

THE SOTL PROCESS IN QUICK STEPS



This is a brief overview of the different steps that are involved in undertaking Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoTL), or educational inquiries. This is just a rough overview to get you started thinking about your project. Engagement with literature and ethics is dialogic throughout all stages of the project, the only reason ethics is placed as an additional item is to highlight that all the previous steps will have to be defined before handing in the application.



2 Research Question

It might be more comfortable for you to develop a hypothesis instead of a research question. However, it will become clear that it is near impossible to establish variables that can be tested in isolation, due to the complex nature of learning. A hypothesis can be a good starting point to develop your research questions though.



4 Methods

Are the tools with which we answer our research questions. It is easy to simply hand out a brief questionnaire to gather some data from our learners. However, how much learning can you gain from this, particularly if your cohorts are small and statistical significance not possible?



6 Analysis

Once data is collected, the analysis tends to be linked to your theoretical framework, and the methods. Thematic Analysis for instance is a common way to explore qualitative data.

1 Interest or Issue

Whilst most SoTL projects are a form of evaluation of teaching interventions, or the implementation of new learning and teaching methods; this is not a must. Other areas to explore could focus on the teachers and their impact, in e.g. reflective practice.



3 Methodology

This is the approach of how you plan on answering the research questions. Ideally, this is supported by educational (sociological, psychological etc) theories. For instance a constructivist view would use methods that look at how learners interact with one another and the learning content.



5 Ethics

Any form of research with people needs ethical approval. The processes for this will vary depending on your department. Issues that generally need addressed are why, how, with whom, data-management, publication, potential risks to participants and researchers, risk mitigation. You must know your methodology and methods for your ethics application.



The next step would be publication. Your writing depends on your audience; sharing SoTL results within the faculty is as common as to publish in a generic or discipline specific SoTL journal.