

## Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL)

### Participant Project Descriptions (In Their Own Words):

**Sandra DeVellis, Professor of Behavioral Science:** Assessment of Learning Communities through Student Responsibility Survey

One of several assessments used to examine the effectiveness of Learning Communities on our campus is an in-house Student Responsibility Survey. This instrument has been used for two years, although the analysis of the results has been limited. I have been involved in the development of the survey and in its distribution and analysis. It contains items dealing with those skills we view as important to achieving success in college. I propose to continue to distribute this survey to both Learning Communities and comparable stand alone classes as both a pre- and post-test and to evaluate the results.

About Me: I bake cookies to relax, love audiobooks and almost always carry a camera around. Some of my students are teaching me to hacksack, quite a challenge for a near retiree.

**Jennifer Hawrylcw, Coordinator/Instructor of Elementary Education:** Teaching Teachers in the Ideal Classroom Setting

I will research the classroom environment and how it affects student learning. In particular, I will show how the effective use of space helps build communities of learners achieve academically. I will specifically look at space as it relates to teaching future teachers, and design a model classroom that can be utilized as a teaching tool for both college students and instructors.

**Ginger Hurajt, Professor of English:** Writing Community Text

Using the city and community as the basis of common experiences, students in English Composition I classes will produce a class "text" from their own writing. My hope is that students will find the writing process more meaningful.

About Me: I'm a "budding" gardener and I need to ride a horse at least twice a week. I love to immerse myself in the worlds of film and fiction.

**Judith Kamber, Director of Faculty & Staff Development:**

My role is to create and sustain opportunities for faculty to participate in SoTL projects at NECC. I also work closely with the COPPER group and my office provides administrative support and resources to SoTL participants.

About Me: I practice yoga regularly in order to quiet the frantic side of my personality. I also paint, sculpt and garden perennials with a dedicated passion.

**Richard Lizotte, Professor of English as a Second Language:** The Effect of Learning Styles on Teaching in the Disciplines

I will use Richard M. Felder and Barbara Soloman's online survey of learning styles as a basis to investigate how differing learning styles among students in a course may affect teaching and

learning in different disciplines. Knowledge of learning styles will help instructors to plan the design of their courses in such a way that the motivation and performance of their students will improve.

About Me: I am a movie buff and a visual, reflective, global, intuitive, and deductive learner. I respond well to great visuals but will take a while to get back to you on anything you say or write to me. Please, I'm thinking!

**George Medelinskas, Professor of Computer Information Sciences:** Using Mindfulness Exercises in the Classroom to Improve Learning

I will use 5-10 Mindfulness exercises at the start of class in order to focus student's attention in the present and to preview where the class is going that day. These exercises will prepare the students for the day's learning who will then learn more easily and thus better.

About Me: I am a rower. I am also a recent discoverer of the wonders of moss and find myself on a crusade to change lawn growers who hate moss to those who tolerate and appreciate it.

**Stephen Mathis, Professor of English:**

My SOTL project investigates what students actually take from my Composition classes once the class is done. I've always been curious to know what they really learned, and, perhaps a bit afraid to find out. I'm especially interested to see how (if?) their writing for other classes has changed in meaningful ways, and, how the students see and talk about their writing.

About Me: Unlike George, I have become fascinated with growing grass (the real kind) in our yard dominated by old maple trees. I am known as "the compost guy" at our local coffee shop because for the last year, I've been taking two five gallon buckets a day of coffee grounds home to make compost for the lawn. I'll let George know how this works out.

**Jacqueline Pena, Professor of Developmental Studies:** Service-Learning for ESL Students to Improve Language Acquisition

I will use service-learning in my ESL Listening/Speaking class to force students to use English outside of their classes and in a setting where they will be able to develop the necessary speaking skills and vocabulary needed to be more successful in their future courses and workplaces.

My hope is that the service-learning aspect of the course will help students 1) continue using the English language outside of the classroom, especially in Lawrence which is primarily a Spanish-speaking community, 2) learn necessary speaking skills and vocabulary to be more successful in everyday class and work settings, and 3) allow students to experience using the English language in a setting that resembles their future workplaces according to their desired careers.

**Barbara Stachniewicz, Professor of English:** Creating Community On-Line

My SoTL project involves researching ways that faculty create (and assess) community in their on-line courses. I will be comparing effects of community-building activities in an on-line and a face-to-face Composition II class. Ultimately, I am interested in the feasibility and desirability of creating an on-line Learning Community.

About Me: I do yoga year round and I am a fair-weather rower. (At the moment I am waiting for the warmer weather and calmer water!