A 3-PART FRAMEWORK TO BUILD A SOTL COMMUNITY FOR FACULTY STAFF & BELONGING

Natalie Schneider, Erica Lott, Cara Putman, Kelly Blanchard
Purdue University

PURDUE UNIVERSITY | Mitch Daniels School of Business

Attendee Introductions:

How do you build community with your fellow faculty?
How can we support you today?

Examples might include faculty learning communities, brown bag luncheons, attending conferences as a group, professional development workshops, socialization before/after meetings, etc.

What is a Faculty Learning Community

And why would we want to form one?

Faculty Learning Community:

A structured, peer-led group of faculty, staff, and graduate students who meet regularly to collaborate on teaching, learning, or professional challenges.

Why form one?

To provide professional development opportunities, dilute disciplinary silos, foster belongingness, maintain academic performance, strengthen faculty/staff well-being, improve higher education practices

Where we're headed

By the end of today, you should be able to…

Identify

Institutional challenges that SOTL learning communities can help address

Outline

Plans for fostering community at your own institution

Discuss

Current SOTL topics of interest for learning communities

Exchange

Practical strategies for building community at your own institution

HOW WE BEGAN OUR SOTL COMMUNITY: Forming a Sense of Belongingness

Cara Putman

PURDUE UNIVERSITY | Mitch Daniels School of Business

Learning from the Center for Instructional Excellence

Bring Community of Practice to Daniels

Recreate Faculty Reading Groups in Daniels



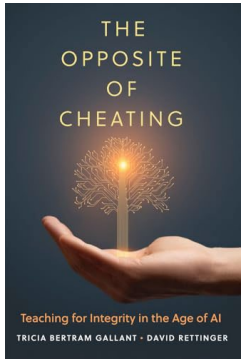
What constitutes a typical SoTL meeting?

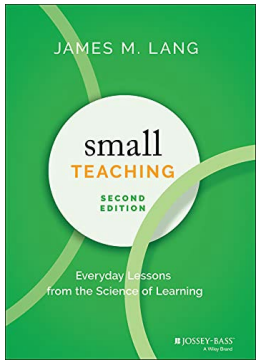
Schedule Outline

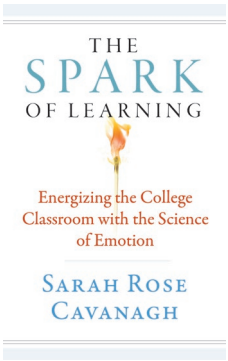
- Lunch and socialization (30 minutes)
- Content presentation/guest speaker (30 minutes)
- Whole group discussion (30 minutes)
- Meet on Tuesdays in Fall, Wednesdays in Spring

Past Content:

- Academic Integrity and AI challenges:
  - Guest Speakers (Student Rights and Responsibilities, DRC, AI, Librarians, etc.)
- Reading group:
  - “The Opposite of Cheating”
  - "Small Teaching"
  - The Spark of Learning"







HOW WE EXTENDED OUR SOTL COMMUNITY: Providing professional development

Natalie Schneider

PURDUE UNIVERSITY | Mitch Daniels School of Business

Introducing Coffee & Curiosity

Why are faculty not taking advantage of SoTL research opportunities?

1. The way we teach is our “normal”; is it worthy of a publication?
2. Doctoral training does not necessarily include SoTL training
3. Lack of time is often biggest contributor to impeding SoTL publications

Introducing Coffee & Curiosity

Monthly Workshops

The presentation of “how-to” SoTL applications.

- Fall 2025: What is SoTL? IRB? Publications?
- Spring 2026: How to Publish in SoTL: Teaching briefs, research, conference proposals, posters
- Fall 2026: SoTL Methodology (Quantitative vs. Qualitative)

Biweekly Writing Groups

In-person writing groups on campus where participants are encouraged to work on their SoTL project. This puts dedicated time on our busy calendars and allows us to work on projects with other people also present and committed.

Introducing Coffee & Curiosity

End of Semester Teaching Showcase

In Spring 2026, we ended the semester with a teaching showcase, where faculty shared a unique teaching pedagogy to peers in focused work groups

- 50+ attendees, including faculty, staff, and administration
- 12 presenters
- Ended with teaching summit meeting (increased attendance)







HOW WE DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF OUR SOTL COMMUNITY

Erica Lott

PURDUE UNIVERSITY | Mitch Daniels School of Business

Value of SoTL Programming

- **Building community and belonging:** Creates cross-disciplinary connections, reduces isolation, and provides a supportive environment for discussing teaching challenges.
- **Advances teaching and scholarship:** Encourages collaboration, sharing of evidence-based teaching practices, and engagement in SoTL research.

Assessing and Reporting Impact

- **Engagement and participation:** Track attendance, repeat participation, representation across departments and faculty/staff roles, and participation in scholarly activities.
- **Outcomes and continuous improvement:** Gather participant feedback, document teaching innovations and SoTL outputs, and use findings to refine programming and demonstrate value to leadership.

What can you share about the value of SoTL community to leadership?

1

Connecting Programming to Institutional Priorities

- Align programming with institutional goals for teaching excellence, faculty development (required for some accreditation), scholarly productivity, and belonging and retention.
- Communicate how FLCs support collaboration across disciplines and continuous improvement in teaching.

2

Documenting and Communicating Impact: Engagement, Productivity, and Outcomes

- Track attendance, repeat participation, and representation across departments and faculty roles.
- Document ongoing SoTL projects, collaborations, conference presentations, and publications.
- Gather feedback on professional connections, teaching practices, and program value.

3

Using Evidence to Sustain Support

- Share participation trends, scholarly accomplishments, and faculty success stories with leadership.
- Use evidence of impact and participant feedback to justify resources, refine programming, and support continued investment.

How to share the value of SoTL community to leadership?

- Keep updates brief
- Data-driven focus
- Relationship to teaching evaluations and student experience
- Program reviews - synthesize course learning outcomes into broader core competency frameworks
- High-level reporting that highlights key trends and/or summary data that tells a story

Considering the examples we've shared and your institution's priorities, **what evidence would be most compelling to leadership at your institution when advocating for continued support of an FLC?**

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A Mock Example with Focus Groups:

We will split into three tables. Rotations will occur for you to attend two.

1. Cara: What are some topics that would be relevant and helpful for faculty and staff at your institution?

2. Natalie: How do you create time for this? (Service contributions, reporting publications in performance reviews, etc.)

3. Erica: Flight cancelled and unable to join us

~10 minutes per rotation

3-Part Framework:

1) **Socialization**
2) **Content Sharing**
3) **Group Discussion**

You've experienced a condensed sample of our 3-Part Framework in this session!

3-Part Framework: How It Works

1

Socialization

Build trust and belonging

Open each meeting with informal time to connect across departments.

2

Content Sharing

Bring SoTL into the room

Members share articles, methods, or project updates to spark ideas and build a common language.

3

Group Discussion

Turn ideas into action

Guided conversation helps members apply insights to their own courses and research questions.

Together, the three parts turn a meeting into a community.

Thank you!

Natalie Schneider nmschnei@purdue.edu
Erica Lott ealott@purdue.edu
Cara Putman, JD MBA cputman@purdue.edu

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