

# Research Methods for Doing The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Kathleen McKinney  
Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning  
Illinois State University

## Overview of Research Methods

“Research methods” is conceptualized broadly here in an effort to be inclusive of a variety of epistemologies in a variety of disciplines. Virtually all disciplines have some method that can be adapted to do SoTL. In addition, though many methods are especially appropriate to the social sciences, faculty members in other disciplines can get help, learn, and use these methods to do SoTL in their disciplines.

1. reflection, analysis, and sharing of a product that discusses, reports on teaching and learning (e.g., a teaching portfolio, an essay or poem on one’s teaching)
2. interviews and focus groups (e.g., face-to-face conversation with open-ended questions with students or others; tend to be mostly qualitative)
3. questionnaires (e.g., survey students and/or faculty members on a topic; tends to be mostly quantitative)
4. content analysis of text or documents (e.g., analysis of student papers)
5. secondary analysis of existing data (e.g., student records or test data or other questionnaire data)
6. quasi-experiments (e.g., comparison of two sections of the same course where one section, for example, has an additional assignment or uses more active learning, etc.)
7. Other?

## Some Useful Articles and Books

- Bass, R. (1999). The scholarship of teaching: What’s the problem? *Inventio: Creative Thinking about Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 1–10.
- Cross, K. P., & Steadman, M. H. (1996). *Classroom research: Implementing the scholarship of teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Huber, M. T., & Morreale, S. P. (Eds.). (2002). *Disciplinary styles in the scholarship of teaching and learning: Exploring common ground*. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.
- Hutchings, P. (2000). *Opening lines: Approaches to the scholarship of teaching and learning*. Menlo Park, CA: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Hutchings, P. (2002). *Ethics of inquiry: Issues in the scholarship of teaching and learning*. Menlo Park, CA: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.