# Brian's Plan for a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Project

**Research Question**
What are you curious about?
What would you like to know about strategies that might hinder and/or help students to learn, in your course?
Do you want to know if an activity, assignment, or teaching strategy "works?"
Do you have a question about how to help your students learn a particular skill?

**I am curious to know whether a better method can be adopted to ensure that 100% engagement and compliance is carried out in *group work settings* (3 or more)? What may be the obstacles that students face in meeting the required group work results? Do some students simply work better on their own? Teamwork is an essential 'employability skill' and important to my learners to experience and see through to a successful conclusion in a post-secondary setting.**

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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.

**Challenge #1: It is a frequent occurrence to have at least one group in the class not fully engaged in partnership. Sometimes, the majority of the work is left to one person. How can I ensure that these group projects are completed equitably? Qualitative measurement can come from examining the assignment's purpose and using better 'descriptives' to highlight how essential partnering will create superior results. Quantitative measurement would focus more on the assignment's 'rubric', identifying the roles and responsibilities of each group member and measuring the input of each.**

***Learning Outcome #1: Demonstrate the ability to be an effective group leader/member fully exploring and executing assignment requirements.***

**Challenge #2: This particular assignment in question is not one to be left to the last minute? The required ingredients require a month's work (minimally). Why do some groups leave their work to the last minute or procrastinate? Since the groups are determined in a random draw, do personality traits clash and become a hindrance?**
***Learning Outcome #2 – Manage time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.***

1. 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.

**Based on my research through the recommended UBC SoTL Explorer, I discovered a number of modifications re: researching, implementing and assessing group-work tasks. Here's one example.**

**https://disruptivepedagogy.ca/2019/03/22/my-sotl-plan-for-group-work/ Credit – Mel Young – Ontario Extend (Scholar Module) Project Posting (Open Source Journal)**

**Mel Young's Research Question:  How do I facilitate group work in my classes so that students find value in the process and collectively engage in the assessment task?**

   a)  **Research work would include reading journals on the topic of group work, ask students for feedback, what they like/dislike about group work, look for other teacher's successful group work stories.**

   b)  **Plan of action would include a call out to colleagues to see if anyone would like to collaborate on this SOTL research topic, gather feedback from students, research and read journal articles about group work strategies, pick 2-3 strategies to try, report findings with collaborators, draft dissemination**

   c) **A dissemination plan would include holding a PD session at our campus's Teaching and Learning Hub about our SOTL project, draft open source publication and post to open source journal, link findings in social media and blog sites, attend at least one conference to share findings**

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?

**I needed more information. I referenced [https://student.unsw.edu.au/groupwork](https://student.unsw.edu.au/groupwork), the University of Sydney's Guide to Group Work. Amidst the list of required elements to foster productive group work, I highlighted (3) points that would persuade an external group that new/modified teaching strategies would effectively address my group engagement/full participation concerns.**

1. **Prepare a <u>student/team contract</u>. In this signed agreement, students will outline what they are going to do, who is going to do what, and by when. (addressing the 'hitting the deadline' issue)**
2. **The professor creates an online '<u>discussion group</u>'. I currently request the group's leader to provide an oral progress report at the end of select classes. A discussion group provides text validating work accomplished, work to be completed.**
3. **Build a <u>'trust' culture</u>. Students need to be clearly informed at the outset that differing views is healthy, to be respected, and the challenge before them is to come to a consensus.**

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

**There are a variety of forums where this information could/should be published. Beyond, sharing my findings and student experiences with faculty team members, I would love to share my research with teaching colleagues across Canada via a Canadian Media Educator's Conference, either during a 'best practices' breakout or a formal 'research' session. I can also link my work via social media platforms including LinkedIn. The latter creates a further discussion and allows the research to evolve.**

Reflection:

**Many resources that were accessed for this SoTL exercise reinforced the value of working effectively as part of a team or group. It is an extremely important skill and one that the student will refine and use throughout their working life. I've noted that when a team is unproductive, it can be very frustrating for the students who <u>are</u> accountable. I look forward to implementing many of these strategies when the course is offered again in the winter of 2021.**

Adapted from: C. J. Stanny, E. M. El-Sheikh, & H-M. Chung (2009) *Getting Started with an SoTL Project* Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment  http://uwf.edu/cutla/