Plan for a SoTL Project

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| **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’m curious to know if getting students to engage with feedback given to a paragraph writing assignment (by completing a feedback reflection activity) can help them do better in a related future assignment.  **Research Question:** How does reflecting on written feedback improve students’ future performance in paragraph writing assignments? |
| **Identify a 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.**Quantitative Method:** I would measure the grade outcome of a paragraph writing assignment completed after a feedback reflection activity against the grade outcome of an earlier paragraph assignment on which the feedback was given. I would go further by calculating the mean grade difference and comparing it to the mean grade difference of the same assignments from a previous term in which a feedback reflection activity was not included.  **Qualitative Method:** I would get students’ perspectives on the feedback reflection activity and its usefulness in helping them improve their paragraph writing. |
| **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 my course, not all students read or follow up on their paragraph writing assignment feedback, so they tend to make the same mistakes when they write another paragraph in their midterm exam. By incorporating a feedback reflection activity as an assignment, students are required to engage with the given feedback. The feedback reflection may help them understand what was achieved and lacking in their paragraphs and show me what they have understood from my feedback. This way, they would be more aware of what they must pay attention to when writing their midterm paragraph, and I would be able to address learning gaps when I review for the midterm.  The feedback reflection activity would consist of three open-ended questions:   1. Based on the feedback, what areas did you do well in your paragraph assignment? 2. Based on the feedback, what areas could you improve on? 3. What will you change or pay attention to when you write your midterm exam paragraph? |
| **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’ skills before and after the assignment? Compare students who complete the learning activity to another group of students – what comparisons would be meaningful?  **Quantitative Evidence**   * Current term: Compare grades from a paragraph writing assignment with grades from midterm paragraph writing (post-feedback reflection activity) 🡪 Calculate the mean grade difference. * Previous term (no feedback reflection activity): Calculate the mean grade difference between the paragraph writing assignment grades and midterm paragraph writing grades. * Compare the two mean grade differences and do a paired t-test to test significance.   **Qualitative Evidence**  Have students fill out an anonymous questionnaire, after completing their midterm paragraph writing, to find out if the feedback reflection activity has helped them in the midterm paragraph writing and how it has (or has not) helped. |
| **How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?**  I would share my research findings (in a PPT presentation) with my colleagues and course leader and ask them for feedback. If the research findings show a significant improvement in students’ performance post-feedback reflection, I would write a paper and send it to a scholarly journal.  **Dissemination Strategy**   * Share my research findings with colleagues in a PPT presentation. * Present my project in the TESL Ontario blog. * Do a poster presentation at the TESL Ontario conference. * Submit a manuscript of my research project to an academic journal. |
| **Considerations of Ethical Concerns**   * Since the feedback reflection activity is incorporated into the course as an assignment, consent for participation is unnecessary. * To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire is anonymized so the students cannot be identified. Similarly, the collection of grades from the LMS will not include the student identities either. |
| **Reflection on SoTL Planning**  At the beginning of the Scholarship module, I was encouraged by Dr. Gary Poole’s interview videos. He advised SoTL newbies to value their questions, start small, and find like-minded people. Inspired by the advice, I began asking questions about my teaching practice. In line with “starting small,” I focused on a manageable intervention strategy. I formulated my research question: *How does reflecting on written feedback improve students’ future performance in paragraph writing assignments?*  To inform my research design, I browsed the literature to see what others have done on my topic of interest. One way to measure the outcome of the feedback reflection strategy is quantitatively by comparing grades of the same assignments, the latter post-intervention. Furthermore, the mean grade difference obtained from this intervention can be compared to a mean grade difference obtained from the same assignments in a previous term in which feedback reflection was not used. Qualitatively, the usefulness of the feedback reflection activity can be determined using a questionnaire to gather students’ perspectives of the activity in improving their paragraph writing.  The plan of action was to assign the feedback reflection activity after the first paragraph writing assignment and before the midterm exam. Grades from the assignment and exam would be downloaded without the student identities. After the midterm, students would be given time in class to complete the anonymous questionnaire. The responses would be analyzed for emerging themes.  To disseminate my work, I would share the findings and interpretations with colleagues in a PPT presentation (whether in-person or narrated in a video) and invite feedback. I may also share my work on the TESL Ontario blog. Going further, I may consider writing a manuscript of my SoTL project and submitting it to a scholarly journal.  The next step is to put this SoTL plan into action. |
| **Visual Representation of the Goal of the SoTL Project**    **Progress in Small Steps**  Photo by [Kanhaiya Sharma](https://unsplash.com/@kanhaiyasharma?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText) on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/photos/T_l246EK19I?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText) |

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

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