SoTL IN MALAYSIA HIGHER EDUCATION SETTING: CHALLENGES FACED BY NEW TEACHING SCHOLARS

Ahmad Thamrini Fadzlin Syed Mohamed[1]

Afifah Quraishah Abdul Nasir

Nur Khadirah Ab. Rahman

Emily Abd Rahman

National Defence University of Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Teaching is an important component in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). To ensure the quality of education in HEI, it is vital to understand the skills and duties that need to be performed by new teaching scholars. Recently, the Ministry of Higher Education has launched the Orange Book that outlines a new and proactive career track for lecturers, with the intention to develop human capital and enhance professionalism in teaching at HEI. However, there is still not much being done in identifying the challenges faced by newly appointed lecturers in Malaysia HEI. Utilising semi-structured in-depth interviews, two new teaching scholars and two expert lecturers at one of Malaysia HEI were interviewed to determine the challenges faced by new teaching scholars. Transcribed interview sessions were analysed using thematic analysis. The results show that the new teaching scholars face challenges in developing their substance knowledge, managing the Gen-Y, and having little knowledge on teaching approaches and methodologies. The paper put forward some suitable and effective suggestions in assisting these newly appointed lecturers to improve the quality of teaching and learning (T&L) process in Malaysia HEI.

Keywords: community of practice, higher education, new teaching scholars, scholarship of teaching and learning, teaching and learning, threshold concepts, troublesome knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Through its *University Transformation Programme (UniTP) Orange Book* (2017), the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (now Ministry of Education (MOE)) forwarded the New Academia Talent Framework (NATF) model in Malaysian Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs). Serving as a guideline for the HLIs in their efforts to create academic career pathways based on the NATF model, the framework focuses on achieving excellence through an ecosystem that is able to attract, develop and retain talent. Adopting Boyer's Model (1997), the new career pathways for academics in HLIs are now broadened beyond the scholarship of research, but also encompass the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), professional practice, and institutional leadership. In Malaysia, teaching and Learning (T&L) are core businesses for universities as they are responsible for delivering competent and responsible professionals through high quality learning experiences (Lodge, 2014:3). What is more, most of the ranking systems; QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, and Shanghai Academic Rankings of World Universities, determine a university's prestige based on the institution's teaching ethos. In keeping up with the current needs and trends of the players in the industry, it is a common practice for the universities to hire professionals with vast application knowledge as teaching staff. As an effect, various localised or out stationed teaching courses like the ASA Teaching Workshop (Albers, 2008; Grauerholz & Zipp, 2008) and the University of Minnesota's SoTL project (Walker et.al, 2008) were created to train these new teaching scholarson various aspect of T&L.

Despite all these trainings, not much is known on how lecturers learn about their profession (Hollins, 2014:99) and the challenges they face to accommodate their new career identity. For this reason, the quality of T&L in HEI has been put under scrutiny (Grauerholz & Zipp, 2008). According to Yin (2014:949), many countries including the UK, the USA and Australia, have established new policy instruments for the evaluation of academic quality in HEI in the past decade. Thornton (2014) mentioned that in 2011, the UK's Higher Education Academy (HEA) launched the revised UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (HEA, 2011). The framework is part of an ongoing sector-wide professionalisation of teaching and support for learning in the UK HEI. This framework ensures that the lecturers possess formal teaching qualifications because it is the key to enhance T&L experience.

As stipulated in the latest Malaysia Education Development Plan (2015-2025), HEI in Malaysia are also advocating the use of heuristic, inquiry oriented, discussion-based and participatory approaches to learning among students. To do so, the plan laid down 10 initiatives to ensure and enhance the teaching quality in HEI. This includes the focus on developing human capital that enhances the professionalism in teaching at Malaysia HEI. Based on evidences from the literature, this trend of providing professional trainings to the new teaching scholars is directed towards "ensuring (that) new staff have a teaching qualification or equivalent on entry or have access to credible teacher training courses in the early years of their career" (Thornton, 2014:226). In keeping up with the current needs and trends of the players in the industry, it is a common practice for the universities to hire professionals with vast application knowledge as teaching staffs having an official qualification in teaching is not ordinarily considered as a requisite to become a lecturer (Albers, 2003). The levels of expertise these lecturers have in the content area of study often take precedence over their ability to effectively teach the content area to the learners (Norazila et al., 2010). These group of professionals may not be aware of the latest T&L methods that cater to the twenty-first century learners. What is more, many recent studies have shown that new teaching scholars are now working under pressure to fit the time for publishing, teaching, and administrative work (Matthews et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2008). Thus, there may have been a negative impact on the output of the T&L process, hence impacting the university's teaching quality.

Teaching in Malaysia HEI: Refining the Profession

To overcome this, most – if not all – Malaysia HEI now require new teaching scholars with no teaching experience, to undertake a professional qualification, such as a postgraduate certificate in higher education or to partake short teaching courses made available at their respective university. Coping with the huge and often complicated demands to improve the T&L quality, the Malaysian government has also been taking proactive steps to improve, facilitate, and assure the quality of its education quality. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), one co-ordinated effort at the national level done by the Ministry of Education is the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Initiative **(**HELTI). Following the Train-the-Trainers model, HELTI was directed to handpick 1,035 Master Trainers that will be made responsible to train over 56,000 academics nationwide on the necessary skills and knowledge to create quality in T&L. Under the provision of the Centre for Learning and Teaching, Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKePT) Malaysia, the "Quality Teaching for Learning" programme was designed to provide participants with "relevant expertise to design an in-house training programme in outcome-

based learning and teaching in their own institutions using the constructive alignment model" (Biggs & Tang, 2011:1-2). The "Quality Teaching for Learning" (QTL) Programme for training the trainers was designed to achieve the following intended outcomes:

1. The trainers need to understand constructive alignment to the point where they can apply the principles in the intended way.
2. The trainers need to identify factors affecting implementation on an institutional level.
3. The trainers need to learn to write Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), design Teaching/Learning Activities (TLAs) and Assessment Tasks (ATs) for themselves, before they can teach others.
4. The trainers need to design a staff development programme for their own institutions.
5. The trainers need to maintain a portfolio of items in order to provide formative assessment on the effectiveness of the staff development programme, and to provide a structure for on-going monitoring of the implementation of QTLin their own institutions.
6. The trainers and senior administrators need to review institutional policies so that they are compatible with constructive alignments.

(Biggs & Tang, 2011:16-17)

As it can be observed from the list above, not much emphasis was given on the required competencies needed to be mastered by new teaching scholars in the context of T&L. This is a vital inquiry, yet compelling and still obscure as there is still work to be done on developing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Hadijah et al. (2016) in their study, foreseen that SoTL will take longer time to be embraced and practiced by Malaysian academics even though AKEPT offers continuous training modules on SoTL (263). A much better approach or programme is on offer at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) described by Norazila et al. (2010). There, the university offers a Post-Graduate Diploma (PGDip) in T&L, conducted by the Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia (CALM) which is offered to new teaching scholar and those without formal training experience in teaching. The objectives of the programme include; 1) to train UNIMAS' new teaching scholars in T&L in a systematic and formal basis, 2) to establish a long-term commitment toward T&L that is consistent with UNIMAS T&L policies, and 3) to develop a culture of collaborative academic environment that places commitment to excellence in T&L. Seven modules were designed, and each addresses a pertinent component of university teaching. The modules are "Introduction to University Teaching", "Principles of Teaching and Learning", "Instructional Design", "Management of Teaching and Learning",

"Assessment of Learning", "Educational Technology", and "Teaching Practice". Thus, it was reported through a survey that the participants' instructional approaches gradually shifted to become more student-centred (Norazila et al., 2010:5-11). The research however, did not provide the reasons why those courses were chosen, or how it has a direct impact on overcoming the challenges faced by the new teaching scholars in coping with the profession.

A more proactive example would come from Ibrahim et.al (2016) who proposed a proactive plan and a comprehensive management of talent pool for *AnakGenerasiFelda* (AGF). Their suggestions and approach covers academic leadership, career development, and mentoring (Ibrahim et al., 2016) that endeavours include delivering capable and commanding academic figures. In the same book, Ibrahim, Norzaini and Sharina (2016) described in detail, a training module that gives emphasis on the function, characteristics, core values, and the professionalism of the academic profession (222). To achieve its objectives, the program content covers seven modules: Academic Profession, Core Values of an Academic, Roles of an Academic, Development and Talent Management, Academic Career, and Academic Leadership. Such module clearly suggests a positive impact on its participants as it demystifies some confusion over the roles of lecturers in HEI and the professionalism aspect of the profession to those who are teaching at the school level (Ibrahim, Norzaini & Sharina, 2016). Nevertheless, such programme and modules did not include the tacit aspect of the profession as its understandings are often shared within a community of practice but less often explained or exposed. According to Baillie et al. (2012), a person coming into a new community may not pick up the nuances of different concepts that are 'common sense' to the experienced members (243). This goes accordingly to Wenger (1999) who had elucidated that this tacit knowledge "may never be articulated, yet they are unmistakable signs of membership in communities of practice and are crucial for the success of their enterprises" (47). Furthermore, the modules did not really give emphasis on giving theoretical exposures on T&L, and on the development of various approaches and methodology of the profession's day-to-day work which is teaching.

Attention was also given to boost the quality of teaching in HEI which is vital to Malaysia higher education. Despite the efforts, researches that highlighted the main issues and challenges of developing new teaching scholars are still limited. These include studies focusing on the transition from traditional method of learning to Outcome Based Learning (Biggs & Tan, 2011; Hussain Othman et al.,2014), improving and empowering leadership among scholars (Anuwar Ali, 2012; Majid Ghasemy et Al., 2015), on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

(SoTL) (Hadijah Jaffriet al., 2016), effects of pedagogical training on teaching at higher education level (Norazila et al., 2010), and self-reported practices and perceived competencies in assessment for learning (Tunku Ahmad et al., 2014).This paper claims that there is a lack of research focusing on developing T&L skills in Malaysian context to ensure quality education in Malaysia HEI. Identifying the challenges faced by the new teaching scholars is important as it creates what Wenger (1998) describe as the *communities of practice,* which "integrate the components necessary to characterise social participation as a process of learning and knowing" (Wenger, 1998:4).   A study by Hollins (2014) provide an interesting insight on teacher's educator perspectives prior to professional preparation.

	Advanced novice	**Aware novice**	**Naive novice**	**Estranged practitioner**
Teaching	Immediately recognised that being a good teacher was necessary, but not sufficient preparation for the role of teacher educator.	Initially believed that being a good teacher was sufficient preparation for the role of teacher educator, but quickly learned that more was needed.	Felt confident as a teacher. Uncertain about the role of the teacher educator and lacked confidence in interacting with those learning teaching.	Lacked confidence as a teacher. Felt inadequate, unprepared, and guilty for failing as a teacher educator.
Teacher Learning	Developed a well thought out plan to guide practice. A self-regulated learner. Consulted with colleagues and searched the scholarly literature for new	Implemented practices already in place. Gained new insights from experience, but not immediately used	Followed procedures provided. Did not make adjustments to meet challenges. Did not consult with colleagues or search the scholarly	Procedures were not provided. Floundered. Failed to develop a plan for facilitating teacher learning. Did not learn from experience. Did not consult

	models of practice.	to improve practice. Did no consult with colleagues or search the scholarly literature for new models of practice.	literature for new models of practice.	colleagues or search scholarly literature.
Responsibility	Engaged in self-reflection, made careful observations about teaching practices and learners' responses, took corrective action to improve practice.	Recognised that the strategies being used were not working, unsure of the location of the problem, and did not take responsibility or action.	Recognised that the strategies being used were not working, initially blamed others for the situation, and did not take corrective action.	Blamed others for not providing adequate preparation and procedures, but made no effort to address this issue.

Table 1: Teacher educator perspectives prior to professional preparation.

Source: Hollins, 2014:106

Looking through the description, one can deduce that developing oneself in the profession could include some 'troublesome knowledge' (Meyer & Land, 2003; Hills, 2010).

'Troublesome knowledge' was first identified by David Perkins who takes a social constructivist approach to education and has been central to threshold concepts theory (Meyer & Land, 2003; Hills, 2010). Simmons et al., (2013) mentioned that navigating through the liminal space, the person would be confronted with troublesome knowledge "prompting profound realisations and the reconstruction of identities" (10). Building on Perkins' description of troublesome knowledge, Meyer and Land (2005) argued that "threshold concepts lead not only to transformed thought but to a transfiguration of identity and adoption of an extended

discourse" (375).   As a result of participating in a ritual, the participants acquire new knowledge and subsequently, a new status and identity within the community of practice (Felten, 2016). However, taking part in a ritual can be "problematic, troublesome, and frequently involves the humbling of the participants" (Meyer & Land, 2005:376). According to Perkins, knowledge can be troublesome because it is conceptually difficult, alien, inert, tacit, or ritual (2006).

1. Ritual knowledge—of a routine and rather a meaningless character such as following pre-defined procedures.
2. Inert knowledge—not integrative nor seemingly related or relevant to (their) real lives or needs.
3. Conceptually difficult—what we often notice as teachers is that, in an attempt to learn difficult concepts, students mix expert views of the concept with their own less powerful conceptions.
4. Alien knowledge—knowledge can often be counter-intuitive to learners' experience of the world. This troublesome situation can be caused either due to the inadequacy of academic knowledge forms, or the inaccurate observation or misinterpretation of what is seen by the student in the world, or both.
5. Tacit knowledge—understandings are often shared within a community of practice but less often explained or exposed. For example, a person coming into a new community may not pick up the nuances of different concepts that are 'common sense' to the experienced members.

(Baillie et al., 2012:243)

Questions of 'troublesome affect' seem to be a particularly important area for further investigation for scholars of threshold concepts (Felten, 2016).   Identifying troublesome knowledge, especially, while being in the liminal state, is important, as it aids our understanding and identifies the conceptual transformations, which learners find difficult, thus making them 'stuck' (Meyer & Land, 2005:377). Furthermore, it also leads to the identification of the threshold concepts in itself (Rodger & Turpin, 2011). A few researchers already have begun to open this door. For example, Simmons et al. (2013) study on academic identity development suggests that navigating among conflicting identities can lead us into a troublesome but deeply reflective liminal space, prompting profound realisations and the reconstruction of academic identities (10).   Ross et al. (2011) on the other hand, looked into the type of writing tasks research students and their supervisors find difficult and suggest that many students and perhaps

supervisors in the Sciences "get stuck" in the liminal characterised by anxiety, stress, struggle and high emotion (25). Furthermore, Evans and Kevern (2015) and Allan et al. (2015) who had looked into nurse education suggest that troublesome knowledge may designate a productive period in its education process.   This is especially true through Blackburn and Nestel (2014) study, where they have determined the tendency of paediatric surgical trainees to lose their awareness of the troublesomeness while taking on the mantle of a specialty trainee and feeling the increased responsibility during the liminal space.

In the scope of the present research,questions on these troublesome experiences seem to escape many researchers even though such findings may aid our understanding and identify the needed conceptual transformations, which learners find difficult, thus making them 'stuck' (Meyer & Land, 2005:377).   As these new teaching scholars embark their journey in the academic world, they will become an active participant of a ritual – the academic rituals - and acquire new knowledge and subsequently a new status and identity within the community of practice (Felten, 2016). However, taking part in a ritual can be "problematic, troublesome, and frequently involves the humbling of the participants" (Meyer & Land, 2005:376).Bennett et. al (2016) for once deduces that being an academician means inhabiting a "strange space"(217) where employment was made under standard academic requirement, but the job descriptions involve a division of duties between the managerial responsibilities, research, teaching, and social services expected by the members of the public.As new teaching scholars may not be well informed of their new role as lecturers at a university, this research then caters in finding out the challenges faced by this group.   As being mentioned in the latest Malaysia Education Development Plan (2015-2025) which outlines 10 new measures to aspire excellence in HEI, the first four measures include the enhancement of quality and efficiency of the lecturers. This then created a need for a system that facilitates the talent's excellence that will facilitate them to fulfil their role either as a teaching scholar, a manager, a researcher or a professional.

METHOD

The research utilises Threshold Concepts as its methodology as it engages "transactional curriculum design" (Cousin, 2008) dialogue between those involve in the community of practice. For that, primary data for the study was collected by means of semi-structured interviews conducted with two early career teaching scholars and two experienced teaching scholars at HEI in Malaysia. Healey-Etten and Sharp (2010) mentioned that in-depth interviews allow

researchers to discover the respondent's "subjective experiences, meaning-making, accounting processes, and unspoken assumptions about life and the social world in general" (157). Furthermore, in-depth interviews can provide crucial information on "reported behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs, and contribute to an in-depth understanding of the research participants' perspectives or experiences" (Dushku, 2000:763). To ensure ethical consideration is met by this research, the participants were initially briefed on the research and were given necessary information about the research. and were never forced to participate (Lichtman,2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The recorded interviews were then transcribed verbatim and being put at the centre of the analysis. According to Åkerlind (2005), "the set of categories or meanings that result from the analysis are not determined in advance, but 'emerge' from the data, in relationship with the researcher" (323). To do so, the research has adopted the Four Stages of Analysis described by Schröder & Ahlström (2004). The four stages begin with the reading of each transcribed interview several times to obtain an overall impression. This stage is then followed by the second stage where each statement was labelled into specific themes. To make sure that the analysis at this phase is unbiased, both transcribed scripts were analysed by all members of the research team. Each researcher was required to analyse the samples independently and discuss the findings thoroughly. This stage is an important one, as it has a huge impact on the interpreted data by avoiding "misstatements, misinterpretations or the fraudulent analysis" (Litchman, 2013:55). In the third phase, deeper and further conceptions were compared to obtain an overall map of how these similarities and differences could be linked, and then they were grouped into preliminary descriptive categories. These preliminary categories were then identified as the *themes*. This step leads the analysis to the fourth and final phase, where the focus shifted from the relations between the conceptions to the relations between the preliminary descriptive categories as presented in **Figure 1**.
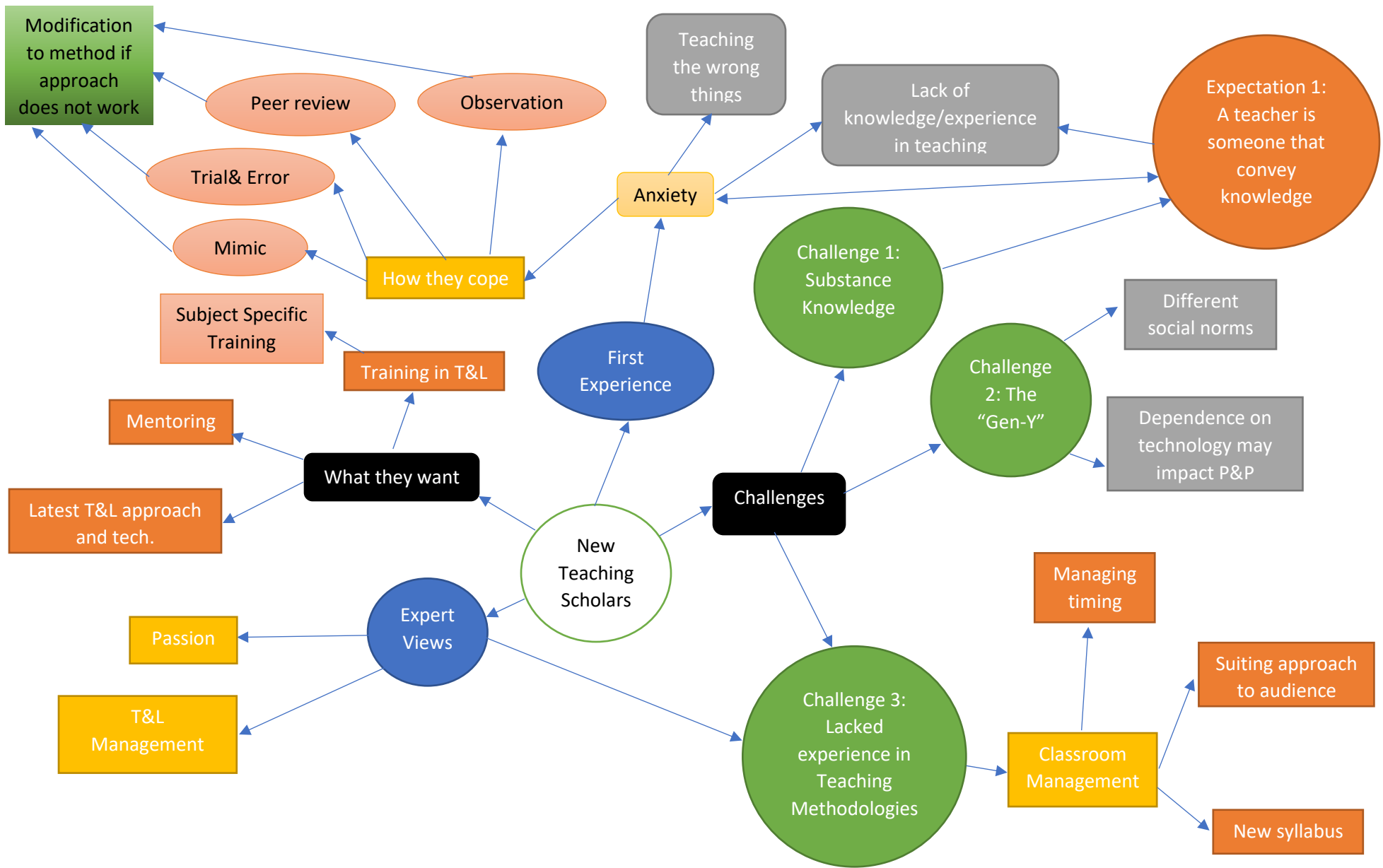
Figure 1: Thematic Analysis

Modification to method if approach does not work

Peer review

Observation

Teaching the wrong things

Lack of knowledge/experience in teaching

Expectation 1: A teacher is someone that convey knowledge

Trial& Error

Anxiety

Mimic

How they cope

Subject Specific Training

Challenge 1: Substance Knowledge

Different social norms

Training in T&L

Challenge 2: The "Gen-Y"

Dependence on technology may impact P&P

Mentoring

First Experience

What they want

Challenges

Latest T&L approach and tech.

New Teaching Scholars

Managing timing

Passion

Expert Views

Suiting approach to audience

T&L Management

Challenge 3: Lacked experience in Teaching Methodologies

Classroom Management

New syllabus

RESULT

Substance Knowledge

The first challenge faced by the new teaching scholars would be on having 'the knowledge' thus, fulfilling the students' expectations on the subject matter. Being asked to share their own experience going into the class for the first time, all respondents agreed that the experience was nerve-wrecking. Initial analysis of both new teaching scholars suggest that the source of anxiety may originate from the new teaching scholar's stage fright. However, deeper analysis suggests hat the real source of their anxiety is due to their feeling of doubt on their own subject mastery. Novice A, for example, compared herself to expert lecturers who she claimed has more teaching experience through years of hard work and gaining experience. Having recognised by the students as someone who has a vast knowledge on the subject, these expert lecturers "may go into a class and talk about their experiences with the students and they (the students) enjoyed that". Novice A had then shared her experience while working as a teaching assistant at one of the prominent HEI in Malaysia. She deduced that the 'senior' lecturers have a certain "aura" which makes their teaching approach seemed effortless. She further explained that because this aura makes "the students will straight away [keep] themselves quiet… by only standing there!". Novice A then concluded that the treatment received by the senior lecturer might have come from his ability to grab students' attention by "sharing his knowledge or he would tell stories based on recent occasions" that grabs student's attention and made them anxious and excited to hear and pay attention to him.

This paper does not claim that the "aura" comes from years of field experience thus enabling the lecturer to share his or her experience.   It is claimed that one part of this "aura" has something to do with what Sherman et. al. (1987) indicated as having 'clarity' – the new teaching scholars' teaching ability where they can explain concepts clearly so that the students can gain understanding. One obvious way of doing that is to relate certain concepts, ideas or even theories with real-world-experience so much so it's like foretelling a story. Talking about this issue, Novice A shared her thoughts and concluded that such approach had a huge influence in boosting student's confidence on the person standing in-front teaching them, thus creating a conducive learning environment. She had even contented that those without 'the experience' will start to stumble here and there by forgetting certain key concepts which makes the students doubt whether the lecturer truly mastered the knowledge they are trying to deliver. As a result, both novices agonised the initial stage of their career due to their fear of their responsibility to teach and make the students understand. This then had made them stiff in

their teaching delivery as they are prone to stick to their 'teaching plan of the day' and was unable to loosen up. This view was echoed by Expert B who explained that:

> *…when you are teaching, you must know every angle of that [concept] because you are bound to have students who out of nowhere simply ask you why that dot is there? You've seen for all your life the dot is there but you just couldn't answer why. They just want to test you or they are just curious but you just couldn't answer. So, as lecturers, you need to be able to handle that situation. When you don't have the answer because you cannot aspect to know every answer. You are not a walking encyclopaedia. So, more often than not, these people will sweat and my God, I cannot answer the question and they panicked. I panicked also those days. There have been a number of instances whereby I know this but somehow there is a certain trick that you need to apply to that question. It is a simple trick but if you forgot it, you're not prepared for the class, then that's it. (Expert B)*

However, all these lead us to one obvious question – how can we develop this 'aura' or better yet help the new teaching scholars to obtain this mantle from the early stage of their career? Responding to such question, Expert B provided an interesting insight that the new teaching scholars must first have a positive outlook on the profession and develop passion towards the occupation. He reflected that novices must develop an appetite not only to the subject they are teaching but also on the whole practice of teaching. In other words, they must understand that the profession is not just a job that they should perform, but a 'vocation' that will motivate them to do more than necessary.

Result: The "Gen-Y" Effect

Another significant aspect of challenges faced by the new teaching scholars is the students themselves. In their accounts on the students, both novices agreed that traditional 'chalk and talk' method will no longer work. More and more, the incorporation of technology in the learning process during class is a necessity. Novice B, for example, had even specified that nowadays, the usage of information technology (ICT) in teaching is important to gauge student's interest to follow through the teaching period. A common view amongst interviewees on the form of technology they used in the classroom includes the PowerPoint or some other presentation software and videos.

Interestingly, stimulation of the learning process using the ICTs may come with its advantages but it also has its downfall. Novice A, for example, described herself as someone who prepares her lessons using the PowerPoint. Because of this, she became dependent on

technology – internet connections, projectors, and other tools related to the usage of such software – to deliver her teaching. She acknowledged that there were times where she could not deliver her lesson due to some equipment malfunctioning. This forced her to revert to the 'paper notes and exercises' which made the students lose their interest altogether to the day's lesson. Replying to the question on how she reacted to the situation, Novice A responded that:

> *As for me? I was lost too. I can't do anything about it. The projector and the computer is not working. Nothing seems to be in their working order. If I turned to classroom discussion, which will not work too as they [the students] will turn their back on me and start their own conversation at the back. If not, they will end up sleeping at the back. (Novice A)*

Such account is striking as it gives us an impression on the downside of technology to cater this gen-Y generation. Such sights, in a way, may suggest that the new teaching scholar may have been too inclined towards using technology in their teaching so much that the absence of it may disrupt the learning process in the classroom altogether. This observation is not baseless as Expert B observed that:

> *…they [the students] have been relying on the calculator so much so that they cannot perform the simple operation on their own. The moment they saw 4x2, oh wait, wait, wait (calculate using calculator). Come on! 4x2! Everything has to be calculator. (Expert B)*

Labelling his latest students as a product of 'calculator education', Expert B expressed his worry over such dependency on technology. As he is a lecturer in Mathematics, he emphasised that the learning of Mathematics at the university level does not always involve numbers but also symbols in doing algebra where a calculator is in no use. What's more for the students, their overt-dependency on technology such as the hand phones also create problems in the management of the classroom. Novice A voices her concern over her students' 'addiction' to their hand phones or tablets during class. She described how the students will peek at their hand phones even though after being instructed to put it away during the commencement of a class; 'chit-chatting' through application like the *Messenger, WhatsApp*, or *Telegram* during classroom instead of giving their attention to the lecture. In addition, the students no longer write important notes down but instead take pictures of the notes projected and record the lecture using their hand phones. This scenario, thus, brought in new challenges to the T&L at HEI as the new teaching scholars are now presented with a new variable to really grab hold of their student's attention and to make them listen to their teaching.

Lacked Experience in Teaching Methodologies

In the current study, a recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that they lack the necessary knowledge and skills in teaching itself. Surprising as it seems, such feedback from both novices is very much anticipated because they are still new to the profession. Furthermore, both do not possess any prior teaching training before they enter and teach at the institution. It is however worthwhile to note that both novices do have previous teaching role – Novice A as a teaching assistant and Novice B as a temporary teacher. Being asked to deliberate on how they develop their teaching approaches and methodology, both novices responded that they adopted those approaches used by their own teachers, personal observation, and through discussion with their colleague.

Even so, Novice A reported having problems in managing her teaching due to the differences of the time allocated for each lesson. It is worthwhile to note here that after the completion of her bachelor degree, Novice B had worked in a school where the teaching period for each class lasted only for one-hour whereas at the university she will have some classes that lasted for two-hours. The response clearly suggest that the novice is experiencing some classroom-management related problems, where she did not know how to manage time in her teaching. This view is in-line with Expert B who mentioned that new teaching scholars may not know that:

> *…for a one-hour lecture, you need to have a three-hour preparation. They don't know that. Yes, you know the whole book but do you know a certain page in that book? That is the thing. So, that is the challenge. But after a while, then you know how to handle. So those are the things. Of course, the teaching methodology is very important. (Expert B)*

In addition, Expert A had deliberated that, as the new younger generation of lecturers nowadays are responsible to teach the Y-Generation, they must be apt in using different teaching approaches like e-Learning, case study and other Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL). He further reflected that those new approaches must be learned by the new teaching scholars before they came into the classroom and start to teach. Such comment is understandable as Expert A used to serve as a teacher for seven years before joining the university. Thus, he strongly views that educators must be equipped with the necessary knowledge about the profession before they start teaching, which could be a result from his own experience.

Furthermore, Novice A had also experienced some difficulty in adopting effecting teaching method that would suit her course. Teaching a third language subject at the university, Novice B sometimes felt left out as she is the only one teaching the subject without having anyone to guide and give her guidance on some effective method that she could use. Even though she had joined a few T&L courses conducted internally at the university, she is in the opinion that those training were not enough as none of them were related to her field. As an effect, both novices reported that they had adopted teaching approach and methodology which they had observed being adopted by their former teachers. Such adoption is like "mimicry" (Bhabha, 1994:123) – a social behavioural condition where individuals would 'copy' a certain behavioural aspect of a certain target group to be identified as a part of that group. Expert B, who have had time in the management of his faculty shared his experience when he was told by one new teaching scholar that:

> *"You know what? Those days when you throw me into the class, I don't know what the hell I was to do. Of course, there was a syllabus but I don't know how to approach the class!" And in terms of teaching, they don't even know how to start. Now, all they can think of is that, how my lecturers did back then. The first day of class, this is what they did. And then what do they do? So basically they were imitating their lecturers' did those days. Be it right or wrong, that's it because they have nothing to hang on to. I know the fact that these people have no knowledge at all about teaching methodology, about lesson objectives, about micro teaching. (Expert B)*

Such insight may suggest what Meyer and Land (2006) described as 'compensatory mimicry' where the new teaching scholar may experience "oscillation between states" (*knowing how to teach*) with temporary regression to earlier state (*not knowing how to teach*). This reflection is rather crucial to the study as it suggest that there is an absence of a specialised programme that prepares new teaching scholars for their roles. Being asked to deliberate on what sort of courses will be needed by a new teaching scholar at the university, Expert B explained that one avenue that can help and assist these young teaching scholars is by having a series of micro teaching sessions that:

> *… give the person review of his/her teaching in class and simply ask if you were to come again into the class what would you have done differently? How would you improve on the delivery? Where did you fail? Where did you do good? And how would you proceed after this? Because by this… you will make them realise…what they did good or bad… what they can improve…maybe they can work on timing also because I realised many of them are very bad at timing…their time management is not good. (Expert B)*

Another central issue here would be the absence of a mentoring system that may help and assist these new teaching scholars to familiarise them with the whole idea of teaching at a university. Expert A implored that he received no guidance or had nobody who was willing to show him the road. The same remark on this was provided by Novice A who mentioned that she had also received no assistance from her previous institution as no mentoring system existed. To overcome this challenge, she had to put on her own initiative and rely on her good relation to learn the work and considers herself as lucky to have the chance to help a senior lecturer in handling some of the tutorials and having the opportunity to observe the senior lecturer's class which had built her understanding on how she should carry out her teaching.

DISCUSSION

The preliminary findings offered by this study will doubtless be much scrutinised, but there are some immediately dependable conclusions that can be made. First, there is now a need for the university to empower teaching training programme that is tailored to instil good teaching practice. Ibrahim et al.(2016) mentioned in their chapter that it is important for a university to create and develop a strategic talent development programme that will guarantee a positive development of an academic institution. However, as it has been suggested through the literature in this paper, such initiative by the management of the university could have been a result from the 'flavour-of-the-week' mentality that could have a negative impact on the professional development of these new teaching scholars. Furthermore, most universities do not have a suitable and effective mechanism that aspire teaching excellence among new teaching scholars. The crux to this alarming situation could come from the fact that most policy makers were unable to find a suitable, operative, cost effective and a valid way to train the new teaching scholars. Plus, it is entirely difficult for the policy makers to create an all comprehensive programme that will deliver qualified academics that maintain high level of quality in their teaching in Malaysia HE. Still, the issue is becoming a more pressing concern not only due to the widening participation agenda and increasing accountability for public funds, but also on the rapid changes students are learning in higher education.

Realising this challenge, this paper suggests for a more localised and hands-on training programme that will include three cohorts – 1. The understanding of T&L theories, 2. Active input on the professional development of the practice, and 3. Mentoring. The suggested program should be directed towards developing a 'reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1983) that will

go through a process of domestication to become "a competent member of the practice" (Wenger, 1999:136). To do so, the programme should be administered throughout the fourteen weeks of the semester. Through such approach, specific emphasis could be given on theories of T&L, on educational research, with a tangent to real working experience and environment. By doing so, participants of the programme will be exposed to the profession that will "reshape their existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices of the profession" (Hollins, 2014:101). The program should also be accredited by AKePT to give the program a form of professional recognition that will attract participation from early entry teaching scholars. According to Gosling (2015) such T&L 'programmes' or 'projects' could present positive output as a tool to promote positive cultural change in higher education. Such desire is reflected further in his paper where Gosling had exemplified how Australian Learning and Teaching Council allocated AUS$8 million to development projects in 2012 (ALTC 2012), while in New Zealand *AkoAotearoa* has committed well over NZ $2.5 million to support projects (AkoAotearoa 2012), and the United Kingdom (UK) had already spent around £181 million for similar projects. The huge sum of money clearly suggests the prospect for such program in improving teaching quality in Malaysia HE and transform the universities as world-leading institutions with the highest accreditation in T&L.

CONCLUSION

Even though the research is still at its early stage, interesting and significant findings had been found in terms of identifying the challenges faced by new teaching scholars in Malaysian HEI. Arguing that much more can be done to improve the T&L climate in universities, attention could be given in informing and guiding these novices as they get used to the demanding climate of being an academic. Tapping into the experiences of two early career teaching scholars and two experienced teaching scholars, three challenges were identified – mastering the whole body of knowledge, identifying different and suitable approach in teaching, and managing the younger generation of learners. Based on the findings, the paper had put forward a suggestion for a more localised teaching award program that is recognised by AKePT which gives emphasis on the T&L theories with on-going feedbacks on the new teaching scholars' professional development, and mentoring.

REFERENCES

Anuwar Ali. 2012. Women in Leadership Role in Academia and Education: Enhancing Malaysian Female Participation. ISTIC/NIEW: High-Level International Roundtable for Women in Leadership Roles in Science and Technology – "Getting There". 4-5 September 2012.Swiss Garden Kuala Lumpur

Åkerlind, G. (2005). Learning about phenomenography: interviewing, data analysis and the qualitative research paradigm. *Doing Developmental Phenomenography*, 63.

Allan, H. T., Magnusson, C., Horton, K., Evans, K., Ball, E., Curtis, K., & Johnson, M. (2015). People, liminal spaces and experience: Understanding recontextualisation of knowledge for newly qualified nurses. *Nurse Education Today*, *35*(2), e78-e83.

Albers, C. (2008). Improving pedagogy through action learning and scholarship of teaching and learning.*Teaching Sociology*, 36(1), 79-86

Albers, C. (2003). Using the syllabus to document the scholarship of teaching, *Teaching Sociology*, 31(1), 60-72.

Baillie, C., Bowden, J. A., & Meyer, J. H. F. (2012). Threshold capabilities: threshold concepts and knowledge capability linked through variation theory.*Higher Education*, 65(2), 227–246. doi:10.1007/s10734-012-9540-5

Bennett, R., Hobson, J., Jones, A., Martin-Lynch, P., Scutt, C., Strehlow, K. & Veitch, S. (2016) Being chimaera: A monstrous identity for SoTL academics, *Higher Education Research & Development*,35:2, 217-228, DOI:10.1080/07294360.2015.1087473

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). The location of culture*.* London & New York, NY: Routledge.

Biggs, J., Tang, C. (2011). Train-the-trainers: implementing outcomes-based teaching and learning in Malaysian higher education. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 8, 1-19

Blackburn, S. C., &Nestel, D. (2014). Troublesome knowledge in paediatric surgical trainees: A qualitative study. *Journal of surgical education*, *71*(5), 756-761.

Boyer, E. L. (1997), Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities for the professoriate, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Cousin, G. (2008). Strategies for Researching Learning in Higher Education (SEDA Series) Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Sage.

Dushku, S. (2000). Conducting individual and focus group interviews in research in Albania. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(4), 763-768.

Evans, C. A., &Kevern, P. (2015). Liminality in preregistration mental health nurse education: A review of the literature. *Nurse education in practice*, *15*(1), 1-6.

Felten, P. (2016), On the threshold with students, in: Threshold concepts in practice, In Land, R., Meyer, J.H.F. and Flanagan, M.T., (eds), Sense Publishers, Rotterdam/Boston/Taipei, Chapter 1, 3-9

Felten, P. (2013). Principles of good practice in SoTL. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, *1*(1), 121-125.

Grauerholz, L. & Zipp, J.F. (2008). How to do the scholarship of teaching and learning. *TeachingSociology*, 36(1), 87-94

Gosling, D. &Turner,R. (2015) Responding to contestation in teaching and learning projects in the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in the United Kingdom, *Studies in Higher Education*, 40:9, 1573-1587, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2014.899339

HadijahJaffri et al. (2016). A single case study on the practice of scholarship of teaching and learning, *Manin India*, 96 (1-2), 255-265

Healey-Etten, V., & Sharp, S. (2010). Teaching beginning undergraduates how to do an in-depth interview a teaching note with 12 handy tips. *Teaching Sociology*, 38(2), 157-165.

Hollins, E.R., Luna, C., & Lopez, S. (2014) Learning to teach teachers. *Teaching Education*, 25:1, 99-124, DOI: 10.1080/10476210.2012.755956

Lodge, J.M &Bonsanquet, A. (2014) Evaluating quality learning in higher education: re-examining the evidence. *Quality in Higher Education*, 20:1,3-23, DOI:10.1080/13538322. 2013.849787

Hill, S. (2010). Troublesome knowledge: why don't they understand? *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 27, pp.80–83, DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-1842.2010. 00880.x

Hussain Othman et al. (2014). 3C3R model and Malaysian experience in training of trainers for problem-based learning. *Pensee Journal.*76(5):53-68

Ibrahim K.,Norzaini A.,&Sharina A.H. (2016). Pendekatan program pembangunan bakat akademik. In Norzaini A. (Eds.), *MemperkasaKepimpinanAkademik: SemaiBaktiMenuai Budi.* (197-220).Terengganu: Penerbit UMT.

Ibrahim K., Norzaini A., Sharina A.H & M. Firdaus H. (2016). Perancangan dan pengurusan bakat akademik. In Norzaini A. (Eds.), *Memperkasa Kepimpinan Akademik: Semai Bakti Menuai Budi.* (197-220). Terengganu: Penerbit UMT.

Lichtman, M. (2013). Qualitative research for the social sciences. SAGE Publications.

Lodge, J.M & Bonsanquet, A. (2014) Evaluating quality learning in higher education: re-examining the evidence, *Quality in Higher Education*, 20:1, 3-23, DOI:10.1080/13538322. 2013.849787

Majid Ghasemy et Al. (2015). Assessment of leadership performance effectiveness in higher education: AMalaysian perspective. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management* (Mojem), 3(4), 63 - 79

Matthews, K.E, Lodge, J.M. &Bosanquet, A. (2014). Early career academic perceptions, attitudes andprofessional development activities: questioning the teaching and research gap to further academic development, International Journal for Academic Development, 19:2, 112-124, DOI: 10.1080/1360144X.2012.724421

Meyer, J.H.F. and Land, R. (2006.) *Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge: Issues of Liminality,* in: Meyer, J.H.F. and Land, R. (eds.), Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge, London and New York: Routledge, 19-32

Meyer, J. H. F., & Land, R. (2005). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (2): Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. Higher Education, 49(3), 373–388. doi:10.1007/s10734-004-6779-5

Meyer, J.H.F. and Land, R. (2003). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: linkages to ways of thinking and practising, in: Rust, C. (ed.), Improving Student Learning - Theory and Practice Ten Years On. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD), pp 412-424. [On- line version: Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses, ETL Project, Occasional Report 4, May 2003 last accessed 5 June 2014]

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Sage.

Norazila A.A et al. (2010). Brave new world for university educators: Effects of pedagogical training on teaching at higher education level. The 3rd Regional Conference on Engineering Education & Research in Higher Education. 7-9 June 2010, Kuching, Sarawak: 1-16

Perkins, D. (2006). Constructivism and troublesome knowledge. In *Overcoming barriers to student understanding*(pp. 57-71). Routledge.

Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan (2015-2025) [On-line version: last accessed 6 June 2017] [http://hes.mohe.gov.my/event/pppm-pt/docs/2.%20 Ringkasan%20 Eksekutif%20 PPPM%20 2015-2025.pdf]

Remmik, M., Karm, M., Haamer, A. &Lepp,L. 2011. Earlycareeracademics' learning in academic communities. *International Journal for AcademicDevelopment*, 16:3, 187-199, DOI: 10.1080/1360144X.2011.596702.

Rodger, S., & Turpin, M. (2011, January). Using threshold concepts to transform entry level curricula. In *34th HERDSA Annual International Conference* (Vol. 34, pp. 263-274). Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.Schön, D. A. (1983). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. Basic books.

Ross, P. M., Burgin, S., Aitchison, C., &Catterall, J. (2011). Research writing in the Sciences: Liminal territory and high emotion. *Journal of Learning Design*, *4*(3), 14-27.

Schröder, A., &Ahlström, G. (2004). Psychiatric care staff's and care associates' perceptions of the concept of quality of care: A qualitative study. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 18(2), 204-212.

Sherman, T.M, Armistead, L.P, Fowler, F., Barksdale, M.A, &Reif, G. (1987). The quest for excellence in university teaching. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 58(1), 66-84

Simmons, N., Abrahamson, E., Deshler, J. M., Kensington-Miller, B., Manarin, K., Morón-García, S. &Renc-Roe, J. (2013). Conflicts and configurations in a liminal space: SoTL scholars' identity development. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, *1*(2), 9-21.

Tunku Ahmad et al. (2014). Assessment for learning practices and competency among Malaysian university lecturers: A national study. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education.* 8(1), 14-31

Thornton, T. (2014) Professional recognition: promoting recognition through the Higher Education Academy in a UK higher education institution. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 20:3, 225 - 238, DOI: 10.1080/13583883.2014.931453

Walker, J.D., Baepler, P. & Cohen, B. (2008). The scholarship of teaching and learning paradox: results without rewards.*College Teaching*, 56(3), 183-189

Wenger, E. (1999). Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity. Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). Community of practice: a brief introduction. *Learning in Doing*, 15(4), 1–7. doi:10.2277/0521663636

Yin, H., Lu, G. & Wang, W. (2014) Unmasking the teaching quality of higher education: students' course experience and approaches to learning in China, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39:8, 949-970, DOI:10.1080/02602938.2014.880107.