

SUMMARY OF ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY ON THE STATUS OF SOTL AT ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY - 2002 and 2007 – SELECTED QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

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Introduction

One of the goals of the Illinois State University involvement in the American Association of Higher Education (before it closed) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, CASTL (Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) Program is to understand the status of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) at Illinois State University. Thus, at the start of the first term of the Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL in 2002-2003 and, again, about five years later in 2006-2007, we created a self-administered on-line questionnaire. This brief report focuses on the results comparing responses from the two time periods. SoTL is defined here as systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public. This definition was written in an attempt to include a wide range of research (broadly defined) on teaching and learning in the disciplines in higher education that is presented or published.

Methods

In fall of 2002, IRB approval was obtained for the study and for the follow-up in 2007. We created an online questionnaire assessing people's understanding of, attitudes toward, and involvement in SoTL. For several reasons, the population and samples of the two surveys are not equivalent and the response rates (after the original and one reminder email message) were low. We recognize both of these as methodological limitations. In the 2002 survey, we drew a 30 percent random samples of tenured and tenure-line faculty (N= 205), nontenure-line faculty (N= 116), and Lab school faculty and administrative/professional staff (N= 224). The overall response rate was 21 percent of those selected (N=115). For the 2007 survey, we were given permission to send an email message about the survey to all tenure-line and non tenure-line faculty who had granted "blanket permission" to receive university on-line surveys. This was 1,042 individuals. We received responses from 152 or 15 percent of those sent the email messages linking to the online questionnaire. Of the respondents, in 2002, 49 percent were tenure-line faculty; in 2007, 82 percent were tenure-line faculty. In 2002 and 2007, respectively, of the tenure-line faculty, 46 percent and 42 percent were Assistant Professors; 20 percent and 33 percent Associate Professors; and 34 percent and 25 percent Full Professors. The mean number of years teaching at the college level was 10 in 2002 and 12 in 2007. Given data limitations, we only describe the results and various trends; we do not conduct statistical tests.

Results

Definitions of and Involvement in SoTL. For the 2002 survey, 32 percent of the respondents indicated they were aware of our institutional-CASTL definition of SoTL. In 2007, this figure was 50 percent. Table 1 contains the percentages of respondents

involved in SoTL in various ways for 2002 and 2007. For most items, self-reported involvement in SoTL is higher in 2007 than in 2002.

Table 1. Percent of Respondents in 2002 and 2007 for Involvement in SoTL

<u>Variable or Item</u>	<u>2002- %</u>	<u>2007- %</u>
Conducted research in SoTL	31	46
Collaborated with colleagues on SoTL	29	34
Given SoTL professional presentation	38	43
Published SoTL work	31	42
Use SoTL to improve teaching/learning	63	81
Involved in SoTL in any other way	15	17

Value of SoTL. A number of items assessed the respondents' views about the value and reward for SoTL on campus. First, respondents were asked what type of impact, if any, conducting SoTL would have on their professional career on a five-point scale. In 2002, seven percent responded positive or very positive, 48 percent responded neutral, and 46 percent responded negative or very negative. In 2007, these results were very different. Fifty percent responded positive or very positive, 43 percent responded neutral, and 7 percent responded negative or very negative.

In addition, respondents were asked (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) about how SoTL is valued at various levels on campus. The five statements and the mean scores for 2002 and 2007, respectively, follow in Table 2. These means are all around the neutral point on the scale but are slightly higher (agree more strongly) in 2007 than in 2002. In both years, respondents were most neutral on the item about adequate funding.

Table 2. Means for Value and Reward Items for 2002 and 2007.

<u>Item</u>	<u>2002-Mean</u>	<u>2007-Mean</u>
There is adequate funding for SoTL	2.58	3.04
SoTL is valued in my department	3.14	3.46
SoTL is valued in my college	3.25	3.33
SoTL is valued in my university	3.39	3.53
Results from SoTL are used in my department	3.02	3.21

Other attitudes toward SoTL. Ten other attitude items were included on the questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The means for these items for both years are presented in Table 3 and were in the range of “agree” between 3.63 and 4.14 with one exception. Respondents were neutral (2.98 and 3.05) about the notion that “everyone should do some SoTL work”. Changes from 2002 to 2007 were all in the direction of slightly more positive attitudes toward SoTL.

Table 3. Means for Attitude Items for 2002 and 2007.

<u>Item</u>	<u>2002-Mean</u>	<u>2007-Mean</u>
SoTL has practical value for teachers.	4.06	4.14
SoTL has practical value for institutions of higher education	4.06	4.07
SoTL has practical value for students.	3.99	4.02

SoTL is important.	3.96	4.09
SoTL work is a form of “real” scholarship.	3.81	4.01
SoTL work can help us fulfill <i>Educating Illinois</i> .	3.75	3.84
Knowing the work of SoTL in ones discipline is important for good teaching.	3.74	3.89
SoTL has practical value for the community.	3.63	3.70
Everyone should do some SoTL work.	2.98	3.05

Conclusions

These data lead to a number of tentative conclusions. We must view these with caution, however, as the low response rates and sample differences may have resulted in response biases and in differences across the two time points. Between the time points (approximately four and one-half years) of the two surveys, significant efforts at ISU occurred to increase information about and resources for SoTL on campus. The descriptive comparisons reported here show several trends. First, we see an increase in the percentage of respondents reporting they are aware of our campus definition of SoTL and in involvement in SoTL using several different measures. Second, respondents expressed more positive views about the value of SoTL on campus. Third, several other attitudes about SoTL either stayed the same or became more positive. Thus, we have made progress in our efforts to support SoTL but still have work to do!