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Book Review: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Canada: Institutional Impact

Jessica Pearce

Mohawk College, jpearce439@gmail.com

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Book Review: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Canada: Institutional Impact

Keywords

scholarship of teaching and learning, institutional implementation, case studies, Canada, book review; advancement des connaissances en enseignement et en apprentissage, mise en oeuvre institutionnelle, études de cas, Canada, critique de livre

Simmons, N. (Ed.). (2016). The scholarship of teaching and learning in Canada: Institutional impact. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 146.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Canada: Institutional Impact, edited by Simmons (2016) and a special issue for *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, presents case studies discussing how the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) has been implemented at various post-secondary institutions in Canada. SoTL is the study of instructors' teaching practices and students' learning with the goal of increasing student learning and the overall quality of academic delivery. Authors from various Canadian colleges and universities discuss the outcomes of SoTL-implemented programs in their institutions and how they have impacted the pedagogical environment. Ultimately, the authors advocate that SoTL involvement in post-secondary climates is beneficial for instructors, students, and institutions. The intended audience of this book is faculty and administrators working within colleges and universities, institutional leaders including presidents and deans, government officials, and community members. These audiences can learn from institutions that have adapted SoTL practices. *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Canada: Institutional Impact* can also act as a springboard for instructors and staff who are learning about the field and are considering how other institutions have embedded it within their programming to potentially implement it within their own institutions.

This 107-page text is effectively organized and clearly written. Within many short chapters, different case studies are presented from specific colleges or universities that have developed SoTL initiatives and evaluated their impact. The authors outline each implemented SoTL program, its successes and setbacks, and its efficacy in a clear and succinct manner. Due to the clarity of the writing and a preface outlining the nature of SoTL, readers, whether familiar or unfamiliar with SoTL principles, can enjoy this book. Additionally, the editor successfully synthesizes evident themes for successful implementation of SoTL based on the case studies including the use of the micro-meso-macro-mega framework, social networking, leadership, and the developmental perspective of SoTL initiatives while encouraging other academics to consider these themes at their respective institutions. This concluding chapter clearly summarizes the ingredients of successful SoTL implementation while encouraging readers to further explore it and consider how it can be personally adapted (to increase individual teaching practices) and institutionally adapted (to increase student success and learning overall).

The title of this special issue, *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Canada: Institutional Impact*, implies that an examination of SoTL at institutions across Canada will take place; however, the case studies only examine colleges and universities in five provinces: New Brunswick (Renaissance College), Ontario (McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence, the University of Waterloo, and the University of Guelph), Alberta (Mount Royal University), Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan), and British Columbia (Simon Fraser University). Canada's remaining provinces and territories go unexplored, and there is a significant focus on Ontario institutions. Future research could explore SoTL's involvement or lack of involvement in these other geographic regions.

Further research could also explore the SoTL identity as a quasi-disciplinary movement, specifically how it can be negatively viewed by institutions and scholars. At several points throughout the book, authors hint that SoTL's efficacy has been disputed. For example, Mengel (2012) states that SoTL is often regarded as a "stepchild of scholarly work" (p. 44) and, at the University of Saskatchewan, Wuetherick, Yu, and Greer (2012) disclose that SoTL "is not

regarded as a ‘real’ form of scholarship by their departments” (p. 67). Yet this perception remains unexamined. Further exploration of SoTL’s undervalued nature could lead to proactive dialogues on the subject, perhaps resulting in recognizing SoTL as an important field of scholarly work and its eventual entrenchment into more Canadian colleges and universities.

This book is useful for academics and administrators interested in learning more about SoTL, especially those who seek to increase their teaching efficacy. Further, faculty who are familiarizing themselves with this field for the first time will benefit from this work, as the editor’s notes and foreword provide a clear framework of the SoTL field. The authors advocate, through detailed case studies, that SoTL involvement in post-secondary climates is beneficial for instructors, students, and institutions. Overall, this is a highly-recommended read.