



Defining and supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): A sector-wide study

Discipline case studies

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The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Creative Arts

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The creative arts disciplines focus on creative practice and include: Fine Art, Photography, Film, Graphic Design/Communication, Graphic Media, Digital Media, Fashion Design/Marketing/Management, Creative Writing and Journalism, Digital Gaming, and Architecture. The varied nature of pedagogic practice in the creative arts and the emphasis on creativity can serve as a catalyst for inquiry into pedagogic practice and approaches to learning and teaching in multi-disciplinary higher education institutions (HEIs).

The development of the **UK Professional Standards Framework** (UKPSF 2011) for the higher education sector has driven a formal approach to encouraging scholarly inquiry for new academic staff in all institutions through the development of postgraduate courses in learning and teaching or academic practice. These courses create opportunities for staff to explore pedagogy in creative arts disciplines and carry out small-scale **research projects (UCA2015b) and action research projects (GSA 2015b)**. Teaching development projects completed as part of formal learning and teaching modules and published online (UAL 2015b) as OERs (Open Education Resources) indicate the breadth of scholarly inquiry that creative arts academics undertake (from skills such as drawing, to practices of assessment, the flipped classroom and OERs, to critical thinking on diversity, and reflective learning).

The design of courses for learning and teaching in the specialised institutions has enabled a focus on the dialogue between theory and practice (GSA 2015b); and on “the key issues affecting teachers and learners in contemporary creative arts contexts” (UCA 2015b). This recognises both the discourse on distinctive discipline practice (Huber 2002; Chick 2008; Kreber 2009; Cleaver 2014) and the need to underpin creative arts learning and teaching practices with generic pedagogy.

The development of **groups** such as the research centre PedRIO at University of Plymouth (UoP 2015c) creates opportunities for Art and Design academics to join a cross-institution network and to gain support and receive positive encouragement.

Staff engage with learning about pedagogy and their teaching practice to varying degrees and creative arts staff are no different: Quinn (2012) suggests that teaching (and its research) are not valued and so requirements to engage with staff development can be viewed negatively. But as outputs from staff taking development courses in specialised universities evidence, many participants engage positively with scholarly inquiry (UAL 2015b). And pedagogic research in the creative arts is positively supported by groups such as the **Group for Learning in Art and Design** (GLAD) established in 1990 “in response to changes in higher education which were to impact on how Art and Design was taught in higher and further education and specialist art schools” (GLAD 2015). As well, **the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design** (CHEAD) at its 2015 Conference explores “how we might visualise and look forward to the changing cartography of the Art and Design research landscape as it comes into public view from REF 2014” (CHEAD 2015).

Approaches to **recognising scholarly inquiry** vary but include:

1. the development of case study archives (UCA 2015c; RGU 2015; MMU 2015b);
2. funding for pedagogic research projects: such as the Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme (UoP 2015b) and the Goldsmiths Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fellowships which “fund academic fellowships to support educational development projects within departments that work to enhance quality and disseminate innovation in learning, teaching and assessment” (Goldsmiths 2015);

3. Teaching Scholarships at UAL (UAL 2015d) which provide project and development funding and a special responsibility allowance;
4. institutional teaching fellow scheme that supports both best practice in pedagogy and related scholarship activities leading to recognition with HEA fellowship (UoW 2015).

Creative arts academics present their inquiry at **international discipline-focused events** and conferences including Cumulus, ELIA, and GLAD. Specific HE sector resources are accessible from the former Art Design Media Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy. Further resources from Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) projects funded by HEFCE are also available (CETL 2015).

Increasingly creative arts academics also present at generic HE sector events on learning and teaching including ISSoTL, ICED and SRHE and pedagogic themed events such as Threshold Concepts (threshold concepts), AHE (assessment) and ALT (learning technology).

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Conferences

- AHE Assessment in Higher Education (2015) <http://aheconference.com/>
- ALT Association for Learning Technology (2015) <https://www.alt.ac.uk/altc>
- Cumulus: International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art and Design
<http://www.cumulusassociation.org/home>
- ELIA: European League of Institutes of the Arts <http://www.elia-artschools.org/>
- ICED: The International Consortium for Educational Development <http://icedonline.net/>
- ISSoTL: The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning <http://www.issotl.com/issotl15/>
- SRHE: The Society for Research in Higher Education (2015) <http://www.srhe.ac.uk/>
- Threshold Concepts in Practice (2015): <https://www.dur.ac.uk/education/cap/conferences/thresholds2014/programme/>

Creative education journals

Art Design and Communication in Higher Education (2015) <http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=139/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

International Journal of Art & Design Education (iJADE) (2015) <http://www.nsead.org/publications/ijade.aspx> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

Websites

Art Design Media Subject Centre (2015) <http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/> or <http://networksadm.blogspot.co.uk/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

CETL (2015) CETL Dissemination Information

<http://evidencenet.pbworks.com/w/page/36516570/CETL%20Dissemination%20Information> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

[Note: lists projects and host institution; resources not always accessible]

CHEAD (2015) Communicating Insights. Conference 18 March 2015 University of Brighton.

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ECA Edinburgh College of Art (2015) Chancellor's Fellows <http://www.eca.ed.ac.uk/eca-home/news-events/eca-welcomes-applicants-for-tenure-track-fellowships> University of Edinburgh [Accessed 9 February 2015].

FMAD Faculty of Media Arts and Design (2015) <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/faculties/media> University of Westminster [Accessed 9 February 2015].

GLAD (2015) The Group for Learning in Art and Design <http://www.gladhe.org.uk/>

GSA Glasgow School of Art (2015a) <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

GSA (2015b) PG Cert Learning and Teaching <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/study/graduate-degrees/pg-cert-learning-teaching/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

Grays' School of Art (2015) <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/areas-of-study/subjects/art-and-design> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

JISC (2015) <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

NUA Norwich University of the Arts (2015) <http://www.nua.ac.uk/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

MMU Manchester Metropolitan University (2015a) Academic CPD Route Planner

<http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/cpd/routes/index.php> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

MMU (2015b) Good Practice Exchange http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/good_practice/index.php [Accessed 9 February 2015].

MMU (2015c) Senior Learning and Teaching Fellows <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/humanresources/current-staff/pathways/academic-pathways/senior-learning-and-teaching-fellow/> [Accessed 16 December 2015].

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RGU(2015) DELTA Snapshots <http://campusmoodle.rgu.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=79121> Unpublished [internal access only].

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<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/UKPSF.pdf> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UAL University of the Arts London (2015a) <http://www.arts.ac.uk/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UAL (2015b) CLTAD Teaching Development Projects <http://process.arts.ac.uk/category/project-groups/cltad-teaching-development-projects> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UAL (2015c) Academic Pathways <http://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/teaching-and-learning/ma-academic-practice/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UAL (2015d) Teaching Scholarships <http://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/teaching-and-learning/funding-and-awards/ual-teaching-scholars/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UCA University for the Creative Arts (2015a) <http://www.ucreative.ac.uk/> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UCA University for the Creative Arts (2015b) Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Arts Education <http://www.ucreative.ac.uk/PG-certificate-creative-arts-education> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UCA (2015c) Case studies in Learning and Teaching <http://community.ucreative.ac.uk/article/43025/Case-Studies-in-Learning-%26-Teaching> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UoP University of Plymouth (2015a) PGCAP Schedule of taught element 2014/15 https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/2/2428/PGCAP_Schedule_of_taught_elements_2014_1v2.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2015].

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UoP (2015c) PedRIO <http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/research/pedrio/Pages/default.aspx> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UoP (2015d) Designing critical message <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/whats-on/envelope-designing-critical-messages> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

UoW University of Westminster (2015) New University of Westminster Teaching Fellow <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/business/2012/new-university-of-westminster-teaching-fellow> [Accessed 9 February 2015].

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Humanities

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Humanists have struggled to be involved in SoTL in ways that **reflect their epistemologies** and resulting practices (Bass and Linkon 2008; Chick 2013; Manarin 2012). Their evidence of student learning is **student texts** (written and oral), and their methods are **close reading, analysis, and thematisation** of these texts. Because of their modes of meaning-making and their relatively small class sizes, Humanistic SoTL studies may be characterised as small in scale but **rich** in description and theorisation. The products of their studies foreground direct quotes from students that both illustrate meaningful patterns and capture the complexity and **learners' voices**.

However, humanists engaging in SoTL report being excluded, **marginalised**, or made into amateur social scientists that result in work that doesn't speak effectively from their disciplinary expertise or to their disciplinary colleagues (Pace 2004), and that often aren't valued by SoTL colleagues from other fields. In Literary Studies, for example, narratives of classroom learning may be dismissed as 'merely' anecdotal evidence (Salvatori 2002; Chick 2009). Attempts to establish a SoTL presence at the field's enormous Modern Language Association (MLA) conference has been slow but not unsuccessful (Michaelson 2013). SoTL's use of **empirical evidence** of student learning challenges philosophers who describe the classroom in theoretical terms (Bloch-Schulman 2009). Historians have been the most SoTL-engaged humanists, in part because early disciplinary leaders founded the active History SoTL (an ISSOTL External Affiliate), and perhaps also because some self-identify as social scientists, making SoTL more accessible. Finally, although much of the research in English composition and world languages would qualify as SoTL, they rarely self-identify as such or cite (or get cited in) SoTL work.

The ISSOTL's Humanities Interest Group represents a collective effort to establish a Humanities presence at the annual ISSOTL conference. Their website, collaborations, and shared models of SoTL aim to help humanists conduct SoTL that emerges from their disciplinary backgrounds and explain their work (what, how, and why) in ways that SoTL colleagues will find meaningful.

Recognition of SoTL depends on institutional type. On campuses with high teaching missions, Humanities departments (except perhaps Philosophy) are the most likely to include SoTL (by definition, sometimes by name) in their reward structures. Samples include Belmont University (Nashville, TN), Oxford College at Emory (Oxford, GA), and the University of Wisconsin Colleges (statewide).

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The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the Sciences

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In the Sciences, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) emerged against the backdrop of long-standing practice where faculty members published an array of work, some of which was research-based, some of which was not (e.g., *Journal of Chemical Education*, *American Journal of Physics*, and the more recent *CBE-Life Science Education*). There is also a large and active community, historically located in schools of education and departments of Psychology, who pursued world-class, Science education research-based studies, who published in the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, the *International Journal of Science Education*, and *Cognition and Instruction*, among others). Until recently, studies in post-secondary Science settings have been minimally represented.

Given that about 94% of the 4,800 colleges and universities in the United States **do not have graduate (PhD) programmes**, explicitly introducing the rhetoric of scholarly practice into this large group of smaller institutions has given academic administrations a way to respond to the need for **accountability** in higher education. **Promotion and tenure** guidelines at some of these schools include SoTL guidelines as a way to express expectations for faculty members to carry out inquiry into their education practices. Institutional Teaching and Learning Centers, through their professional development staff, generally provide the support and guidance for faculty members to organise, implement, discuss, and or report out their work in SoTL. A typical SoTL report in the Sciences might be a Physics class in which **peer-led team learning** (PLTL) was introduced, with the **change in student achievement** on examinations used as **evidence** of efficacy. Or, perhaps a Chemistry laboratory class in which **students have designed their own experiments** - how would this group respond to a performance-based assessment (carrying out a procedure) and how would it **compare with a group that followed standard procedures?**

At research-intensive colleges and universities, the tradition for having faculty members with a dedicated specialisation in Science education research is more typical than its other, mainstream faculty members carrying out education or education research projects. In fact, over the past decade or so, the number of education research reports at the post-secondary level has been increasing as a reflection of a growing community of university education research specialists who have gathered under the DBER rubric: **Discipline-Based Education Research**. In 2012, the National Research Council (NRC), a part of the US National Academies of Science, published a review of this area, which they dub "DBER". In two special issues of the *Journal of Research on Science Teaching*, the questions of (a) what is the unique contribution of the discipline in post-secondary education, and thus on studies of teaching and learning, and (b) what are the distinctive targets that disciplinary depth brings to the future of research in these areas?

Recently, after about 20 years of experimentation, the Department of Chemistry at the University of Michigan permanently budgeted its CSIE|UM Program (Chemical Sciences at the Interface of Education; sites.lsa.umich.edu/csie-um). By combining instructional development with future faculty education, CSIE|UM provides support for all of the faculty members in the department to pursue work **in instructional development and education research** by allowing them to collaborate with students, at all levels, who are interested in faculty careers. CSIE|UM projects are highly contextualised in the department's undergraduate education program, and aimed at developing new ideas and/or examining existing practices and then making the results public through publications and presentations. In addition to the standard features of SoTL, CSIE|UM also addresses a scholarly practice that is underrepresented in most SoTL settings, namely, identifying and educating the **next generation of faculty** who are better prepared to advance teaching and learning.

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