# S.O.A.R Model: An Alternative Approach for 21th Century Education to Shift from "Classroom Management" to "Classroom Leadership"

## Roslizawati Che Aziz, Suriati Hamzah, Nik Alif Amri Nik Hashim, Marlisa Abdul Rahim, Wan Farha Wan Zulkifli
Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

## Ghazali Ahmad
Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

**Abstract**

The s.o.a.r model has been used effectively in organizations to facilitate change and development while improving motivation, involvement and student achievement. It is an adaptation of the swot analysis where the major dissimilarity resides in their approach; the s.o.a.r analysis eliminates the bad aspects (threats, weaknesses) and replaces it with positive factors (aspirations and results). In every element of leadership, there is some element of management. However, leadership is what brings that out, not management. Thus, we believe that the term "classroom leadership" needs to be more prominent in academic conversations about teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** S.O.A.R Model, S.W.O.T, Appreciative Inquiry, Classroom Management, Leadership.

**Introduction**

Student learning methods in every class environment involve the acquisition of information, dealing with information through activities, and the formation of new knowledge. The classroom provides a contextual learning environment for acquiring knowledge by creating conducive conditions for learning. According to Caffarella (2002), this environmental structure decides the effectiveness of the learning method as a whole. Online education in the classroom may change motivation, involvement, and student performance. Student needs for self-motivation and taking responsibility for class participation and task completion may be more significant with online classes. Hence, some students can use assignment deadlines and scores as their source of motivation (Martin & Calabrese, 2011).

Online student engagement in the classroom is regularly encouraged through the use of discussion boards and asynchronous interactions with their mentors. Performance in an online classroom environment is based on student work products, whether this is done

through group activities, online assessments, or written assignments. As stated by Hassan & Rasiah (2011), students are given comments by their lecturers, and the level of the comment can be different from the grade of the letter to the amount of points received, or the inclusion of the comments. Depending on the level of involvement of lecturers and students, the online classroom has the potential to be highly mechanical, and it may be easy for students to experience cutting-edge sessions and lectures.

What should 'career advancement' look and feel like for students who will graduate into today's competitive, connected and the technologically advanced world? How do staff at Institutions of Higher Learning (HEIs) deal with the new, varied and complex challenges they face, and meet the diverse needs of stakeholders? However, assessment, learning and teaching may differ depending on the discipline, students' needs, and the environment in which they practice S.O.A.R, but who will guarantee that results are achieved to meet the standards required and consistently implemented? The issue has grown in importance in light of recent Industrial Revolution 4.0 in higher education. In fact, scholars and governments around the world are worried about their system of education competing to unlock the potential of their people. Employers want graduates with the values, work ethic, talent, and experience to fit their organisation's needs. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address this issue by engaging with developmental experiences and opportunities within and beyond the formal curriculum as well as enhancing the generic attributes that make it effective and productive in learning and work.

The involvement of students, however, is an area of concern for many teachers, because students with a decent level of involvement and higher motivation tend to learn more than those who are less motivated. Research on strength-based approach demonstrates that individuals who work from their strengths show their level of motivation, confidence, satisfaction, and efficiency, and they are likely to study and possess the information more quickly (Stratton-Berkessel, 2010). Therefore, the project aims to transfer students from a deficit-based, teacher-based approach to a more independent approach by focusing on the use of their strengths to study more effectively. In addition, it is also useful, especially for teachers or lecturers who make use of positive discourse to foster better student attitudes, enhance interaction among students, and increase student engagement with their learning. Hence, it can make it easier for students to practice a set of reward agreements or commitments about what they do individually and collectively as a class to achieve their goals.

## Literature Review
### The Provisions of the S.O.A.R Model and S.W.O.T Analysis
S.O.A.R has been shown to be an effective and flexible strategic framework that releases energy, creativity, and organizational involvement. S.O.A.R stands for Strength, Opportunity, Aspiration, and Result. S.O.A.R's strategic thinking and strategic planning is a dynamic, modern, and innovative approach to build strategic thinking, evaluating individual and group performance, building strategies, and strategizing plans. As a framework, S.O.A.R focuses on the formulation and implementation of positive strategies by identifying strengths, constructive creativity in the form of opportunities, inspiring persons and groups to share aspirations, and determine measurable and meaningful results (Stavros & Cole, 2013). Hence, this framework expedites strategic planning sessions and processes using the Initiative of Studies (AI) as a guiding approach to researching strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and measurable results; imagining the most favourable future; creating innovative strategies,

plans, systems, designs, and structures; building a sustainable culture; and inspire organizational stakeholders for S.O.A.R (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2007).

The S.O.A.R Model has been successfully utilised in organisations to facilitate change and development while improving students' performance, motivation and engagement. The purpose of the S.O.A.R framework is to follow the strategic planning method based on the Opportunity and Strengths development to achieve the product target management Aspiration. The philosophy behind the S.O.A.R framework is an appreciative inquiry, used to formulate plans that are aligned with the planned insights. The analysis assimilates the collective ideas and encourages collaboration within the organisation (Khavarian-Garmsir & Zare, 2014; Stavros & Cole, 2013). The S.O.A.R framework also provides a flexible approach to strategic thinking, planning and leadership that invites the entire system into a strategic planning or strategy process by incorporating all who have an interest in the future success of the organisation. These stakeholders can be internal workers such as employees or external such as suppliers, consumers, and societies. As mention by Stavros, Cole & Hitchcock (2014), by using the overall perspective of the system, it provides a comprehensive image of how an organisation can best serve its consumers and what the future can hold by considering various stakeholder perspectives. Table 1 shows a detailed explanation of S.O.A.R from an AI approach.

Table 1
*S.O.A.R Model Analysis*
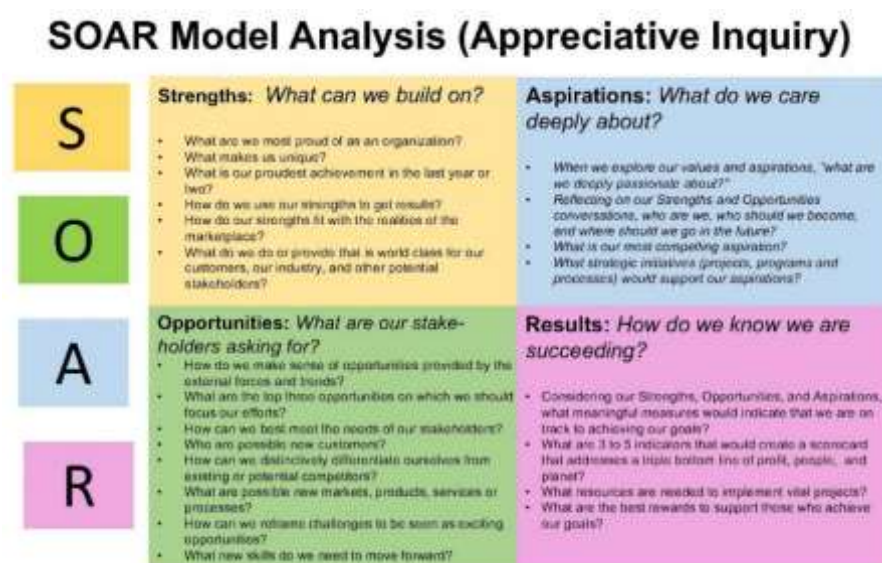


(MU Library, 2018; Stavros & Hinrichs, 2019)

In other words, according to Stavros & Hinrichs (2019);

**S** = Strengths: A good classroom, including his students, learning tools, and the best achievement.
**O** = Opportunities: external conditions that can increase the performance, the students' needs are not met; repeated threats or vulnerabilities are a possibility.
**A** = Aspiration: What the class can be; what the class wants to know.

**R** = Result: The visible and measurable detail that will show when goals and aspirations have been achieved.

The S.O.A.R model is an adjustment of the S.W.O.T Analysis where the main difference lies in the factor approach; S.O.A.R eliminates the negative factors (threats, weakness) and replaces it with positive elements (Aspirations and Results). S.O.A.R also comprises all stages and functional parts of an organization, while S.W.O.T usually takes a top-down approach. Through S.O.A.R, the focus is on improving the organization and what it does well, instead of focusing on the threat and/or perceived weakness. A comparison between the SWOT and S.O.A.R approach can be seen from Table 2 during S.O.A.R analysis. The primary questions that must be answered are:

1. What is our biggest strength?
2. What is our best chance?
3. What is the future of our choice?
4. What are the measurable results that will tell us that we have reached a vision of the future?

Table 2
*Comparison between SWOT model and the S.O.A.R approach*

| SWOT analysis | SOAR approach |
|---|---|
| Analysis-oriented | Action-oriented |
| Weakness & threat-focused | Strength & opportunity-focused |
| Competition-focused—*Just be later* | Possibility-focused—*Be the best!* |
| Incremental improvement | Innovation & breakthroughs |
| Top-down | Engagement of all levels |
| Focus on analysis → planning | Focus on planning → implementation |
| Energy-depleting—*There are so many weaknesses and threats!* | Energy-creating—*We are good and can become great!* |
| Attention to gaps | Attention to results |

Source: Khavarian-Garmsir & Zare, (2014); Stavros & Hinrichs (2007)

**Applicability of S.O.A.R Model as an Alternative Approach for 21th Century Education**
Since the creation of S.O.A.R's framework in 1999, the application of S.O.A.R has been offered to a wide range of organisations, which they have adapted to market and plan their strategic conversation. The use of S.O.A.R as the mainstream thinking, planning and framework that creates positive momentum and sustainable change has evolved well among practitioners and scholarly communities (Stavros et al., 2014).There are several instances of S.O.A.R functioning as one factor of many in a complex system that has produced significant benefits and results. This pedagogic design of S.O.A.R in higher education allows learners to make links as below:
1. Identify the strengths and needs of their development regarding (and in line with) the decisions they require, tutors and employers;
2. Critically appreciate and promote the strengths arising out of their motivation, capabilities and personality;

3.  Explore the extent to which Motivation, Ability, Personality (MAP) Self aligns with the type of MAP required for the opportunities they choose to aspire to (occupation, employer-organisation or self-employed);
4.  Using MAP itself to engage in development with others and with opportunities in learning, work and life;
5.  Generate, clarify, test and execute aspirations through decisions and plans that are fully informed;
6.  Achieve and record greater competence, demonstrate and evaluate results.

(Stavros & Cole, 2013)

In addition, there are three general categories of classes, namely first; Unmanaged classrooms. This permits chaos and confusion to interfere with teaching and learning. Secondly are managed classes. This class permits common learning but often without student ownership. Last but not lease is deliberately steered classes. It cultivates self-motivation and self-discipline, generates synergistic learning, and ultimately empowers students (Walsh, Chang, & Tse, 2015). As stated by Goss & Sonnemann (2017), classroom management is an important and effective teaching skill for teachers to minimize errors and reduce interference and create learning environments that enable intellectual and emotional growth. The design of class management includes an understanding of environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors; an approach to promoting health to create a safe, supportive and caring environment; inclusive so that different needs can be met as well as to recognize and celebrate diversity; putting students at the learning centre and focusing on their social, emotional and academic requirements (Egeberg, McConney & Price, 2016). By enhancing strength, opportunities, aspirations and results and utilising the (S.O.A.R) model for classroom management, classroom management can then shift to classroom leadership.

Value and significance of shifting to classroom leadership involves actions that help a group to accomplish its task and maintain effective working relationships among its members. For any group to succeed, a task leadership action and group maintenance action needs to be provided (Maier, 2009). It is essential to remind that every team member can be a leader by taking the necessary actions (i.e., the teacher is not necessarily the leader), and various leadership actions can be given by different members of the group (that is, the teacher may decide to share a variety of leadership aspect with class members). According to Thomas (2014), a leader in the class can be known as the one who can guide students through the learning process in a way that way students can understand and use the knowledge they acquire with the help of teachers. In this day and age of unmotivated, entertainment-driven students, it is hard to find classroom leaders who can achieve this.

Classroom leadership has an inspirational leader truly use their knowledge and sense of people's' basic needs to build their effectiveness. The effectiveness of classroom leadership has six keys to motivate people and performance excellence (Sammons, Davis, Day, 2014). The six keys are safety, success, love and belonging, freedom and independence, fun and pleasure, and a valued goal. By having classroom leadership, the process of the lecture will be easier. Firstly, students lead group projects, where the project-based learning will enhance a kinaesthetic component to the digital learning environment, and assist learners to contextualise the material. Secondly, students lead conversations with everyone in the eLearning environment that has something to offer or questions to consider, where both are

equally valuable in improving the group experience. Finally, students assume accountability, and it is difficult to succeed in distance learning programs without autonomous and independent motivation. It takes perfect knowledge of self-motivation and responsibility; no leader can thrive without this quality. This is also the essence of leadership: vision, an exciting drive to achieve, and a willingness to explore strategies to achieve that goal.

Leadership is a capability that everyone can gain. According to Doveston & Keenaghan (2006), responsible leadership behaviour depends on flexibility, the ability to diagnose the behaviour of a specific time for the team to function efficiently; and the ability to fulfil this behaviour or to get other members to comply. In addition, educational research indicates that there are five core behaviours that classroom leaders need to help students to learn. These behaviours consist of clear lessons, variety in instruction, task orientation of the teacher, student engagement in learning as well as the high success rate of students (Thomas, 2014). Therefore, teachers need to know that, in general, this group works best when group members share leadership tasks. Nevertheless, the majority of students are used to being in a class where teachers play all leadership roles; if we want students to play some of these roles, we must allow them to do so, and perhaps provide guidance on how best to take this role. When teachers ignore leadership and fail to provide their leadership or invite students to take on leadership roles, students themselves choose to play an unofficial (and often inappropriate) function in the classroom, to draw individuals together as a group.

**Suggestions and Conclusion**
This article is focused on the applicability of the S.O.A.R Model to higher education in the 21st century. It has emerged as an effective and flexible strategic model and or approach that release a classroom's energy, creativity and engagement. This study will be more interesting if the S.O.A.R can be effectively interpreted, implemented and facilitated through policy and practice. It is better understood as a different pedagogy, a pedagogy that values students as active partners in learning, assessment and research and not as passive recipients of knowledge transfer. The S.O.A.R approach is different from teaching a subject or training for skill development, though both methods play a part. Students need to be supported, supported, and motivated to conduct self-esteem questions and opportunities for explicit external referrals, using self-audit, discussion and diagnostic / assessment activities, peer reviewers, tutors, and employer feedback. It is essentially a model for holistic development aimed at expanding the framework for 'learning' and 'assessment', to date: recognized as a contribution to personal, professional and academic goals. Furthermore, it was used for both current and future graduate market research; 'Owned' as a student responsibility and facilitated by learning capabilities (including peers, alumni and employers); as well as be identified and evaluated wherever they occur - in formal or out-of-work curricula, co-curricular activities and life experiences; driven by attitudes that lead to readiness and ability to engage in lifelong learning.

In conclusion, S.O.A.R model expedites strategic planning sessions and processes using the Appreciation Inquiry as a guiding approach to investigate strengths, opportunities, aspirations and measurable results; imagine the most favourable future; creating innovative strategies, plans, systems, designs and structures; building a sustainable culture; and inspire organisational stakeholders to adopt S.O.A.R. model. It will engage representatives from every level of the classroom to have shared conversations and input on the teaching and

learning process. Resistance to change is minimized and students are more likely to commit to goals and objectives they helped create. Hence, this approach is also very flexible and scalable, so planning and decision-making by lecturers can be adjusted to meet class and cultural needs. In addition, it can build classroom strengths to produce more significant results than spend time to correct students' weaknesses.

**Corresponding Author**
Roslizawati Che Aziz & Nik Alif Amri Nik Hashim, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia,
Email: nikalifamri@gmail.com

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