Plan for a SoTL Project

by Deidre Wilson, Conestoga College

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| **Research Question**  What are you curious about?  I’m curious about how guided and clear students feel about course structure and expectations in a fully online, asynchronous course setting.  What would you like to know about strategies that might hinder and/or help students to learn, in your course?  I would like to know if adding video explanations of the syllabus and assignments would increase students’ feelings of confidence entering an online, asynchronous course. |
| **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.  Developing a questionnaire to be completed at the end of the semester that asks students to rate their feelings of confidence, knowing what to expect, and feeling clear about course expectations would answer these questions. I envision offering both scaling questions as well as spaces for qualitative responses. |
| **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.  Teaching in a fully asynchronous course, I often get multiple emails from students a semester asking questions about assignments, or expressing having misunderstood/missed course expectations. This has happened despite modifications to the number of reminders or references to the learning plan, syllabus, or assignment outlines. The new approach of adding in video descriptions of the syllabus and assignments is inclusive of more learning styles, and can provide additional clarity, as one would find in a traditional synchronous classroom. Having an additional, video-based explanation may help to reduce student stress, anxiety, or feelings of uncertainty about the course. This may have an impact on their ability to be engaged and focused on the course content. |
| **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 think it would be meaningful to compare responses between cohorts of students who completed the course as it currently is and cohorts of students who completed the course with the video instructions added. |
| **Ethical Considerations:**  I would ensure students knew that participation in the end of semester survey was entirely voluntary. I would also take steps to ensure that survey results were anonymous. I would writer a disclaimer to the students to ensure that they knew that whether or not they decide to participate in the survey, as well as regardless of their feedback, there would be no impact on their grades. |
| **How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?**  After analysis, I would prepare a brief report and share my survey results with both my program coordinator and my Chair.  I would also use the gathered data to create visual representations of the findings, and submit these to be shared among faculty at my College who teach in other asynchronous courses. As the course I teach is part of the OntarioLearn portfolio, I would also make the findings available to other OntarioLearn instructors across the province. |

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

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