

Sample SoTL Questions

What is happening—and for whom? Understanding differential learning in context

- How do different groups of students describe their experiences with a specific assignment, activity, or course practice, and where do those experiences diverge? (student reflections, surveys, interviews, discussion posts)
- What expectations about participation, communication, or performance do students report learning implicitly rather than being explicitly taught in this course or program? (early-semester reflections, focus groups, artifact analysis)
- How do students from different backgrounds explain moments when they struggled, disengaged, or felt unsure about their learning in this context? (reflective writing, learning journals, interviews)

What works—and for whom? Examining differential effects

- How does a commonly used teaching strategy (e.g., group work, active learning, peer review) support or challenge students differently across identities or prior educational experiences? (comparative reflections, surveys with open-ended questions)
- When an instructional or programmatic change is introduced, which students report the greatest benefits—and which report little or no change? (pre/post surveys, disaggregated course data, interviews)
- What features of a teaching or support practice do students identify as most helpful for their learning, confidence, or persistence—and do these features differ across groups? (student feedback, interviews, artifact-based reflection)

What could be possible—and for whom? Designing and testing differential change

- What happens when expectations, criteria, or pathways are made more explicit, and how do students from different backgrounds respond to that transparency? (assignment redesign, pre/post reflections, surveys)
- How does changing a structural feature of the learning environment (assessment, feedback, support access) shift students' sense of agency or ability to persist? (artifact comparison, interviews, learning analytics)
- How might insights from this course or program inform changes to broader practices (e.g., advising, onboarding, professional preparation) in this context? (synthesis of findings, stakeholder feedback, design proposals)

What matters—and to whom? Interpreting values, assumptions, and consequences

- What kinds of learning, participation, or achievement are most visible and rewarded in this course or program, and which forms of learning remain less visible and less rewarded? (assignment analysis, grading criteria, student reflections)
- How do different students and instructors define success or rigor in this context, and where do those definitions align or conflict? (surveys, interviews, syllabus and rubric analysis)
- How do students describe their sense of belonging, legitimacy, or recognition in this learning environment, and how does this vary across identities? (belonging surveys, reflective prompts, interviews)