

Approaching Teaching from a Scholarly Perspective Workshop

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Purpose and Goals

We designed and delivered a workshop that was co-sponsored by the Center of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the Center of Teaching and Learning (CTL). The purpose of the workshop was to bring together faculty from various disciplines to learn more about how to think of their classrooms as a place of research on teaching and learning.

There were several goals of the workshop. They include:

- Helping participants better understand the motivations behind SoTL.
- Helping participants develop a better understanding of the different kinds of SoTL projects.
- Providing participants with a framework for designing their own SoTL project.
- Helping participants design an outline of their own SoTL project.

The Workshop

Participants received background information about the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), including its history, purpose, and outlets. We also shared several individual and collaborative SoTL projects that we have designed and published, including case studies, classroom activities, and experiments. We provided participants with a framework for learning about our SoTL projects, as well as to develop their own projects. The framework included five steps to designing a SoTL project, including:

1. Identify the Research Questions or Problems/Issues
2. Design a Study
3. Collect the Data
4. Analyze the Data and Draw Conclusions
5. Report Findings

We worked with participants to design a SoTL project that can be completed in one or more of their courses. Participants were also provided with SoTL references and resources.

Workshop Assessment

The workshop was conducted on April 6, 2007 on the Middletown Campus. It was attended by 17 faculty from various disciplines, including accountancy, English, computer science, sociology, and physics. At the completion of the workshop, participants were asked to complete an assessment of the workshop. The following tables detail the results of this assessment. All questions based on a 7-point scale, with higher scores indicating more favorable results.

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
If one of the goals of the workshop was to better understand the motivations behind SoTL, how successful was it in meeting that goal?	6.92	.29
If one of the goals of the workshop was to develop a better understanding of the different kinds of SoTL projects, how successful was it in meeting that goal?	6.00	.74
If one of the goals of the workshop was to provide a framework for designing your own SoTL project, how successful was it in meeting that goal?	6.50	.52
If one of the goals of the workshop was to help you design an outline of your own SoTL project, how successful was it in meeting that goal?	6.08	.29
How likely are you to actually complete the SoTL project you outlined today?	4.83	1.19
How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague?	6.67	.49

The following tables contain sample verbatim responses from open-ended questions.

What did you like best about this workshop?
I like the workbook & the attitudes of the facilitators. I like any gathering of my colleagues during which we discuss teaching.
Useful framework provided-made SoTL seem doable. Facilitators were encouraging and knowledgeable. Time to actually begin thinking.
Interaction during workshop with other participants and presenters.

The clearly identified definitions and processes in support of SoTL. You completed the picture very well-what is SoTL, why do it, and how.

What can the workshop facilitators do to improve this workshop in the future?

I wish we had talked about the “policy” aspect of the purposes of SoTL.

For people like me, who take a while to warm-up to brainstorming and processing-possibly ask participants to bring with them to the workshop a classroom problem or issue they'd like to explore.

Personally, I think the workshop format per se is not as useful as hearing more details about your own example projects./I always feel I need more info & knowledge to answer workshop questions effectively.

More time-maybe this should be a half day workshop?

Would you like to see a follow-up to this workshop? If so, then what topics might be included?

Yes, IRB-I still avoid going there. IRB training block I think it's going to take too long, etc.

I'd like to see this follow-up linked to the SoTL working group-perhaps use that group meeting to pull people in and then decide what forms of SoTL support would be helpful.

All this was very overwhelming to me. Perhaps this workshop could be made into two.

More workshops-maybe those designed to help guide people who have some semi-solid ideas.

Yes-let's continue the dialogue!

I don't know. Everyone is at such a different stage that it might be more beneficial to have a listserve or something for ideas & collaboration.

Future Plans

We intend to conduct this workshop in the future. Motivated by comments we received about following up on this workshop, we would also like to pursue the formation of a SoTL faculty learning community (FLC). Such a community would allow us to provide more hands-on training for participants interested in pursuing a SoTL project from start to finish. On the basis of this workshop, there appears to be a need for the formation of a SoTL FLC.