

Plan for a SoTL Project

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Research Question

What are you curious about?

I am curious to know if engaging reflection while completing faculty development workshops related to a specific practice alters the pre-existing philosophies and approaches to curriculum design and teaching of early-career/new university professors.

What would you like to know about strategies that might hinder and/or help students to learn, in your course?

Does engaging in reflective practice alongside faculty development training workshops transform new faculty's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours about curriculum design and teaching?

Do you want to know if an activity, assignment, or teaching strategy "works?"

How does reflection on instructional techniques shape professors' perceptions about teaching and learning?

Do you have a question about how to help your students learn a particular skill?

What tools or support do you feel you need in order to improve your teaching practice?

Identify challenge/outcome related to learning that is related to your question.

Describe the learning in a way that suggests how you might *measure* it using either qualitative or quantitative methods.

Learning could be measured through surveys and interviews as well as a review of reflective journals kept by the professors throughout the training period.

Describe the instructional activity, assignment, or teaching strategy that will promote student learning on the outcome you identified.

SoTL projects might investigate the impact of a *modification* to an existing strategy or assignment. Describe how the new approach differs from the old approach and why this modification might change student learning on this outcome.

At the moment, we generally survey faculty to ask what kind of training do they feel they need and from there, hold one-off workshops in which faculty attend, but no follow-up is ever completed to see if the training was implemented or had impact on their practice. This on-going faculty development plan would work with a specific group of professors over a set period of time and use data collected at the beginning of the time frame and compare it with data at the end of the time frame to document changes. The on-going nature of the training, coupled with intentional reflective practices and interviews would assure that professors are implementing the training into their practice and purposefully acknowledging the benefits/disadvantages to their practice as well as their own teaching philosophies.

Describe the evidence that would persuade an external audience that the new or modified teaching strategy improves student learning on the targeted learning outcome.

Describe the evidence you would need to collect to answer questions about the impact or value of this teaching strategy. How would you convince others that this approach is better than other approaches? What comparisons should you make? Examine students; skill before and after the assignment? Compare students who complete the learning activity to another group of students – what comparisons would be meaningful?

By comparing the survey and interview data from the start of the training with the data at the end of the training - this evidence would indicate the efficacy of the new approach. Individual testimonials from interviews would also be effective forms of evidence. Reflective journals illustrating growth and change would also prove beneficial and highlight where there's been impact.

How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?

It is likely I would share this information first, within my workplace so that we could make plans to implement faculty development plans aligned with the data. I would also more than likely share the findings at conferences such as TESS and COED. If I was to publish my work, I would also likely look to publish in journals such as the Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CJSOTL).

Adapted from: C. J. Stanny, E. M. El-Sheikh, & H-M. Chung (2009) ***Getting Started with a SoTL Project***

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