



The Contribution of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through Self-reflection and Knowledge Sharing

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ABSTRACT

A people-centred approach placing value on humanity is at the core of numerous democratic-led governments, and educational institutions to solve socio-economic and environmental challenges facing civilisation. This paper explored the contribution of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in emphasising reflection and theories to enable people to improve teaching and learning and to reinforce the application of logic when addressing barriers confronting humanity. The purpose of this study was to examine the relevance of SoTL platforms using reflection and theories to improve the quality of teaching and learning by promoting intellectual and ethical virtues in human interactions. Qualitative data was generated from literature and a purposively sampled respondent group of twelve lecturers in one of the South African universities. Interviews were conducted by using an interview schedule questionnaire whilst data collected was categorised and analysed into themes. The findings revealed that SoTL encourages knowledge sharing and inspires academics to reflect on their practice by answering some of the questions that hinder effective teaching and learning and its snowball effect on improved human interactions in general. Answering complex questions relating to teaching and learning requires all parties beyond borders to share ideas, reflect, think critically, engage in research, and apply relevant theories that embed values that inform human interactions. The implication is that SoTL discourse can eliminate the silo and irrational ways of solving problems by employing inquiry and critical reflective strategies to stimulate reasoning and restore values that position humanity at the centre of governments and all human interactions. Therefore, SoTL approaches can foster intellectual decisions that can sustain the upholding of ethics and intellectual virtues and advance human dignity.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the fusion of democratic principles in the pedagogic space, there has been a much-unprecedented decline in humanity and human values evidenced by the wars that have taken place over the past decades and continue to take place in certain parts of the world. The concept of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is not only an academic platform that accommodates researchers from different disciplines, but it also follows a human-centred thread. It employs inquiry, reflection, and collaboration as instruments used by the SoTL community of practice to share knowledge and experiences. It has gained momentum and opened dialogue and scholarly inquiry to transform teaching and learning activities in line with human rights principles.¹ Being

¹ Pat Hutchings, Mary T Huber, and Anthony Ciccone, "Feature Essays: Getting There: An Integrative Vision of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 5, no. 1 (2011): 31; Emily O Gravett, "The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Religious Studies," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 84, no. 3 (2016): 589–616.

grounded in theories, SoTL cannot be compared to some of the teaching and learning models or approaches that were introduced to impact the teaching and learning context but did not yield substantial results in enhancing human dignity and humanity. Recognition of human rights as a global phenomenon has prompted a shift in focus around teaching and learning approaches that popularised a learner-centred approach, a trajectory that created a new space of change and inquiry.

As posited by Bananuka, overcoming some of the day-to-day challenges faced by humanity requires 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, conflict resolution skills, problem-solving, communication skills, digital literacy, and social and cultural skills.² At the same time, what is crucial for change is to embrace humanity, improve human relations and move away from the conventional way of teaching and learning wherein a scholarly investigation is adopted in response to classroom challenges. A need to follow teaching and learning that is informed by new approaches and a scholarly angle is pertinent to enable the development of students' high cognitive levels and society at large. Also needed in human interaction is the capacity for people to solve problems rationally. Through reflection and collaborative processes of sharing and publicising scholarly contributions in SoTL, critical thinking skills are tapped, which deepen knowledge to improve the practice and lessons learned are also applied in real-life contexts.

Methods used in SoTL are to be viewed as progressive since problems identified in various higher institutions of learning led to the emergence of such a platform to respond to changes and trends followed globally. The modus operandi of SoTL in accommodating both virtual and face-to-face exchange of knowledge thus indicates that SoTL fits the description of making knowledge borderless quality to improve the teaching and learning practice and intellectual virtues in general. Notably, SoTL allows academics from different institutions regionally and globally to share new innovations and tools that can transform the pedagogical relationship as well as mitigate challenges in professional practice in general. However, not all academics are using the platform to collaborate with others to share their ideas and expertise.

According to Boyer, SoTL is categorised into four scholarly works, which include the following: the scholarship of discovery, which refers to research; the scholarship of integration, which represents the synthesis of knowledge across disciplines; the scholarship of practice, whereby knowledge is applied in solving problems experienced by the society; and lastly, the scholarship of teaching, which focuses on using knowledge meaningfully to contribute to effective learning.³ Since SoTL is research-intensive, it means that it can sensitise people to think critically, communicate effectively, and reflect critically about workable solutions that are not only applicable in the teaching and learning context but that can be applied in real-life situations. The overall aim is to reduce human conflicts, human gross violations, and injustices through reflective teaching and learning juxtaposed with theories to develop intellectual and ethical virtues. Similarly, society must acquire knowledge enriched with theories and values so that people can learn and reflect on creating healthier habits of living that can translate towards upholding high moral standards in our daily interactions. SoTL is a borderless community of practice, and its focus is on improving teaching and learning, a role done by all academics who teach but the crucial factor is, that not all academics in different faculties are joining the platform to share their best practices. This paper thus examines the ripple effect of SoTL activities, not only to improve the quality of teaching but to elevate inquiry that can enable people to improve their human interactions, solve human problems rationally, and apply values that can create a better life for all. To accomplish the task the following questions will be examined. How does SoTL contribute towards promoting intellectual virtues? And to what extent does SoTL advance the recognition of human values and humanity in human interactions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Purpose of Education

According to Saunders, the purpose of education is to produce rounded and capable individuals who are not only developed for the world of work but who also lead meaningful lives.⁴ The 21st century requires a sound education that enables people to cope with different challenges, including the possession of different competencies and skills. The implication thereof is that a teaching and learning space that is influenced by scholarly work can enable people to think about practices and innovation that can elevate humanity and human dignity. Following Kant's teachings on existential-phenomenological philosophy, human dignity must be one

² Twine Hanington Bananuka, "The Pursuit of Critical-Emancipatory Pedagogy in Higher Education," in *Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century: Pedagogy, Research and Community-Engagement* (Springer, 2023), 69–86.

³ E. L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ : Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁴ Ben Saunders, "Education For Democracy Or For Itself: A Critical Note On Martha C. Nussbaum's Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs The Humanities," *Representation* 49, no. 2 (2013): 241–51.

of the most important values that the world considers for people's existence.⁵ This means that the path to advance humanity and human dignity are trajectories that should form the basis of scholarly work embedded in theories and reflection to advance knowledge sharing and the adoption of new approaches.

Arguably, the research-intensive and value-laden approaches practised in SoTL can improve the quality of teaching and bring transformation that will not only remain in the classroom situation but can trickle down to benefit diverse nations who are experiencing conflicts. Therefore, formal education should be prioritised and transformed to promote the acquisition of competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, socio-emotional wellness, lifelong learning aptitudes, resilience, and positive self-concepts.⁶ This requires teaching and learning to embrace critical reflection sessions wherein theories are applied to emancipate people so that they can reconfigure human ethical relations that can change the world for the better. This assertion is supported by Robeyns, who maintains that outcomes of teaching and learning grounded in scholarly work have the power to improve the quality of life of a society.⁷ In the same vein, Theron and Mchunu assert that a capable state requires ideal principles and values.⁸ This implies that quality teaching and learning should be underpinned by sound values and principles.

Scholarly Teaching

According to various scholars, SoTL's focus is on teaching and learning inquiry, which is influenced by scholarly investigations to make teaching and learning a scholarly work.⁹ The implication thereof is that challenges that are encircling the world need a scholarly approach to develop society towards using its reasoning power as a positive trajectory that can elevate human worth and reclaim human's unique place above other species. In the same vein, Potter and Kustra describe scholarly teaching as a scholarly approach to teaching underpinned by critical reflection that is supported by systematically compiled evidence juxtaposed by reasoned theory and philosophical underpinnings.¹⁰ Therefore, scholarly teaching must translate into a transformation that recognises reason and human values as the highest ideals both at a local and global level.¹¹

Since SoTL operates through inquiry, it can stimulate deep thinking when members respond to pertinent questions that confront individuals with real issues inside and outside the classroom that pose barriers to progress and the accomplishment of other virtues. Notably, scholarly teachers reflect on their teaching, using classroom assessment techniques, discussing teaching issues with colleagues, as well as trying new innovations.¹² This means that SoTL activities can influence human interaction and classroom activities by also preparing students to learn to reflect and solve work-related issues and socio-economic and political problems, including environmental issues, systematically and rationally.¹³ Therefore, the main purpose of SoTL is to improve the quality of teaching through inquiry, whilst elements emerging from research is added to content to raise the standard of teaching and to produce holistic multi-ethnic world citizens who can take charge of world affairs.¹⁴ This requires teaching to adopt a research-intensive angle that can contribute towards enabling people to reconfigure human relations that can transform the world towards a humane path. To that effect, Robeyns endorses the idea that outcomes of teaching and learning grounded in scholarly work have the power to improve the quality of life of nations.¹⁵

⁵ Brent Dean Robbins, "The Heart of Humanistic Psychology: Human Dignity Disclosed through a Hermeneutic of Love," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 56, no. 3 (2016): 223–37.

⁶ Jennifer Pei-Ling Tan et al., "Educating for Twenty-First Century Competencies and Future-Ready Learners: Research Perspectives from Singapore," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 37, no. 4 (2017): 425–36.

⁷ Ingrid Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 17, no. 3 (2016): 397–414.

⁸ F. Theron and N. Mchunu, *Development, Change and the Change Agent: Facilitation at Grassroots*, 2nd ed. (Pretoria: : Van Schaick Publishers, 2016).

⁹ Barbara Mae Gayle et al., "Faculty Learning Processes: A Model for Moving from Scholarly Teaching to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," *Teaching and Learning Inquiry* 1, no. 1 (2013): 81–93.

¹⁰ Michael K Potter and Erika D H Kustra, "The Relationship between Scholarly Teaching and SoTL: Models, Distinctions, and Clarifications," *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 5, no. 1 (2011): 23.

¹¹ M. C. Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. (Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹² Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism."

¹³ Joelle Fanghanel et al., "Literature Review. Defining and Supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): A Sector-Wide Study," 2016.

¹⁴ Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism."

¹⁵ Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism."

Reflection

Nussbaum indicates that reflection is at the heart of SoTL to bring awareness about the plight of human interactions and to foster inquiry that will enable nations to unravel knots and solve complex problems.¹⁶ Since SoTL operates through reflection and dialogue and other methods of teaching, this implies that through reflection, which stimulates inquiry, SoTL can contribute towards empowering individuals to think carefully before resorting to rivalry and unethical dealings that violate human dignity. According to Simmons, Abrahamson, Deshler, Kensington-Miller, Manarin, Morón-García, and Renc-Roe, the use of reflection in SoTL creates dialogue, which influences the formation of academic identities.¹⁷ To that effect, reflection as another SoTL strategy becomes an enabler for critical debates that allow academics to share experiences, have a voice, hear others' experiences, deliberate on pertinent issues, and solve problems.

As posited by Kreber, reflection as one of the features of SoTL paves the way for the promotion of professional engagement and critical reflective inquiry to improve teaching and learning.¹⁸ Liu adds that the evaluation and reflection of one's teaching methods make provision for the adoption of new innovative ways that contribute towards a positive change in the teaching and learning encounter.¹⁹ The implication is that reflection positions human beings on a level that reconciles them to their ability to think things through and reflect on ways that can bring better solutions in diverse situations. Similarly, innovative ways that are adopted not only improve teaching and learning but can facilitate progressive actions that eliminate weaknesses and gaps not only in the classroom situation but also in real life, particularly in community engagement and civic obligations.²⁰ This implies that reflection not only makes teachers look deeply towards improving their practice but also has an influence on bringing learners to the centre of teaching and learning to deepen learning by connecting lessons to real-life situations.²¹ Robeyns thus suggests that the curriculum should convey knowledge and understanding, which promotes the principle of reflection to allow all participants to deliberate on pertinent issues affecting human development and human worth.²² This means that a healthy society should be grounded in reflective thinking as the base for teaching and learning to enable engagement, communication, and mutual respect.

Critical Thinking

Placing priority on human values and teaching humanity at all levels is key to promoting democracy in a civil society. In the same vein, humanity should pursue intellectual means to deal with abstract ideas and adopt better ways of resolving problems that recognise values related to humanity.²³ A critical thinker reflects deeply and follows logic to adopt refined solutions that also consider others' points of view.²⁴ The implication is that humans are expected to use their intellectual powers to separate their behaviour from that of animals.²⁵ This means that SoTL can impact nations meaningfully in conveying knowledge and understanding that helps society to solve problems from an informed angle of reflexivity, which in turn promotes a better life for all. Significantly, the scholarly knowledge present in SoTL engagement should be accompanied by principles of respect for human dignity, justice, ethics, equality, tolerance, responsibility, and good human relations to create

¹⁶ M. C. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. (Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

¹⁷ Nicola Simmons et al., "Conflicts and Configurations in a Liminal Space: SoTL Scholars' Identity Development," *Teaching and Learning Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (2013): 9–21.

¹⁸ Carolin Kreber, "Reviving the Ancient Virtues in the Scholarship of Teaching, with a Slight Critical Twist," *Higher Education Research & Development* 34, no. 3 (2015): 568–80.

¹⁹ Katrina Liu, "Critical Reflection as a Framework for Transformative Learning in Teacher Education," *Educational Review* 67, no. 2 (2015): 135–57.

²⁰ Ali Hébert and Petra Hauf, "Student Learning through Service Learning: Effects on Academic Development, Civic Responsibility, Interpersonal Skills and Practical Skills," *Active Learning in Higher Education* 16, no. 1 (2015): 37–49.

²¹ Edward Seidman et al., "Assessment of Pedagogical Practices and Processes in Low and Middle Income Countries: Findings from Secondary School Classrooms in Uganda," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 71 (2018): 283–96.

²² Robeyns, "Capabiltarianism."

²³ Saunders, "Education For Democracy Or For Itself: A Critical Note On Martha C. Nussbaum's Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs The Humanities"; Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. .

²⁴ Robert Ennis, "Critical Thinking: Reflection and Perspective Part II," *Inquiry: Critical Thinking across the Disciplines* 26, no. 2 (2011): 5–19; V. R. Ruggiero, *The Art of Thinking: A Guide to Critical and Creative Thought*, 10th ed. (New York, NY: Longman, 2012).

²⁵ M. C. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. (Princeton, NJ & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010).

a fair and just society for all.²⁶ Individuals thus need to be developed to apply knowledge to solve issues regionally and globally that violate world peace.²⁷ According to Robeyns, the world can learn to solve complex problems appropriately if supported by an education that produces holistic citizens who can reflect and balance thinking and emotions.²⁸ The implication is that the standard of teaching and learning can be enhanced when a scholarly approach to teaching is promoted.

Human Dignity

Stark places emphasis on human dignity and humanness as one of the government's functions to ensure justice for all.²⁹ In the same vein, Nussbaum includes logic as an intellectual virtue to drive human interactions and when not consistently applied leads to the strife that destroys human relationships and undermines their dignity.³⁰ Conflict prevailing amongst nations thus prompts an inquiry and reflection regarding the foundational principles that are shared in the pedagogical relationship that paves the way for other relationships to be formed in the real world. Hence the relevancy of SoTL to improve the teaching and learning relationship based on theories that provide knowledge in enhancing intellectual, social, and ethical principles to develop people who are anchored on all sides and can cope with the demands of the world in a befitting manner worthy of their dignity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Grant and Osanloo, a theoretical framework denotes assumptions, ideas and concepts grounded in research that support one's thinking or a lens that is used to view the world.³¹ This paper adopts Nussbaum's theory, which is derived from Socrates and Aristotle's teachings, which emphasise virtues such as ethics, equality, respect for human dignity and critical thinking.³² Whilst Aristotle's focus is more on ethics and dignity, Socrates's emphasis is more on intelligent virtues such as critical thinking and the discovery of knowledge through investigation to bring about cognitive and emotional characteristics as pronounced by Aristotle.³³

In the same vein, according to Aristotle, participation in dialogue opens an avenue for open-mindedness, and respect for different and multiple views, which promotes a deeper understanding between the parties involved.³⁴ Undoubtedly, SoTL opens dialogue and reflective practice, which promotes a shared platform to enhance methods of teaching and learning. The focus is on active learning and inquiry enhanced by dialogue as an essential and educational tool that also promotes a learner-centred approach, impacting on participatory democracy.³⁵

Likewise, Nussbaum believes that education has a socio-ethical dimension that contributes to laying the foundation for human virtues and social justice.³⁶ This then further amplifies the promotion of reflection and critical thinking activities in the teaching and learning encounter to enhance logical thinking as well as influence people's improved relationship with one another. Arguably, the world needs to change and empower everyone in the broader public to place priority on knowledge virtues, ethics, and values. It is thus important to acknowledge the role reflection plays, which manifests in critical thinking. Hence, Aristotle emphasises reflection as a trajectory that can direct the world towards promoting borderless intelligent virtues and human-centred approaches that can mitigate geo-political tensions in the affairs of humans.³⁷ Since SoTL is a collaborative platform that follows a research-intensive investigation, it can facilitate the implementation of intelligent virtues such as logic, critical thinking, and reasoning.

²⁶ Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism."

²⁷ Melanie Walker, "Universities and a Human Development Ethics: A Capabilities Approach to Curriculum," *European Journal of Education* 47, no. 3 (2012): 448–61.

²⁸ Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism."

²⁹ Cynthia A Stark, "Respecting Human Dignity: Contract versus Capabilities," *Metaphilosophy* 40, no. 3-4 (2009): 366–81.

³⁰ Stark, "Respecting Human Dignity: Contract versus Capabilities."

³¹ Cynthia Grant and Azadeh Osanloo, "Understanding, Selecting, and Integrating a Theoretical Framework in Dissertation Research: Creating the Blueprint for Your 'House,'" *Administrative Issues Journal* 4, no. 2 (2014): 4.

³² Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. .

³³ Cited in Philipp Banks, "On the Philosophical Interpretation of Logic: An Aristotelian Dialogue," in *Logico-Philosophical Studies* (Springer, 1962), 1–14.

³⁴ Banks, "On the Philosophical Interpretation of Logic: An Aristotelian Dialogue."

³⁵ J. Dewey, *How We Think* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1933).

³⁶ Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. .

³⁷ Cited in Sotiria Triantari and Ioannis Noitsis, "Aristotelian Rhetoric As Tool Of Development Of Critical Thinking In Education," *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* 2, no. 09 (2015): 1592–98.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative method to collect rich data. A literature review preceded an interpretive paradigm to understand the world from the beliefs and subjective experiences of participants about SoTL's relevance and value in improving human interactions. Participants involved in SoTL activities were interviewed using semi-structured questions to reflect on their experiences.³⁸ Their narratives were transcribed and manually coded into themes. Ethical considerations were followed, in compliance with the institution's principles and the researcher provided participants with the objectives of the study both verbally and in writing.

The sampling method is of great value in determining the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings about the phenomenon under investigation.³⁹ The study sample was limited to a group of twelve purposively selected lecturers who joined the SoTL community of practice when it was established and those who joined it at a later stage, to represent the academic population relevant to the research design. Data was collected through interviews using semi-structured questions enabling participants to share their views. Data was transcribed manually, categorised systematically using a table format into common themes, and analysed thematically.⁴⁰

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion are provided:

Collaborating and moving away from the silo mode of doing things

One of the participants indicated that SoTL breaks away from the vulnerability and the silo approach of academics in resolving day-to-day challenges in the teaching and learning encounter. This suggests that SoTL's shared approach is ideal and a good platform to support facilitators regarding challenging issues and choosing the best alternative tools to overcome barriers. Other participants reported how the aspect of collaboration in SoTL helped them to learn about others' teaching and learning challenges, and they were thus able to take cues from other peers who have succeeded in implementing new strategies to improve the quality of teaching. Another participant had this to say, "*Problems encountered in the classroom are discussed in an open public forum where peers share information and use scholarly approaches to assist each other.*" Other participants indicated that SoTL encourages the sharing of knowledge and new teaching methods whilst another participant said the following, "*Through SoTL, we have created communities of practices (COPs) to focus on common themes, and this extends peer support and enhances teaching effectiveness.*"

The above responses thus validate the use of SoTL in creating a space for engagement, debates, critique, and support to fellow peers to sharpen and improve the pedagogical relationship. This implies that SoTL's platform of mutual assistance enables academics to pull together to eliminate barriers by implementing workable strategies suited for the 21st-century cohort's way of learning including recognition of human worth in teaching and learning activities. In so doing, initiatives to improve and maintain the quality of teaching and learning are expedited and relationships are formed whereby academics from all walks of life build networks and connect to assist each other.

SoTL research approach and knowledge sharing

One of the participants said, "*SoTL works on evidence-based teaching and learning*". Most of the participants indicated that they felt empowered because SoTL creates and instils a research approach that follows a systematic and objective way of using theories to improve teaching and learning. Other participants said that the contribution of scholarly work that is shared enables academics in different faculties to improve their teaching methods and to add more substance to content aligned with human rights principles as well as producing knowledge that can be applied to solve individual and societal problems. Another participant had this to say, "*With the focus on inquiry, innovative ideas are shared that contribute to innovation.*" With innovative teaching and learning learners reap the benefit of obtaining knowledge that puts them on par with that of other countries. This further suggests that inquiry as a point of departure of SoTL contributes towards the impartation of knowledge to prospective graduates who are to become agents of change and who will use logic and ethical practices to solve problems and conduct their affairs humanely.

The findings confirm the assertion that the benefit of a scholarly approach not only supports the outcomes of teaching but also has the power to improve the quality of life of a society.⁴¹ Since SoTL follows a

³⁸ Q.M. Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 4th ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2015).

³⁹ M G Awang, N Muhammad, and S K Sinnaduri, "Research Design and Data Analysis in Social Science Research," *Malaysia: Pahang University*, 2012.

⁴⁰ J. Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications., 2016).

⁴¹ Robeyns, "Capabilitarianism."

scholarly path to generate scientific solutions, this means that it can create new perspectives and solutions that can enrich lives and save the world from distinction. This implies that the scholarly work followed in SoTL influences individuals to search for applicable theories that should be integrated into teaching and learning activities to contribute to prioritise sound values that are to be upheld and that are not only confined to the classroom but that are exhibited throughout all human interactions. The findings further revealed that SoTL not only creates a learning platform for academics to improve on how they tackle problems emanating from their practice. Notably, the idea of inquiry and logical reasoning directs how academics engage in new methods of delivery that respond to problematic areas in their practice and is corroborated by the assertion that reflection helps to solve work-related issues and socio-economic and political problems, including environmental issues, systematically and logically.⁴² The implication is that what is applied in the classroom situation goes further to be applied in different real-life situations. This further suggests that SoTL discourse capacitates academics to research their practices, learn, and contribute towards the dissemination of new knowledge that impacts changing people's conduct. This further means that SoTL goes beyond the solving of practical problems in teaching and learning to be value-laden in the sense of placing values to direct a relationship of respect, based on human values between people. Since human worth is amplified, a borderless platform like SoTL can contribute towards the adoption of a borderless curriculum that can embrace everyone.

Reflection

The following extracts from participants corroborate the idea that reflection is one of the tools that helps peers convey their thoughts and values that can guide people's interaction in the world as multi-ethnic world citizens to be able to take charge of world affairs.⁴³ *"Reflection allows me to reflect on values that are significant for human development and human dignity to be transferred to prospective students to influence communities"*, said one of the participants. Another participant stated, *"Reflexibility empowers me as a lecturer to reflect and evaluate my teaching methods and to ponder on new innovative teaching approaches shared by others. Data thus confirms the assertion by Nussbaum that reflection is at the heart of SoTL to stimulate inquiry and raise awareness about new trends that need to be adopted to be relevant in the 21st century to mitigate the plight of human interactions."*⁴⁴ Other participants added that SoTL places emphasis on reflection to influence facilitators to become reflective moral agents who lead reflective lives. Other participants said that reflection could be twofold, which translates to thinking and improving. Some said that reflection brings awareness of gaps in the pedagogical encounter and how SoTL collaborative initiatives can help academics to share and learn about new innovative and digital technologies that can be investigated and improve their practice. Other participants indicated that reflection lays bare teaching and learning impediments that disturb the development of positive outcomes expected from the teacher-learner relationship.

The above findings revealed that reflection touches on deep thinking, open dialogue, and deliberations on how to transform and improve practice. Individuals can share ideas and think critically about ways of bringing excellence into the teaching and learning space. Such reflections open debates and a free space for all to have their voices heard and this contributes to raising the standard of teaching and the maintenance of human values in higher institutions of learning, which can be replicated in communities. Also discovered is how reflection encourages peers to give answers to some of the questions that hinder effective teaching and learning. Responses to such questions indicated that all parties need to work together, engage, think critically, use research, and apply relevant theories and approaches. This further suggests that the reflection route emanating from the SoTL platform stimulates reasoning and deep thinking over issues that bother humankind. Such nuances trickle down from the classroom situation to real-world situations where human interactions are involved as cues on how to curb conflicts and violence that undermine human dignity.

Decision Making and Critical Thinking

Most of the participants indicated that SoTL enhances lecturers' decision-making skills and gives them autonomy to innovate whilst some indicated that SoTL involves critical thinking in identifying teaching strengths and weaknesses in the process of gathering evidence and choosing the best alternative solutions. Critical thinking thus brings a collective review of ideas, which SoTL platforms provide, to select reasonable and optimal alternatives that can improve practice.⁴⁵ The effect of critical thinking indicates that problems are

⁴² Fanghanel et al., "Literature Review. Defining and Supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): A Sector-Wide Study."

⁴³ Robeyns, "Capabiltarianism."

⁴⁴ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. .

⁴⁵ Ruggiero, *The Art of Thinking: A Guide to Critical and Creative Thought* .

evaluated, and problem-solving skills are enhanced. Critical thinking as one of the elements of SoTL thus translates towards enhancing all components of the curriculum such as planning, assessment, instructional design, and diagnoses. This suggests that SoTL is also relevant in transforming the curriculum to empower individuals on problem-solving and critical thinking skills to be able to make decisions that protect humanity.⁴⁶ This implies that human logic is important in directing the interaction of other relationships outside the classroom and thus becomes one of the important virtues to be used in all human interactions to avert conflicts and wars amongst individuals and nations in general.

Human Dignity and Values

The era of human-centredness set a stage for learner-centredness approaches that highlight the exchange of intellectual and ethical virtues and the recognition of human dignity. One of the participants indicated that the values embedded in curriculum content have an impact on the type of students that are produced. Another one said, “Theories that facilitators explore deepen students’ values to learn to sift things that do not develop them.” Other participants indicated that values embedded in theories that are explored in SoTL practices improve the quality of teaching, and improve the imparting of knowledge and skills including human virtues. The idea of developing citizens who uphold ethics is corroborated by Nussbaum, who indicates that education has a socio-ethical dimension that contributes towards laying the foundation for human virtues and social justice.⁴⁷ Another participant had this to say, “Empathy, and respect for others, are some of the values that are embedded in the teaching and learning process to recognise human worth.” This suggests that teaching and learning should primarily be driven by a humanistic scholarly approach that places priority on inquiry, theories, reflection, critical thinking, and sound values.

Other participants indicated that research and theories are underpinned by values that are shared in SoTL platforms as trajectories that are incorporated into the teaching and learning relationship. This suggests that higher education can produce rounded and capable individuals who are not only developed for the world of work but who can respect one another and maintain values that contribute towards leading meaningful lives.⁴⁸ Another participant said that a classroom situation is a mini reality that lays the foundation for the real world out there whilst others said that one of the most important things to be realised is the formation of a relationship of trust between those involved in the teaching and learning space. Also pointed out by most of the participants was logic as one of the intellectual virtues that bring direction to all the development in the teaching and learning relationship. Nussbaum’s theory, which advocates for critical thinking and ethical virtues, highlights SoTL’s relevance in aiming to improve teaching content that will develop a healthy society.⁴⁹ Aristotle’s teachings corroborated the idea of a healthy society through the promotion of a balance between the cognitive and the emotional qualities to restore humanity and human dignity in human interactions.⁵⁰ This suggests that wars can be eliminated if intellectual and ethical virtues are elevated.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reality of a people-centred approach which form the basis of a human worth paradigm, recognised in a democratic dispensation is also adopted by SoTL through its focus on the improvement of teaching and learning. The implication is that teaching and learning should primarily be driven by a humanistic scholarly approach that places priority on inquiry, theories, reflection, critical thinking, and sound values. Since reflection is a human function that enables people to think critically and logically it implies that SoTL platforms are relevant in enabling human interactions and the sharing of ideas that are informed by scholarly work which is conveyed by all academics in the classroom situation. The inference is that teaching is a role conducted by all academics regardless of which faculty they belong to. This suggests inquiry and ethical principles that sustain human dignity should be virtues that are pursued to improve teaching and learning in all disciplines. Furthermore, the expertise and abilities of diverse academics, inclusive of digital technological skills are needed to enhance the academic platforms to develop logic and entrench values that will lead to successful human interactions. It is thus recommended that different heads should come together to elevate the scholarly angle followed in SoTL activities through collaboration, and documentation of findings to develop citizens who are intellectually, socially, and morally sound.

⁴⁶ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. .

⁴⁷ Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. .

⁴⁸ Saunders, “Education For Democracy Or For Itself: A Critical Note On Martha C. Nussbaum’s Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs The Humanities.”

⁴⁹ Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. .

⁵⁰ Banks, “On the Philosophical Interpretation of Logic: An Aristotelian Dialogue.”

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that SoTL's multidisciplinary and research-intensive tools are pertinent to enhance intellectual and ethical virtues that promote rationality, which separates people from animals to restore human dignity and values. The inference is that SoTL contributes towards social transformation by using reflection and critical thinking to influence human interactions and the maintenance of values when conducting worldly affairs. It is thus pertinent that such intellectual and ethical virtues start in the classroom to lay the foundation and enable learners to give healthy human responses to difficult situations to preserve human dignity in human interactions instead of choosing irrational ways that undermine human dignity. It can also be inferred that dehumanisation can be resisted through teaching and learning that is informed by theories, knowledge sharing and reflection, which makes SoTL one of the relevant platforms in developing and developed nations. SoTL activities should thus be supported in higher education institutions to enhance thinking skills and ethics that translate to logical engagement in all human interactions to bring a human virtue necessary to mitigate transgressions that violate human dignity and social justice. To that effect, a borderless platform like SoTL can contribute towards adopting a borderless curriculum, which is supported by digital technology to bring nations together.

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