

60-Second SoTL

Episode 83 – Grand Challenges of SoTL in Africa

Featured Article

Abrahamson, Earle. 2026. "Addressing the Grand Challenges: Pathways to Sustainable Educational Development in Africa through Culture, Community, and Co-Creation." *SoTL Africa* 1 (1).

<https://journal.ashesi.edu.gh/index.php/SA/article/view/119>

Transcript

(Music)

0:10

Jessie L. Moore:

What does it take to foster sustainable and contextually meaningful Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, especially in regions facing systemic challenges? That's the focus of this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. I'm Jessie Moore.

(Music)

0:31

In "Addressing the Grand Challenges of SoTL: Pathways to Sustainable Educational Development in Africa through Culture, Community, and Co-Creation," Earle Abrahamson examines how to support the advancement of SoTL, which in turn can support educational transformation across African higher education systems. His article appears in *SoTL Africa*, a new open access journal.

0:56

Framed in Hutchings' foundational inquiry questions about SoTL—what is, what works, what's possible, and new conceptual frameworks—and Scharff and colleagues' Grand Challenges for SoTL, Abrahamson's essay explores strategies for fostering SoTL in African higher education, while also attending to the specific cultural, institutional, and historical contexts of African universities.

1:21

Abrahamson first outlines the African context for SoTL. He highlights several persistent barriers to SoTL development in Africa, including limited institutional supports and recognition for SoTL, lack of funding, and heavy faculty workloads—all of which can make it difficult for educators to prioritize pedagogical research.

At the same time, broader structural challenges—such as the legacy of colonial educational systems—continue to shape whose knowledge is valued and how curricula are designed, raising important questions about how SoTL can support decolonization and the integration of African epistemologies into teaching and learning.

2:01

Despite these challenges, Abrahamson identifies significant opportunities for advancing SoTL in African higher education. Increasing attention to student-centered learning, along with the growth of digital technologies, is creating new pathways for faculty collaboration, research circulation, and pedagogical innovation.

He notes that institutional, regional, and international collaborations—especially writing groups and scholarly networks—play a key role in supporting emerging scholars and offering mentorship, feedback, and opportunities for co-authorship.

2:35

Building strong intra-African networks supports knowledge exchange while avoiding over-reliance on external partners. Moreover, these intra-networks can advance new theoretical approaches to SoTL that are grounded in African contexts, epistemologies, linguistic diversity, indigenous knowledge systems, storytelling, and community-based learning.

2:57

Across these approaches, three interconnected principles stand out: culture, community, and co-creation. Together, they offer a foundation for building SoTL practices that are locally relevant, globally connected, and oriented toward long-term educational transformation in African higher education.

To learn more about this essay, visit our show notes for a link to the open access article.

3:20

(Music)

3:26

Jessie L. Moore:

Join us for our next episode of 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

(Music)