

Positioning the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Firmly in the Center of Health Promotion Pedagogy

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Historically, the work of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) scholars has been grounded in multi-disciplinary connections to educational psychology and pedagogical research. SoTL research and commentary intends to answer questions about what is, what is possible, what works, and what conceptual frameworks explain learning, teaching, and pedagogy (Hutchings, 2000). *Pedagogy in Health Promotion* provides examples of the rich variety and scope of the scholarship of teaching and learning. SoTL work observes and comments on teaching practice (Flores et al., 2021; Kratzke et al., 2021), develops and tests theories and evidence-based frameworks (Kuganathan et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2021), provides quantifiable explanations (Blavos et al., 2022; Foutch et al., 2022), pursues qualitative explorations (Muzaffar et al., 2020), engages in experimental research (Djulus et al., 2020), increases our ability to be compassionate and inclusive (James et al., 2020; Mezuk et al., 2021) and shares deep reflections about our collective experience of teaching and learning (Derreth et al., 2021). Combined, these scholarly endeavors help us to better understand how to provide effective and supportive education to health promotion and public health students, develop and challenge critical skills for health promotion and public health practice and ultimately, benefit communities and populations, and improve health outcomes.

The scholarship of teaching and learning is grounded in rigorous empirical methodologies and underpinned by attested theories and frameworks. Commonly, SoTL scholars take cues from educational psychology, sociology, or behavioral psychology. Learning theories generated from these disciplines are logical companions for health promotion and public health pedagogy because they offer a structure to drive empirical enquiry and better understand learning and teaching in health promotion. As a community of scholars, we are obliged to challenge our learning and teaching practice. However, failure to situate our learning and teaching within a theoretical context, fails to uphold standards of rigor expected from a research community. Consequently, it is bequest us all to ensure health

promotion and public health pedagogy is embedded in learning and teaching theories and frameworks.

As SoTL scholars, we are curious about our practice. We use our intuition, anecdotes, and observations to pique questions about how and why we learn and how to better our teaching practice (Chick, 2018). We begin by asking meaningful questions, reviewing the SoTL literature, making connections between educational research and practice and thinking about theories of pedagogy which can inform our learning and teaching practice within the context of our disciplinary field. We select the theory or framework which best resonates with our enquiry to help revise and clarify our question. Reviewing educational theorists such as Weber, Marton, Bandura, and others helps shape the questions we ask. Theoretical models such as ecological, health belief, social cognitive, reasoned action, and others help shape how we design our programs. These refined and focused questions inform the most appropriate methodology, ensure the intended questions are answered, and the findings are relevant, useful, and valuable. Observations, interviews and focus groups, experimental methodologies, and case studies as well as reflexive practice of teaching and learning help us to explore what works, understand what is, learn what is possible, whether theories hold up over time and help us to act. When we use the most appropriate methodology to explore a theory or framework which underpins our empirical enquiry, we gain a deeper understanding of how we can improve our teaching and student outcomes. In doing so, we aspire to graduate students who remain inquisitive, are imbued with sense of robust and critical inquiry and are not afraid to challenge the status quo of current health promotion and public health practice.

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Those of us who teach in health promotion and public health are comfortable with labeling ourselves as educational practitioners. We are not as comfortable with referring to ourselves as educational scholars. Yet, it is likely you are actively using SoTL strategies to shape your teaching and learning approaches and curriculum development. If you have tried a new teaching strategy, if you have made changes to your curriculum, if you have structured activities so students apply a framework, you are using SoTL strategies. As you consider the shift from sharing your insights with colleagues at work to the broader pedagogical community, you may be exploring how to present your SoTL efforts. To begin, SoTL research is held accountable to the same standards as other research. The questions explored should be grounded in theory and our answers to those questions should be backed by evidence. Methodologies used are ones you may find familiar and include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. SoTL work, like other research, should provide discussion about its impact across the field and encourage us to explore new ideas. Original research in SoTL develops and tests theory, seeks explain how the learning environment impacts the learning process, explores solutions to learning challenges, and strives to find effective practices (Coombe et al., 2020; Crowell, 2018; Gainforth et al., 2021; Wingert & Hale, 2021). Quantitative research may seem challenging as sample sizes are often small in the classroom. Consider the use of cross sectional and longitudinal methods to mitigate this. All SoTL research occurs within context (theoretical construct, historical time, social construct, geographical location, and so on) and qualitative research provides a rich understanding of contextualized and nuanced environments and the lived experience of the phenomena under enquiry.

Descriptive best practices, underpinned by theory and the evidence-based literature, provide opportunities to share our experiences with peers so they might benefit from what we have learned about the application of teaching strategies and curriculum development (Brown, 2017; Callaghan-Koru & Aqil, 2022; Caruso et al., 2019; Godley et al., 2021; Pinahs-Schultz & Beck, 2016; Wigginton et al., 2019). In essence, this applied work helps us to implement what works for educators and practitioners of health promotion and public health. Commentaries involving perspectives on pedagogy help us to delve more deeply into teaching within the context of public health and health promotion (Glanz, 2017; Hughes et al., 2020; Pember, 2019), and to acknowledge contemporary issues so we can decide how we want to address them in our classrooms and in the field (James et al., 2019; Merzel, 2020, 2021; Sendall, 2021). SOTL work enhances our ability to engage in scholarly teaching as it provides the research and perspectives that enrich the literature, training, and reflections that educators use to strengthen their own teaching practice.

As an aspiring and successful SoTL scholar, it would enlarge your worldview and strengthen your research to engage in robust discourse with researchers outside of the discipline. So that you can engage effectively with SOTL scholars across disciplines, develop an awareness of current theories and frameworks, as well as the evidence that has been tested. It is important for you to explore the learning experience through multiple lenses over time. It is also important to understand how your practice impacts educational research, social behavioral research, and your disciplinary field. Strive to implement innovative practice based on sound pedagogy. In this way, you will find your work has impacts not only health promotion and public health, but beyond.

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