Applying an Academic Literacies Lens to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) is central to improving teaching, enhancing students' learning experiences and ensuring practice is evidence-based. This study explores the insights gained by applying an academic literacies lens to the results of professional development initiatives (programmes, schemes) designed to enhance features of faculty colleagues' SoTL skills. A scoping review was conducted on Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice (JUTLP) papers published from 2004-2023. Developing teaching practice is a central theme of JUTLP and the papers published across this timeframe provide a rich source from which to explore initial insights as a first step to potentially deeper explorations. The review identified four themes emerging from the qualitative data captured across the review sample: meaning-making together; journey of becoming; flattening of power; and context-specific identities. The analysis points to reasons why collaborative meaning-making opportunities are so valued within professional development initiatives. The academic literacies lens highlights issues of discourse, power, epistemology and identity, and consequently illuminates these collaborative moments as spaces that provide a knowledge and identity-based anchor for colleagues. This lens also stresses the destabilising and emotive nature of 'becoming' a pedagogic scholar. Implications of the findings are considered from an academic development perspective. Discussion centres particularly on how academic developers may work to support rather than jeopardise colleagues' future SoTL trajectories.

Citation

Introduction

The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) is recognised as the mechanism through which the practice and profession of teaching advances (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999). The classroom, or other learning environment, becomes a site for inquiry in which questions are asked about the effectiveness of students' learning and the influence of teaching within this process (Huber & Hutchings, 2005). At the heart of SoTL is the notion of the reflective, critical and inquiring teacher, focused on "the improvement of their teaching so as to improve their students' learning" and the communication of their work for wider communities to learn from and build upon (Tight, 2018, p. 64). Taking an enquiring, critical and evidence-informed approach is also positioned as central to the development of teacher expertise. In King's (2022) work in this area, SoTL can be seen as the foundation from which teaching expertise continues to grow, cultivated by professional learning opportunities that support faculty colleagues in developing skills to inquire into and evaluate their own practices.

Engagement in SoTL, however, has been documented as unsettling to and troubling for academic identities (Simmons et al., 2013). As an academic (or educational) developer with a focus on supporting SoTL engagement, I have observed this discomfort in colleagues and my own struggles in knowing how to help them navigate through it. Over time, I noticed parallels between academics' experiences with SoTL and students' experiences of meaning-making within higher education, as illuminated by the academic literacies concept. An academic literacies perspective views meaning-making as a socially constructed and socially situated process (Healey & Healey, 2023; Lillis, 2003). I began to question what insights might be gained by viewing SoTL engagement through an academic literacies lens.

SoTL is a relatively new sphere of activity and calls have been made for literatures reviews "to help us understand and navigate the [SoTL] field" (Chick et al., 2019, p. 187). These calls have led to various scoping reviews of SoTL literature "to show the highly travelled questions, topics, methods, and areas where more work needs to be done" (Chick et al., 2019, p. 187). Reviews have explored research methodologies used in SoTL studies and the focus of investigations (Haigh & Withell, 2020; Jie How, 2020; Manarin et al., 2021; McSweeney & Schnurr, 2023), types of studies published in SoTL journals and who is authoring them (Hamann et al., 2009; Major and Braxton, 2020), the range of scholars being cited in SoTL literature (Capello and Miller-Young, 2020) and the extent to which SoTL is responsive to transformative educational practice (Gilpin & Liston, 2009).

These studies add much to understandings about the investigative and publication features of SoTL literature. Less attention has been given to how a scoping review of published literature may enhance understandings of academics' experiences of engaging in SoTL practices. Such a review is important given the crucial role that SoTL plays in advancing teaching practices and teacher expertise. With developing teaching practice a particular theme of the Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice (JUTLP), there have been various studies published over its publication history exploring initiatives aimed at enhancing faculty colleagues' SoTL-related skills. These contributions to the field of knowledge provide a rich source of findings and a unique opportunity to firstly, examine the application of an academic literacies lens to such findings and secondly, consider the insights gained. The insights may yield valuable information

for those leading or developing programmes and initiatives to support faculty colleagues' SoTL engagement. As a study concentrated on JUTLP, this scoping review also provides an important "first step to gathering information on areas that [may] warrant deeper exploration" (Chick et al., 2019, p. 188) across a broader publication landscape.

Setting the scene

As alluded to previously, this topic is a personal one for me in that interest in it stems from my professional experiences and a desire to use the findings to inform and enhance my practices, as well as advance sociological understandings. Realising this subjectivity, it seemed only appropriate to conduct the review within an autoethnographic tradition, which foregrounds personal experience and its influence on the research process (Ellis et al., 2011). More than just accounting for subjectivity, however, autoethnography aims to capitalise "on insights gained from researchers' personal experiences" and their position as a member of the group under study (Stevens et al., 2021, p. 6). As Anderson (2006, p. 379) states, the dominant feature of autoethnography is that the researcher is "a complete member of the social world under study" and as such is embedded within all aspects of the sense-making process of research. In taking an autoethnographic stance, this paper follows a rich and growing tradition of such studies published within JUTLP (e.g. Nachatar Singh & Chowdhury, 2021; Wilson et al., 2020; Yeo et al., 2023). In keeping with this tradition, as Wall (2008) indicates, we must begin with a (brief) personal story.

My interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) developed almost immediately as I entered the world of academia in my first role as an educational researcher. This role evolved to include working with faculty colleagues, who had largely come into their academic roles direct from industry, to consider and approach teaching as a scholarly and, in time, inquiry-based endeavour. As I moved into the academic (or educational) development field, I began working with colleagues who, through their own academic backgrounds, were trained (and usually confident and experienced) researchers within their disciplinary fields, but new to the field of higher education (HE) pedagogy and scholarship. I have had various academic development roles but, in line with a priority of this field (Forgie et al., 2018; Gosling, 2008), all have included an explicit focus on supporting the development of colleagues' SoTL-related skills (e.g., as course leader for new and early-career academics who had to engage in a SoTL project and as lead institutional support for funded 'teaching excellence' projects).

It is not a new insight to say that many academic colleagues experience challenges as they engage, often for the first time, in SoTL activities. Literature highlights the unsettling and sometimes troublesome nature of SoTL for new practitioners, which may emerge from unfamiliarity with the SoTL/HE literature (Kim et al., 2021), alien epistemologies and research methodologies (Haigh & Withell, 2020; McSweeney & Schnurr, 2023), and perceived lack of time and ongoing support (Fanghanel, 2016; Tierney, 2020). I observed these challenges playing out in practice in my activities with academics and often felt the shortcomings of my own approaches to help colleagues navigate this uncertain terrain. I connected with ideas that explored experiences of SoTL scholars through the lens of threshold concepts and the troublesome knowledge and liminality they must journey through as they traverse transformative landscapes while developing their SoTL identities (Simmons et al., 2013). The 'academic tribes' discourse, in

which the distinct characteristics and knowledge structures of disciplines "strongly condition or even determine the behaviour and values of academics" (Trowler, 2014, p. 18), also served to give some appreciation of boundaries that new "SoTLers" (Fanghanel, 2016, p. 9) may have to cross and the (emotional and cognitive) work involved. Reflections on these views or arguments only took me so far, though, in relation to understanding the part that I could play in supporting this crossing of boundaries so that I did not, inadvertently, cause colleagues to retreat at the sight of troubling or cognitively challenging ideas, however transformative they may be in the future. I felt that I may be missing more about what may be going on under the surface of academics' experiences and what this might mean for my SoTL support practices.

Academic literacies and SoTL

Over time I found myself increasingly drawn to the academic literacies concept. This concept informed various aspects of my academic development work with faculty colleagues, for example when considering student transitions into HE learning and exploring assessment as literacy practices. The academic literacies approach developed from Lea and Street's (1998) seminal work on students' approaches to reading and writing. They argued that research into student learning in HE had tended "to concentrate on ways in which students can be helped to adapt their practices to those of the university" (Lea and Street, 1998, p. 158), which ultimately ignores the cultural and contextual component of writing and reading practices. As Lillis (2003) highlights, an academic literacies approach emphasises the socially situated and ideological nature of student academic writing, and as such sees issues of learning "at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159). In essence, an academic literacies perspective views meaning-making as a socially constructed process (Healey & Healey, 2023), taking place within contexts that are ideologically inscribed (Lillis, 2003), value-laden and shaped by convention (Hilsdon et al., 2019). Importantly these contexts, such as HE institutions, are sites of discourse in which meanings may be contested and practices "saturated with identity, power and culture" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 9).

The more that I read about academic literacies, the more that I could see parallels with the experiences of new SoTL practitioners. Lea and Street (1998) argue that:

> From the student point of view a dominant feature of academic literacy practices is the requirement to switch practices between one setting and another, to deploy a repertoire of linguistic practices appropriate to each setting, and to handle the social meanings and identities that each evokes. (p. 159)

As evidenced in this quote, the requirement to "code-switch" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 34) across subject or disciplinary discourses does not have implications just for the type(s) of language used in each context, but for the values and meanings ascribed to the identities within those contexts too. This requirement to switch practices, as well as identities, may also be seen as a dominant feature of SoTL practitioners' experiences. Disciplinary contexts may value and prioritise ways of thinking, knowing and making sense of the world that might conflict with discourses presented in pedagogic scholarship contexts. 'Legitimate' academic practices may be contested across these contexts (e.g., how knowledge is created and validated) (Weller, 2011) that academics must negotiate. As Lea and Street (1998, p. 159) go on to argue, the emphasis on identities and social meanings "draws attention to deep affective and ideological conflicts in such switching" and the

constructions of academic identity that may be destabilised by unfamiliar and cognitively challenging discourses (Haigh & Withell, 2020; Weller, 2011). For Lea and Street (1998, p. 159), a student's "personal identity - who am 'I' - may be challenged by the forms of writing required in different disciplines", leading to emotional struggle as the tensions are navigated (Gourlay, 2009). We may see similar conflicts occurring for academics as their disciplinary and teaching identities are potentially challenged by the forms of knowledge or meaning-making that are valued and prioritised in each context. As noted previously, engagement in SoTL has been documented as unsettling to and troubling for identities (Simmons et al., 2013), so by applying an academic literacies lens we can see academics experiencing the same emotional and destabilising struggles as they navigate uncertain, troublesome and unfamiliar terrain.

Context to this review

I am not the first to recognise the value of applying an academic literacies lens to SoTL experiences. Healey and Healey (2023) and Weller (2011) have considered academics searching and reading of HE literature from an academic literacies perspective. Emphasising the role that "literacy practices play in constituting notions of identity and personhood", Weller (2011, p. 95) explored how readers described and compared their experiences of reading research in their discipline with their experiences of reading HE research. The accounts of their literacy acts were contextualised within "a conception of the dynamics of an academic identity that is not fixed but continuously reconstituted in relation to the social context within which the individual operates" (Weller, 2011, p. 96). In their work, both Healey and Healey (2023) and Weller (2011) foreground the social context of meaning-making and the "recognition that discourses are contributory to the forming and reforming of identity" (Weller, 2011, p. 96). As yet, an academic literacies lens has not been applied beyond the reading experiences of those new to SoTL. Of course, the interplay of discourses and identity (re)formation will continue as academics engage with other SoTL activities and initiatives. As such, there is value in expanding the application of this lens to academics' experiences within other SoTL-related contexts and settings.

At this point I must return to the beginning of my personal story where I indicated that my interest and the particular focus of my academic roles have been on supporting the development of faculty colleagues' SoTL-related skills. This interest aligns to Geertsema's (2016, p. 124) argument that a "central aspect of our role as academic developers is…to find good ways of fostering SoTL through our courses, programmes, and consultations". As such, my aspiration in conducting this review has been to see what insights we might gain by applying an academic literacies lens to papers that are presenting results of initiatives (programmes, schemes, etc.,) that have been specifically designed to cultivate and enhance some aspects of colleagues' SoTL-related skills.

Now, the scholarship of teaching and learning is not an uncontested concept itself. Since Boyer first introduced us to the 'scholarship of teaching' in 1990 (which evolved into the scholarship of teaching *and learning*), debate has continued about its parameters. Does it, for example, encapsulate scholarly teaching or is it a distinct research or enquiry-based endeavour into students' learning? Is SoTL a spectrum of activity (ranging from reflection on teaching-related experiences to disseminating public, peer reviewed and critiqued pedagogic research) or is it purely the pursuit of original education research? The scope of this paper can extend only to acknowledging these debates (c.f. Canning & Masika, 2022; Geertsema, 2016; Kanuka, 2011;

Macfarlane, 2011) rather than engaging within them. It also does not extend to providing an overview of the progression of the field of SoTL, which can be found addressed in other works (c.f. Tight, 2018). It does, though, require clarity on the definition of SoTL being applied in the context of this review.

While critical of the situation, Canning and Masika (2022 p. 1084) highlight that SoTL has "come to be regarded as an umbrella concept" covering a range of activities and practices. Illustrative of this, Fanghanel et al. (2016, p. 6) include "concepts as diverse as reflection and inquiry on learning and teaching practices, strategies to enhance teaching and learning…or SoTL research" under this SoTL umbrella. I have demonstrated above that we are still in the early stages of applying an academic literacies lens to faculty colleagues' SoTL experiences. Given this, it seems sensible at this point to apply a spectrum-of-activity view of SoTL so as not to constrain any meaningful insights that may emerge. Additionally, what might be classed as the lower-order spectrum of SoTL activity (e.g., reflection on teaching-related experiences through, for example, peer observation) may be the first time in which some academics are explicitly switching between differing discourses of practice (e.g., switching from 'I am an economist' to 'I am a teacher of economics'), potentially bringing issues of epistemology and identities to the fore.

Method

As identified above, the overall aim of this study is to explore the insights that we might gain by applying an academic literacies lens to the results of initiatives (programmes, schemes, etc.,) that have been specifically designed to enhance features of colleagues' SoTL-related skills. To fulfill this aim, a scoping review has been conducted on JUTLP papers published over the previous twenty years. Arksey and O'Malley (2005, p. 21) highlight that a common reason for conducting a scoping review is to draw "conclusions from existing literature regarding the overall state of research activity". This review is exploring the contributions of research activity published within JUTLP to draw conclusions about the insights that might be gained through the application of an academic literacies lens to study findings.

The review was conducted following the scoping review protocol set out in Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and extended by Chick et al. (2019). This protocol includes six explicit stages: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant literature based on clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, (3) selecting the literature based on these criteria, (4) charting the literature using uniform data extraction tools, (5) collating, summarising, and reporting results, and (6) consulting SoTL leaders and practitioners. As a review of previously published research, formal ethical approval was not required; however ethical principles informed and guided all stages of the study.

Identifying the research question

As a scoping review, the research question centres the emergent nature that the findings of this study will take. The research question is:

> What features from an academic literacies lens are evident in the findings of papers presenting results of initiatives designed to enhance features of faculty colleagues' SoTL-related skills?

Identifying relevant literature

The primary inclusion criteria for this review was that the papers were published within JUTLP across its full publication timeframe. The specific date range searched was January 2004 to July 2023. Each paper included also had to be a research study, reporting data and findings from initiatives (programmes, schemes, etc.,) that have been specifically designed to enhance aspects of faculty colleagues' SoTL-related skills. Papers were excluded if they were not a research study presenting such data and findings.

Selecting the literature

The search feature within the journal's website was used to search for relevant papers. To ensure breadth of coverage and reduce the likelihood of missing pertinent literature, a range of terms was searched selecting the 'All fields' category in the search function. These terms aimed to encompass the various ways that SoTL skills development might be framed within papers. Search strategies employed within other SoTL scoping reviews, including keywords used and titles of SoTL-related journals searched within, provided a foundation for defining the terms used in this review (c.f., Chick et al., 2019; Haigh & Withell, 2020; Jie How 2020). Quotation marks encapsulated the search terms so that they were searched as a phrase rather than individual words.

Figure one identifies all search terms and outlines the review process. The first search term was used as it would return all papers also using the 'scholarship of teaching *and learning*' term and at the same time would not miss papers that had identified only as the 'scholarship of teaching'. The last two terms were included after initial screening of relevant papers suggested that many initiatives reported on were based on peer observation or peer review of teaching schemes.

Charting the literature and extracting the data

Following scoping review procedures (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), an excel spreadsheet was used to capture and chart specific contextual features of each paper included in the review. The features captured were:

1. Country in which the study was conducted.
2. The initiative being investigated (e.g., a workshop, CPD module, peer observation scheme, etc.).
3. Context of the initiative (e.g., department or faculty-based, cross-institutional, etc.).
4. The target population of the initiative (e.g., early career academics, all faculty colleagues, etc.).
5. The research design.

Within the findings presented in each paper, any data showing elements that might be related to an academic literacies perspective were extracted and captured within a separate table.

Figure 1

Review process

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│  │ 491 papers identified according to search terms   │                         │
│  │ and screened for retrieval:                        │                         │
│  │                                                    │                         │
│  │     "Scholarship of teaching and learning" - 116   │                         │
│  │     "Pedagogic research" - 25                      │                         │
│  │     "Scholarly teaching" - 8                       │                         │
│  │     "Pedagogic inquiry" - 2                        │                         │
│  │     "Scholarship of learning" - 10                 │                         │
│  │     "Pedagogic scholarship" - 1                    │                         │
│  │     "Pedagogic development" - 10                   │                         │
│  │     "Academic development" - 142                   │                         │
│  │     "Peer review" - 151                            │                         │
│  │     "Peer observation" - 26                        │                         │
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│         │        │     not research papers presenting results of          │     │
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│         │        │     SoTL-related skills.                               │     │
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│  │ 16 papers selected for full text    │                                        │
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│         ├───────▶│ 1 paper excluded after full text review:               │     │
│         │        │     not a research paper presenting results of         │     │
│         │        │     initiative designed to enhance aspects of          │     │
│         │        │     SoTL-related skills.                               │     │
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│  │ 15 papers included in the review.   │                                        │
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Collating, summarising, and reporting results

Descriptive analysis was used to summarise the characteristics of the data captured in the excel spreadsheet. This analysis shows key patterns and trends occurring across the features of the papers to provide a contextual framework for the findings of this study. All data collected in relation to the academic literacies perspective were qualitative and as such, were thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The flexibility of this data coding process suited this study in that open and selective coding merged somewhat more than remaining distinct stages (Williams & Moser, 2019). In essence, when reviewing the data from the papers, I was engaging in a level of selectivity by extracting only that which appeared to pertain to facets of the academic literacies concept. An open coding approach was then used on the qualitative dataset gathered in which, using an academic literacies lens, distinct themes were identified for categorisation. These themes were then refined as categories were reduced, reorganised and combined (Ely, 1991) to

achieve "thematic specificity" (Williams & Moser, 2019, p. 52) within a further selective coding process.

Consulting SoTL leaders and practitioners

The publication of this paper is the first step in presenting this work to SoTL leaders and practitioners for consultation. As a scoping review, it aims to be catalyst for conversation and further research.

Results

Following the search strategy outlined above, 15 papers were identified that matched the inclusion criteria (Figure 1). These articles ranged in date from 2005 to 2023, with over half (n=9) published from 2018 onwards. The majority of studies were Australian-based (n=9), with two from the UK, two from Canada, one from the USA and one from Oman. In terms of initiatives studied, seven related to a professional development course or programme (either certificated on non-certificated), four explored peer observation or peer review of teaching schemes, three focused upon co-teaching activities (including one lesson-study project), and one explored the creation of a virtual community of practice (Table 1). Approximately half of the initiatives (n=7) were directed at early-career academics and ten took place within a disciplinary or subject-specific context.

Table 1

Focus of initiatives studied within the review sample

Initiative studied	Papers
Professional development course or programme (either certificated on non-certificated)	Webster et al. (2005); Al-Musawi (2008); Wilson et al. (2018); Kehoe et al. (2018); Beatty et al. (2020); Kim et al. (2023); McEwan et al. (2023).
Peer observation or peer review of teaching scheme	Hendry & Oliver (2012); Woodman & Parappilly (2015); Wevill & Savage (2020); Kanuka and Sadowski (2020).
Co-teaching activity	Turkich et al. (2014); Wingrove et al. (2015); Soto et al. (2019).
Virtual community of practice	Bickle et al. (2021).

Eight studies used a qualitative framework to evaluate their initiatives and seven employed a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach. Participant questionnaires and semi-structured interviews following completion of the initiatives were the most common methods used. Three studies included student evaluations of teaching as part of their data collection methods. In at least two studies, the participants were also the researchers and these employed more textual analysis approaches, such as review of journal entries, transcriptions of meetings and free-writing exercises. Most studies were small-scale, with sample sizes ranging from one at the lowest to 66 at the highest. More commonly, the sample size varied between seven and 10. In accordance with the intentions of a scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), data on the studies' research

design was captured to provide contextual information. Quality appraisal of the methodologies utilised was not carried out, nor was any attempt made to determine the effectiveness of the initiatives.

Applying the academic literacies lens

The results will now turn to the qualitative data captured across the review studies. Following the coding process described above, four major themes were identified: meaning-making together; journey of becoming; flattening of power; and context-specific identities. Before exploring these themes further, it is important to note that, commensurate with an academic literacies approach, I am not seeking to authoritatively impose meanings on the findings presented here. Instead, I aim to engage in what Lillis (2003, p. 198) calls "internally persuasive discourses", which are "ways of meaning with which the individual has dialogically engaged, that is, questioning, exploring, connecting, in order to develop a newer way to mean".

Meaning-making together

Whilst the initiatives discussed in the review papers were designed to enhance colleagues' teaching and SoTL-related skills, the most commonly reported benefits were the collegial relationships engendered and the exchanging of ideas that occurred between participants (Beatty et al., 2020; Kanuka & Sadowski, 2020; Kim et al., 2023; Wingrove et al., 2015; Woodman & Parapilly, 2015). In the minority of initiatives where interaction between participants was not a significant feature, it was specifically requested in evaluation comments, as in Al-Musawi (2008) and Wilson et al. (2018):

> For example, one participant paused and commented on the asynchronous nature of the [programme]: 'A couple of times I would have liked to talk to people about what I was learning. I didn't have any questions, I just wanted to talk about it'. (Wilson et al., 2018, p. 20)

These comments reinforce the academic literacies perspective of meaning-making as a socially-constructed process (Healey & Healey, 2023). Teaching and pedagogic scholarship, like student writing, may be "seen not as a not as a 'skill', but as a complex, socially-situated set of meaning-making practices" (Gourlay, 2009, p. 182). From this perspective, it makes sense that the social experience of any initiative is one of the most valued for colleagues for the space that it provides to explore and consider ideas together. Webster et al. (2005) provide an example of designing this meaning-making process into the coursework aspect of their initiative. In their study, course participants "appreciated being able to access other group members' work online or in face-to-face sessions" (Webster et al., 2005, p. 80) for the opportunities it gave to make meaning through the lens of their fellow participants' perspectives. Colleagues were able to "view responses of others, modify their answer to represent their newer understanding and reflect on prior responses to develop new understandings" (Webster et al., 2005, p. 78).

For two of the studies in the review sample, collaborative meaning-making was the specific intention and focus of their activities. Soto et al. (2019, p. 19) reported on their collective and "participatory professional development" through their lesson study project and Bickle et al. (2021, p. 144) explored the opportunity to jointly "shape our professional identities" through a virtual community of practice. This latter study provided some insight into what was occurring during the collaborative meaning-making process: "This [collaborative] process helped us to 'see gaps in

each others' views' (Q11A5 [participant code]) and gave 'inspiration for new lines of work' (Q2A3) leading to the creation of 'knowledge' and 'confidence' (Q1A3) for the individual members [in the community of practice]" (Bickle et al., 2021, p. 146).

Lea and Street (1998, p. 159), in their seminal academic literacies work, argued issues of learning should be seen "at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation". In the quote above, we see learning occurring at this epistemological level as colleagues create 'knowledge' together, which positively impacts on their identities through the confidence gained by the process. Of course, the finding that academic colleagues value opportunities within professional development initiatives to interact with each other and collaborate may not be particularly new; however, an academic literacies lens provides a "newer way" (Lillis, 2003, p. 198) to consider what might be going on within this space. The next theme allows us to dig a little deeper into why these collaborative meaning-making opportunities are so valued.

Journey of becoming
In seeing issues of learning at the level of epistemology and identities, an academic literacies perspective emphasises that meaning-making is not just about making texts, "but is also about the making of ourselves, in a process of becoming" (Lillis, 2001, p. 48, cited in Gourlay, 2009, p. 183). Importantly, this perspective also stresses that identity is not fixed but fluid (Healey & Healey, 2023) and "continuously reconstituted in relation to the social context within which the individual operates" (Weller, 2011, p. 96). Lea and Street (1998, p. 159) draw attention to the "deep affective and ideological conflicts" that can occur in the switching of identities across contexts and the meanings that may be ascribed to them. In her work exploring students' transition into university, Gourlay (2009, p. 183) highlights an "emotional process of change" that students go through, which may be "destabilising and challenging" in terms of their identity. In part, this destabilisation occurs through the "lack of determinacy surrounding literacy norms" (Gourlay, 2009, p. 183) and disciplinary requirements (Hilsdon et al., 2019). As a result, whilst undergoing transition, students may experience inhabiting an emotionally charged "betwixt space" (Gourlay, 2011, p. 184), navigating status ambiguity and uncertainty in their process of becoming a disciplinary learner.

The findings in this review study suggest that faculty colleagues, particularly early career academics, may also be experiencing this 'betwixt space' as they transition into their teaching role and an identity that may feel to them uncertain and somewhat ill-defined. The emotionally charged nature of this is captured in a participant quote from McEwan et al. (2023):

> I feel [the course] has…equipped me with the skills to build my teaching career, something I never thought possible before now. As a traditional science researcher, I never had the confidence or knowledge to fully take on my teaching responsibilities to make them effective. Now I feel with the skills I have learned and the knowledge I have in my subjects I'm not quite as much of a fraud as I felt before! (pp. 10-11)

An immediate benefit reported in some of the review sample was the confidence gained by colleagues from participating in the various initiatives. This confidence related to using new teaching or scholarly approaches learnt or observed from others (Wilson et al., 2018), implementing teaching and learning policies, and presenting at teaching and learning conferences (Beatty et al., 2020). Woodman and Parappilly (2015, p. 6) asserted that the confidence gained

by their participants "reflected their uncertainty in their abilities", which was exemplified in one of their participant's quotes: "I was greatly encouraged with my [peer observation] feedback because I hadn't any great confidence in my lecturing, although no-one had ever formally critiqued me" (Woodman and Parappilly, 2015, p. 6). This quote (and the one before) speaks to a "lack of determinacy surrounding literacy norms" (Gourlay, 2009, p. 183) with teaching, rather than writing, being the indeterminate practice in this case. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss or critique the state of professional development for new HE teachers, or to engage in debates about the nebulous nature of 'teaching excellence' (c.f. Godbold et al., 2023); however, we can see parallels here between academics and students as they enter the unfamiliar, and perhaps hazy, terrain of their new field or discipline. For academics, operating in a discourse that is uncertain to them, their identity as a teacher is destabilised and viewed from an inherently affective dimension. This affective element plays out in a common theme across the review papers of colleagues concerned about being judged or exposed as inadequate: "…others were initially apprehensive about being observed and felt a 'little self-conscious' or nervous at the start, as one person said, because 'you are being judged in a way' (Interview 5)" (Hendry and Oliver, 2012, p. 8); "…as a new academic, the [course] is a really reassuring environment. I feel like I can share anything that I'm finding hard or concerned about, without being judged or feeling inadequate" (Beatty et al., 2020, p. 7);

> This focus on our understanding and experience was echoed in the reflective data, where we reported 'a feeling of freedom of expressing one's own ideas' without 'the pressure of potentially be[ing] seen as a 'not-knowing' or as a 'not-qualified enough' participant' (E6 [participant code]). (Bickle et al., 2021, p. 147)

These quotes suggest that the participants are navigating feelings of vulnerability within their identities as teachers and that the journey of becoming a teacher (and pedagogic scholar) is an intensely emotional one. As such, participation in a community with peers "experiencing similar issues" (Beatty et al., 2020, p. 6) and "doing the same" things (Bickle et al., 2021, p. 146) is extremely valuable. From an academic literacies perspective, we can see how this community engagement may help to reconstitute for colleagues their sense of identity as a teacher, at the same time as supporting them to create meaning about their roles *through* their interactions with others, e.g.: "Some great ideas have already come out [of discussions together], and it's encouraged me to reflect on my current teaching practices" (Beatty et al., 2020, pp. 7-8).

Flattening of power
The above discussion allows us to see the importance of peer connection for teachers as they embark on a journey of becoming and making sense of their teaching or SoTL-related experiences. An academic literacies lens continues to grant us further insight into the significant elements of these peer connections. It suggests that the process of meaning-making does not just occur by bringing peers together, but by creating an environment that reduces any power dynamics that may be at play. The concept of power is a weighty issue within the academic literacies perspective. This approach "views the institutions in which academic practices take place as…sites of…power" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159), imposing authoritative discourses "saturated with…identity, power and culture" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 9). The fear of judgement expressed in the quotes above may show some academics sensing the existence of power dynamics at work and might also explain why "develop[ing] a trust" (Woodman & Parapilly, 2015,

p. 9) between peers was mentioned in certain studies as the foundation to openly sharing and discussing together (Soto et al., 2019; Wingrove et al., 2015). The notion of trust is also implied in studies highlighting the sense of safety or belonging experienced by participants through knowing that what is shared between peers as part of the developmental initiative "doesn't go further than the group" (Beatty et al., 2020, p. 7; Bickle et al., 2021).

In addition to highlighting the importance of trust between peers as a starting point to the meaning-making process, various studies highlight the impactful effects of initiatives that remove any elements of hierarchies or power dynamics altogether. Turkich et al's (2014) co-teaching initiative paired an experienced mentor with colleagues who had received little teacher training or professional development. This collaborative and experiential initiative involved the mentor and participant developing course material and delivering sessions together. As one participant stated, "I found this co-teaching approach comforting rather than intimidating. It would be our class that sank or swam, and we would both be taking responsibility for the process and the outcomes…" (Turkich et al., 2014, p. 19).

Joint responsibility was also a sentiment expressed by Soto et al. (2019, p. 19) in the findings of their collaborative lesson study initiative: "It was active, participatory professional development with built-in accountability: we were all going to be teaching this lesson". There is a removal (or balancing) of power implied within these two initiatives that have deliberately turned away from the presentation of authoritative discourses that "seek to impose particular meaning" (Lillis, 2003, p. 198) about teaching to endeavours based on dialogue and co-creation of experience and knowledge. Within these initiatives, the discourse is owned (and developed, debated, extended, etc.) by the participants themselves, e.g.: "As we continued our collaboration throughout the lesson study, our discussions broadened to include conversations about common struggles, interests and teaching- or research-related resources we encountered" (Soto et al., 2019, p. 15).

Findings from the studies in this review suggest that ownership of the discourse within the developmental initiatives is something valued by participants. This ownership might be in relation to being able to "speak freely about topics…determined by the group" (Beatty et al., 2020, p. 6) or having the "direction of [a] peer teaching review [in your own] hands" (Kanuka & Sadowski, 2020, p. 9). In a sense, this ownership provides the opportunity to "talk back" (Lillis, 2003, p. 204) to any discourses being presented, to be involved in the "decisions about the kinds of meanings they might wish to make" (Lillis, 2003, p. 204) about their teaching practices. We can see this 'talkback' process in action in Kim et al. (2023, p. 13), where the community of practice (CoP) element in a modular professional development programme was viewed as the "most valuable and helpful part" of the experience. The researchers noticed "that the participants' interactions during CoP helped them situate certain pedagogical approaches in their own classroom situations. They shared and reflected on their thoughts and experiences of teaching and discussed the challenges and possibilities of certain pedagogical approaches" (Kim et al., 2023, p. 16).

Through ownership of the discourse within these community-based interactions, academics can act as knowledge producers themselves (Hilsdon et al., 2019) and "draw on their existing resources for meaning-making" (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 6). In this way, they are positioned not just as learners or acquirers of relevant practices, but as active participants in commenting on them, critiquing them and potentially expanding them (Hilsdon et al., 2019). Further, both Soto et al.

(2019) and Bickle et al. (2021) demonstrate the organic and emergent nature that professional development can take within these power flattened contexts as conversations flow along emergent paths. For example, logistical discussions about how to share slides and presentations within the lesson study project would shift "towards a more pedagogical focus" (Soto et al., 2019, p. 10) as group members responded in the moment to the content they were viewing. Similarly, the collaborative writing exercise in Bickle et al. (2021, p. 146), as part of their virtual community of practice, supported an "open approach to sharing information", which, "helped us to 'see gaps in each others' views' (Q11A5) and gave 'inspiration for new lines of work' (Q2A3)". By viewing these peer communities and interactions through an academic literacies lens, we might suggest that a flattening of power is an essential element for significant meaning-making processes to occur.

Context-specific identities

As highlighted in this paper, an academic literacies approach views issues of learning "at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159). The findings from this review suggest that identities play a consequential role at the epistemological level in terms of how knowledge is embraced or rejected as part of meaning-making activities. Much attention has already been given to the ways that SoTL can create conflict for academics' identities (Capello & Miller-Young, 2020; Geertsema, 2016; Simmons et al., 2013). It was noted previously that academics may need to switch practices and identities as they traverse disciplinary and pedagogic scholarship contexts. Ways of thinking and knowing that are valued within their disciplinary contexts may differ significantly to knowledge discourses that they are presented with in pedagogic scholarship programmes or initiatives. Whilst the 'big tent' (Chick, 2014) metaphor advances an inclusive vision of SoTL that values "a range of perspectives, methodologies and meanings" (Canning & Masika, 2022, p. 1085), there are some that suggest SoTL retains a firm commitment to the social science research paradigm (McSweeney & Schnurr, 2023; Potter & Raffoul, 2023), meaning that those from other disciplinary conventions may struggle to accept the validity of knowledge created in that paradigm (Haigh & Withell, 2020; Kinchin, 2023). Additionally, beyond the issue of research paradigms, scholars have identified that academics may be "wary of educational theory" (Kandlbinder, 2013, p. 1) because of what they may see as a disconnect between it and their lived, in-practice experiences (Weller, 2011). It not the aim of this paper to weigh in on these debates, but they provide some compelling context in relation to what academics may see as credible pedagogic knowledge or evidence.

We can see these issues of credibility coming out in the findings of this review. Studies, like Hendry and Oliver (2012, p. 6), report perspectives from participants of accepting the validity of pedagogic approaches only after "I actually saw it … in action". This type of response is perhaps to be expected within a peer observation of teaching initiative; yet we see similar sentiments being expressed within program-based schemes too. For example, in Wilson et al. (2018, p. 14), one participant commented in relation to the video resources used: "[The videos] gave it a real-world feel…It was really useful to hear different academics in the videos, how they use active learning, hear their ideas and real suggestions". The double use of the word 'real' is interesting in this quote. It evokes the distinction highlighted above between what may be seen as abstract educational concepts or theories being presented as opposed to ideas emerging from practice-based (and hence 'real') contexts. This distinction is also illustrated somewhat forcefully in Al-

Musawi's (2008, p. 101) evaluation of a workshop-based professional development program: "It seems that the need to link the workshops with the real world is overwhelming. One participant commented: 'I expect practice… to see more practice'. Another said: 'more examples and experience from…other universities…'".

This notion of what is 'real' knowledge or evidence to draw upon can also be seen in relation to who is providing the expertise. We connect back here to the value of the community-based interactions as these are the spaces that provide the opportunities for colleagues to learn from those that they view as credible sources of evidence. In these spaces they can "build a skills repertoire from the strengths and experiences of others" (Beatty et al., 2020, p. 8), "seek support/advice from those that have already embarked on [research] activity" (Bickle et al., 2021, p. 144) and debate together the trustworthiness of pedagogic approaches:

> When they shared how they implemented certain pedagogical strategies in their own classrooms and how these worked (or not), [participants] reported that they became more aware of the potential and feasibility of classroom implementation, which often encouraged them to accept these strategies as evidence-based, effective, and trustworthy teaching pedagogies for engineering classrooms. (Kim et al., 2023, p. 13)

Kim et al. (2023, p. 13) go on to highlight that the participants particularly valued the input from more experienced faculty members, and "often considered this information to be reliable or practical since they saw this actually experienced or observed in their context". A central feature of success in the initiatives explored in Kanuka and Sadowski (2020) and Beatty et al. (2020) is reported as the integration of an accomplished facilitator with expertise and experience grounded in the specific contexts of the participants, leading them to have "credibility with teaching academics" (Beatty et al., 2020, p. 10). From an identity perspective, these findings suggest that colleagues may trust and view as reliable, at least in their early journeys of becoming, the evidence and information presented by those with the same or similar academic identities who make meaning through similar ways of practising, thinking and knowing. The implications of this finding are considered further in the Discussion section.

It makes sense, from an academic literacies standpoint, that those sharing similar academic identities may be viewed as possessing more credible pedagogic knowledge. This approach emphasises the socially-situated, and hence contextually-bound, nature of meaning-making in which discourses are shaped by dominant priorities, values and conventions within those contexts (Healey & Healey, 2023; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2003). As such, pedagogic knowledge that has been created within a familiar epistemological framework may, in essence, ring true for colleagues, reflecting their ways of thinking about and making sense of their (context-based) practitioner experiences. Kim et al's (2023) study is a good illustration of this point. This initiative involved evaluating engineering faculty members' experiences of completing two modules as part of a program to develop their pedagogical content knowledge. The researchers found that the module that appeared to resonate most with the participants' beliefs about what "engineering is and what engineering education should be" (Kim et al., 2023, p. 10-11) was viewed as the more "practical, relevant and effective" (Kim et al., 2023, p. 9) for their professional development:

> Thus, they viewed [the problem-based learning module], as an obvious link to their identities as problem solvers, was congruent with their conceptions of what engineering is and how

working in engineering typically occurs. These ideas appeared to be more easily incorporated into their pedagogical considerations and valued in engineering classrooms. (Kim et al., 2023, p. 11)

Weller (2011) reports a similar finding in her research of new lecturers' experiences of reading higher education research. Reading papers in which knowledge was presented from unfamiliar epistemic customs appeared to "destabilise these readers' sense of themselves as academic readers" (Weller, 2011, p. 102), leading some to challenge the legitimacy of the research. Lea and Street (1998, p. 159) highlight that from "the student point of view a dominant feature of academic literacy practices is the requirement to switch practices between one setting and another" as they work across different subject, genres or modes. This "code-switching" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 34) can create tension and challenge as students struggle "to decode unfamiliar practices" (Gourlay, 2009, p. 182), particularly when the "norms of participation are not fully expressed or shared" (Gourlay, 2009, p. 185). Viewed from this perspective, we can see academics being required to 'code-switch' when they are reading papers from unfamiliar research paradigms or reviewing ideas seen as "not typical" (Kim et al., 2023, p. 11) of their disciplinary education culture. It may also be that at times, they are being asked to 'code-switch' at a point too early for them to engage comfortably in the new discourses. The findings from this review show that early career academics particularly valued initiatives that supported them to engage with colleagues who "have similar students and class sizes" (Hendry & Oliver, 2012, p. 8) and work in comparable contexts (Beatty et al., 2020; Wevill and Savage, 2020). We might suggest that this desire for similarity helps in the meaning-making process for these colleagues by lessening the amount of decoding of unfamiliar practices that they have to do at this point in their career journeys.

The paper turns now to consider the implications of the review findings for supporting SoTL skills development.

Discussion

In discussing the implications of the findings from this scoping review, we must return to its specific research question:

What features from an academic literacies lens are evident in the findings of papers presenting results of initiatives designed to enhance features of faculty colleagues' SoTL-related skills?

Emerging predominantly within the findings of the studies reviewed is that no matter the type of professional development initiative, the aspect valued the most by academic colleagues is the opportunity to interact and collaborate with each other. As indicated previously, this may not be a particularly new finding; however, we might view the academic literacies lens as shining a light into the significance of these opportunities and what specifically is going on within them. In using this lens, we see the process of socially constructed meaning-making in action during these collaborative occasions but more than that, we see how these spaces provide a knowledge and identity-based anchor for colleagues. It is in these spaces that colleagues find the potential, through discussion and exploration with others, to situate new or unfamiliar pedagogic knowledge into their practice experiences and to find affinity with those also on a journey of (re)forming their teaching identities. An academic literacies lens helps us to understand how destabilising and

emotive this ongoing transition of 'becoming' may be (Gourlay, 2009; Weller, 2011), especially when this process involves navigating discourses of practice that may be vague or hazy (as in conceptions of 'teaching excellence') or in conflict with disciplinary ways of thinking and knowing. Further, we see the need for a sense of safety and belonging within these spaces, for an absence of authoritative discourses that seek to impose "monologic" (Lillis, 2003, p. 198) and "monolithic" (Grant, 2021, p. 541) meaning against which academics fear they may be judged.

To consider the implications of these findings for supporting SoTL skills development, I must return briefly to the autoethnographic stance of this paper. My reasons for conducting this review, alongside advancing sociological understandings, stem from a desire to use the findings to inform and enhance my practices as an academic (or educational) developer. As well as my personal interest in this topic, a central aspect of the academic development field is to foster and support others' SoTL engagement (Geertsema, 2016; Kenny et al., 2017). As such, I am considering the implications from an academic development perspective. Additionally, it is worth restating that in the context of this paper, SoTL is viewed as a spectrum of activity, ranging from reflection on teaching-related experiences to disseminating public, peer reviewed and critiqued pedagogic research.

Kenny et al. (2017, p. 5) highlight the inherently reflective nature of SoTL, where researchers and practitioners "draw upon and contextualise evidence of inquiry and their experience of practice to improve teaching and learning". It is this contextualisation through 'experience of practice' that points to what I believe is one of the signification implications of this review. Scholars have long propounded SoTL as a practice embedded in disciplines (Kanuka, 2011) and grounded in context (Felton, 2013). We see from the findings of this review, the importance of shared disciplinary or practice contexts to the pedagogic meaning-making process for academics. From an academic literacies lens we might suggest that these shared or comparable contexts provide a familiar framework or discourse through which to consider, or situate (Kim et al., 2023), new pedagogical knowledge. They limit the amount of decoding or switching of practices that may be required of academics as they engage in their roles as pedagogic learners and as such, the threat to or destabilisation of their academic identity is also lessened.

This finding gives me pause for thought about when I, as an academic developer, may be inadvertently placing pressure on academics to "code-switch" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 34) and engage with discourses that trouble or discomfort them. It suggests to me that we need to recognise this stage of discourse familiarity as an important step for academics, particularly early career academics, in becoming conversant with pedagogic knowledge and scholarship approaches and developing confidence in transferring them into practice. Whilst a central feature of professional learning initiatives is often the opportunity provided to engage in cross-disciplinary conversations about teaching and learning, we may need to think carefully about when it is most productive for this occur and when we should be prioritising meaning-making at local or contextually specific levels. It is also important to recognise that academic developers have often migrated to the field from other disciplines (Geertsema, 2016) with their own disciplinary conventions and ways of thinking, and so we may not be steeped in the disciplinary traditions of the colleagues participating in our professional learning initiatives. The academic literacies lens suggests that it is unrealistic to believe that such initiatives can deliver a body of generic or universal pedagogic knowledge that participants can take back and apply to their teaching

settings. Of course, we should know this is an unrealistic expectation anyway given that any pedagogic knowledge produced has been created within certain disciplinary or paradigmatic conventions. However, from an academic literacies perspective, if we acknowledge that disciplines are the "guardians of conventions, and the adjudicators of what counts as knowledge" (Fanghanel et al., 2016, p. 29), we must accept that they also provide the discourse frameworks within which colleagues are making sense (or not) of new pedagogic knowledge and experiences. Whilst we may not always align to the same disciplinary discourses as our participants, and as such might lack 'credibility' from their perspectives, as academic developers we can facilitate the spaces for meaning-making to occur and provide the impetus (pedagogic theories, ideas, etc.) for the significant conversations within them. In this way, our roles may be (re)conceptualised as those that support rather than control the meaning-making process (Lillis, 2003), which we may do by reconfiguring "curricular spaces for formative, dialogic learning" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 32) to occur.

In practice, this reconceptualisation of our roles might mean reconsidering the balance between content delivery and discursive opportunities within programme or course-based professional learning initiatives. We may also emphasise those collaborative initiatives that are grounded within context (such as co-teaching or lesson study activities) that prioritise for participants an immediate application or translation of pedagogic ideas into practice in which they are actively confronting and reflecting upon the discourses that they are working within. Again, the role of the academic developer here may be to support this reflective process in which meaning is made from the experiential pedagogic activities.

The considerations above are not meant to suggest that we only support working within disciplinary or localised contexts. To propose this is to run the risk of increasing siloed thinking and practices. They are instead to encourage a longitudinal view of how and when we as academic developers may work to introduce colleagues to new and unfamiliar discourses in ways that will be constructive for, rather than threatening to, their professional learning and identities. It is important that we avoid unintentionally creating a sense of what Potter and Raffoul (2023, p. 2) term "engaged alienation", which is "the experience of those isolated within, and excluded from, a culture to which they have been invited". We know that engagement in SoTL can be unsettling to and troubling for identities (Simmons et al., 2013) through the epistemological shifts that may be required as faculty "learn and apply new languages…methodologies, and ideas of knowledge and evidence that may be incongruent with their disciplinary approaches" (McSweeney & Schnurr, 2023, p. 1). Haigh and Withell (2020) assert that how participants engage with unfamiliar ideas and paradigms may determine whether they become successful SoTL practitioners. If colleagues feel a sense of isolation early in their journeys of becoming pedagogic scholars due to an expectation of engaging with unfamiliar and cognitively challenging ideas, we may inadvertently jeopardise their future SoTL trajectories and encourage a rejection, rather than embracing, of this identity.

Instead, we may seek to scaffold a process of deliberation by facilitating spaces that allow academics to "reflect critically on the assumptions informing their [pedagogic] practices and how these operate to construct their social and individual academic identity" (Weller, 2011, p. 104). Over time, these spaces can begin to open familiar conventions to "newer ways to mean" (Lillis, 2003, p. 205) by bringing different discourses for collaborative consideration. Lillis (2003)

highlights encountering difference as an important part of constructing meaning and making new meanings. We see some participants in the studies reviewed recognising the value of engaging with ideas or pedagogic discourses outside of their own disciplines (e.g., McEwan et al., 2023) and as academic developers we of course want to support these opportunities. The broader scope of findings, however, suggest that we do not rush this process but instead recognise a sense of pedagogic safety or belonging that colleagues may need to develop firstly within their familiar disciplinary discourses before encountering ideas that may challenge, but ultimately expand, their ways of thinking.

Conclusion

At the heart of the scholarship of teaching and learning, whether it is viewed as a spectrum of activity or the pursuit of original education research, is the desire to improve student learning and enhance the teaching approaches that support this process. This scoping review helps to build understandings about how academic (or educational) developers can support the development of faculty colleagues' SoTL-related skills. The unique application of an academic literacies lens to the findings of studies in the review sample reveals insights that suggest the journey of becoming a pedagogic scholar is more than one just filled with "growing pains" (Kim et al., 2021, p. 168). It is one that needs to be viewed at "the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159). As academic developers, we need to be aware of the affective dimension to supporting SoTL skills development and the sense of destabilisation that may occur if we inadvertently expect colleagues to "code-switch" (Hilsdon et al., 2019, p. 34) across discourse frameworks that may seem vague, hazy and/or in conflict with their paradigmatic ways of thinking and knowing. Returning to the autoethnographic stance of this paper, for me, the academic literacies lens emphasises the human and relational elements at play as colleagues navigate their journeys of becoming "SoTLers" (Fanghanel et al., 2016, p. 9). In these journeys, colleagues are finding and exploring new ways of relating to pedagogic knowledge, their practice experiences, and their teaching identities. Ultimately, though, meaning is made through the opportunities to relate with others and situate, explore, discuss and debate new pedagogic knowledge in relation to their lived, and shared, in-practice experiences.

As a scoping review of JUTLP papers across the 2004 - 2023 timeframe, this study is just the first step in exploring the insights that an academic literacies lens might provide. It offers a foundation that other reviews investigating broader publication contexts may continue to build on by interrogating further the light that an academic literacies lens can shine into this important area that ultimately aims to advance teaching and learning experiences.

Conflict of Interest

Acknowledgements

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