Plan for a SoTL Project

by Rochelle Hughes, St. Lawrence College

|  |
| --- |
| **Research Question*****What are you curious about?*** What technology difficulties do new part-time instructors face when starting out with teaching? Do they feel supported and well-equipped for teaching?***What would you like to know about strategies that might hinder and/or help students to learn, in your course?***How do new part-time instructors like to learn? Do they like workshops, resources, one-on-one meetings, or would they like multiple options for learning? What tools do they think would help? ***Do you want to know if an activity, assignment, or teaching strategy “works?”***Yes, it would be important to know if they work.***Do you have a question about how to help your students learn a particular skill?***1. How do you learn best?
2. Do you prefer meetings, video resources, or handout/written resources?
3. Do you have any experience with the college approved technology (LMS, MS Office Suite)?
4. Do you feel ready to start teaching?
5. Are you teaching online or in the classroom?
 |
| **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 by observing what kind of questions instructors have after reviewing resources or partaking in training. It could also be measured through a survey that is taken after resources are reviewed/ training is provided. |
| **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 the past, we have identified needs of faculty based on inquiries we get and experiences we have. With the pandemic and needing to switch to alternate delivery quickly, this method mostly worked. Now that we have more time though, I think it is important to hear from more faculty members. It’s important to make sure they feel supported and to see if there are any gaps in their knowledge when they start teaching for the college. Faculty members should have the opportunity to learn by multiple methods and should be able to voice which methods work best for them. Faculty members could show what they’ve learned by having a Digital Learning Specialist review their course content and set up, to ensure it follows the best practices and policies outlined by the college documentation. |
| **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?***Less frequent inquiries to the Digital Learning Team throughout the semester would prove that resources/workshops/meetings have been helpful. We would need to examine the number of inquiries and the average number of interactions with new faculty members before and after. Faculty members could also evaluate their training and let us know what worked well and what didn’t. Looking at course before and after training would also be helpful to gain insight on whether or not the training was helpful. |
| **How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?**Share with Associate Dean and VP of Academics. Share outcomes and what we learned with the larger college community and then eventually with other college communities as well to enhance their practices. |

Considerations of ethical concerns:

* Connect with the college’s REB team
* Ensure accessibility
* Consider confidentiality and privacy concerns (ie. Instructors may not want managers to know how much or how little training they’ve attended)
* Consider the credibility of the research and responses
* Consider how engaged instructors are with the research and if they see value in it

Dissemination Strategy:

* Formal write-up with research action and results
* Share with my team/colleagues, Associate Dean, and the VP of academics
* Share with the greater college community via community emails/website and workshops
* Share resources and findings with other college communities/teams

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/>