

**Fostering & Supporting SoTL Development:
Highlights from the Second SoTL-Asia Symposium, 19-20 September, 2019,
Nanyang Technological University (NTU)**

In 2017, the National University of Singapore (NUS) hosted the [first SoTL-Asia Symposium](#), which brought together participants and speakers from across Asia (and the US and Middle East) to discuss SoTL and what constitutes SoTL both generally and in our local context.

The second Symposium was held at NTU from 19 to 20 September 2019, and had two main points of focus. The first of these was the general theme of how institutions can foster and support the growth of SoTL. The intention of this theme was to cast a wide net across university practices, policies, and procedures that impinge on the development of SoTL and to seek some consensus on the kinds of strategies we might develop for the future of SoTL as an accepted everyday part of university life.

The two keynote speakers and the workshop session that spread over the two days addressed this theme.

The second focus was to showcase as many cases of SoTL practice as possible. The conference was therefore balanced between talking *about* SoTL and actual examples of SoTL practice. As a consequence, a large part of the symposium consisted of parallel sessions with presentations from the NUS, NTU, Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Beijing Institute of Technology and a featured talk from Adrian Lee (NUS).

The opening keynote was presented by Dr Eva Wong, Director Centre for Holistic Teaching and Learning, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU). Dr Wong's talk was titled "From Sharing the Joys and Woes of Teaching to Publishing Teaching Innovations—the Arduous Yet Rewarding Path of SoTL". In her talk, Dr Wong made a case that scholarly writing about teaching and learning and scholarly writing in the disciplines are the same, and that in each case, it is about telling a coherent story backed by evidence.

One of the points of this symposium was for institutions to share strategies for supporting and fostering SoTL, and Dr Wong provided a very clear picture of the complex ways in which SoTL is nurtured at HKBU at the micro-level, supporting individual academics, and at the macro level, which includes not only intra-institutional support, but extra-institutional support through the University Grants Committee of Hong Kong and external funding for SoTL projects.



Dr Eva Wong (HKBU) delivers the opening keynote.

The keynote speaker on the second day, Professor Chen Chwen Jen, Senior Director of the Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia, UNIMAS talked about “SoTL as a catalyst for teaching and learning transformation: an ongoing journey.” She gave a very detailed talk that began with the history of SoTL development at UNIMAS and strategies developed at a national level in Malaysia, through to the approval



Professor Chen Chwen Jen shares about the development of SoTL at UNIMAS.

in 2015 for 93 SoTL projects involving over 400 faculty. More recently, UNIMAS has begun to encourage the scholarship of curriculum leadership.

Prof Chen talked about both positive and negative views faculty have of SoTL, and discussed the many challenges, including misperceptions of SoTL.

Both talks by the keynotes provided very pertinent discussion points for the workshop involving all participants. The workshop, facilitated by Peter Looker, Head of Teaching, Learning and Pedagogy Division at NTU engaged participants in a long jigsaw activity to explore the key institutional factors influencing the development and support of SoTL.



*Photos above: Dr Peter Looker (left) and workshop participants in action (right).
Photos below: Parallel sessions during the Symposium.*

On the first day, Associate Professor Adrian Lee, Deputy Director of the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning at NUS, gave a featured talk on “Transforming Early-Career Academic Development at NUS using a Community of Practice Model.” What this talk (together with those of the two keynotes) highlighted is the importance of applying a scholarly (and reflective) approach to faculty development itself. This illustrates the notion of the whole academy as a learning institution, where teaching is also a socially constructed and sustained practice.

The parallel sessions run across the day-and-a-half of the symposium included the following sessions and speakers, illustrating the enormous space for variety offered by the “big-tent” notion of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.



Assoc Prof Adrian Lee (NUS) shares about applying SoTL to faculty development.

1. LIM Sok Mui, May, FOO Yong Lim, LOH Han Tong (SIT) “Developing educators for applied learning using 5 models of academic developer practice”
2. Radhika Jaidev (SIT) “Exploring communication needs beyond the University to facilitate undergraduate transition in to the workplace”
3. Misty COOK (NUS) “Embedding communication skills into the discipline: The good, the bad, and the challenges”
4. Paul J. GALLAGHER (NUS) “How NUS is transforming its undergraduate pharmacy programme in order to align with the increasing complexity of the Singaporean health-care system”
5. CHUI Wai Keung (NUS) “Developing a tool to evaluate reaction, attitude and perception of students from 5 NUS health professional programmes towards interprofessional collaboration practice”
6. CHNG Hui Ting, YAP Kai Zhen (NUS) “A sharing of the teaching and learning experience in the development of empathy and metacognition among pharmacy students”
7. Qi GAO, Beijing Institute of Technology “How to facilitate SoTL practice in Chinese Universities: Policies, approaches and cases”
8. Jason LEE, YEONG Jin-Yuan (NTU) “Enhancing the scholarship of teaching and learning among faculty in NTU”
9. Emmanuel TAN Chee Peng, Preman Rajalingam, Jessica ANG (NTU) “Reflecting on reflective practice in SoTL”

Overall, this Symposium illustrated the growing strength of SoTL in the Asian context. It showed how institutions are devoting serious effort to SoTL and individual faculty are producing a wide variety of very valuable SoTL studies that will enrich the teaching and learning environments. And importantly, these projects are localised and contextualised.

We should all look forward to the third symposium.



Participants of the SoTL-Asia 2019 Symposium.

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