

FDC Quick Start

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Terri Patchen, CSUF FDC Coordinator for Scholarly and Creative Activities

Strength your teaching and generate publications simultaneously!

Assessing your courses to develop the effectiveness of your instruction

Things to Think About

- **Design.** It's your class! Which aspects of your instruction or student learning are you interested in examining or developing? What will help your students most? Come up with one or two research questions you can investigate in your class(es).
- **Data.** What empirical data can you collect and analyze? Surveys? Focus Groups? Interviews? Assignments?
- **Deliverables.** Think about where you want to disseminate what you learn. [Identify a viable journal](#) or [conference](#). Use these identified outlets to help you frame your study design.

Potential Study Foci

- **Course Objectives:** Consider how your instruction supports student comprehension of a specific course objective (or student learning outcome). Investigate the effectiveness of your teaching strategies, assignments, or assessments in meeting particular course objectives. Which aspects of your instruction are resulting in the most learning? Examine the relationship between objectives and instruction.
- **Student Affect/Attitudes:** Survey students to identify how particular instructional strategies, readings, assignments, or assessments influence their learning.
- **Application:** Examine how well students can apply what you teach them. Design case studies or build service learning experiences to consider the ways in which, and the degree to which, students can apply what they learn.
- **Discipline-Specific Theories:** Look to your field to generate questions about the effectiveness of your instruction. What basic precepts or theories from your discipline can you examine in your course or through your instruction?
- **Learning or Teaching Theories:** Focus on discovering what's helping students learn: Which aspect of the course is most helpful to students? How does what you do align with or deviate from traditional learning theories? What suggestions do you have for improving the course?

Using the Empirical Data you Collect

- **Triangulate Data.** Try and collect at least two types of data to increase the rigor of your findings and support the validity of any claims you make.
- **Frame the Study.** Think about mapping out your study in one of the following ways:
 - Descriptive: What is going on?
 - Responsive: How does what is happening reflect course/student particularities?
 - Effective: What works?
 - Comparative: What works better?
 - Prospective: What is possible?
 - Productive: How can what you're doing lead to new models?
- **Write the Literature Review.** Make sure your lit review is up-to-date, and includes studies that are both discipline specific and focused on teaching and learning.
- **Specify Results.** Make connections to the literature explicit.
- **Identify implications.** Clearly state how what you learned matters to your teaching, and can help others teaching in your field. Be concise and concrete.

Want to learn more? Come to one of the SoTL Institutes provided by the FDC!

Check the calendar for upcoming dates. Let's develop ideas together!

Faculty Development Center, California State University, Fullerton, January 2016

