The SoTL Seed Program (2014-2020)

Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, August 2020

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT)

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

The Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISoTL) and the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) are home to the SoTL Seed program. In this report, we describe the program goals and strategies, provide an overview of its evolution since its inception in 2014, and offer an overview of its internal operations.

In 2019, a formal program evaluation initiative was launched to assess the extent to which the intended program goals have been met after six years of operation. Data sources include time tracking files, formative feedback from project leads, project closure reports, interviews with project leads, focus groups with SoTL Specialists, and our own experiences managing the program. Evidence indicates that the main program goals are being achieved to varied degrees of success, while also highlights areas of future improvement and growth.

2. The SoTL Seed Program

Since 2014, the Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISoTL) and the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) have offered a support program for UBC faculty interested in engaging with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): the SoTL Seed program. The SoTL Seed Program was established with the following goals:

1. To support faculty members in engaging in reflective practices and pedagogical research in various disciplines.
2. To increase faculty members' agency and capacity as independent SoTL researchers and hubs.
3. To promote a culture of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at UBC.
4. To facilitate student-faculty partnerships on teaching and learning.

In 2015, a few months after its launch, considerations of how to effectively attain the program goals led to the establishment of the SoTL Seed Program's current strategies:

1. Partnership with graduate students (SoTL Specialists) who contribute their knowledge of learning theories and methodologies;
2. Offering workshops and resources that facilitate professional development;

3. Consultation from project inception to publication;
4. Collegial collaborations that encourage reflection and sharing of successes and challenges with teaching; and
5. Synergistic support and collaboration with other teaching and learning programs on campus.

The SoTL Seed program is a competitive program that requires interested proponents to submit an application that is reviewed by an adjudication committee. The motivations for SoTL Seed projects often arise when instructors face a teaching "problem", observe a trend in their classrooms, and/or would like to investigate a novel pedagogical approach to their practice (Felton, 2013).

The support package offered to awarded projects has evolved as a response to the emerging needs of applicants. In Winter 2020, the support package included:

- Up to 70 hours of SoTL Specialist support.
- Cohort-based meetings for informal feedback by SoTL Seed peers (past and present).
- CTLT consultation during the entire life cycle, from design to dissemination.
- Up to $200 CAD in discretionary funds to support research expenses such as participant costs and disciplinary data interpretation.
- Up to $500 CAD to support presentations at SoTL meetings and conferences.

2.1 Application and Adjudication Process

Between 2014 and 2016 there was one call for project proposals per year. Starting in 2016, adjudication decisions included the offer of limited support (restricted to 20 hours of Specialist support) for projects with narrower scope. Given the increasing interest in the program, in 2017 two calls per year were implemented: one in the summer and one in late fall. Calls for proposals are promoted by CTLT's marketing and communications team and advertised internally through instructors and educational developers who we know are interested in SoTL opportunities.

The application form has been revised multiple times with the goal of making it short and uncomplicated, while still including enough details about project originality and value, links to the existing literature, key questions, and support needed.

The adjudication process involves careful consideration by an ad hoc Adjudication Committee which is formalized for each call. Typically, the committee consists of two faculty members with previous SoTL experience, the ISoTL Director, the Associate

Director of Curriculum and Course Services (CTLT), the Senior Manager of Research and Evaluation (CTLT) and one SoTL Specialist. Each committee member reads every application and rates them on three key components:

1) Potential impact to practice (i.e., Is the work likely to contribute to teaching and learning at UBC?);
2) Potential impact to theory (i.e., Does the project have the potential to advance our knowledge of teaching and learning in higher education?); and
3) Practicality (i.e., Can the goals be accomplished within the designated time frame? Are the stated goals attainable through the proposed process?).

Balance of all these aspects is sought during the adjudication process. After reviewing the proposals individually, the committee discusses their ratings to reach consensus on proposals to accept for full or limited support, and proposals to redirect/reject. A number of the proposals we reject require more general CTLT, non-SoTL specific support (e.g. instructional design, development, professional development), these are redirected to relevant CTLT units (e.g. learning design) or invited to consult with our team on proposal revision and resubmission.

2.2 Communication with Project Leads

Once adjudication has been completed, successful project leads are invited to participate in a "Kickoff meeting". Kickoff meetings are an opportunity for new project leads to get detailed information on the Seed program, and learn what to expect from the collaboration with the ISoTL team. Most importantly, during this meeting faculty leads are paired with the Specialist who will be providing support for their project. During the meeting, time is set aside for them to work together on refining a research plan, including milestones, methods and timelines. Kickoff meetings are also an opportunity for faculty members to meet fellow SoTL practitioners from across campus and to establish a network for collegial support.

We encourage project leads to regularly meet with their Specialist and to have open communication with one another so that projects stay on track. Moreover, project leads are contacted twice a year by the administrative group for a brief check-in on project progress. This is an opportunity for feedback on the status of projects and the support provided (including remaining support hours), and to troubleshoot any challenges.

2.3 SoTL Seed across the Years

The program has seen a steady growth and change since it started operating in 2014. After one year of operation, SoTL Specialists were introduced to the program. By 2017 a second call-for-proposals was implemented and the program expanded to the Okanagan campus. Since its initiation, the SoTL Seed Program has supported a total of 90 SoTL Seed projects, 56 of which have been successfully completed to date. There have been seven projects which have been terminated due to project lead's lack of engagement or change in priorities.
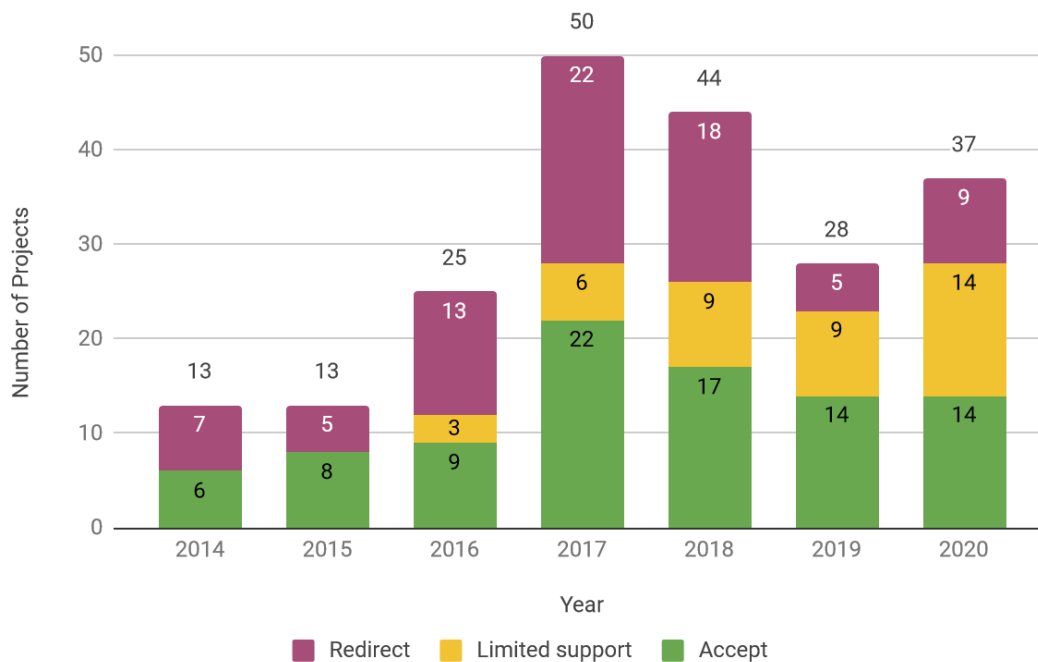

Figure 1. Distribution of SoTL Seed proposals accepted, supported and redirected (2014-2020). Starting in 2017 the program offered two rounds of funding per year.

Across the years we have received applications from 10 of the 11 Faculties at UBC Vancouver, Vantage College, the Library, and UBC Okanagan (see Figure 2). This diversity across disciplines has led to proposals covering a wide range of pedagogies, interests and methodological considerations. Supported projects are led by faculty from diverse ranks and streams, although most predominantly by faculty in the Educational Leadership stream (Figure 3).
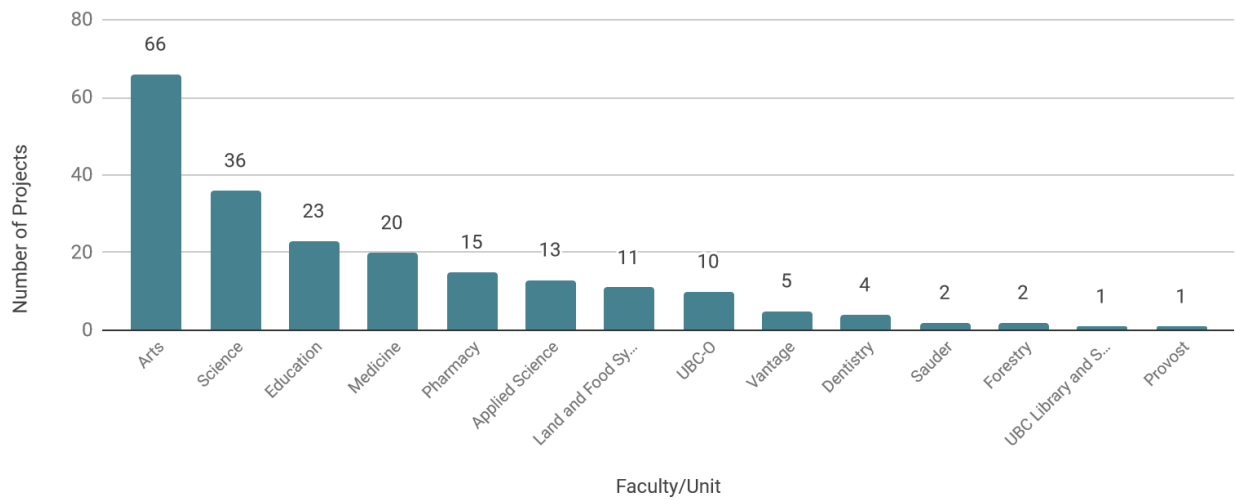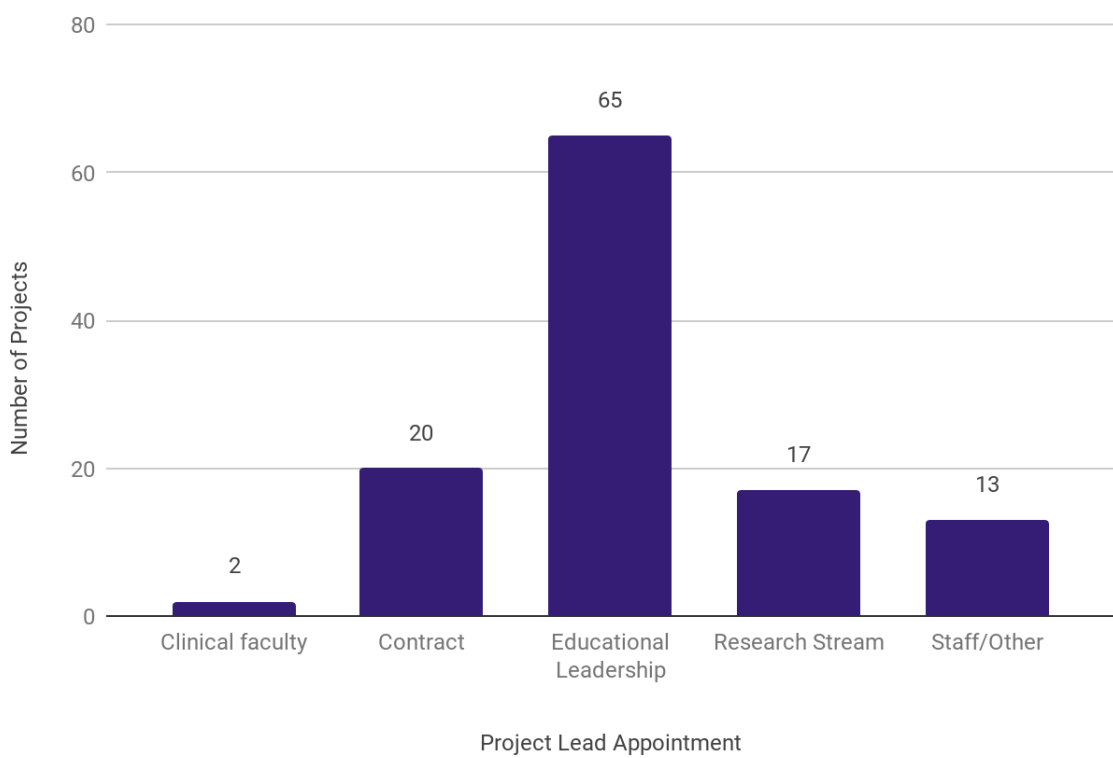
Figure 2. SoTL Seed Program Applications, by Faculty/Unit (2014-2020).

Figure 3. Funded SoTL Seed projects by project lead appointment.

Based on historical time tracking data, the typical life cycle of a project is one to two years with projects taking an average of 60 hours of our Specialist's time. A breakdown of time spent by the various support activities can be seen in Figure 4.

Specialist time (hrs)
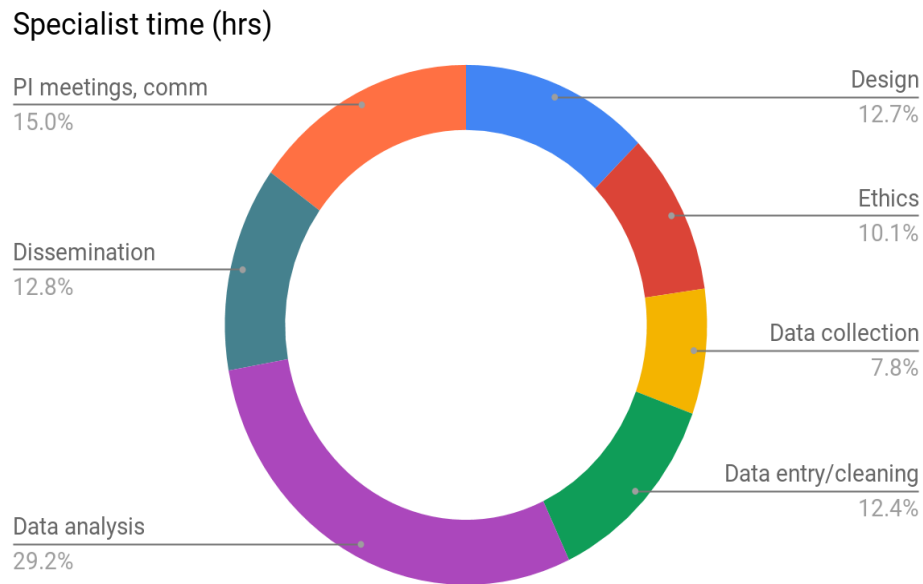
Figure 4. Specialist time allocation, based on 40 completed SoTL Seed projects.

SoTL Seed projects, while diverse, often explore common areas of practice:

1. Community based/Experiential learning: Experiential learning both in and out of the classroom and/or community partners/collaborations.

2. Peer feedback or other forms of innovative assessment.

3. Multimedia in the classroom: The impact of technology integration (e.g., apps, collaborative tools, iclickers, and visual media) on student learning experience.

4. Active learning: Pedagogies that seek to foster student engagement through student-centered approaches.

Likewise, SoTL Seed projects are diverse in their area of impact, with projects exploring topics such as:

1. Diversity and inclusion: Exploring more equitable practices and pedagogies.

2. First-year transition: Improving first-year experiences.

3. Student attitudes, engagement and motivation: Seeking to better understand students' level of satisfaction, confidence, motivations, and perceptions about pedagogies or disciplinary knowledge.

4. Disciplinary specific skills: Improving how students retain key concepts in a course, or mastering particular professional skills.

5. Student actions and behaviours: Understanding and/or facilitating student participation (in class, online discussions, etc.), time spent on particular tasks, and enrolment in courses.

3. The ISOTL Team

The ISoTL team consists of a group of 10-12 SoTL Specialists, and an administrative group of three CTLT staff members who manage the team and run the SoTL Seed Program and other ISoTL activities. The Academic Director of the CTLT currently serves as the Director of the Institute, providing strategic leadership and vision.

SoTL Specialists are graduate students with expertise in all aspects of carrying out education research plans – from the design of a study, to ethics applications, data collection and analysis. They partner with faculty members to offer their expertise in behavioural and education research, and are assigned to specific projects based on matching skill sets related to projects' design and methods. Each SoTL Specialist typically manages approximately 3-5 SoTL Seed projects concurrently. SoTL Specialists may not necessarily be experts in a particular project's discipline but are experts in research methodologies and research evaluation. They support the SoTL Seed projects from project acceptance until project completion, providing guidance on: project planning and design; survey development; design and implementation of focus groups; conducting interviews; data analysis and reporting of findings.

SoTL Specialists are project leads' point of contact to the ISoTL team and the CTLT more broadly. SoTL Specialists work as a team; internal communication is a key aspect of the program and we strongly encourage team members' collaboration and interaction. It is unusual for one SoTL Specialist to be an expert in multiple methodological approaches, so SoTL Specialists commonly support each other by complementing their individual skill sets to offer support to projects that demand a range of methods.

When SoTL Specialists make significant intellectual contributions to the work (design of project, analysis framework, etc.) it is expected that they are included as co-authors on

relevant publications and presentations. Across the years, SoTL Specialists have also attended conferences to co-present the resulting work.

3.1 Team Meetings & Operations

A key factor in promoting internal cohesion and communication is the mandatory participation in team meetings. Team meetings are held twice a month and serve two main purposes: to receive and provide feedback on current projects from other SoTL Specialists, and as an opportunity for professional development through guest speakers, and group discussions on relevant topics (e.g. inclusivity and equity issues; research methods; navigating difficult relationships with project leads, etc.). Team meetings also serve the meta purpose of bringing team members together and creating community, collegiality and interconnectedness.

Once a year the team meets up for a half-day retreat. Traditionally, retreats have served as opportunities to welcome new team members, revisit the program goals and mission, and plan for the year ahead.

Team members are also encouraged to attend relevant sessions and workshops as they occur (e.g., Celebrate SoTL Day, CTLT Institutes, and Celebrate Learning Week). As of 2018, SoTL Specialists also have access to Professional Development funds as part of their appointment, these have typically been used to cover SoTL-related conference registration costs.

3.2 Hiring and Onboarding of New SoTL Specialists

In hiring new SoTL Specialists, we look for students with the specific skills that are needed to be able to adequately support current projects (e.g., relevant research methodology skills). The majority of our SoTL Specialists have been hired from UBC's Faculty of Education and the Psychology Department.

New SoTL Specialists go through an onboarding process with the administrative team, where they learn an overview of the SoTL Seed program and ISoTL operations, how to keep track and report time worked, where to find resources and support. Most importantly, we emphasize that we work as a team, through encouraging collaboration among SoTL Specialists and open communication with the administrative team. New members are paired with experienced SoTL Specialists for their first SoTL Seed projects, following a mentorship model where the novice learns and gets support from the experienced.

3.3 Coaching & Resources

Team members meet individually with a member of the administrative group on a monthly basis to discuss project status, and troubleshoot any current challenges. From methodological roadblocks to managing interpersonal communication with project leads, time workload and work-life balance, monthly check-ins ensure SoTL Specialists can provide excellent faculty support and progressing in personal professional development.

Additionally, all team members have access to an extensive bank of carefully curated resources designed to assist novice and senior SoTL Specialists throughout project life cycle. These resources include:

- Articles on getting acquainted with SoTL as a field of scholarly inquiry, common SoTL approaches and methodologies, and current debates in the field;
- SoTL Specialist guidelines and documents to orient team members as they move projects from inception to completion;
- Research and evaluation best practices and practical guides around inclusive research design;
- Tips on the UBC ethical review processes; and
- An archive of past team retreat materials.

4. SoTL Seed Program Evaluation

The evaluation of the SoTL Seed program is informed by the following sources of data:

- **Records and time tracking files -** Team members are asked to keep track of the different activities they support in each project they are assigned.
- **Formative feedback from project leads** - Collected from the bi-annual check-in on support they are receiving, project progress and suggestions for improvement.
- **34 project closure reports** - At completion, project leads are asked to complete a final report and provide feedback on the support received, the recent experience doing SoTL, the outcomes of the inquiry process, impact on teaching practices, and dissemination activities.
- **Interviews with project leads** - In June 2019, 5 project leads with completed projects were invited to participate in interviews that addressed overall level of support in the program, the impact of their projects on their courses and personal growth as SoTL practitioners.

- **SoTL Specialists focus groups -** In April-May of 2019, focus groups were held with all the students in order to explore their experiences as SoTL Specialists and to identify team operation challenges and successes.
- **Our own experiences** – Shared experiences while managing and administering the program.

4.1 Supporting faculty members in engaging in reflective practice and pedagogical research in the disciplines

The SoTL Seed program has provided faculty support for researching and reflecting on their teaching practices. Engaging in SoTL often means instructors are required to move from their disciplinary boundaries and embrace methodologies and practices generally unfamiliar to them (Kelly, Nesbit & Oliver, 2012). Leading a SoTL Seed project has been a learning experience for most of our project leads. With the support of our SoTL Specialists, instructors report confidence in thinking critically about their teaching practices, adjust them as needed, and build up their educational leadership careers.

In the closure reports, 66% of the project leads expressed that due to their SoTL Seed experience they were more interested in SoTL overall, and experienced changed perceptions of the possibilities and opportunities for researching their own teaching.

"I have learnt that there are always opportunities to learn from what we are doing in the classroom. There is always research that can be done and that there should be a mix of various different types of learning modalities to provide students the best possible outcomes."

Sixty-three percent indicated that the experience increased their awareness of the impact of their teaching practices and pedagogical choices on their student learning experiences, and also increased their understanding of how students learn. Half of the project leads indicated that the outcomes of their projects have encouraged them to modify how they teach.

"I'm still a beginner when it comes to SoTL research, but I really felt that this helped me understand the SoTL process and has motivated me to continue researching my teacher practice."

Educational Leadership stream instructors particularly appreciated that support is provided in-kind, as opposed to funding. This implies that we are helping overcome one of the most critical challenges our educational leaders face: workload and time constraints.

"This has been very helpful because as a researcher in the educational leadership stream it is not money I need to help with this research but someone to actually help me with the research as we are so busy teaching."

"I'm really, really impressed with the model you have created. For example, it's great that you are not giving me funds and, instead, are mentoring and paying [SoTL Specialist]. He is learning and getting paid, our team is also learning, from [SoTL Specialist] and also from each other."

4.2 Increasing faculty members' capacity as independent SoTL researchers

Beyond increasing awareness and interest around SoTL, participating in the SoTL Seed program has impacted instructors' identities as independent SoTL researchers. Many have indicated that program engagement has led to newly acquired skills and understandings.

Although some project leads still do not feel confident to conduct a SoTL project on their own after participating in the program, generally instructors report increased confidence and understanding of the SoTL process, such as, how to: craft research questions, design a study, identify the need for ethics clearance (or lack of it) and complete an application, implement the study, and interpret data.

"I feel that my ability to think of research questions and methods has definitely grown throughout this process. The main lesson learnt is that there is always an opportunity for SoTL! I do feel motivated to continue my research in my teaching practice."

"Being part of the Seed Grant program was an amazing opportunity. I learned how to better use survey data to understand learners' preferences and how to more objectively measure the educational impact of interventions. In addition, I gained a better understanding [of] how the CTLT can connect disciplines and departments across campus."

"I feel more comfortable in conducting educational projects. If I want to conduct research doing focus group discussions on students, I will think of finding appropriate time (e.g. not in the summer) as well as allocating more incentives (e.g bonus grade, if possible) to increase their participation rate."

In response to a question about how confident she felt as a "SoTL scholar", one project lead responded:

"[I'm] more confident now than at the start in terms of talking about course design and teaching strategies and developing pedagogy within the discipline that I'm in, but to label myself as a "SoTL expert' I think not yet only because... I don't think I'm crystal clear about SoTL... it's definition."

This comment reflects an interesting point about a "definition" of SoTL, one that perhaps can be made more explicit, along with its goals, for incoming SoTL Seed project recipients.

When asked about the challenges they encountered as they engaged with their SoTL Seed project, instructors highlighted the following (in decreasing order of frequency): coming up with the right study design; collecting data (including recruitment of participants); completing the ethics application; and getting their SoTL work published. Instructors generally agreed that the support provided by the SoTL Specialists significantly contributed to overcoming the challenges mentioned.

"For me it was designing the experiment. I could not have done any of the analysis without [SoTL Specialist's] help."

"The most challenging aspect was, initially, the learning curve during the pilot phase of the course and survey. This learning curve required that I immerse in the world of SoTL as it relates to my discipline, while also deliberating the type of data to gather that would contribute meaningfully towards shaping pedagogy and curriculum design within my discipline."

One key finding across both interviews and feedback surveys was the feeling of limited support for dissemination of SoTL work across UBC. While a couple of project leads acknowledged the recent SoTL Dissemination Fund[1] as a source of financial support, many mentioned that they did not feel very well supported to disseminate their findings, such as not knowing which journals send their work to, or which conferences to attend. One project lead stated that he would like more support in writing with a specific "SoTL" focus. This is an important point, as many SoTL projects require project leads to think with a lens that differs from their own discipline (Kelly, Nesbit & Oliver, 2012).

"I would have liked to close the circle on the project by receiving help with writing a paper about the findings. There are some very interesting results that should have been published in a timely way."

Nonetheless, when completing their closure report, almost half of the instructors had either presented their SoTL Seed work at a conference or published their work in a

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[1] To respond to faculty needs for support in disseminating SoTL work, in 2019 UBC's Office of the Provost and VP Academic started piloting the SoTL Dissemination Fund. Funds are managed and adjudicated by ISoTL.

scholarly journal. Several instructors also indicated they were working on publication drafts with hopes of sharing outcomes in the coming months.

4.3 Promoting a culture of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at UBC

Many of the project leads indicated that the SoTL Seed program promotes a culture of teaching and learning at UBC, and assisted with meaningful connections made with other faculty members. The value of SoTL activity at UBC was a point of contention amongst project leads with completed projects, with half the project leads indicating it was valued and half indicating it was not. Those who perceived SoTL activity as holding value at UBC, clearly believed SoTL plays a role in tenure and promotion processes, and that engaging in SoTL is an expectation for faculty in the Educational Leadership stream. Some also noted that UBC's SoTL culture has started to shift with teaching, and research on teaching, being valued by more sectors in academia.

"As a member of the educational leadership stream, SoTL is formally part of my review for tenure and promotion. At the same time, there seems to be only limited awareness of this strand of scholarly enquiry, and its ramifications for teaching practices, among colleagues outside the EL stream."

"I believe there is interest amongst my colleagues to learn from my SoTL experience. SoTL is also recognized in my discipline, given the number of scholarly journals that are accepting such work. I think there is a promising future ahead for SoTL as universities begin to expand on teaching tracks and educational leadership type positions."

Comments from faculty with the perception that SoTL is not valued enough at UBC include:

"I wish this kind of work was valued for tenure and promotion, but my sense of that is that it is not heavily valued."

"No it is not valued outside a smaller group of people within the Educational Leadership stream - but this is a university wide problem where research track faculty just do not see the value of educational research. However, doing the SoTL projects I am and also completing the SoEL program with Harry Hubball has allowed me to feel confident in my interests and abilities and better able to ignore the critics."

Appreciation of the SoTL Seed program towards promoting an institutional culture that values teaching and learning as a scholarly activity was both for support provided and also in terms of the collaborations and connections with other instructors. In fact, in the interviews, many of the project leads reported feeling isolated in their own departments

because they are the only ones interested in SoTL. Having participated in the SoTL Seed program provided opportunities to meet and connect with faculty beyond home departments thus expanding project leads' professional networks.

"[The SoTL Seed] introduced me to an active and supportive team/community of UBC colleagues with whom I hope to continue engaging in SoTL conversations."

"Yes, we are now much more confident about starting a new SoTL project. Initiating collaborations on projects, especially with people with different expertise [is] a great way to take on the workload associated with SoTL projects."

Comments from both reports and interviews were that project leads would like to see more opportunities for engagement with others involved in SoTL across the disciplines at UBC. Several project leads indicated that they would like the SoTL Seed program to include a "cohort" that meets consistently throughout the year. One project lead mentioned that a highlight of the program was the Kickoff meeting where he got to meet other scholars doing SoTL. He reflected on the fact that it would be great to have a group of scholars to follow up with to discuss their SoTL projects, challenges, findings, methods, etc. Other comments in this area were related to fostering a culture of SoTL that included more networking events for SoTL practitioners to share their projects in informal ways.

"I'm not a fan of meetings unless they are needed, but I do miss the occasional SoTL seed fund meetings that we'd have to debrief, check-in and present what we are up to. Those occasional meetings happened during my first SoTL seed fund grant and I thought they were quite valuable. It held you accountable to make sure the project was moving forward, but also helped create a SoTL community of people working on different things, but giving them an opportunity to do so together. My suggestion is that we consider bringing them back. Even one meeting a term would be good."

4.4 Promoting student-faculty partnerships in teaching and learning

SoTL literature often points to the challenges that instructors face in designing SoTL research projects because they are entering new disciplinary terrain. As Hubball and Clarke (2010) have argued: "More often than not...faculty members from a variety of disciplines, especially those unfamiliar with social science research methods, do not possess the appropriate methodological expertise and thus find it significantly challenging to conduct SoTL research in complex institutional/curricula/classroom settings" (p. 1). In this way, the SoTL Specialists bridge an important gap for faculty who may be engaging with SoTL for the first time, and who many need additional support

navigating new methods and approaches to evaluating learning/teaching in their particular contexts.

Comments and feedback received from project leads both during the course of their SoTL Seed projects (formative feedback) and after project completion (closure reports) indicate a high level of satisfaction with the support received from our team. Project leads responded very positively to the role of their SoTL Specialist, stressing the value of their help with ethics applications, project design, data analysis and project management (specifically that their SoTL Specialist was integral to keeping the project on task and in full momentum). This last point is interesting as project management is not an explicit skill we expect from our team members. However, often they are key in making sure projects move along in a timely manner, timelines are being met and project members complete their tasks.

"She has kept a good record of where we are, what we have done and what we need to do next. Each time we have each gone off to accomplish some productive tasks toward the project and the accountability provided through working with the Specialist has been extremely valuable."

"The SoTL experts are excellent and really help with the project management and the SoTL expertise. By far it's what makes this successful!"

The contributions of SoTL Specialists, in the form of methodological advice, data analysis, attentiveness, and convergence of research interests, were acknowledged by most project leads in their survey responses. Overall, project leads have indicated that the support received met or exceeded their initial expectations.

"One thing I learned is the value of collaboration, and that someone with a strong background in educational studies can allow me to do studies my own training really wouldn't allow me to do--but that are potentially quite useful for the field."

"This project in collaboration with SoTL specialists has motivated me to continue research teaching practices, and I am currently planning my next project assessing program level learning outcomes."

Overall, the collaboration with SoTL Specialists is not only the trademark of the SoTL Seed Program, but a trait that is highly valued by faculty and perceived as the major strength of the model we created.

4.5 The SoTL Specialists' Experience

From the focus groups conducted we discovered four major program highlights, and three challenges, each are discussed in turn.

Program highlights included:

1. Sense of belonging and camaraderie – SoTL Specialists reported developing strong relationships with each other, a deep appreciation for the team, a sense of belonging and community, and opportunities to learn from each other's areas of expertise and disciplinary backgrounds. The program, according to the graduate students, saved them from being siloed in their own academic departments and programs. The rich disciplinary, cognitive and cultural diversity of the team was also acknowledged as a source of inspiration and fellowship.

   "Everyone has different perspectives and different backgrounds."

   "Joining the SoTL Seed [team] is the best thing that happened to me"

2. Partnerships with faculty – SoTL Specialists acknowledged the learning opportunities that emerged from partnering with faculty members. The recognition of expertise and contributions from project leads enhanced the SoTL Specialists' confidence. SoTL Specialists acknowledged the trust bestowed on them, illustrated by the fact that they are "let loose with tenured faculty members as experts".

3. Professional development – The constant opportunities to deepen and broaden knowledge about research methodologies, as well as gain hands-on experience with research on teaching and learning, was appreciated by the SoTL Specialists. The diversity and interdisciplinary nature of the work allowed them to expand understanding and application of their skill sets in a unique and valuable manner. Team meetings and collaborative work were reported to facilitate philosophical conversations and debates as junior scholars.

   "[The] contrast and diversity in the projects... tremendous differences in how to think about research, especially educational research."

   "I can do crazier stuff, ontologically or analytically... I can do more complicated analysis [that] I wouldn't be able to do in my regular research."

   "As a more quantitative person, I think I have become less judgmental of qualitative methods... came to see the value in them."

   "It's an opportunity to learn. This wealth of knowledge around you. Everyone has different perspectives and different backgrounds."

The following challenges were identified:

1. Managing and/or navigating faculty expectations - Each project and lead pose a unique context that the students need to navigate. Sometimes faculty expectations are not easy to navigate and this leads to communication and relationship management challenges.

   "the PI says that I am doing this [giving a presentation] … and I am going to this conference and your name is already on it … and that pulls you in."

In response to this point, a "New SoTL Seed Holder Program Guide" was created which is posted publicly and discussed at our kickoff meetings. In the guide, there is a clearer outline of support provided (and not provided), project life cycle and communication expectations. In our bi-annual project lead check-ins we also clarify tasks that SoTL Specialists support, and communicate number of hours left in each project.

2. Role clarity and onboarding - The boundaries of our team's responsibilities are not always clear and in many cases a personal component is added to the faculty-student partnership which makes boundary setting difficult.

   "The guilt to some degree is real – there is a personal relationship with the PI that you want to help them."

SoTL Specialists also requested a more thorough process for initiating new team members and getting comfortable in their roles. The current mentoring strategy, while appreciated, was deemed insufficient and more training was suggested. We are currently exploring ways to address this weakness of our program.

3. Internal communications – SoTL Specialists suggested team meetings and materials could be more effectively organized. To address these concerns, team meetings have been restructured to offer two rotating "themes": professional development sessions, and SoTL Specialist-led presentations for seeking support/providing feedback on project development and challenges. We also created an internal website that clearly organizes SoTL Specialist-related content (e.g., BREB application guidelines, SoTL recommended reading, guidelines for working with project leads, etc.), and is now regularly updated with new resources.

5. Future Actions

Feedback received from faculty members and SoTL Specialists is an invaluable source of insights on what is working and what could be done to improve our program. As feedback has been received on a rolling basis, some adjustments have already been implemented. However, we recognize that there is still room to grow and advance our program towards meeting its intended goals. In this section we describe some concrete actions or adjustments we intend to pursue in the near future in order to address weaknesses identified through the program evaluation process.

5.1 Faculty Support and Professional Development

The SoTL Seed program is supporting faculty's engagement with SoTL and is providing relevant professional development opportunities for instructors to develop agency and capacity as independent SoTL researchers. However, particularly for those new to SoTL, the development of relevant skills and understandings of SoTL as a discipline requires practice and time. One project supported by an expert graduate student may not be enough for faculty to feel prepared to conduct further research into teaching and learning on their own. This is particularly true when faculty rely on the SoTL Specialists' expertise to assist them cross disciplinary boundaries and the bulk of the work is done by our team members, with faculty somewhat disengaging from the opportunity for professional growth.

Our team is currently exploring possible ways to address project lead disengagement and to promote project ownership. Cohort meetings could provide benefit by having project leads share their work as their projects progress, share challenges and lessons learned, and seek feedback from fellow project leads. Besides engagement and project ownership, cohort meetings would allow for networking with other SoTL researchers at UBC. In upcoming SoTL calls, attendance to cohort meetings will be an expectation upon acceptance in the program. Project leads have expressed in interest in a cohort model, so this approach is likely to be well received by project leads.

The importance of involving project leads in the data collection and data analysis process is now a recurrent theme in our team meetings and individual check-ins. Our team members are constantly reminded that project outcomes must be accessible regardless of epistemologies and expertise with methodologies and methods. SoTL Specialists are also reminded of the importance of discussing project implications to teaching practice, stressing how outcomes can inform the original research questions.

To meet another regular request, our team now offers limited support with literature reviews. By providing this support, SoTL Specialists are better able to situate projects within the existing literature, which is fundamental for any SoTL endeavour. To make efficient use of project time, our team is developing a library of selected SoTL literature and key references that can be easily shared with project leads or used to inform the support provided. This library of resources may also assist with the challenge of disseminating SoTL, an area which we are still determining how to better support but that we are aware needs attention.

In this regard, we are currently conceptualizing and developing a session aimed at supporting faculty with the publication of their SoTL work. While the details of the session are being discussed, it is clear that the challenge is not an easy one and that different support modalities will be needed (e.g. workshops, peer review, writing clubs).

Another planned change in practice includes more clearly communicating what is SoTL as a field of inquiry (i.e., its goals, dilemmas and current debates). This could further motivate faculty members to engage in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and help them increase their capacity as SoTL researchers. Seminal pieces in SoTL as a field of inquiry will be provided at the kickoff meeting stage (e.g. Poole & Chick, 2015; Hubball, Pearson & Clarke, 2013; Kelly, Nesbit & Oliver, 2012; O'Brien, 2008).

To provide more professional development opportunities for faculty, we are also increasing the number and diversity of workshop offerings for SoTL Seed holders. Current workshops/sessions include: navigating ethics review; inclusive survey design; and interviews and focus groups. In the coming year, we plan on deploying sessions on "getting started with SoTL" and "getting SoTL published".

To prompt SoTL as a systematic study of teaching and learning, we have made various academic resources available on our online webpage (such as sample projects, SoTL literature and evaluation tools). We also provide faculty with an opportunity to present ideas and receive feedback during the annual Celebrate SoTL Day. These opportunities together help current and incoming applicants, and the SoTL Specialists, to familiarize themselves with the process of inquiry (design, conceptualization, and methodically sound approaches) and nurture a community of SoTL researchers.

5.2 Institutional SoTL Culture

The SoTL Seed program is only one of several services and activities managed by the Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. As such, its palpable contributions to UBC's SoTL culture are better realized when considering its connectedness to the rest of ISoTL's programming (e.g. Celebrate SoTL Day and SoTL Dissemination Fund).

Our program has been effective both at introducing novice SoTL practitioners to the discipline, and supporting experienced faculty in achieving their goals. The SoTL Seed experience has been a source of inspiration for many. Nonetheless, we recognize institutional change takes time and a coordinated effort with other units and groups is of the essence. We are working towards growing and deepening our relationships with faculty-led groups (e.g. the Educational Leadership Network and the SoTL Community of Practice), faculty-specific teaching and learning centres, as well as other institutional initiatives and programs such as the International Program for the Scholarship of Educational Leadership. Connected and coordinated efforts are likely to have a more resounding impact on our university's institutional SoTL culture.

Additionally, we are discussing ways in which our program might respond to UBC's Strategic Plan by promoting SoTL activity aligned with institutional priorities. For instance, we may promote cohorts of projects with particular strategic foci by launching special/strategic calls. While many SoTL Seed projects implicitly address various strategic priorities (such as, equity and diversity, engagement with community members, etc.), more explicit guidelines to encourage faculty members to engage in this work could be facilitated. Topics under consideration include: student diversity and inclusion; indigenous pedagogies/initiatives; student wellness; and first year experiences. To harmonize efforts, collaboration with existing expert groups on campus will be established.

5.3 Final Remarks

Some of the feedback from this report has already been implemented: bi-yearly reports to project leads, the "New SoTL Seed Holder Program Guide", etc. We continue to explore avenues for timely and clear communication with project leads, SoTL Specialists, and UBC's teaching and learning community at large. Some ways that share these critical and exciting outcomes are through the bi-monthly ISoTL Newsletter and our ISoTL website.

The SoTL Seed program is an ever-evolving program, with a continuous influx of new projects, project leads, and SoTL Specialists. The administrative group has also seen changes in composition and thus, in ideas and perspectives. We see all these changes as a continuing opportunity to learn, adapt and grow. We hope our support model serves as inspiration to others looking for ways to support faculty members engaging in reflective practices and pedagogical research.

6. Acknowledgements

7. References

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