

Faculty Applications of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research

**Kathleen McKinney
and**

Patricia Jarvis

with the assistance of Denise Faigao



Teaching-Learning Problem

- ◆ The main function of SoTL is to improve teaching and enhance student learning.
- ◆ Yet, applications of SoTL results are often not discussed in publications/presentations and are limited by a number of problems and gaps

Multiple Levels for Application of SoTL are Possible...

- ◆ Classroom
 - ◆ Program
 - ◆ Department
 - ◆ Institution
 - ◆ Discipline
 - ◆ Broader Higher Education Contexts
- 

Gaps or Problems with Application

- ◆ Discussions of how the results of SoTL work are applied are simply not included in presented or published work;
- ◆ Application is rarely at levels other than the individual classroom;
- ◆ Past SoTL knowledge or literature is often not used such that SoTL work is not always building on what is already known;
- ◆ Involvement of those who are not contributing original SoTL research in the application of others' work is not widespread.

Some Prior Data on Application

- ◆ Carnegie Scholar Survey-

Ninety-three percent of the scholars agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have changed the design of my courses since becoming involved in SoTL." Similarly, 92 percent agreed that "I have changed the kinds of assessments I use in my courses as a result of my participation in SoTL."

More Data

- ◆ Illinois State University Faculty Survey-

Sixty-three percent of respondents at our institution said they had “used SoTL (own or others) to improve teaching and learning”

Purpose of this Study

- ◆ The purpose of this exploratory and descriptive study was to assess the frequency and type of concrete applications of SoTL results to teaching and learning at one institution. Respondents' views of barriers to and supports for greater application were also assessed.

Methods-Application Questionnaire

- ◆ Sample - Twenty Faculty/Teaching Staff SoTL Grant Recipients at ISU (2002-2006) contacted. Ten Responded.

Mean Age = 49 80% Female

Avg Yrs Teaching = 15.9

CAS = 40%

CAST = 30%

COB = 20%

COE = 10%

Methods-Application Questionnaire

- ◆ Measure - Demo Items
- ◆ Closed and Open Ended Questions
 - Application of SoTL Results?
 - Frequency?
 - Level? (Classroom, program, dept.)
 - Examples of Application of SoTL Results
 - Barriers to Application
 - How Application Valued in department, college, university?

Methods- Qualitative Focus Group

Same Sample of grant recipients- 4 in Focus Group

Guiding questions:

- ◆ What is application of SoTL Findings?
- ◆ What are barriers to doing more application?
- ◆ Describe one change you made to improve teaching/learning based on SoTL results.
- ◆ What would help you do additional application?
- ◆ What role, if any, does your department or your department colleagues play in the application of your SoTL work?
- ◆ Do you think your department, college, or the university uses SoTL results for planning or decision making? Example?

Methods- Previous SoTL Questionnaire

Relevant items on a 2007 online questionnaire about the status of SoTL on our campus were analyzed.

- ◆ Respondents: 152 (15%) of the fac/staff
- ◆ Likert Scale: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree on Items:
 - Results from SoTL are used in my department
 - SoTL has practical value for teachers
 - SoTL has practical value for higher education
- ◆ Two open-ended items

Results- Application of SoTL Questionnaire

Respondents offered the following changes, innovations or improvements made to enhance teaching and learning based on the results or implications from their own SoTL grant work:

- Improved communication, cooperation, and solidarity.
- Learned to effectively handle problems.
- Let students know different reading strategies and relate them to learning styles.
- Used rubrics more for self-assessment of students to help support learner autonomy.
- Integrated student experiences into study of culture on international business.

Results

- Adapted schedule in on-line class to reflect learner preferences.
- Added a service-learning component to an additional course.
- Changed to fewer lectures, more experiential learning activities.
- Used more teacher immediacy behaviors.
- Evaluated course assignments to ensure desired effect.
- Realized importance of student feedback to reevaluate a course.

Results

Respondents also indicated that the implications of the results of their SoTL small grant work occurred at the following levels:

- ◆ Program
- ◆ Class/course
- ◆ Individual levels

No one indicated implications of their work at the departmental level.

Results

Respondents offered the following practical advice for enhancing learner autonomy, a focus of the SoTL work at our institution, derived from their SoTL small grant work:

- ◆ Students need to learn reading strategies and their own learning style.
- ◆ Students should be taught to self-assess and use that in the future.
- ◆ Instructors should emphasize quality of discussions rather than quantity.
- ◆ Students do self placement into a course option to help increase learner autonomy.

Results

- ◆ Student participation in an experiential learning activity enhances learner autonomy.
- ◆ Instructors can foster teacher immediacy to enhance learner autonomy.
- ◆ Instructors can encourage students to seek information on their own before giving it to them.
- ◆ Students engaging in hands on learning is more beneficial for promoting learner autonomy.
- ◆ Instructors having students use technology can enhance learner autonomy.

Results

Respondents indicated that application of SoTL work would be enhanced if:

- ◆ Better Funding Available
- ◆ More Time for SoTL Research
- ◆ One could Partner with someone who has similar SoTL interests
- ◆ Contextual variables were also noted as supporting and/or hindering applications of SoTL Grant results (e.g., no longer teaching the course that their SoTL Grant concerned or they had changed positions)

Results

Examples of how any SoTL results have been used at the department, college, or University level(s):

- ◆ Influence teaching and learning through interpersonal contact and co-teaching
- ◆ (Add to) Scholarship of assessment (that) had been applied to their professional prep program and its standard-based assessment
- ◆ Evaluate student perceptions of their outcomes-based portfolio assessment
- ◆ Make decisions about standard grading criteria for freshman composition courses
- ◆ Use in accreditation and in revising and updating the University's strategic plan)

Results- Focus Group

Focus Group Data is still being analyzed but the following examples of application were noted:

Faculty altered assignments based on SoTL data from students such that additional time to do library work was offered.

Faculty used SoTL work from an Agriculture Contest Project across multiple classes to make course content revisions.

Faculty allowed students to do self-placement into level of writing classes based on SoTL data. Result was increased student satisfaction at the program level (but not increased grades).

Results- Status of SoTL Questionnaire- Application Items

Respondents (81%) reported they use SoTL to improve teaching/learning.

In response to:

“What do you see as the benefits, if any, to pursuing the SoTL for faculty, staff, students, institutions of higher education, and/or the community at large?”

93 of the 152 respondents listed 99 benefits. Of these, 62 fell in the category ‘to improve teaching and learning’

Results

Sample respondent quotes of examples of SoTL applications:

- ◆ "I read the education journals in chemistry and try to apply some of what has been published; recently the incorporation of the ""Molecule of the Week"" into my fundamentals course"
- ◆ "I compared two sections of a course, one which used a new pedagogy and one which did not. I compared the answers to questions at the end of the semester and decided to use the new pedagogy again because of the demonstrated enhanced learning."

How Have You Applied Results of SoTL?

Let's share with each other some concrete examples...



Final Comments or Questions

