

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at KSU



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN
TEACHING AND LEARNING

What is SoTL?

Although definitions differ, our working definition for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is: *systematic inquiry into student learning and/or one's own teaching practices in higher education which is situated in context and involves methodologically sound application of appropriate research methods, peer review, and distribution as scholarly work.* Put simply, SoTL is research on the teaching and learning happening in your own courses.

Why do SoTL?

- It allows you to reflect and improve on your teaching in a systematic way.
- It provides you a way to marry your teaching and research interests, helping to create professional synergy.
- It provides teaching-focused faculty a path toward scholarship and research-focused faculty an additional line of scholarship that they can pursue concomitantly with disciplinary research.
- It is the means by which we improve teaching in higher education, a goal which should be at the forefront of all disciplines.

Examples of SoTL Projects at KSU:

Glover, E. M., & Lauzon, O. (2018). Using a contrast illusion to teach principles of neural processing. *Journal of undergraduate neuroscience education: JUNE: a publication of FUN, Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience*, 17(1), A81–A88.

From the abstract: "we developed an interactive laboratory exercise to challenge students to use observational measurements of a visual contrast illusion to study neural activity. The goal of this study was to understand the effectiveness of this active learning exercise in increasing students' fundamental understanding of how perception is shaped by neural circuits in the retina."

Wynn, C. T. , Ray, H. , Liu, L. (2019). The relationship between metacognitive reflection, PBL, and postformal thinking among first-year learning community students. *Learning Communities Research and Practice*, 7(2), Article 3.

From the abstract: "The current study [compared] Post-Formal Thinking growth of first-year Learning Community students who practiced metacognitive reflection during six Problem-Based Learning activities in their LC course with PFT growth of students who completed the same PBL activities without metacognitive reflection in a control group section of the same LC course.

Frequently Asked Questions about SoTL:

If I share what went well in my class, is that SoTL? No, not in the way most people define it. While anecdotal information about good teaching practices might be useful to share with colleagues, it becomes SoTL when it is subjected to systematic inquiry and peer review.

How is SoTL different from assessment? Assessment may be systematic and rigorous but unlike SoTL it is not usually subject to peer review and distributed as scholarship.

Does SoTL require IRB approval? Any study involving human subjects as participants requires IRB approval. However, many SoTL studies are exempt from continuing review and approved quickly. The IRB and CETL have partnered to create resources to support faculty in preparing SoTL IRB applications. See the SoTL website for more information.

Can I publish in retrospect about what I changed in my classroom last year? Maybe—it depends on your methodology. You cannot, however, publish data from your former students without getting their consent. Contact IRB for more information.

Will I have to learn new methodologies to do SoTL? Maybe not. SoTL is often situated in a disciplinary context, using methods appropriate for your discipline. Most SoTL studies follow a similar approach as other research studies and may use qualitative or quantitative methods (or a combination of the two).

I don't know the literature on teaching and learning. Will I need to become familiar with it to do SoTL? SoTL typically draws on literature from many areas, only one of which might be literature on teaching and learning. CETL has resources available to those faculty who need "entry points" to this literature.

What support is available for SoTL? External and internal grants exist to support SoTL. CETL and the Office of Research can help you identify these. In addition, CETL offers the following programming to support faculty in SoTL work:

- Research on Teaching and Learning Summit conference (held in fall semester each year)
- SoTL Scholars online course and writing institute (Funded)
- SoTL Conference Travel Funding (Funded)
- Faculty Learning Communities (Funded)
- Workshops, individual consultations, and online resources

More information on SoTL at KSU can be found at:

<https://facultydevelopment.kennesaw.edu/scholarly-teaching/scholarship-teaching-learning.php>

Hillary Steiner, Ph.D.

Associate Director for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

hsteiner@kennesaw.edu • 470-578-6410