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Leading Up in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

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Leading Up in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Abstract

Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) scholars, including those who are not in formal positions of leadership, are uniquely positioned to engage in leadership activities that can grow the field, influence their colleagues, and effect change in their local contexts as well as in institutional, disciplinary, and the broader Canadian contexts. Drawing upon the existing SoTL literature and our own diverse experiences, we propose a framework that describes institutional contexts in terms of local SoTL activity (microcultures) and administrative support (macro-level) and use it to describe the many ways that SoTL scholars can and do “lead up” to effect change depending on their own context. We conclude by inviting scholars to consider, reflect upon, and experiment with their leadership activities, not only for their own professional growth but also to contribute to the literature in this area.

Les professeurs qui font des recherches dans le domaine de l'avancement des connaissances en enseignement et en apprentissage (ACEA), y compris ceux qui n'occupent pas un poste de leadership formel, occupent une position unique pour s'engager dans des activités de leadership qui peuvent faire avancer le domaine, influencer leurs collègues et effectuer des changements dans leurs contextes locaux ainsi que dans les contextes plus vastes de leur établissement, de leur discipline et du contexte canadien en général. En nous appuyant sur la documentation déjà publiée en ACEA et sur nos diverses expériences personnelles, nous proposons un cadre qui décrit les contextes institutionnels en termes d'activités d'ACEA locales (micro-cultures) et de soutien administratif (niveau macro) que nous utilisons pour décrire les diverses manières dont les chercheurs en ACEA peuvent en arriver à effectuer des changements selon leur propre contexte. En conclusion, nous invitons les chercheurs à prendre en considération leurs activités de leadership, à y réfléchir et à faire des expériences, non seulement pour leur propre croissance professionnelle mais également pour contribuer à la documentation dans ce domaine.

Keywords

leadership, activity, identity, emerging, established, micro-, meso-, macro-, mega levels

Cover Page Footnote

All authors of this paper participated in a year-long series of discussions to develop, refine, and challenge our collective thinking and to collaboratively write this article. Thus, we chose to list our names alphabetically, with a few exceptions: Janice Miller-Young, who facilitated the group; Catherine Anderson, who did an incredible job in revising our writing so that it reads as coming from a single voice; and Nancy Chick, who chose to be listed last.

For those of us who practice scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), study SoTL, and conduct SoTL research, one of our core challenges is recognizing and claiming our identities as SoTL scholars, especially when our academic formation shapes us as scholars of a particular discipline. Simmons and colleagues (2013) describe how “navigating among conflicting identities can lead us into a troublesome but deeply reflective liminal space, prompting profound realizations and the reconstruction of our academic identities” (p. 10) and argue that this unsettled liminality is an inherent part of developing one’s identity as a SoTL scholar. Many SoTL scholars reach a stage in their careers where they want to grow the field, to influence decisions, and to effect change in their local environment, in the broader Canadian context, and beyond. Such people, we argue, are practising not just SoTL but SoTL leadership—“the capacity to influence others to work towards a set of shared goals” (Mighty, 2013, p. 114). Just as Simmons et al. (2013) call for “opportunities for SoTL scholars to consider their academic identity” (p. 17), in this paper, we describe activities and actions that we count as SoTL leadership, and we invite those who engage in these actions to consider their identity as SoTL leaders.

In the inaugural issue of *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, Mighty (2013) proclaims that “perhaps the most important lesson that I have learned in relation to SoTL [is] the critical role of leadership” (p. 114). By describing leadership in terms of influence, Mighty shows that leadership activities are not restricted to deans and other administrators, but can emerge at every level and in many contexts: for example, among students, with faculty, within disciplinary associations, and in educational development units. Bernstein (2013) reserves the term *leader* for those in formal positions of academic leadership, but makes the case that “SoTL-active faculty” are sources of significant influence on their campuses as “accessible model[s] of excellence in instructional design and reflective practice” (p. 36) and “conduit[s] to the best practices, innovations, ideas, and resources outside the immediate campus” (p. 38). Likewise, Huber and Robinson (2016) elide the term *leadership* in favour of advocacy and outreach, providing a tool for mapping SoTL scholars’ advocacy for “particular pedagogies, curricula, and/or factors in student success based on the findings of SoTL research” (p. 2). Their framework addresses leadership by describing the influence that such advocacy work can have not only at one’s own institution but also beyond it, for example in disciplinary and professional associations, foundations and funding agencies, government boards and agencies, and media.

Institutions of higher education can at times feel very hierarchical, such that senior administrators make decisions that they impose on instructors, who in turn make decisions that they impose on students. In such a setting, creating change can be challenging and even frustrating for people who are not in official leadership positions. Nevertheless, the literature makes it clear that individuals—faculty members, contingent instructors, librarians, educational developers, and students—can and do effect change through the relationships that they build across the institutional hierarchy. While individuals in all positions can enact leadership within their own contexts, this article concentrates on the leadership activities of faculty and academic staff who are SoTL scholars. These individuals influence departmental and institutional practices, as well as the decisions made by senior administrators, inverting patterns of top-down decision-making. We refer to this kind of influence as “leading up,” and in what follows, we describe many ways that SoTL scholars in diverse institutional environments can lead up.

SoTL Leadership in Context

Recognizing the complexity of influencing teaching and learning in higher education, Roxå, Mårtensson, and their colleague (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009, 2012; Roxå, Mårtensson, & Alveteg, 2011) advocate for an intentional approach to cultivating teaching development and culture using a network strategy. Their research finds that faculty are most influenced by colleagues within their close, significant networks such as departments and workgroups. The microcultures in these networks might have an attitude of exploration and development related to teaching and learning, or might be more conservative, seeking to maintain the status quo. For an individual SoTL scholar to exert influence in the local context or beyond, strategies that influence both the microcultures and the communication between these microcultures are crucial. Building on this work, Williams and colleagues urge that SoTL must be “woven into the fabric of our institutions” (Williams et al., 2013, p. 50), which, they argue, requires the diffusion of shared values across an entire institution through effective network communication both horizontally and vertically. Using the organizational perspective of Poole and Simmons (2013), Williams et al. define the micro-level of the organization as individual faculty members and students, the meso-level as middle management (department heads and deans), and the macro-level as senior management such as provosts and vice-presidents. They also argue that individuals at all levels can be agents of change, whether in appointed leadership positions or not. Much of this body of research has highlighted the crucial roles of meso-level leaders as conduits of information between the levels (Williams et al., 2013), in improving network structures and connections (Mårtensson & Roxå, 2015), and in nurturing emergent leaders at the micro level (Verwoord & Poole, 2016). There is still a good deal of variation, however, in the extent to which this kind of departmental and institutional support for SoTL exists within Canadian institutions (Wuetherick & Yu, 2016).

Looking beyond the structures and cultures of the individual institution, Kreber (2013) argues powerfully that “engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning authentically ... has implications not just for students’ academic learning and personal flourishing but also for creating greater social justice in the world” (2013, p. 11). Likewise, Simmons (2016) urges SoTL scholars to situate their influence beyond the institutional level to have an impact at the mega-level, where SoTL has the potential to inform decision-making that will shape the future political, social, and economic landscape of higher education (Bloch-Schulman, Conkling, Linkon, Manarin, & Perkins, 2016). Thus, in a zeitgeist that increasingly demands accountability for education funding, our colleagues remind us that SoTL not only has the potential to make a vital contribution to providing the evidence of quality that provincial and federal stakeholders demand (Bernstein, 2013; Gordon, 2010; Hutchings et al., 2013; Openo et al., 2017; Poole & Simmons, 2013), but also to critically challenge and transform current practices.

This brief discussion shows that SoTL leaders face both rich opportunities and complex challenges. The characteristics of institutional microcultures can help or hinder leadership activities. Macro-level institutional structures vary in the extent to which they support and value SoTL work. And disciplinary biases can make a scholarly teacher reluctant to embrace an identity as a SoTL scholar. Nevertheless, like Mighty (2013), we argue that leadership in SoTL does not require an appointment to a formal position, nor does it require a particular temperament or personality type. Rather, successful leadership is situational, embedded in a context that includes many individuals’ narratives and skills, disciplinary cultures, types of microcultures, as well as institutional structures, communication processes, and reward systems

(Gibbs, Knapper, & Piccinin, 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Marcketti, VanDerZanden, & Leptien, 2015; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2015). In their extensive work studying leadership and agency of change in higher education, Kezar and Lester (2011) demonstrate how successful leaders, including “bottom-up leaders,” can leverage nine strategies for creating change and exerting agency: (1) intellectual opportunities, (2) professional development, (3) leveraging curricula and using classrooms as forums, (4) joining and utilizing existing networks, (5) working with students, (6) hiring like-minded people, (7) gathering data, (8) garnering resources, and (9) partnering with influential stakeholders. Considering the complexity and challenges of SoTL, SoTL leaders may consider using multiple strategies, choosing those which align with their goals as well as the context within which they are pursuing them.

Many SoTL scholars are already influencing others to work towards shared goals in the classroom, in the curriculum, in their disciplines, and in the public sphere. In what follows, we describe the activities of SoTL leaders in several types of contexts that vary in support for SoTL at the micro- and macro-levels. In particular, we focus on the leadership activities of individuals at the micro-level who can influence their peers laterally and can also lead up to have influence at the meso-, macro-, and mega-levels. In our discussion we have intentionally used indicative verbs (that is, describing what leaders *do*) rather than subjunctive or imperative phrasing to describe what leaders *could* or *should do*. We have made this deliberate grammatical choice to honour the activities in which our colleagues in various contexts are already engaged, rather than simply describing hypothetical situations or insisting on necessary conditions for leadership. The leaders we describe are of course composite characters, and these composite images are intended not just to describe but also to invite readers to identify their own SoTL activities as leadership activities, and to consider new opportunities for leadership in their specific contexts.

A Framework for SoTL Leadership

Just as leadership is sensitive to a particular context, so, too, is SoTL. Indeed, as our collaborative writing group engaged in regular conversations over a period of six months to review the literature on SoTL and leadership and to develop a focus for our article, we initially had difficulty finding a main thesis. This was because of the diversity of our own contexts and positions, which range from research intensive to teaching-focused institutions with varying levels of administrative support for SoTL, and from teaching professors, to PhD students, to directors of teaching centres, to educational developers. We saw how our own contexts require different forms of leadership to advance the practice and influence of SoTL.

Through further conversation, and following Blair’s encouragement to situate SoTL “within a contextual framework rather than merely attempting to examine the teaching-learning nexus as an abstract construction” (Blair, 2013, p. 128), we developed a contextual framework for SoTL leadership that takes account of our institutions’ particular cultures, policies, procedures, values, attitudes and norms, both explicit and tacit (Cranton, 2006; DeCourcy et al., 2017). We propose that two dimensions of institutional culture are crucial in shaping the SoTL environment (Figure 1). The first, depicted on the horizontal axis, is an institution’s explicit support for SoTL at the macro-level, as encoded in its vision and mission statement, policies, performance measures and budget. The second, depicted on the vertical axis, is the nature of the institution’s tacit microcultures, that is, the ways in which individual teachers and learners engage in SoTL, talk about it with each other, or pay attention to the SoTL literature in their

teaching and learning work. While these two dimensions can and do influence each other, they can also vary independently of each other.

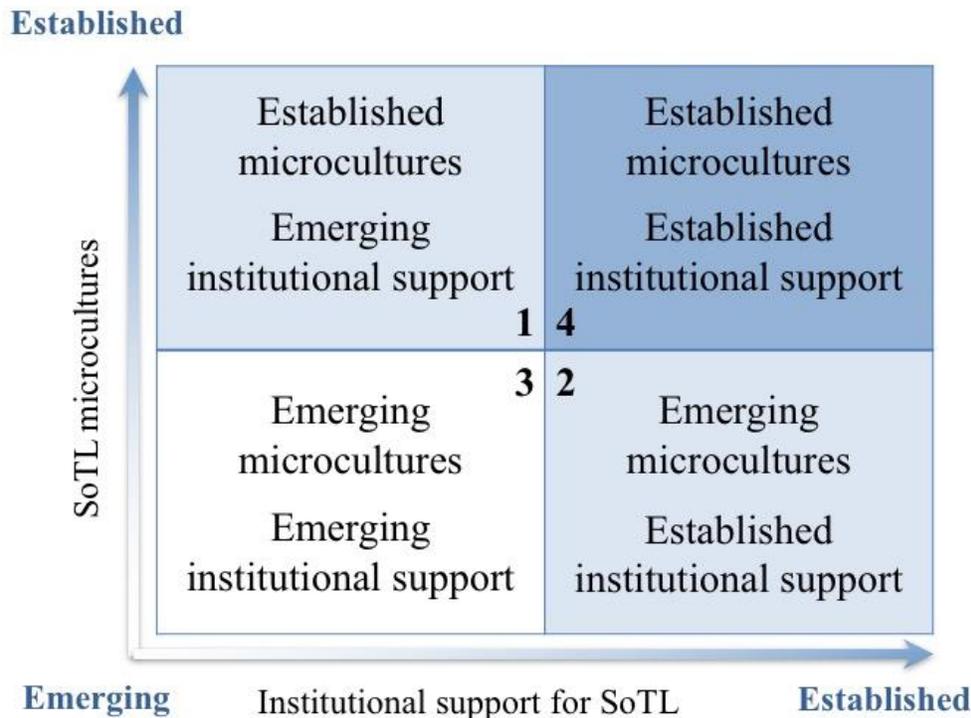


Figure 1. Framework describing institutional contexts.

Any model is, of course, a simplification of a complex world, and we recognize that no institution is likely to fit perfectly into a single quadrant of this framework, including our own. Nevertheless, we believe that this simple framework can help SoTL scholars recognize the attributes of their own contexts that are most relevant for effecting change, since “a leader can never control a culture; it is much more likely that the culture controls the leader” (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2013, p. 14). Effective leaders must, therefore, be sensitive to these cultural factors. Emerging from the literature and from our own experiences at various institutions, we discuss below a variety of leadership activities that can be effective in the four broad contexts represented in the framework. The reader will of course realize that many of these activities can be effective in more than one context. We invite our readers to consider which attributes of their own contexts and careers shape their own identities as SoTL leaders.

Quadrant 1: Established SoTL Microcultures, Emerging Institutional Support for SoTL

Within this context, SoTL microcultures are well-established, such that SoTL scholars weave their research within and across their networked spaces (Fanghanel, Pritchard, Potter, & Wisker, 2016). With limited institutional support, however, the impact of these established interactions is visible primarily at the micro-level within individual classrooms. Many Canadian institutions may fall into this quadrant as documented in Wuetherick and Yu’s (2016) Canadian survey in which 94% of respondents reported having collaborated on SoTL work with colleagues at their institutions and 77% reported supportive attitudes of departmental colleagues. This

context might include some macro-level awareness of the desirability of SoTL, but gaps exist in the institution's structures for supporting or encouraging SoTL and policies for recognizing and rewarding SoTL.

Such an environment offers abundant opportunity for SoTL scholars to lead up. The many individuals at the micro-level who value SoTL and have established networks form a body of champions who work at the meso-, macro-, and mega-levels to begin to influence the institution's priorities and values.

Communication and networking. When SoTL work is concentrated primarily at the micro-level, communication is a vital element of leadership. Many Canadian SoTL scholars report that their department colleagues are not aware of their SoTL work (Wuetherick & Yu, 2016). Recognizing the key role of the meso-level as information conduit (Williams et al., 2013), leaders in this context promote awareness of SoTL by informing their chairs and deans about their research and by discussing it at faculty meetings--as do, for example, the "larger-than-expected" community of SoTL researchers who reported benefits to their teaching in Wuetherick and Yu's (2016) survey. In curriculum decisions, these individuals draw on SoTL-informed evidence and on their knowledge of other departments from their networks of SoTL colleagues. Furthermore, individual SoTL scholars in this context have a wide network outside their institution, consisting of disciplinary and SoTL scholars as well as community members, with whom they interact in various ways (including formal and informal activities, e.g. social media, blogs, conferences, workshops, town halls, collaborative writing groups).

Teaching and learning centres. In this quadrant a teaching and learning centre (TLC) may concentrate its typical activities on individual instructors and courses. The literature has argued for the vital role of teaching and learning centres and educational developers in SoTL leadership, especially in facilitating networks of scholars and in advocating for institutional support (Mighty, 2013; Williams et al., 2013). Individual SoTL scholars can lead in this context by connecting with their teaching and learning centre to identify potential collaborators and projects, and to showcase and disseminate SoTL work through educational events, research showcases, and local conferences.

Funding. Because funding for SoTL is a challenge in this context, leaders engage in strategic advocacy to seek funding from the meso- and macro-levels. They persuade by showcasing the value that their SoTL activities bring to the academic mission, and by forming teams to apply for interdisciplinary grants.

Institutional structures and priorities. In this context, SoTL scholars have a ripe opportunity to effect macro-level change by persuading those in formal leadership positions of SoTL's value to the institution. Bernstein (2013) offers many examples of this value. Perhaps most fundamentally, SoTL-active faculty provide the evidence that allows an institution to demonstrate that it is committed to a high-quality learning environment. Moreover, they bring their own research findings and evidence from the wider SoTL literature to bear on measures of program and institutional quality.

Disseminating SoTL work in peer-reviewed venues raises the perceived status of the work by taking advantage of the recognized academic currency of publication. With publications in hand, SoTL leaders work with the bargaining unit and academic administrators to seek recognition for SoTL as a relevant criterion for merit, tenure, and promotion.

Working at the mega-level, leaders promote SoTL within their disciplines; they organize conference panels and journal issues in the arenas that were traditionally devoted to disciplinary research. This outreach work has a two-fold benefit. First, it extends SoTL awareness to scholars

who might not otherwise encounter it, thus enlarging the field itself. Second, as Mighty (2013) suggests, when SoTL work is presented and published in disciplinary venues, the work is then perceived by the institution to have greater value for assessments of merit.

Quadrant 2. Emerging SoTL Microcultures, Established Institutional Support for SoTL

In this context, support for SoTL is primarily encoded in an institution's macro-level documents and policies, and senior administrators understand the benefits that SoTL brings to the institution. Assessments of merit, tenure, and promotion include SoTL work, and SoTL activity is funded by institutional grants and initiatives. When support for SoTL is well-established at the macro-level, leaders can emerge at the micro-level by expanding their SoTL networks, connecting with others, and cultivating healthy SoTL microcultures across the institution. These opportunities also include challenges: Bernstein (2013) cautions that instituting a policy in higher education is relatively easy in comparison to developing the strategies that will lead to change in an institution's values and practices.

Communication and networking. When support for SoTL is primarily at the macro-level, individual faculty members and indeed, entire departments, might resist what they perceive as top-down pressure to engage in unfamiliar research questions and methods. Williams and colleagues offer a thorough summary of the psychology of such resistance, while pointing out that "if departments are the places where barriers to change exist, they are also important loci for change" (Williams et al., 2013, p. 52). In an environment of resistance, leaders recognize their responsibility to generate awareness of the value of SoTL among their micro-level peers, and they use their positional power to influence their colleagues by example (Bernstein, 2013; Mighty, 2013). They organize and participate in learning communities, workshops and seminars, and take advantage of social media and the institution's communication channels (newsletters, intranets, etc.) to promote interest in SoTL activities. Their persuasion is effective because of the recognized currency of their mega-level participation in national and international conferences like the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) and the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL), their involvement with disciplinary associations, and their publications in peer-reviewed journals (Mighty, 2013; Skorobohacz, Billot, Murray, & Khong, 2016).

Teaching and learning centres. An institution with established macro-level support for SoTL has a well-funded and well-staffed teaching and learning centre. Leaders have robust connections to the TLC; they take advantage of its many resources and support its programs. When the TLC organizes a local conference, SoTL scholars review the submitted abstracts and organize panels or workshops. They advocate for long-term, collaborative support structures such as faculty learning communities (e.g., Cox, 2004; Hubball & Burt, 2006; Miller-Young, Yeo, Manarin, Carey, & Zimmer, 2016). Furthermore, they work to connect others to the TLC, encouraging students, contingent faculty, and colleagues who are new to SoTL to seek out the center's writing support, mentoring and partnership opportunities, and expertise, which are crucial resources for novice SoTL scholars (Kelly, Nesbit, & Oliver, 2012; Webb, 2015).

Funding. A hallmark of strong institutional support for SoTL is funding, not just for the TLC but for individual SoTL scholars' work. Although it is often possible to carry out classroom-level SoTL projects at minimal expense, SoTL leaders recognize that obtaining funding for their research influences their peers' perceptions of the legitimacy of the work, and therefore seek grants to further their own research while simultaneously persuading their

colleagues of its value. Even in the absence of financial awards, an institution might offer course release or research assistant (RA) time. A student research partner or RA brings benefits to a SoTL project beyond the hours that they work; they also bring the unique insights of their student perspective, and the collaboration sows the seeds for the growth of a new generation of SoTL scholars and leaders (Werder & Otis, 2010).

Institutional structures and priorities. In an environment where SoTL has top-down support, leaders understand that effecting change requires strategies that are sensitive to the local micro-cultures (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2013; Roxå et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2013). Leaders use their intimate knowledge of the micro-cultures to generate interest in SoTL at the micro- and meso-levels to ensure the sustainability of the institution's commitment to SoTL. They make a long-term investment in their institution by partnering with students and junior scholars in SoTL work. When hiring opportunities arise, they advocate for hiring colleagues who are already active in SoTL. In this way, they cultivate the next generation of SoTL leaders. SoTL influencers also recognize the power of meso-level leaders (Roxå, 2014; Verwoord & Poole, 2016) both in supporting the small networks that are vital for a healthy SoTL culture, and as conduits of information to the macro-level. SoTL leaders therefore keep their chairs and deans informed about the needs of their colleagues and the effectiveness of the institution's SoTL support.

Quadrant 3. Emerging SoTL Microcultures, Emerging Institutional Support for SoTL

Institutions in this quadrant are emerging spaces for SoTL at both the micro- and macro-levels. These institutions boast vibrant teaching cultures with strong grassroots support for innovative and high-quality pedagogy. Individual instructors and small informal groups of instructors dedicate some of their most cherished resource—their time—to reading about and discussing teaching and learning. And yet, these activities are not widespread across the institution, nor are they necessarily valued as legitimate avenues of research. Furthermore, the macro-level guiding documents of the university—and those that define scholarly activities and how they are valued—do not always have language that supports or values SoTL. This context is characterized by good teaching and scholarly teaching, but has not yet developed a culture of SoTL inquiry (cf. Vajoczki, Savage, Martin, Borin, & Kustra, 2011). As Poole (2007) shows, good teaching is the foundation from which a SoTL-informed program to improve an institution's quality can grow, and so this context offers rich opportunities for SoTL leadership to have lasting effects on an institution's culture and priorities. While leaders in this context engage in many of the activities described above in quadrants 1 and 2, some activities are particularly important to this context.

Communication and networking. Where SoTL microcultures are beginning to emerge, SoTL scholars play a vital role in nurturing networks of colleagues who are potentially interested in SoTL. As Bass (1999) suggests, they talk in the hallways about their teaching, about the SoTL work that they read, and about their specific teaching interests and “problems.” These authentic conversations build trust among peers, and provide encouragement for junior scholars (Verwoord & Poole, 2016). Leaders also know that, to be persuasive, these conversations are informed by scholarship and are about contributing to that scholarship (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009, 2012). The work of nurturing networks is not just in informal conversations over coffee; leaders also construct sustainable structures for these conversations by organizing reading groups, brown bag research workshops, and writing retreats centered around SoTL, to which they invite colleagues from outside their own departments.

Teaching and learning centres and funding. In an institution with nascent macro-level support for SoTL, the TLC might consist of a single staff person, or simply of a coalition of scholarly teachers. In some institutions the TLC is the administrative home for the staff who operate the learning management system (LMS) and for audio-visual services and classroom maintenance. Savvy SoTL scholars pay attention to the support units that get attention from senior administration, and strategically align their research with institutional initiatives. For example, an initiative to integrate technology into classrooms or to construct active-learning spaces might bring with it a pocket of funding to support research into the effectiveness of the initiative. Leaders who are plugged into the TLC's network take advantage of the opportunities that arise.

Institutional structures and priorities. Like in Quadrant 1, SoTL leaders in this context face many opportunities and challenges in leading up to influence the meso- and macro-levels of their institution. They know that effecting change requires a long-term investment in building trust and nurturing relationships across all levels. These leaders volunteer for service on committees that influence institutional policy, where they listen carefully to what chairs, deans and provosts say about the institution's priorities, in order to fine-tune their arguments for SoTL-informed decision-making. Their service on Research Ethics Boards positions them to educate their colleagues about SoTL research, while ensuring that SoTL work complies with the ethical principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2014; Healey et al., 2013; MacLean & Poole, 2010). In seeking the support of the Research Office to apply for teaching and learning grants, they also educate the research office staff about the field of SoTL, and act as a liaison between the research office and other colleagues to help them develop competitive grant applications.

Quadrant 4. Established SoTL Microcultures, Established Institutional Support

This context represents the ideal environment for SoTL to thrive and grow as a field. While they are currently the exception, some Canadian campuses offer strong institutional support for SoTL alongside well-established SoTL microcultures. These established microcultures are likely to bring together instructors of all ranks, graduate and undergraduate students, librarians, advisors, student services staff, and others, therefore contributing to SoTL work that is characterized by a range of interests, methodologies, and goals. These microcultures form a critical mass such that all levels of this context are committed to SoTL as a "priority of the professoriate" (Boyer, 1990). Even those who do not conduct their own SoTL projects are consumers of SoTL who apply the knowledge produced by its scholars in their teaching, curriculum development, or program reviews.

Communication and networking. Individuals within these microcultures interact in a variety of ways that demonstrate leadership activities. Laterally, the diversity within and across the microcultures is not accidental but instead the result of intentional efforts to develop future generations of SoTL scholars and to expand the range of "voices of teachers and learners we might hear and who might hear us" (Poole, 2013, p. 149). Experienced SoTL scholars orient new scholars to the field, mentoring and collaborating with early-career colleagues. The supportive context allows them to focus less on introducing and defining SoTL and more on building on others' work, adapting a previous study to a new context, developing projects that address gaps in the literature, or otherwise advancing the field as a whole (McKinney, 2012).

Individual SoTL scholars in this context also lead up by taking advantage of opportunities for collaboration, since networks and communities of practice reach across departments and faculties. They share SoTL—not only their own practices and results, but also the broader knowledge produced by the field—up to the macro-level in campus meetings and media, gatherings of senior administration and boards of governors, local conferences and seminars. In addition to sharing their SoTL research and practice through conference presentations and publications, scholars from this context lead up to the mega-level to shape the field as a whole through activity within national and international SoTL associations, and the institution grants them flexible schedules and funding to accommodate these travel activities. They are reviewers, members of editorial boards, and editors of SoTL journals. Even more broadly, they work within their disciplinary associations to foster a SoTL-friendly culture through dedicated conference sessions and journal contributions. Outside of academia, they use social and public media to become advocates for SoTL, higher education, and the social responsibilities of both (Huber & Robinson, 2016).

Teaching and learning centres. The established SoTL microcultures in this context have strong relationships with their campus's well-resourced teaching and learning centres—or institutes, in institutions that have expanded their mandates as research units. SoTL scholars here regularly participate in and bring new colleagues to sponsored activities and faculty learning communities. They draw from their own SoTL work (and encourage their colleagues) to help the institute document the meaningful impacts of SoTL. Their leadership roles with these institutes include liaisons, partners, advisory board members, advocates (where necessary), and the institute's educational developers. They also help the institute connect those “small, significant networks” of practice and influence across campus, and beyond through multi-institution projects and collaborations (Kenny, Watson, & Desmarais, 2016; Mighty, 2013; Roxå et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2013).

Funding. Although funding amounts may wax and wane over the years with provincial and federal budgets, the institutional culture in this context—from its microcultures to its senior leadership and institutional priorities—remains committed to SoTL, with allocations from even the tightest budgets. With a successful history of various local grants, individual SoTL scholars help colleagues in writing applications and letters of support for grants, and readily share their past applications and projects as models. Here, they are granted replacement instructors for course releases, travel funding, research assistants, and relevant technologies to support the work of SoTL. Increasingly partnered across faculties and/or with their teaching and learning centres and institutes, they also seek larger funding sources both on and off campus. They envision these funds not so much to support their individual SoTL interests but instead to support broader initiatives that continue to build the capacity and likelihood of making substantive contributions to the field.

Institutional structures and priorities. The microcultures of SoTL scholars here have the support but not the mandate of institutional structures and priorities. They have institutional autonomy: they are able to explore—with support—inquiries that are informed by their own experiences with student learners, even projects that are independent from institutional and administrative priorities. At the same time, their perspectives on student learning reach across the broader campus context, so that they also pursue lines of inquiry that support institutional initiatives. SoTL for them has become their way to contribute to local teaching and learning practices and the good of the campus as a whole.

SoTL scholars in this context also intentionally lead up to weave the value of SoTL throughout the institution. Having the authority that comes with experience, they serve on and chair committees that regularly use SoTL evidence, rather than anecdotes and conventional wisdom, to make decisions and effect change. They work to ensure that SoTL activity is recognized, rewarded, and integrated into institutional policies and practices, such as merit, promotion, and tenure; for example, curriculum, program, and ethics reviews. SoTL scholars are found within the faculty's teaching stream and its research stream (if the two are still divided), as well as in university-wide chairs in teaching and learning. Some join the ranks of administration and senior leadership (e.g., associate deans and vice provosts of teaching and learning) while remaining engaged in and committed to SoTL, its local microcultures, and the field as a whole. When in positions of formal institutional leadership and authority, they continue to advocate for SoTL where necessary. They may, for instance, host visiting SoTL scholars or national and international SoTL conferences, elevating their institutions (and not just individual scholars) within the international SoTL community.

SoTL scholars in this context also have the opportunity to lead up to the mega-level and bring SoTL evidence to bear on provincial and federal policy decisions, working with organizations like the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), Universities Canada, and the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities, or with accreditation boards for the professional disciplines.

SoTL Scholar-Leader Identity

Our framework broadly categorizes institutional contexts according to their micro-level SoTL cultures and their macro-level support for SoTL. Whichever quadrant resonates for a particular individual's experience and institutional context, we invite readers to reflect on the attributes of their context, and to discuss with SoTL colleagues what corresponding leadership actions could move their institutions towards (and beyond) the situation described in quadrant 4, where both microcultures and institutional support for SoTL are well established.

In this article, we have deliberately framed the discussion of SoTL leadership in terms of leadership activities, rather than the characteristics of SoTL leaders. We contend that "leaders" are not confined to formal roles, titles, or personality traits, but that each of us can take leadership actions to advance SoTL in our respective contexts. Our framework is, therefore, both descriptive and prescriptive, calling SoTL scholars to consider the connections between their roles as SoTL scholars and their current and future actions as SoTL leaders. Our framework asks readers which actions will be most effective in their specific contexts to embed the practice, advancement, and applications of SoTL into the micro, meso, macro, and mega levels of higher education.

This call to action carries with it a call to reflection on our identities as SoTL scholars and SoTL leaders. As O'Meara, LaPointe Terosky, & Neumann (2008) describe, "narratives of growth" are characterized by moments of learning, agency, professional relationships, and commitment. It is within this growth narrative that we place our discussion about SoTL leadership. We hope that this article will help to bring scholars' existing leadership activities into the conscious and explicit domain so that they can be observed and reflected upon, and offer new ideas for individual experimentation. For those interested in developing a practice of leading up and possibly contributing to the scholarship in this area, we recommend approaches that recognize the experiential and situated nature of leadership such as communities of practice

(Wenger, 1998) and research methods with narrative forms of inquiry such as ethnographic methods (O'Reilly, 2012), particularly interpretive inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Morehouse, 2012) and appreciative inquiry (Schall, Ospina, Godsoe, & Dodge, 2004; Simmons et al., 2013). These practical and methodological tools encourage “the observed” to consider their own leadership identities, thus becoming developers and inquirers themselves. As Simmons and colleagues (2013) show through their own narratives and reflections, involvement in SoTL has pushed them to “reconstruct [their] identities” and carve out “a new way of being an academic” (pp. 13-14). In this article, we have shown that SoTL invites us to consider new ways of being leaders, and that this invitation extends even to those of us who have not yet identified ourselves as leaders.

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