Planning and evaluating impact of scholarship and educational research initiatives

Shailey Minocha,
Faculty of STEM, The Open University, UK
Twitter/X: @ShaileyMinocha
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Impact evaluation initiative (2021-2022)

• A compendium of 16 case studies
• A guide for educators
• SoTL* impact evaluation workbook
• Planning for SoTL impact workbook
• Executive summary

*SoTL: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Definition

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning or ‘SoTL’ is defined as a systematic and ethically reasoned investigation of aspects of teaching and student learning by applying disciplinary knowledge, resulting in reflections and outcomes that are publicly shared for peer-review.

‘Scholarship of Teaching and Learning’ in ‘Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in STEM’, Badged Open Course (BOC), The Open University, https://www.open.edu/openlearn/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=109800&section=1

Impact of research

UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) defines impact as ‘an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.’

Impact of SoTL or an educational inquiry

The impact of a SoTL inquiry implies **demonstrable benefits to learning and teaching** that are directly attributable to that project.

**Impact of SoTL answers the question:** what has changed because of this SoTL inquiry? What new insights will other educators gain from this SoTL inquiry? How can the institution put the outcomes of the inquiry into use? What are the current or emerging debates in HE does this inquiry contribute to?


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Three scholarship projects

- Early start programme
- Diagnostic quizzes
- Cross-level Design events

Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) for SoTL

12 facets of IEF for SoTL are divided into four categories

1. Learning and Teaching
2. Transfer to others
3. Stakeholder benefits
4. Cultural and economic benefits


Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) for SoTL

Guidance at the project proposal stage
Workshop with the project team and other stakeholders
Planning and monitoring the impact
Self-evaluation

### Theory of Change (ToC) Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 situation/problem</th>
<th>What situation/problem is the project trying to address or resolve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 context</td>
<td>What is the current context of the situation/problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Aim</td>
<td>What goal or objective is the programme/initiative trying to achieve? What is your proposed solution to the problem given the context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 stakeholders</td>
<td>Who are the stakeholders (including the beneficiaries) of the project?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 impact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 outcomes and measures</td>
<td>Short and intermediate-term outcomes and measures which must be in place for the long-term goals to be achieved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 resources/inputs</td>
<td>What are the human, financial and organisational resources required to achieve the desired outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7+ activities</td>
<td>Outline the interventions (supported by assumptions) that will bring about the desired change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7++ outputs</td>
<td>What are the results/deliverables of the activities relevant to the achievement of the outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6 time</td>
<td>When will you conduct the various activities? When do you expect the impact to be achieved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>~ assumptions</td>
<td>The various conditions on which the project’s success will rely on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ risks</td>
<td>Risks to activities? Risks to impacts not being achieved, or leading to unintended consequences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name: project</td>
<td>[theme – brief description]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</table>

**Outputs**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
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Theory of Change: Question-driven template, Logic Model

- **Question-driven template**: Designed to identify the key information required to develop a theory of change
- **Logic model**: A visual representation of the key information and the links between them
- **Theory of Change (ToC)**: Using the key information (questionnaire) and the visual representation (logic model) identify the key causal pathways for impact


Development of Theory of Change (ToC)

- Project plan
- ToC (question-driven template)
- ToC visual
- ToC visual and narrative

An example

- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in STEM BOC

[Image of a flowchart]

- Question-driven ToC, visual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>planned work</th>
<th>intended results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources/inputs</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Logic Model

[Image of a logic model]

Resources for SoTL impact

- A guide for educators, Section 7, p. 72

[Image of a book cover]

Strategies for planning and generating impact

- Connecting to the aim of the SoTL project
- Planning for the impact from the beginning
- Aligning SoTL with the strategic priorities of the institution
- Identifying stakeholders
- Conducting collaborative SoTL
- Communicating the context of the SoTL project and the impact
- Sharing findings of SoTL strategically
- Receiving the questioning of the findings with an open mind
- Using social media to create community and connection
- Employing a variety of research methods to collect evidence of impact
- Keeping a record of the evidence of impact

Identifying stakeholders

- Participatory role
- Advisory role
- Advocates
- Communications role
- Amplifiers
- Beneficiaries
- Obstructors
Values of a SoTL practitioner for impactful SoTL

- Inquisitive
- Open-minded
- Ethical
- Strategic
- Empathetic
- Generous


Any challenges that you anticipate or may have experienced in planning for and generating impact?