Plan for a SoTL Project

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| **Research Question**  What are you curious about?  **I would like to research the following question:**  Are triple jump assessments effective at testing a level 2 student’s ability to independently hypothesize and research based on a client file and come to reasonable conclusions?  **I am generally interested in:**   * Triple jump assessments (Do they test what they need to? Are they the best way to test a students’ knowledge of how to interact with a client? Is there a way to scaffold these?) * How do you best prepare a student for a triple jump assessment? (i.e., if students are failing this assessment, how to we prepare them better to encounter it?) * Triple jump |
| **Motivations for engaging in SoTL**   1. Improving student outcomes in this assessment and in general clinical skills 2. Greater faculty awareness of how the courses/assessment fit together 3. Renewed understanding of what is needed in/across different terms of the program 4. Generating ideas/scaffolding to share with other clinical groups in my workplace |
| **Identify challenge/outcome related to learning that is related to your question.**  **I could utilize the following methodology to measure:**  Have students complete pre-post surveys on their self-confidence with the skills being taught in the class and measured with the assessment at the beginning and end of the term (maybe at the mid-term too). Additionally, use student grades from this and previous cohorts to compare. |
| **Identify ethical considerations for this project**   * Students need to know that completing the survey is optional * Confidentiality of student names in my cohort, as well as previous cohorts * There is a power differential between me as the instructor/researcher and the students, they need to know that this does not affect their role as students * Students should be anonymous and coded in some way – this may involve working with another instructor who would need to be blinded and may have access to student information |
| **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: effectiveness of triple jump assessments / teaching required in order to help students do well on triple jump assessments * Outcome: students passing the triple jump assessment (class); students able to prepare for a client interaction (practice) * Measuring outcomes: Do students pass the triple jump? Do students do progressively better throughout the course to then do well on the triple jump? Do students feel confident preparing for a client interaction before the triple jump? After? * Quantitative: % of students that pass the triple jump exam; range, average, and median grades on the exam * Potentially qualitative: asking students about their experience completing the exam – could be a pre-post survey to see how their confidence has changed/improved for researching and hypothesizing about client files |
| **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.  Traditionally, the triple jump assessment has included getting a case and orally creating hypotheses (step 1), a chance to confirm your direction of inquiry with the instructor (step 2), and a final oral and written summary (step 3). This course occurs in term 2 of 4 for the students. We are considering modifying the assessment to be strictly oral, as the area that the students seem to be struggling most is with the written review of the case that must be submitted after step 3. At this point, the goal is to test the student’s ability to orally explain the situation, and to test the student’s ability to work on his/her/their own to come to these ideas, as most of their work has been in groups. They do an additional triple jump in Term 3, so making the Term 2 assessment oral-only and the Term 3 assessment oral and written will allow an opportunity for scaffolding the assessment and provide more opportunity for success in both terms. |
| **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?   * Grades and pass percentages of the assessment – especially as this assessment is a practical one and is meant to mimic what the students would need to do with a client file in practice, the grades on the assessment are a good indicator that the students are able to practically apply the information that they received/retrieved * Potentially evidence to answer qualitative information re: student experience in the assessment and whether they feel it prepared them for practice (i.e. asking whether they feel more confident, less confident, or same as previous about their ability to research and hypothesize around a client case file when they receive it) * Another piece that would be important to consider would be the quality of student responses given during the assessment – whether they fit what is expected for a student at this level? Does it meet learning expectations and outcomes? If we are seeing students meet criteria at or above the level of the learning expectations, that may be convincing evidence that this is a strategy that is working (in combination with the teaching provided in class). * Comparisons can be made to previous iterations of this assessment, where some students were failing the assessment, and thereby the course (as they need to pass the assessment to pass the course); comparisons can additionally be made to the course work where they have to do the same type of work, except in groups, not individually; additional comparisons can be made to their fieldwork on placement, as this is similar to what they would be expected to do in practice. * I would love to be able to track students’ self-confidence with the skill throughout this course, and see how the triple jump plays into that as well – specifically, how do they feel about the prospect of forming hypotheses and doing research based on a client’s file in order to prepare themselves for what an appointment might bring. * This class could be compared with previous cohorts of students, with the Term 1 students (who do not complete a triple jump at all), and/or with the Term 3 students who complete a full triple jump to see differences in the above criteria. |
| **How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?**   * Faculty group in my program area – understand implications for us as a teaching group * Other programs in our School of Health and Community Services – disseminate throughout the college as many of us have similar clinical-practice-style assessments * Teaching and learning showcase sessions hosted by our Centre for Teaching and Learning * Write an article to be posted on our school’s internal HUB website * Publish in a peer-reviewed journal |

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

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