



Beyond compliance: ethics in scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in EAP/language education

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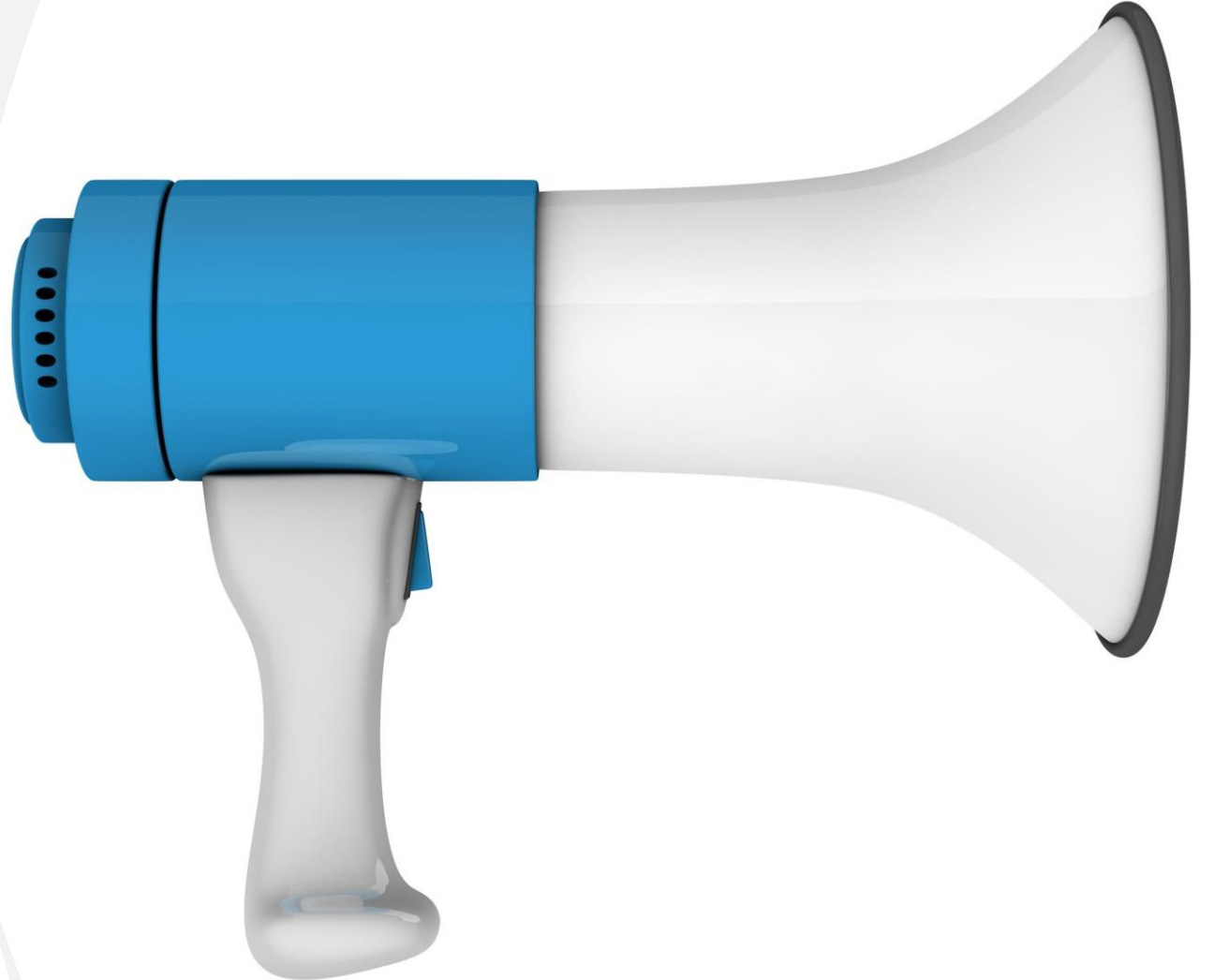
King's Foundations, Centre for
International Education and Languages
(CIEL)

King's College London

Warning!

This talk contains
acronyms (e.g. SoTL, EAP)

And some (light)
interaction



My profile (in 15 acronyms)

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. BCN | 10. KCL |
| 2. TEFL | 11. SLSOTL |
| 3. BC | 12. CIEL |
| 4. DELTA | 13. OU |
| 5. EAP | 14. SFHEA |
| 6. TELUS | 15. SFBALAP |
| 7. ACIS | |
| 8. CALD | |
| 9. 'ISEAP' | |

What I am talking about today

This session will look at what ethics means and what ethical approaches are in the context of Scholarship in Teaching (SoTL). It will draw on my ongoing experiences from developing training and providing guidance for academic staff involved in English for Academic purposes (EAP), Academic skills and Language teaching across departments in a large London based university.

It will seek to answer what ethics means in the broadest sense, consider the positioning of non-research contract teaching staff in the wider university context and examine the challenges and affordances that brings for developing meaningful, ethically-minded scholarship.

In the room (‘scholarship’ =?)



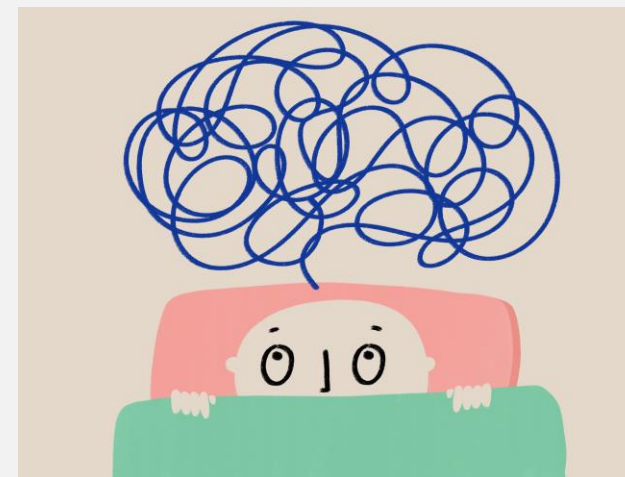
“what ethics means in the broadest sense...”

1. “BEYOND Compliance” **Not just the form!**

Some more acronyms... ERGO, OREM, CUREC, REMAS, HREC



Or...?



“what ethics means in the broadest sense...”

2. ‘Ethics’ – Underlying philosophy

Calls for specifically *ethical* approaches to scholarship of teaching and learning in language education (Ding et al., 2018; Ding, 2024; Monbec and Ding, 2024, Bond, 2024)

- **What for?** Questioning (reflexivity) around scholarship and reasons for doing scholarship
- **Who for?** Representing others? Inclusive scholarship...
- **Why?** What is the purpose of doing it (the real, underlying purpose) Critical, political, social emancipatory, revelatory... etc. purposes
- **Why now/here/me?** Motivations and role of emotions (e.g. pedagogy of care, social justice, perceived need for increased visibility, catharsis, love)

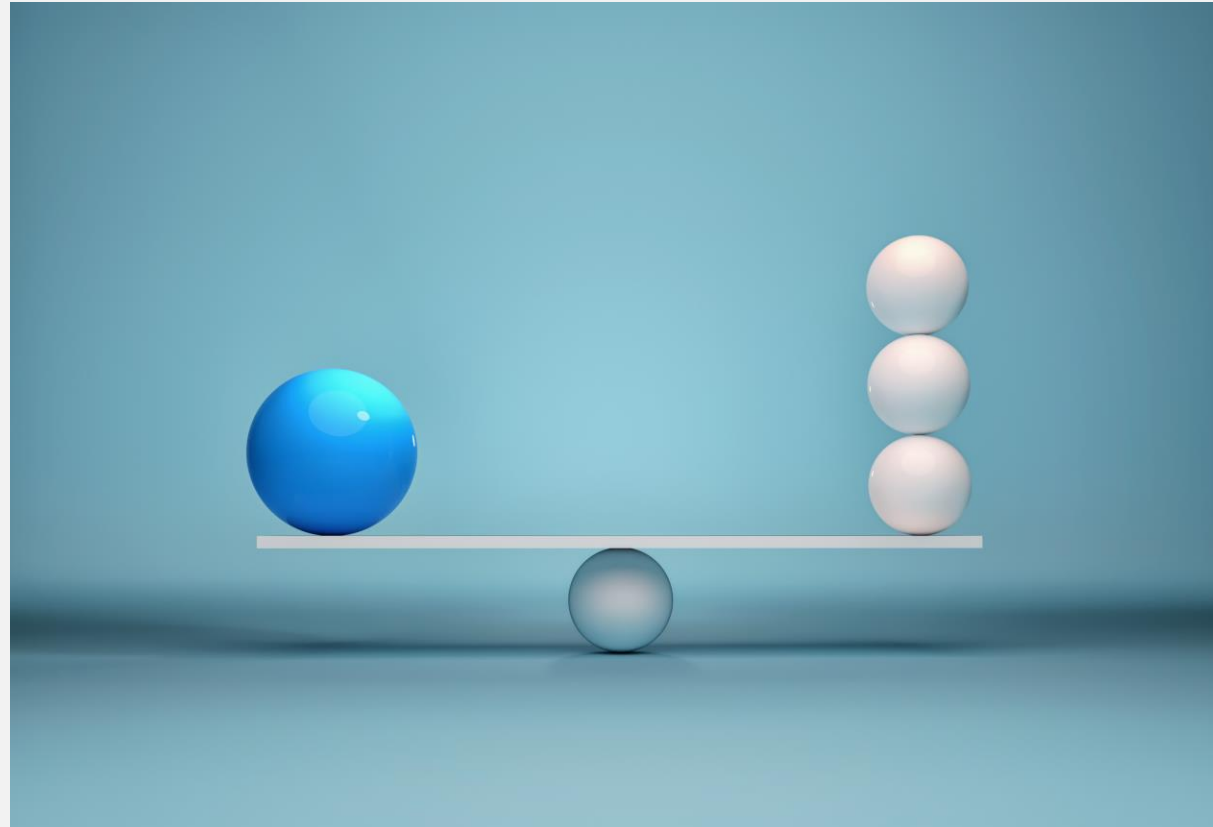
“consider the positioning of non-research contract teaching staff in the wider university context...”

visibility

marginalised

teaching load

**impostor
syndrome**



central

connected

up close

in situ

“examine the challenges and affordances that brings...” Some (personal)examples

- **Liminal areas** of EAP/Lang ed. in HE practice: (e.g. Foundation year students, incoming international students, elective/optional modules)
- Revelatory function: increasing visibility, exposing realities of contemporary university contexts, conditions for teaching staff and students... (**ACIS Student showcase**)
- In-sessional EAP- How language is actually used *in situ* (Tibbetts and Chapman, 2023)
- Question ‘*but who would be interested in this?*’
- Coming together creating something: example - **Carr et al., (2021)** In-sessional in creative studies area
- But also, interdisciplinarity and connections... (**Bristol ALLs**)
- Rewarding involvement in a research and publications community of practice (Pocock and Haines, 2024)
- Up close to learning/language use, questions of authorship, **what really is...**(Collini,2012)

“for developing meaningful, ethically-minded scholarship...”



Section 2 Ethical/Meaningful scholarship

- Fanghanel et al., 2016 (AdvanceHE paper on SoTL)
- SoTL = ‘not recognised in the sector as endowed with a clear meaning and distinctive set of characteristics’ (p.5)
- Call to consider ‘scholarship conceptually’
- **Micro Meso Macro levels**

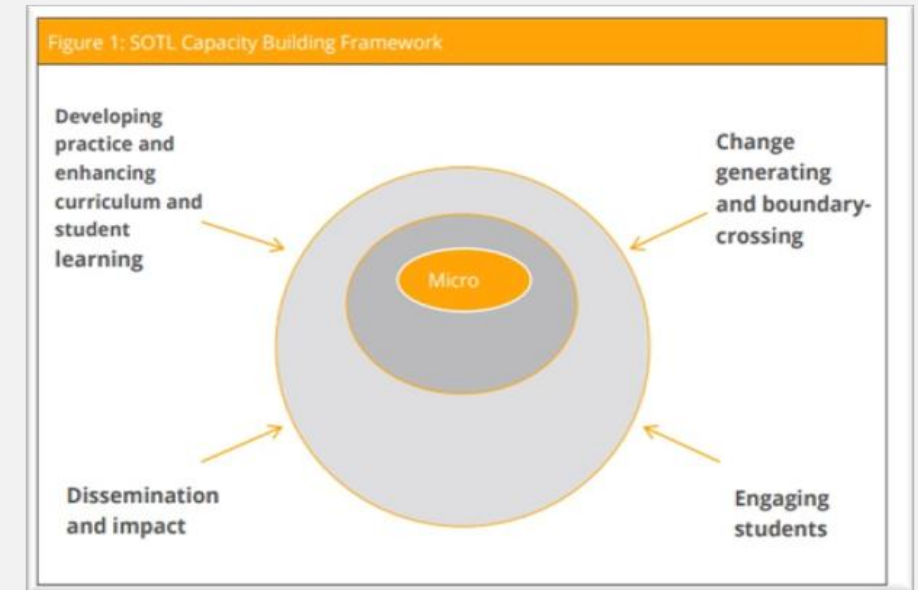


Image (Figure 1): Fanghanel et al., 2016: 7

Working through the levels? m... **M... M**

From individual to collective to profession...

“I define scholarship as individual and collective intellectual activity in which practitioners engage in order to (i) extend their own individual knowledge as well as the collective knowledge of the field, and to (ii) achieve impact on their own individual practice as well as on the wider practice and scholarship of the profession.”
(Walkova, 2026: 7)

Wider conceptualisation of scholarship – examples in SoTL literature

- “The questions we pose should be meaningful for ourselves; our students; our colleagues; and ultimately, for advancing the field.” (Ciccone 2018: 16)
- “SoTL is essential for creating an effective teaching culture that recognizes and values the importance of teaching, constructively assesses teaching, engages various stakeholders and resources, and supports teacher development.” (Braxton et al. 2024)

Scholarship... of teachers **and** learners?

<i>Principles of Good Practice in SoTL</i>
Inquiry focused on student learning
Grounded in context
Methodologically sound
Conducted in partnership with students
Appropriately public



Principles of good practice in SoTL (Felten, 2013: 122)

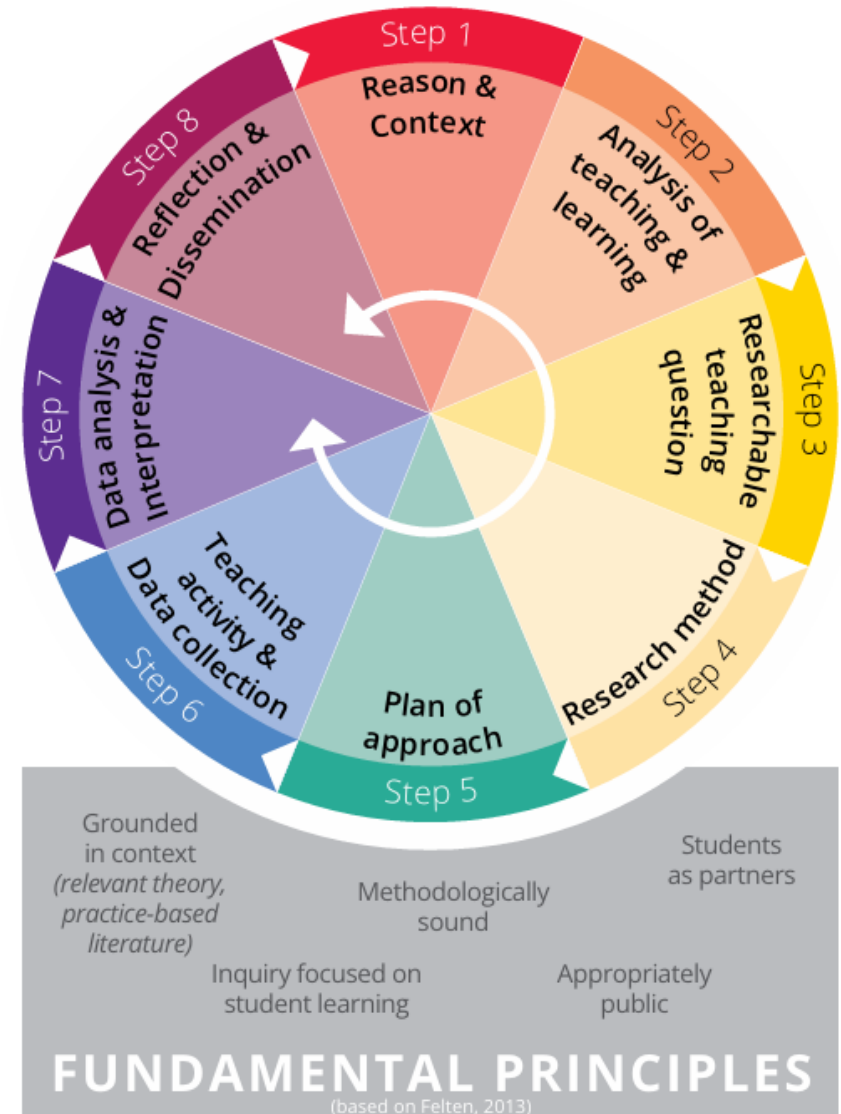
Do you need a roadmap?

As part of a process

Four important ethical issues to consider are:

- 1. Conflicts of interest and power relations: e.g. can you conduct a focus group yourself with a group of students that you will also assess?
- 2. Permission processes: e.g., should students give permission before you can use their data?
- 3. Equal and equitable participation in the project: e.g., can you divide your student group into two groups and have each group do something different?
- 4. Privacy and confidentiality: e.g., are you allowed to have the data you collected processed by a student-assistant?

Utrecht Roadmap for scholarship of teaching and learning: an introduction (Meijerman, Wijsman and Kirschner, 2024: 4)



Utrecht Roadmap for scholarship of teaching and learning: an introduction (Meijerman, Wijsman and Kirschner, 2024: 2)

Specific ethical questions in SoTL context?

- Conflicts of interest and power relations (Meijerman, Wijsman and Kirschner, 2024: 4)
- “If your inquiry is within your own teaching context (as is most often the case), your relationship with your students takes on an extra dimension [...] although you’re primarily their teacher, you’re now also a researcher of their learning” (Chick et al. 2025: 108)
- Timing – is there any benefit from one cohort to the next?
- Representation...
- Reflection vs reflexivity (e.g. see [Pat Thomson blog](#) 30 June 2026 “Being reflexive means asking hard questions.”)

‘Going beyond reflexivity’ Bond (2024)

- Questions on Thinking about ethics; Collegiality and trust; Ethics and Power and Ethics and the purpose of scholarship...
- E.g. ‘Ethics and the purpose of scholarship’:
 - Why am I undertaking this project? (Is it instrumental, developmental, externally driven?)
 - What and who will gain from my scholarship?
 - Who is included and who is excluded?
 - Who can I collaborate with?
 - Who do I have the right to speak with?

Manifesto for the scholarship of language teaching and learning (Ding et al. (The Language Scholar editorial team) 2018)

Scholarship = “a vehicle for all actors in language education (including students, researchers and practitioners) to contribute to a collective exploration and understanding of the many complexities of language teaching and learning..”

“...scholarship that is governed and **driven by ethics**. More specifically, a scholarship ethics of humility, fallibility, care, curiosity, inclusiveness and truthfulness.”

“collegial, collaborative and conversational, but also critical, combative and cautious.

Scholarship should open up rather than close down dialogue. Scholarship works to improve teaching and learning rather than create generalised norms to follow. “

(Ding et al. 2018: 58-59)

“seeing things as they really are is the first stage of making them better – and suggests that an ethics of scholarship might emerge. The manifesto remains a useful reminder of what scholarship could be and could achieve. (Ding, 2024)

Critical, empowering, unconventional ongoing process (some other quotes)

- ❑ “scholarship is a powerful tool for language educators (especially practitioners) to enhance their knowledge and understanding. Engaging in scholarship contributes to greater professional autonomy, enabling new professional identities to emerge; it allows for development and transformation of praxis. [...] **scholarship has the potential to enable language educators to actively shape their educational contexts rather than be shaped by circumstance, others and powerful ideologies and structures.**”(Ding et al. 2018: 60)
- ❑ Scholarship includes a range of activity exploring and applying ideas of teaching and learning. Whilst ‘research’ tends to be defined in terms of university expectations and is subject to institutional measures, **scholarship resists the pressure to conform** to conventional external expert norms as a default setting. (Webster, 2022: 2)
- ❑ “Scholarship is to be viewed as **a process rather than a product** – a product such as a journal article or a conference presentation on its own is not scholarship but an outcome of scholarship activity.” (Walkova, 2026: 7-8)

So... “meaningful, ethically-minded scholarship...”



[Enter your own ethical questions here]

CPD and Scholarship in King's Foundations/CIE

L

Some examples of my
attempts to develop a
“Meaningful, ethically
minded scholarship”
approach to scholarship

KING'S
College
LONDON



Welcome to my world 😊

Quiz questions

1. What do my teaching colleagues most worry about when it comes to doing scholarship?
2. What is **the number one question** colleagues have about ethics?
3. What does 'scholarship' actually mean?

Suggested answers

1. Time, getting it done, their appraisal, how to get started...
2. “Do I have to go through **<insert acronym name of your favourite uni ethics form here> ?**”
3. Good question...

KF Vision for CPD and scholarship 2025



Identifying key needs for CPD and scholarship priorities in KF for our learners and our teachers



Improving visibility of scholarly activity that is in progress and of opportunities for development through CPD for all



Building community and connections and creating spaces and opportunities for collaboration



Enhancing mechanisms for sharing expertise and constructive feedback on CPD and scholarly development



Ensuring that critical reflection is built in to ensure quality and allow for evaluation



Disseminating outcomes of our practices and ensuring impact within KF, CIEL, KCL and beyond

Have a vision

Review of 2024-25- can you guess the answers?

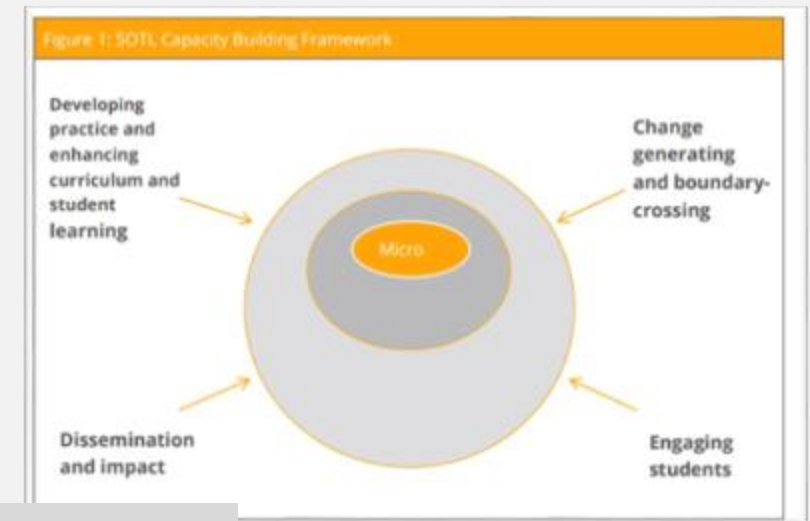
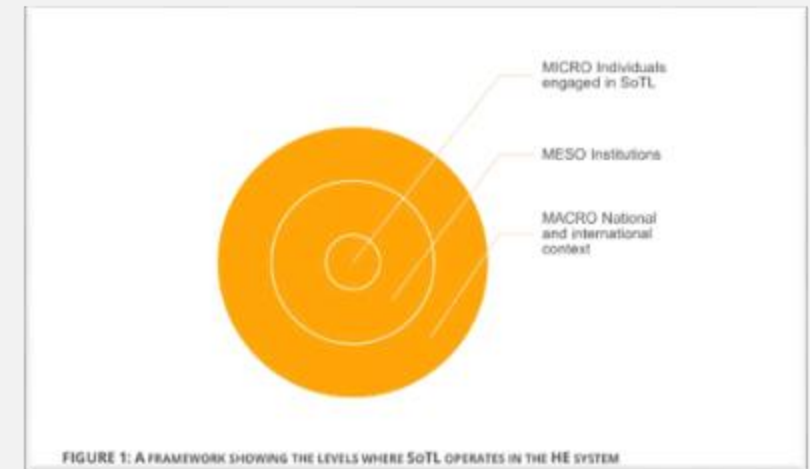


Share results/show possibilities

1. We funded [**how many?**] colleagues to go to conferences, training or other CPD events in 2024-25?
2. KF staff attended [**how many?**] different conferences?
3. We were able to fund [**what proportion?**] of the CPD, training and conferences requests we have had so far in 2024-25 .

Micro Meso Macro levels – inspired by Fanghanel et al., 2016 (AdvanceHE paper on SoTL)

- **‘Micro’ level** - Individual level CPD (FHEA and internal King’s Academy stuff) and self-actualisation rewarding, developmental
- **‘Meso’ level** - contribution from scholarship is useful for the department, for all our KF programmes/associated courses, across CIEL and for colleagues, and...
- **‘Macro’ level** - Kings education conference, College various funding opportunities, potentially for sector – e.g. speaking at national or international/sector wide conference or publishing in a journal



**Relate SoTL theory to
your specific context**

BALEAP 2025 University of Plymouth

Crossing the boundaries and claiming space: a tale of two cities (and two scholarship leads)

**Collaborate
with others
(beyond)**



Lindsay Knox

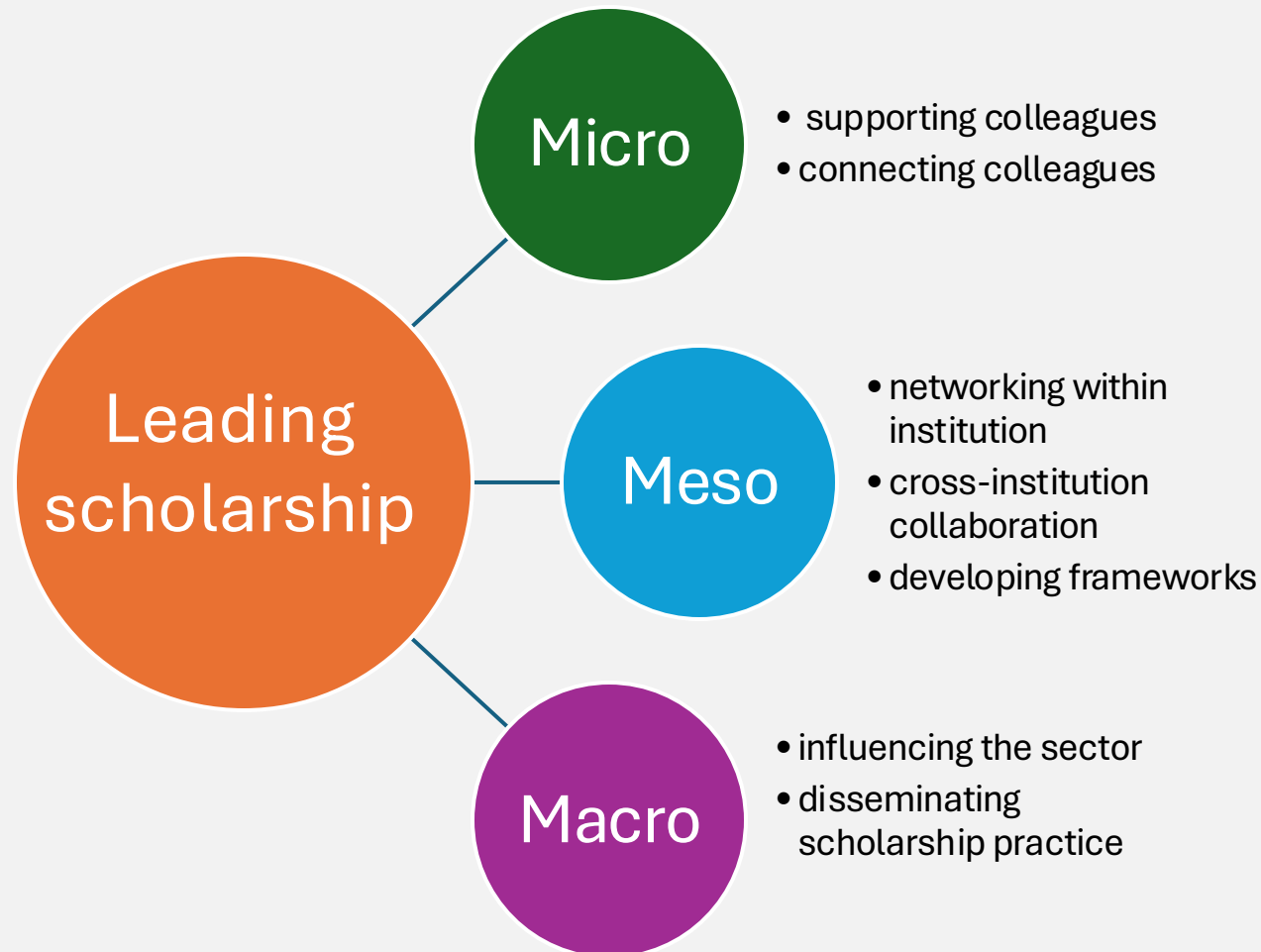
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Neil Adam Tibbetts

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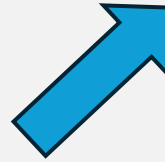
Claiming space: leading scholarship in practice



**Reflect on
your own
practice**

What are keys to how to approach having a conversation around scholarship? Introducing 'EXPECTS' (© N.A. Tibbetts, 2025!)

**Invent (and
copyright)
your own
acronyms!**



- **Experience/Expertise:** consider what level of experience your colleague has- how can you help them build on what they are doing or have done before?
- **Passion:** Can they work with what they are passionate about? What really interests them in teaching?
- **Ethical considerations:** Is what they are suggesting ethical (in broadest sense)? Does it involve students? EDI considerations? Important: consider students' interests (think of student experience team!)
- **Contribution:** How does the scholarship idea fit with what others are doing in KF/department needs/CIEL/ KCL Strategy... how does it contribute to their role and what they are doing?
- **Time:** how much time do they feasibly have and what should they be concentrating on?
- **Sensitivity:** importance of sensitivity discussing this (especially for new colleagues or ones who may be sensitive to suggestion that they need to do more)

How would you approach a conversation in the following circumstances with a colleague?

Reflect (as a group?)

1. Your colleague doesn't know how to get started with scholarship or what they are really interested in

2. Your colleague has lots of different ideas, lots of conferences they want to attend, but there isn't a common theme

3. Your colleague has done lots of educational research before and doesn't know what to do next

4. Your colleague talks to you about something you don't think is very useful or beneficial to them or the research idea does not seem sound

5. Your colleague has questions about funding, getting ethics approval, or requires specific training needs

6. Your colleague's suggestions will involve working with students as partners

Questions?



Thank you!

Please do contact me if you would like to chat about any of the points from today-

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