

# SOTL AT ISU

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University  
“*systematic reflection/study on teaching and learning made public*”

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## The Dr. John Chizmar and Dr. Tony Ostrosky SoTL Award

*The Dr. John Chizmar & Dr. Anthony Ostrosky Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award* recognizes and encourages high quality and quantity of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) projects, representations, and service at Illinois State and in the discipline beyond Illinois State that contributes to the SoTL field, the SoTL body of knowledge, improved teaching, and enhanced student learning.

We are pleased to announce the 2015-2016 recipient of this award is Dr. Jennifer Friberg, Associate Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders and a SoTL Scholar-Mentor. Friberg has been active in her disciplinary SoTL movement through her research and service to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the Council on Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Friberg is the co-author of the

first text focused on SoTL in her profession: *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology: Evidence-Based Education*, and is editor of *The SoTL Advocate Weblog* at our university. She led the winning team and SoTL project for last year's "Walk the Talk: Applying SoTL Beyond the Individual Classroom Level" contest. Currently, she is working with colleagues on a SoTL curricular reform project.

Dr. Friberg is acknowledged in several settings including at the University-Wide Teaching & Learning Symposium in January (though the award is not a teaching award, but is an award for scholarship on teaching and learning), Founders' Day (along with other University-level award recipients), and a reception event in the spring sponsored by the Office of the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

## 2015-2016 Go Global with SoTL Mini-Grants

The Go Global with SoTL: Mini-Grants Program provided support to study the developmental and learning outcomes of Illinois State University students as a result of global/international/cross-cultural curricular or co-curricular experiences. These experiences could be part of an ISU class or program on campus, a study abroad experience, a co-curricular travel and/or volunteer experience, etc., as long as a global/international/cross-cultural component was clearly a major aspect of the assignment or experience. The mini-grant awards were \$1,000 per proposal.

Grantees will meet with the Spring 2016 SoTL Scholar, Erin Mikulec, to work on any issues and talk about progress on their projects. The recipients must also present their SoTL research projects in any format at the University-Wide Teaching & Learning Symposium held in January 2017 and submit a brief report on the project by December of 2016 to the Cross Chair. Recipients of the 2015-2016 mini-grants are the following:

*Study Abroad Experience in Peru and Students' Development* (Aysen Bakir, Marketing)

*Interpreting the Frames: A Study of Six Art Education Students' Integration of Their Study Abroad in Australia Experience Into Their Classroom Teaching Practices* (Judith Briggs, Art)

*History Teacher Candidates and Discipline-Specific Pedagogy: Theory, Policy, and Practice in England and the United States* (Richard L. Hughes and Sarah Drake Brown, History)

*Preparing Future Early Childhood Teachers: Furthering Intercultural Dialogues among Early Childhood Pre-service Teachers across the Globe* (Miranda Lin, School of Teaching and Learning)

*FCS 399 Fashion Industry Tour to Asia: May 2016* (Yoon Jin Ma and Elisabeth Reed, Family and Consumer Sciences)

*Exploring and Understanding Global Diets from a Sociocultural Perspective: A Case of Pre-service Teachers in Thailand, Taiwan, and the U.S.* (Do-Yong Park, School of Teaching and Learning)

Check out the November blog for project summaries at: <http://www.illinoisstateuniversitysotl.wordpress.com>.

# Search to Fill Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL

The search for the next Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is underway. The eight-person search committee was formed this fall with representation from each Illinois State University college. Amy Hurd, Director of the Graduate School, serves as the chair of the committee.

The job announcement can be found at: <http://hr.illinoisstate.edu/> under tenure track faculty postings. The closing date is January 15, 2016 when the committee will review applications, select candidates for phone interviews, and hold on campus interviews. Questions about the search may be directed to Dr. Hurd at [arhurd@ilstu.edu](mailto:arhurd@ilstu.edu), 438-2583.

## SoTL URG Grant Outcomes from 2001-2002 to 2014-2015 Kathleen McKinney, Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL

For each of the 14 academic years since 2001-2002, there has been a competition for internal Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) University Research Grants (URGs). At Illinois State University, SoTL is defined as the systematic study/reflection on the teaching and learning of our ISU students made public. Approximately \$20,000 each year was awarded, through a peer review process, for a total of about \$280,000 across the 14 years.

A total of 63 SoTL URGs were funded in these 14 years. These grants represent work in most departments and in all the academic colleges as summarized below:

- 6 of 8 departments in the College of Applied Science and Technology
- 11 of 16 departments in the College of Arts and Sciences
- 2 of 4 departments in the College of Business
- 3 of 3 departments in the College of Education
- 3 of 3 departments in the College of Fine Arts
- 1 of 1 department in the College of Nursing

Data on outcomes or products for the grants was submitted for 39 grants (62%) and were coded into eight general categories:

- External publications (e.g., peer-reviewed SoTL or disciplinary pedagogical journal articles) (N=33)
- Internal publications (e.g., internal SoTL journal, newsletter articles, department publications, etc.) (12)

- External presentations (e.g., in regional, national, international conferences, workshops, etc.) (50)
- Internal presentations (e.g., in department/campus meetings, our teaching-learning symposium) (37)
- Other grants (internal or external) (5)
- Videos, performances, blogs (2)
- Under review/in progress (7)
- Other (positively affected career, used for tenure, used in administrative reports, etc.) (6).

Thus, a total of 152 grant outcomes were listed, which represents an average of 3.9 outcomes per reported grant, thus far. There were 47 publications/videos etc. and 87 presentations from these 39 grants. The most common outcome submitted was one or more external presentations followed by internal presentations and external publications.

### Notes:

- A list of grantees (researchers, departments, and grant title) by year is available at <http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/grants/>.
- The total amount was slightly more than \$280,000 as, in some years, a small additional amount from the Cross Chair in SoTL regular general revenue was added to the URG funds to support part of an additional grant. This amount and this report also do not reflect the funding and outcomes of SoTL travel grants or SoTL mini-grants.
- Four additional grants for a total of \$20,000 were awarded for 2015-2016. As these research projects are just beginning and no outcomes have yet occurred, these four grants are not included in this report.
- A more detailed report is available at [sotl.illinoisstate.edu](http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu).

## Spring 2016 Issue of *Gauisus*

Volume four of *Gauisus*, the Illinois State University online, multi-media SoTL journal is in progress. We are reviewing submissions; the issue should be available in May. The editorial team has decided to extend the deadline to January 29 to encourage others—including those presenting posters, videos, or papers about research on the learning and development of ISU students at the January Teaching-Learning Symposium—to submit for this volume. If you have a representation of your SoTL project, please consider submitting it. All submissions will be peer reviewed in a manner appropriate to the format of the work submitted. Submissions can use a variety of formats for publication:

- Research paper/note (15-30 double-spaced page manuscript, 12 point font, APA format)
- Electronic poster
- Photo essay or Video essay or Website or Blog or Wiki, with a 1-2 page written summary to contextualize content, situation, and impact of your work.

In addition, submissions should include a 50-100 word abstract and 3-5 key words/phrases. Submissions for the spring 2016 volume of *Gauisus* are to be sent electronically to Dr. Jennifer Friberg, SoTL Scholar-Mentor ([jfribe@ilstu.edu](mailto:jfribe@ilstu.edu)).

# SoTL Travel Grants: Rounds 1 and 2

The Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning requests applications for Round 2 of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Travel Grant Program - FY16. The program is designed to encourage public sharing of SoTL work on the teaching and/or learning of ISU students. The program provides partial funding for travel to present SoTL work. Funds up to \$700 per application/conference will be awarded. Funds may be used toward conference registration and/or travel costs for a trip taken (and not fully reimbursed), or to be taken, to pres-

ent SoTL work this fiscal year. We expect to award about 8 grants in Round 2. Details about eligibility and application materials are available at <http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/grants/travelGrantFY16.pdf>.

Congratulations to Round 1 Travel Grant Recipients: Charlene Aaron, MCN; Linda Haling, T&L; Jennine Harvey-Northrop, CSD; Susan Hildebrandt, LLC; John Hooker, COM; Kate Lewis, MUS; Jacqueline Rene McClure, CSD; Rebecca Rosenblatt, PHY; Jean Sawyer, CSD; Jamie Smith, CSD; Lisa Vinney, CSD.

## The Making SoTL Public Incentive Program Continues

The Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is continuing to offer, until funds run out, a \$200 'incentive' (per submission) to Illinois State faculty and academic staff for the submission of a product representing their ISU SoTL work to a book, journal, newsletter, conference, website, blog, juried show, or

similar external and peer reviewed/judged outlet between August 15, 2015 and April 15, 2016. To earn this incentive, several requirements must be met and clearly documented in specific ways. Details for applying for the incentive can be found at <http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/IncentiveFY16.pdf>.

## Is SoTL “Less Rigorous” or Simply “Different” than Other Research?

**Kathleen McKinney, Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL**

Often when I am facilitating workshops on designing, conducting, and sharing scholarship of teaching and learning empirical projects, I am questioned about the methodological rigor of SoTL research. Such questions are usually from participants in disciplines that emphasize quantitative research and/or experimental methodologies and/or large sample sizes and/or the use of known and tested instruments in their disciplinary research. Sometimes they are traditional educational researchers using such techniques in K-12 settings. They are concerned, understandably, with reliability, internal validity, and external validity of SoTL studies.

Of course, there is SoTL research that uses quantitative research or experiments or instruments with known statistical characteristics or large samples. These SoTL studies, however, are atypical rather than the norm. And those of us who do SoTL are concerned with rigor, and with reliability and validity. But, we may think about these issues somewhat differently or emphasize other aspects of our projects over the traditional view of these methodological standards. I also believe, however, that there is overlap in how SoTL researchers and other researchers attempt to enhance reliability and validity.

Usually, reliability is defined as consistency, that is, the extent to which a measurement instrument or other tool yields essentially the same result when used more than once. Of course, this assumes no real change has taken place in what is being measured. Thus, as a hypothetical example, if you have an instrument to measure a student's

ability to engage in metacognition and they score in the 'medium-high range', when you give that student the same measure two weeks later, they should still score in the 'medium-high range' (assuming nothing happened that actually significantly decreased or increased this ability).

Internal validity is the degree to which a measure actually measures what it is supposed to or claims to measure. Thus, for example, if you have a measure to assess the quality of a student's analysis of historical text, the measure should in fact be measuring the quality of that historical analysis and this should be demonstrated in a variety of ways (e.g., face, construct, criterion validity). The measure should not be measuring something else such as the student's ability to write well or to tell a good story

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### Our SoTL Social Media Sites

**Check us out on Twitter:**

**@ISU\_SOTL**

**And on Facebook:**

**Illinois State University Cross Chair in  
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning**

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or to think critically (though those may correlate or overlap to some degree with your measure if they are related to or part of your construct of historical analysis). Internal validity also has a meaning in experimental designs in terms of the quality of the manipulations, measures, and design to give us clear results related to cause and effect; ruling out confounding factors and alternative explanations of the results.

External validity deals with the extent to which we can legitimately generalize the results of our study beyond that study. If our study was replicated or adapted, would the same results be found? We may want or be expected to have our results generalize to other contexts or situations, samples, measures of variables, etc. To what extent, for instance, does our finding that the use of reflective learning logs enhances student learning in our sociology senior capstone class generalize to other classes or students or disciplines or institutions?

There are two answers (at least) to the questions about SoTL lacking rigor in terms of reliability, and internal and external validity. The first answer is that SoTL does concern itself with these traditional methodological standards. We, similar to many other researchers in different fields, attempt to strengthen these qualities of our research by doing the following:

- building on prior research,
- using theory to guide our work,
- using established reliable and valid measures if they exist for our constructs or variables,
  - making use of multiple measures of the same concept or behavior or outcome we are studying,
  - making use of multiple methods (often both qualitative and quantitative) so as to triangulate our results,
  - engaging and honoring student voices in our SoTL projects in terms of both their descriptive data and as members of our research teams,

- replicating others' and our own SoTL research, and
- seeing a single SoTL study as only one piece of a large and complex puzzle in a long-term, multi-study SoTL research agenda.

The second answer to such questions, especially to the concern about external validity or generalizability, is to remind others that SoTL is a special type of research and scholarly activity. SoTL is applied, action, practitioner research. The purposes are to learn about our teaching and, more so, our students' learning and other outcomes in our classes and programs. It is also to use what we learn to enhance the learning and development of those and future students. Because of these purposes, SoTL is context-specific in terms of the specific students or tasks, the learning we are attempting to measure, or the discipline, program or institution.

I argue, then, that SoTL research does not inherently lack rigor. It is not, by definition, 'weaker' than other research. It is just a little different!

## ***The SoTL Advocate Blog***

*The SoTL Advocate* welcomes submissions of possible guest posts. Two members of *The SoTL Advocate* editorial team review submissions for appropriateness and quality. Submissions should be MS Word files of 300-800 words and be sent, via email, to [jfribe@ilstu.edu](mailto:jfribe@ilstu.edu).

Recent blog post titles and authors were:

"Brushing Up on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: A Sample of Books" by Kathleen McKinney, Cross Chair

"ISSOTL Down Under!" by Erin Mikulec, T & L

"Do We Need to be 'Meta-Theoretical' in Our SoTL Work?" by Jennifer Friberg, CSD

## **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Workshops**

On October 29, an Introduction to SoTL Workshop was held with 20 faculty/staff members in attendance. Participants were introduced to the basics of the scholarship of teaching and learning including definitions, uses, design/methodologies, IRB issues, and where/how to share their results. They also had a chance to begin to formulate and refine a SoTL research idea.

Two workshops are being planned for the spring semester. At this time, we are considering another

workshop for SoTL beginners or those just starting a project that would focus on refining SoTL research questions and design/measurement/IRB issues.

In addition, we are discussing the idea of a workshop for those interested in SoTL projects on the learning and other outcomes of ISU students as a result of their involvement in out-of-class learning experiences. Be on the look out for additional information on spring workshops via campus mail and social media.

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