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?

How do I enhance international student learning outcomes, engagement, and attendance in the current economy. Most international student are too focused currently in earning money when they come to Canada. Not to mention the whole slew of challenges they face from adjusting to the new culture to finding the grocery store to shop from. More often than not, a lot of international students prioritize their job over their classroom attendance leading to a mediocre leaning outcome and grade at the end of the semester. Since I want my students to succeed in school and survive in life, I want to be able to find a way increase their learning outcomes, engagement, and encourage them to come to class while not affecting their hours of work.

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 challenge would be on how to incentivize students to come to class and engage in the topics and activities while not affecting their means to earn for their survival.

To measure the challenge and outcome I would need to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods.

For the qualitative approach, I would gather student feedback or surveys to gather information on how they want to be supported in order to succeed, and on the other hand a separate survey or feedback method would be given in order to measure if the solution is working or making an impact. Furthermore, a one on one interview can also be employed to dig in deeper.

For the quantitative approach, I can track and record the students' attendance, logins, grades, assessment results, and time spent in the Learning Management System.

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.

The teaching strategy that I would employ is to convert all assignments into classroom assessments. This means that all means to acquire a grade would be done inside classroom hours.

The new approach greatly differs from the old approach as there will be no homework anymore. This means that students will be a lot more incentivize to come to class more often as they can only earn grades within the classroom hours. In this way, students will be able to be present and actively participate during the lecture and be able to translate that learning to the assessment while it is still fresh. They would be able to build upon what they have learned in the lecture converting the short-term memory to long term memory and thus improving learning outcomes. This method will also give students a peace of mind as they will be free to use their time without worries outside the class hours, meaning they would just be able to focus on their work and not sacrifice sleep or hours to do their assignments at home.

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?

In order to persuade an external audience, I would need to be able to have six classes for the same course and have professors follow accurately the learning plan provided for them.

Set A would be the control group. This means that three classes will use a learning plan using the regular teaching strategy (Giving homework).

Set B would be the experimental group. This means that the other three classes will use a learning plan making use of the new teaching strategy (Having all the assessment be done in class hours).

On both experimental and control sets, student attendance, scores, number of assessments completed, assessment results, quizzes, and survey/feedback would be collected. Furthermore, classroom observations on how students behave and engage in the activities will also be documented. After both data have been tabulated and organized, both data sets will be compared and analyzed if there is a difference in student learning outcomes, attendance, and engagement.

How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?

After completing the research project, I will publish my findings in the institution I am part of and present it on our departmental meetings or any other learning conferences. Apart from these, I will also share my results to my Personal Learning Networks or Channels in my discipline.

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

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