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 help faculty/subject matter experts/content experts develop asynchronous material when they are coming to us with no experience?** |
| **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.  I would need a method that would be within scope, budget and time as well as one that would not overwhelm the project team.  It would be best to tackle this question at the start of the project with a tool or methodology that would enable the subject matter expert be in the mindset of writing content for asynchronous learners. Tools help faculty brainstorm and map their course with reminders that they should consider the end user, their student’s perspective, would be beneficial such as the Empathy Map. The Empathy Map would provide subject matter experts insights into the process from the perspective of the students before making any judgments or considerations about what content they should present to the students asynchronously.  Most of the qualitative data would come from the subject matter experts and the project teams through my observations and discussions.  Quantitative data can be gathered via a short survey before and after projects. Questions for the pre-survey could include some background information about the subject matter expert such as how many courses have they caught online, how many workshops have they conducted virtually, etc. The post-survey questions could include questions to assess their experience. |
| **Include considerations of any ethical concerns with the research you are planning.**  With any research project, I believe it is important to notify the participants that you are collecting data or observing and sharing the goal or purpose. Should this be a larger and formal SoTL project, I would have to share a proposal with the SoTL team and proceed with their procedures to ensure that the project meets all ethical considerations. |
| **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.  Most of the subject matter experts work on projects without any prior experience or knowledge of writing for an asynchronous modality. Typically it does require more work as in-person material cannot be flipped over for an asynchronous modality without further review.  Before determining a strategy for a particular project group, I would need to be aware of the amount of extra work required by the subject matter expert to ensure we don’t overwhelm them by any extra work we may ask for. Writing content requires time, so we need to be careful about asking for extra commitments as this may be out of scope and budget.  Subject matter experts should go through the modules they developed the curriculum for in the mindset of a student versus as a facilitator or content developer. This should help them identify any potential gaps within their material and areas students typically find challenging. Once these gaps and challenging areas are identified, supplementary activities or content can be provided to enhance the learning. It is important for the subject matter expert to reflect on their past teaching experiences at this stage. Reviewing the developed modules is not considered extra work because it is part of the review process during a project. |
| **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? The evidence would be through subject matter expert and facilitator surveys or focus groups. We would examine their responses, key words, skills or knowledge they believe would be helpful at the start of the project. Post-project surveys or focus groups should also be conducted as a comparison method.  We’d have to do this for all projects in a given year to ensure we have captured a good sample for data collection.  The hope is that this evidence and data will help inform our process going forward with development projects. It may even shed light on how to work with faculty within specific disciplines. |
| **How and where would you publish, present, or disseminate this work?** I’d present this to my team for their feedback as well as to engage with my research so that together we can further improve our process. There is opportunity to develop a module for subject matter experts to go through prior to a project.  **Dissemination Strategy for Reflecting Your SoTL Project:** Share via presentations at conferences and share these resources with the conference host to post. Another option is to write articles for blogs and forums related to education. |

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

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