own teachers and the taken for granted structures of the institution. The aspect of “articulating” is important if a shared understanding is to be established. And why should these two aspects be regarded? Why, because without teachers challenging their own experience of being taught in circumstances that differ from those they teach in, the context created for student learning today will fall short of the desired standard. And because the outcomes of researching teaching practices, keeping learning in focus, needs to create a somewhat uniform view of the challenges of teaching and learning, therefore needs to be shared, and that demands articulation.

CHAPTER 9 • THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING – ITS CONSTITUTION ...

To return to the notion of transformative potential, we can now see that the whole of SoTL has bearing on the status of the profession and the potential for its transformation, at the individual, the institutional and the societal levels.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter and this book, we reflect on the outcomes of this project and our analysis in the light of the literature as reviewed in Chapter 1. Of particular interest, we feel, is that our analysis and the domains-based framework which it has developed offers a coherent basis for thinking about the constitution of SoTL without having to attempt a reduction to a single, all encompassing definition or unifying conceptualisation, an option which Trigwell (2013) has reported is no longer considered viable. By recognising seven domains of SoTL activity and interest – five core and two contextual domains – it provides a means for embracing the diversity that is evident in SoTL work and it establishes a basis for clarifying which aspects of this diversity are being addressed at any given time, while leaving the door open for further domains to be identified should the need arise. The utility of this ability has been demonstrated in this chapter both from the perspective of providing a common framework for understanding the nature of the very different kinds of SoTL work to be found in the chapters of this book and for discussing the transformative potential of that work and of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning work in general.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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