

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Resources for FAMU

Faculty Resource Document

AI was used to help generate, organize, and refine content related to Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The final document was reviewed and edited to ensure accuracy, relevance, clarity, and alignment with the intended purpose and audience.

Purpose of This Document

This document is designed to support FAMU faculty, instructors, academic staff, and graduate teaching assistants who are interested in the **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)**.

The purpose is to provide a practical overview of SoTL, explain its value in higher education, and identify resources that can help FAMU educators design, conduct, publish, and apply teaching-focused research.

What Is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, often called SoTL, is a systematic inquiry into student learning and teaching practices. It involves asking meaningful questions about teaching, collecting and analyzing evidence, and sharing findings with others to improve learning outcomes.

SoTL moves teaching beyond personal reflection by making teaching practices:

- Intentional
- Evidence-based
- Research-informed
- Publicly shared
- Peer-reviewed or critically examined
- Focused on student learning

A SoTL project may investigate questions such as:

- How do students respond to a new teaching strategy?
- What instructional approaches improve student engagement?
- Which assessment methods best support learning?
- How does culturally responsive teaching affect student success?
- What barriers affect student learning in gateway courses?
- How can technology support active learning?

Why SoTL Matters

FAMU has a strong commitment to academic excellence, student success, equity, innovation, and community impact. SoTL aligns directly with these priorities.

SoTL can help FAMU faculty:

- Improve student learning and retention
- Strengthen culturally responsive and inclusive teaching
- Support evidence-based instructional innovation
- Document teaching effectiveness for promotion and tenure
- Contribute to disciplinary and interdisciplinary research
- Advance student success initiatives
- Support accreditation and assessment efforts
- Address equity gaps in student achievement
- Build faculty learning communities
- Share effective practices across departments and colleges

SoTL is especially valuable in courses with high enrollment, high withdrawal rates, or historically challenging content areas.

Core Principles of SoTL

Effective SoTL work usually includes the following principles:

Inquiry-Based Teaching - SoTL begins with a question about teaching or learning. The question should be specific, meaningful, and connected to a real classroom issue.

Evidence of Student Learning - SoTL uses evidence such as student work, surveys, interviews, grades, reflections, participation data, or assessment results.

Systematic Methodology - A SoTL project should use a clear method for collecting and analyzing data. The method may be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods.

Ethical Practice - Because SoTL often involves students, faculty should consider research ethics, informed consent, privacy, and whether Institutional Review Board approval is needed.

Public Sharing - SoTL becomes scholarship when findings are shared with others through presentations, publications, workshops, teaching portfolios, or campus learning communities.

Continuous Improvement - The goal of SoTL is not only to publish but also to improve teaching and enhance student learning.

Turning Teaching Activities into Scholarship

Many faculty already engage in excellent teaching practices that can become SoTL projects.

Teaching Activity	Possible SoTL Project
Using case studies	Study how case-based learning affects application skills
Adding weekly quizzes	Examine impact on exam performance
Revising a syllabus	Study student perceptions of course clarity and belonging
Using peer review	Analyze changes in writing quality
Incorporating group projects	Study teamwork and peer accountability
Adding reflection assignments	Examine growth in metacognition
Using open educational resources	Study affordability and student access
Integrating service learning	Examine civic learning and community engagement
Using AI tools	Study ethical use and learning outcomes

Common Types of SoTL Projects

FAMU faculty may conduct SoTL projects in many forms, including:

Classroom-Based Research - A faculty member studies how a teaching method affects student learning in one or more courses.

Course Redesign Studies - A department examines the impact of redesigning a course structure, assignments, or assessments.

Equity-Focused Teaching Research - Faculty investigate how inclusive or culturally responsive teaching practices affect students from different backgrounds.

Technology-Enhanced Learning Studies - A project explores the effectiveness of digital tools, learning management systems, simulations, online discussions, or AI-supported learning.

Assessment-Based Research - Faculty use student learning outcomes, rubrics, or assessment data to study instructional effectiveness.

Interdisciplinary SoTL - Faculty across disciplines collaborate to study teaching and learning questions that cross departmental boundaries.

Steps for Developing a SoTL Project

Step 1: Identify a Teaching and Learning Problem

Begin with a challenge, curiosity, or improvement goal.

Examples:

- Students struggle with applying theory to practice.
- Participation is low in online discussions.
- Students perform poorly on writing-intensive assignments.
- Group work does not produce equal participation.
- Students lack confidence in quantitative reasoning.

Step 2: Develop a Research Question

Turn the teaching challenge into a focused research question.

Examples:

- How does peer review affect student writing quality in a sophomore-level course?
- What impact does active learning have on exam performance in an introductory biology course?
- How do students perceive belonging in a culturally responsive classroom?
- Does weekly low-stakes quizzing improve retention of key concepts?

Step 3: Review the Literature

Search for research on similar teaching and learning questions. Literature may come from:

- Discipline-specific education journals
- Higher education journals
- SoTL journals
- Teaching conferences
- Faculty development publications

Step 4: Choose a Methodology

Select methods appropriate for the question.

Possible data sources include:

- Pre- and post-tests
- Student assignments
- Exams and quizzes
- Surveys

- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Reflection papers
- Discussion board posts
- Classroom observations
- Learning analytics
- Rubric scores

Step 5: Address Ethics and IRB Considerations

Determine whether the project is classroom assessment, program evaluation, or human subjects research. If the work may be published or presented publicly, IRB review may be required.

Faculty should consult FAMU's Institutional Review Board or research compliance office before collecting student data for research purposes.

Step 6: Collect and Analyze Data

Use systematic procedures to collect evidence. Analysis may include:

- Descriptive statistics
- Comparison of student performance before and after an intervention
- Thematic analysis of student reflections
- Survey analysis
- Rubric-based scoring
- Qualitative coding
- Mixed-methods analysis

Step 7: Interpret Findings

Connect the findings back to the research question and teaching context.

Ask:

- What did students learn?
- What improved?
- What challenges remained?
- Were there differences among student groups?
- What surprised you?
- What should change next time?

Step 8: Share Results

Faculty can share SoTL findings through:

- Department meetings
- Faculty development workshops
- FAMU teaching and learning events
- Discipline-specific conferences
- SoTL conferences
- Peer-reviewed journals
- Teaching portfolios
- Grant reports
- Assessment reports

Teaching Support, Institutional Research and Assessment

FAMU offices involved in faculty development, instructional design, assessment, institutional effectiveness, and student success may support SoTL projects by helping faculty identify relevant data sources and align projects with student learning outcomes.

Potential support areas include:

- Teaching Strategies
- Instructional Design
- Program assessment
- Learning outcomes assessment
- Retention and progression data
- Student success metrics
- Accreditation-related evidence
- Survey development

Visit the [Teaching and Learning Center](#), the [Office of Instructional Technology Office](#) and the [Office of University Assessment](#) for more Information.

Institutional Review Board

The Institutional Review Board is essential for faculty who plan to collect data from students and disseminate results beyond the classroom.

Faculty should consult the IRB when projects involve:

- Student surveys
- Student interviews or focus groups
- Use of student grades or assignments for research
- Publication or conference presentation
- Identifiable student information
- Vulnerable populations
- Comparison groups or experimental instructional interventions

Visit the [Office of Research Compliance](#) for more Information

University Library

The FAMU Library can support SoTL through:

- Literature searches
- Database access
- Citation management
- Research consultations
- Open educational resources
- Systematic review support
- Digital scholarship support
- Copyright guidance
- Publishing support

Visit the [University Library](#) for more Information.

Office of Sponsored Programs or Research

Faculty seeking external funding for SoTL projects may consult offices responsible for grants, contracts, and sponsored research.

Support may include:

- Identifying funding opportunities
- Proposal development
- Budget preparation
- Grant compliance
- Research collaboration
- External partnership development

Visit the Office of [Sponsored Program](#) for more Information.

Recommended External SoTL Resources

Professional Organizations - Faculty may benefit from organizations such as:

- [International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education \(POD\)](#)
- [Association of American Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#)
- [American Educational Research Association \(AERA\)](#)
- [Quality Matters \(QM\)](#)
- [Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\)](#)
- [HBCU Faculty Development Network \(HBCU FDN\)](#)

SoTL Journals - Faculty can explore publication opportunities in journals such as:

- [Teaching & Learning Inquiry](#)
- [International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)
- [College Teaching](#)
- [Innovative Higher Education](#)
- [Journal on Excellence in College Teaching](#)
- [To Improve the Academy](#)
- [Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education](#)
- [Active Learning in Higher Education](#)

Conferences - SoTL work can be presented at:

- [International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning conferences](#)
- [Lilly Conferences on College Teaching](#)
- [POD Network Conference](#)
- [AAC&U conferences](#)
- [Assessment Institute](#)
- [Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\) Accelerate](#)
- [HBCU Faculty Development Network Conference](#)

SoTL Topics Especially Relevant to FAMU

Because of FAMU's mission and student-centered focus, the following SoTL themes may be especially meaningful.

Student Belonging and Academic Confidence

- What classroom practices increase students' sense of belonging?
- How does instructor feedback affect student confidence?
- What role does peer mentoring play in student persistence?

Gateway Course Success

- What instructional interventions reduce D, F, and withdrawal rates?
- How do supplemental instruction or active learning affect performance?
- What early-alert strategies help students succeed?

High-Impact Practices

- How do undergraduate research experiences affect student learning?
- What is the impact of service learning on civic engagement?
- How do internships influence career readiness?
- How does collaborative learning affect student achievement?

Online and Hybrid Learning

- What online discussion structures promote deeper engagement?
- How does regular instructor presence affect student persistence?
- Which multimedia tools improve comprehension?

Writing, Communication, and Critical Thinking

- How does scaffolded writing instruction improve final papers?
- What feedback methods improve revision quality?
- How do oral presentations support critical thinking?

AI, Technology and Digital Learning Tools

- How do AI tools affect student learning, academic integrity, and confidence?
- How do video lectures affect student preparation?
- What is the impact of adaptive learning software on student outcomes?

Culturally Responsive Teaching

- How do culturally relevant examples affect student engagement?
- How does representation in course materials influence student belonging?
- What teaching strategies support identity-affirming learning environments?

Student Engagement

- How does active learning affect attendance and participation?
- What discussion strategies increase student engagement in large classes?
- How do students perceive collaborative learning activities?

Assessment

- Does rubric-based feedback improve student performance?
- How do low-stakes quizzes affect exam outcomes?
- What types of formative assessment best support learning?

Equity and Inclusion

- How do inclusive syllabus statements affect student belonging?
- What classroom practices support first-generation college students?
- How does culturally responsive pedagogy influence student motivation?

Career Readiness

- How do experiential learning assignments affect professional confidence?
- What classroom activities improve students' ability to apply course concepts to workplace problems?
- How does service learning influence civic identity?

Ethical Considerations in SoTL

SoTL often uses data from students, so faculty should protect student rights and privacy.

Important ethical practices include:

- Informing students about the project
- Making participation voluntary when appropriate
- Avoiding coercion
- Protecting confidentiality
- Removing identifying information
- Separating grading from research participation
- Using consent forms when required
- Storing data securely
- Seeking IRB guidance before dissemination

Faculty should be especially careful when researching their own students because of the power relationship between instructor and student.

Visit the [Office of Research Compliance](#) and [Office of University Assessment](#) for more Information

Funding Opportunities for SoTL

Faculty may seek support for SoTL projects through a variety of funding opportunities. These may include internal faculty development grants, college or department mini-grants, teaching innovation grants, and assessment grants. Faculty may also explore external sources of support, such as education-focused foundations, federal education grants, discipline-specific teaching grants, and funding opportunities offered by professional associations. These resources can help support project planning, data collection, instructional innovation, conference presentations, and publication efforts.

Potential funders and programs may include:

- [National Science Foundation education programs](#)
- [National Endowment for the Humanities education initiatives](#)
- [Spencer Foundation](#)
- [Teagle Foundation](#)
- [Lumina Foundation](#)

Visit the Office of [Sponsored Program](#) for more Information.

Recommended Next Steps for FAMU Faculty

Faculty interested in SoTL can begin with the following steps:

1. Identify one teaching challenge or learning outcome to investigate.
2. Discuss the idea with a department chair, colleague, or teaching mentor.
3. Search the literature on the teaching issue.
4. Draft a focused research question.
5. Determine what student learning evidence is already available.
6. Consult the IRB or research compliance office if dissemination is planned.
7. Start with a manageable classroom-based project.
8. Join or form a SoTL faculty learning community.
9. Share findings with colleagues.
10. Use results to revise teaching and improve student learning.

Visit the [Teaching and Learning Center](#) for questions or assistance in setting up a SoTL project.

Conclusion

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning provides FAMU faculty with a powerful framework for improving teaching, strengthening student learning, and contributing to educational research. By systematically studying classroom practices and sharing results, faculty can advance both individual teaching effectiveness and the broader mission of the university.

SoTL supports FAMU's commitment to academic excellence, student success, innovation, equity, and public service. Whether through a small classroom inquiry or a larger collaborative research project, SoTL can help faculty transform teaching questions into evidence-based improvements that benefit students, departments, colleges, and the university community.