

Partnerships for Internationalization: Fostering Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Dilnoza Khasilova

Assessment/Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Specialist, Teaching and Learning Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.

Email: dkhasilo@uwyo.edu

Tags

Internationalization and Global Learning; Partnerships; Program Design; Program Assessment; Professional Training; Student Learning and Development; University/Higher Education

Setting

Kate is a new specialist in a Teaching and Learning Center at a U.S. land-grant university. The Center supports faculty to be more effective teachers by encouraging faculty to learn about the research on effective teaching practices and to study how students learn. Faculty are asked to do research, not just on their own discipline, but also on how teaching and learning happens within their discipline. The Center supports faculty of all disciplines in conducting assessments of their own teaching practices. This is known as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

The university has a strategic plan prioritizing increased assessment of student learning and has allocated resources to this work. Aligned with this plan, Kate's main responsibilities include establishing campus partnerships for SoTL initiatives. She provides faculty and program directors (including instructors, staff, and graduate assistants) training on SoTL assessment resources/tools, SoTL assessment research proposal writing, and current assessment practices. Kate also facilitates consultations, workshops, and learning communities.

Kate's research includes reviewing current and previous SoTL assessment work, analyzing data and trends, and evaluating effectiveness and potential for growth and change based on these findings. Although she is new, she is well-equipped with resources on campus and has worked in the areas of program design, assessment, and

the scholarship of teaching and learning. Additionally, Kate has experience as an international educator, having designed and run programs to teach about languages and cultures.

Case

Kate, upon being hired, rebuilt the SoTL program and identified three primary areas for new SoTL initiatives:

- fostering a culture of SoTL among campus partners,
- providing support for SoTL scholars to advance teaching by looking into students' learning,
- and enhancing student involvement as partners (SaP), including in international SoTL Initiatives.

These three areas aim to advance teaching and learning in alignment with the institution's strategic planning. Embedded in all three goals is a theme of internationalization. Internationalization efforts in SoTL involve collaborating with faculty, instructors, and educators from different countries and cultural contexts to explore teaching and learning practices from diverse perspectives. Cross-cultural studies and comparative analyses can reveal how pedagogical approaches may need to be adapted for different educational settings across the globe. Engaging in SoTL through an internationalization lens helps promote the sharing and dissemination of effective teaching and learning strategies around the world.

Kate started offering new SoTL programming such as learning cafes and writing retreats for faculty and staff. However, building collaborations and engaging in SoTL projects proved challenging. Although some sessions and meetings were productive for Kate, challenges included the following:

- Time constraints: Faculty often have heavy workloads with teaching, research, and service responsibilities, making it difficult to dedicate time to additional SoTL projects or collaborations.
- Lack of incentives or recognition: SoTL work is not always valued or recognized in tenure and promotion decisions or performance evaluations, so there is limited motivation for faculty and staff to engage in these projects.
- Disciplinary silos: Collaborating across disciplines is complicated by differences in pedagogical approaches, research methodologies, and academic cultures.
- Institutional Support: Lack of funding, resources, or institutional support for SoTL initiatives hinders collaboration and project development.
- Methodological challenges: Some faculty and staff do not have the necessary research skills or experience in educational research methodologies to effectively carry out SoTL projects.

Despite these challenges, Kate sought to motivate faculty and staff to work on SoTL projects. In addition to providing assessment tools, Kate held ongoing meetings with program heads to discuss the benefits of SoTL engagement and hosted sessions in collaboration with other resource offices. She sought funding to engage faculty and staff in SoTL and aimed to introduce international SoTL projects to encourage global partnerships such as international faculty exchanges. This would allow faculty members to observe and learn from teaching and learning practices in different cultural contexts, and potentially collaborate on SoTL projects. Another example of global partnerships are virtual SoTL research collaborations. Online platforms, video conferencing, and shared workspaces can enable cross-cultural collaborations on SoTL research, curriculum development, or teaching innovation.

As the academic year was coming to a close, Kate focused on building relationships with campus leadership. Looking forward to her second year in the role, she planned to revise sessions, launch SoTL workshops focusing on course learning outcomes, and write grant proposals. Kate decided to focus on individual SoTL scholars to address challenges and advance programs and teaching. She hoped these changes would better develop a SoTL culture on campus.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- How can the Teaching and Learning Center facilitate genuine and supportive engagement between siloed departments on campus?
- How does the SoTL initiative in partnering with the campus programs and departments contribute to the institution's broader strategic planning and assessment planning?
- Given the financial constraints mentioned in the case, what creative approaches or alternative sources of funding could help the Center overcome financial limitations?
- How does the SoTL initiative contribute to the institution's broader internationalization goals such development of students' cross-cultural understandings and competencies?
- How could the campus partners, including International Programs, benefit from collaborating with the Teaching and Learning Center to build global partnerships?
- How can university International Education offices build a culture of SoTL and assessment with support from their campus colleagues?