

## The SoTL Research Paper

SoTL Research Papers present original research relevant to teaching and learning in Canadian higher education (5,000–8,000 words, including references).

### What is a research paper?

A research paper is a submission type that authors can opt for when they would like to share the process and findings of their original research related to teaching and learning. Often, this means that authors have collected data directly from their courses or another instructor's courses using various methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observation, or artifact analysis, but it can also include a wide variety of research methods. These could include approaches such as systematic literature review, autoethnography, institutional ethnography, arts-based methods, narrative inquiry, critical participatory action research, phenomenology, or others.

In *Pedagogical Inquiry and Practice*, research papers are distinguished from research briefs in that they present and discuss the full design and results of a study, and they are distinguished from essays in that they apply careful and deliberate methodology to their data collection and analysis.

Generally, a research paper will include the following:

- The research question and goals of the research
- A literature review that contextualizes the research and identifies existing relevant research
- A clear description of the methodological context, methods used, and research steps
- An ethics approval statement, where appropriate
- Presentation of findings
- Discussion of results and implications for future research
- Relevant appendices, such as survey instruments

### What kinds of research are appropriate?

SoTL is a field that is interdisciplinary by nature and is organized around its applied and practice-oriented focus. It is grounded in the context of learning, seeing teaching as an ever-evolving and scholarly process that seeks to improve learning. As such, SoTL research often centres on student experiences and participation in their learning processes.

*PIP* is focused on the critical inquiry into the many elements of SoTL (including but not limited to): assessment, teaching practice, innovative course design, education technology, curriculum, the use of and ethics around artificial intelligence, accessibility

and universal design for learning, reflective professional practice, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Thus, many types of research papers may be suitable for the journal.

### **What special ethical considerations are needed?**

Because SoTL research seeks to determine the impact and efficacy of various pedagogical methods and approaches, most SoTL research centres students or student work as the focus of its analysis or engages students as research partners. Thus, Research Ethics Board (REB) approval is often required. This approval should be obtained by the author's own institutional ethics review board or committee, and the paper should include a statement indicating when approval was granted, usually presented as part of the methods section.

When conducting SoTL research, researchers should be particularly aware of the considerations that can arise from holding a dual role as an instructor and researcher, from managing student perceptions and trust-building, and from working with small sample sizes where anonymity can be more challenging to ensure. Researchers are also encouraged to give careful thought to identifying and articulating how their research benefits all stakeholders, including students, prior to undertaking SoTL research.

### **Are there examples of research papers that I can consult?**

Lacasse, M., Douville, F., Gagnon, J., Simard, C., & Côté, L. (2019). Theories and models in health sciences education: A literature review. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(3), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2019.3.9477>

Ludy, M.-J., Brackenbury, T., Folkins, J. W., Peet, S. H., Langendorfer, S. J., Beining, K. (2016). Student impressions of syllabus design: Engaging versus contractual syllabus. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(2), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.20429/ijstl.2016.100206>

Smeltzer, S., Poli, A., & Axenova, K. (2024). Crisis of meaning: Compassion and community engaged learning. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 15(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotlrcacea.2024.2.15603>

### **Additional Resources**

Fedoruk, L. (Ed.). (2022). *Ethics and the scholarship of teaching and learning*. Springer.

Yeo, M., Miller-Young, J., & Manarin, K. (2024). *SoTL research methodologies: A guide to conceptualizing and conducting the scholarship of teaching and learning*. Routledge.

### **Contact Information**

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