Letter to the editor

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Origin, route, and destination

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The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), or educational scholarship, is a complex and interconnected concept that needs more exploration and understanding (1). Imagine educational scholarship as a river that should flow continuously; this river has its origin, route, and destination. The similarity between these two is that if their movement and continuity are interrupted, which can lead to stagnation or turmoil, this is not surprising. To understand the process conditions and success factors, knowing about the beginning and end of the path is necessary. Details of this pathway are provided in **Table 1**.

SoTL involves meeting attributes to be performed at individual and activity levels (1). Therefore, it requires prerequisites and agreements (2). Evidence indicates this concept needs more explanation and elaboration, especially in Iran (1, 3). Educational scholarship brings individual, institutional, and professional benefits (4). Despite many parallels, a significant obstacle it faces, particularly in the realm of educational research, is the false perception that the two notions are the same. Here, we will explore the fundamental characteristics of SoTL, namely those that set it apart from educational research, to guide those who work in this area.

Table 1. Origin, route, and destination in scholarship of teaching and learning

Origin	Route	Destination
Learning problems	Scholar learns during the process	Significant results
Learning questions	Scholar changes during the process	Problem solved
Learning issues	Scholar develops during the process	Quality education (5)

In recent years, educational scholarship and conducting research in this field have increased, including the necessity of dedicating a course unit for it in the Ph.D. curriculum of medical education in Iran. (6). Based on the history of this concept, we find that the SoTL was the voice of faculty members and that their standout and innovative educational actions and activities should be taken into consideration. This story gave rise to disagreements between research and education. However, our goal is to offer a thorough understanding of the components of SoTL, not to highlight the tension between these two ideas. To provide a clear understanding of SoTL and differentiate it from educational research, we have identified 15 components that are linked to educational scholarship (**Table 2**). It is imperative to note that the subjects mentioned in educational research or other research are not necessarily the same in all studies; however, we provide them for comparison and a better conception of educational scholarship.

Educational scholarship centers around the implementation and installation of novel scholarly activities within the educational context or system. Subsequently, the scholar assumes a pivotal position in the process of scholarship and is an integral

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component thereof. In contrast, research often requires hypotheses, and researchers sometimes might become blinded based on study design. In educational scholarship, significant outcomes, whether positive or not, are acknowledged, whereas in research or educational research, mainly positive results are considered by researchers.

Although every teacher is a scholar (7), they are not necessarily researchers. SoTL tries to offer solutions to problems, while research often focuses on identifying and resolving questions. Engagement, interaction, and learning with beneficiaries are vital in the SoTL process. In other words, scholars actively collaborate with the beneficiaries.

Reflection is another debatable component. It's a fundamental part of educational scholarship, and scholars should constantly reflect on their learning and development (5).

In terms of the evidence review, SoTL entails implementing the evidence into practice, whereas in research, evidence is mainly synthesized.

Another major distinction is that documenting and sharing, key parts of educational scholarship, gain less attention in research. In a general sense, we might regard SoTL as an umbrella that embraces and covers all educational activities. Considering sharing attributes, both documenting and sharing are crucial in SoTL. In contrast, in research, publishing a paper is typically sufficient, and its results may not be implemented in many cases. In both fields, there are critiques, but in educational scholarship, criticism is addressed in varied ways, and utilizing the critiques results in improvement, which is vital.

The criteria differ between these two concepts. For scholarship, we follow Glassick and FINER criteria (8), which are distinct from research criteria.

Another distinction is related to context. In SoTL, it's vital to consider the context, including norms, rules, and fields of inventive activity, which should also be considered by scholars. In research, context often doesn't play a big role. Researchers often strive to minimize contextual influences to determine generalizable findings. Additional details are provided in **Table 2**.

Finally, we discuss the educational scholarship, encompassing its origin, route, and destination. Subsequently, we compared it to a river. To further clarify its meaning, we highlight its differences and, to some extent, its similarities with educational research. It is crucial to remember that educational scholarship is more tied to the learning route. It considers every kind of individual progress valuable, works with the scholars themselves, and looks at the process's path, although they are not oblivious to the destination. Ultimately, SoTL endeavors to make the teacher a person who is interested in learning and continuously learns.

Table 2. Distinguish between educational scholarship and research/educational research

No.	Subject	Research/Educational Research	Educational Scholarship
1	Functor	Researcher	Scholar
2	Role of functor	Recommended blind	The main part of the process
3	Teacher Role	Not always	Should be scholar
4	Hypothesis	Mainly has	No hypothesis
5	Goal	Problem identifies	Problem-solving
6	Beneficial	Work on them	Work with them
7	Learning effect	Not necessarily happen	Very necessary
8	Context	Mostly ineffective	Context-based (1)
9	Reflection	Mostly irrelevant	Necessary (1)
10	Evidence	Synthesized	Implemented
11	Documentation	Less required	Crucial
12	Sharing	Less required	Imperative
13	Critique	Required	Required
14	Results	Mainly positive	Significant
15	Criteria	Depending on the study design	Glassick, FINER (8)

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