

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 can we teach students taking EAP writing course evaluative judgement and reasoning to help them develop critical writing and evaluative judgement skills?

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.

Students taking writing courses often struggle to understand how to critically think and write an argumentative essay in response to a prompt, which is crucial for completing their assignments.

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.

Taking an incremental approach to teaching writing, using templates designed by the instructor, can guide students through the process of analyzing the prompt critically and composing an argumentative essay that demonstrates their ability to evaluate it thoughtfully. This teaching approach helps students develop critical thinking and reasoning skills and effectively compose different components of an argumentative essay, thereby showcasing their critical appraisal of the prompt. They not only present their final product but also provide insight into their writing process.

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 will conduct continuous assessments throughout the term. Before the course begins, I will administer tests to gauge students' technical and critical thinking skills, providing insight into their starting point. Throughout the term, I will administer additional tests and activities to evaluate their critical analysis and synthesis skills as I incrementally teach them how to make evaluative judgments and reason their points. These tests will require students to demonstrate their evaluative judgment and technical skills at various stages of their learning journey. Ultimately, students will integrate these learnings to write argumentative essays in response to prompts, critically appraising the prompt, and evaluating not only their technical writing skills (including grammar, mechanics, and punctuation) but also their evaluative judgment and reasoning abilities. I am planning to follow up with students after they complete the course to measure the long-term impact of this method of teaching and assessing on their writing skills and evaluative judgment.

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

I will disseminate my work through conferences and journal papers, such as Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CJSOTL) or Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics (CAAL) conference. I might as well present this to my fellow colleagues.

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

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