Plan for a SoTL Project

by Brian Percheson, University College of the North

|  |
| --- |
| **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 always curious about Teaching English as a Second Language, especially meeting people. I hope our teaching and learning strategies and lessons are age-appropriate in real-life, authentic contexts. My research question: How will our ESL students develop personally relevant learning strategies for reading maps and asking directions? |
| **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.*The learner develops a personal goal along with a pre-assessment survey based on their success criteria.The learner practices their personal goal in classroom activities throughout the unit.And at the end of the unit, they reflect with a before/after comparison with the same survey and success criteria. |
| **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.*In order to improve reading maps and asking directions, our learners will engage in group role play activities with maps from their local neighbourhoods.The original lesson was teacher-centred with drilled question and answers from a textbook with an imaginary map.Now, with our student-centred approach with authentic materials modification, our learners are using their own language to express themselves, it is a safe environment where learners help each other and aren’t afraid to make mistakes and the map itself is a useful skill that can be used outside the classroom.  |
| **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?*Before the role play assignment: I think many of our ESL learners would be resistant to role play because they are used to teacher-centred rote instruction from their elementary and high school education days and they would be afraid to make mistakes in front of their peers and always strive to give perfect answers.But after the role play, our class could share in a group discussion, in a casual, informal setting. This is really formative assessment, not an evaluation, which means that we are simply learning how we have improved from the role play without pressure of grades and the need to be perfect and not make mistakes. I am sincerely curious for personal feedback about each learner’s take on how they improved (or not improved) with their targeted learning income: map reading and asking questions, based on role play with neighbourhood maps activity, thanks to the informal group discussion. |
| **How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?**One way would be via social media through a blog through twitter, especially with a group that I have helped create with my peers as a collaborator.But if I don’t want to formally publish or disseminate my work, it’s perfectly fine to talk informally or even in staff meetings or professional development would be fine too. Scholars share knowledge … that’s how we learn from each other. Professionally and/or personally, I’m glad to have the option to share and collaborate either way because we are teaching and learning with each other. |

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

Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment <http://uwf.edu/cutla/>