List ways you've measured student learning in the past.

Before we move on to what you're going to measure for this project, though, it'll be helpful to think about what you've done in the past to measure your students' learning. For this part of the workshop, let's think about measurement of student growth in terms of grading. Consider the following things that might be used to determine student grades:

- In-class or virtual participation (frequency, quality)
- Portfolios (breadth of work, quantity of materials included, legitimacy of work included)
- Performance (games, role playing, computer simulations, or demonstration of lab techniques)
- Attendance
- Journals
- Writing
- Problem solving
- Final products
- Demonstration of process

How have you graded your students in the past? On what were their grades based?

Review and reflect on your past approaches to measuring student learning.

How do you know that the grades you assigned students were valid and accurate reflections of what they demonstrated through their work with you?

What did you do to ensure consistency of grading across students within each course?

What might you have done to make grading within a course even more consistent across students?

Brainstorm approaches you might take to determining what your students learned as a result of participating in your SoTL project.

Find a colleague. Share with her or him what, specifically, you expect your students to learn or be able to do as a result of participating in your project. Now, together, brainstorm…

For each thing that you expect your students to learn as a result of participating in your SoTL project, list all of the possible ways that you might use to determine what they've learned. At this point, all ideas will be useful—don't censor any of them!

Review and reflect on approaches you might take to determine what your students learned as a result of participating in your SoTL project.

Now ask yourself these questions:
- Which of these approaches causes a serious struggle when I try to logically defend it as yielding true and valid evidence of what I wanted my students to learn?
- Which of these approaches can I easily and logically defend as yielding true and valid evidence of what I wanted my students to learn?

Now think about factors that might affect your ability to take any one of these approaches. For example, consider the following:
- Time to gather or administer
- Time to score or grade
- Ability to develop a consistent approach to measuring across students
- Generation of an unwieldy amount of data
- Lack of understanding of how to analyze the data
- Excessive monetary cost

Cross out the options that you can't defend or that aren't feasible (but first ask yourself again if they really aren't feasible!); circle the options that you can defend and that do seem feasible.

Relocate to this space the approaches for determining what your students learned as a result of participating in your SoTL project that you've identified as defensible and feasible.

Examples: 1) Have students write background sketches of their characters. Discuss each student's sketch with her or him. Rate each student on his or her ability to use the text of the play to justify the sketch.   2) Using a rubric to guide the process, observe students during rehearsals and rate the extent to which they incorporated director feedback into their performances and revised their portrayals of their characters.

Relocate to this space the approaches for determining what your students learned as a result of participating in your research project that you've identified as defensible and feasible.

Connect your objective for your SoTL project to the approach that you're going to take to measure student learning.

In the table below, relocate your objective to the column on the left. Relocate the corresponding and relevant measure to the column on the right. Explicitly connect the two in the merged box that appears below them. Repeat the process for other objectives.

Example:

What, specifically, do you expect your students to learn or be able to do as a result of participating in your project? Theatre students will develop the ability to collaborate with a director regarding issues related to character portrayal.	What approach are you going to take to determine this? What is your measure of student learning? 1) ratings of student ability to use the text of the play to justify their written background character sketches 2) scores from observations of students during rehearsals that reflect the extent to which they incorporated director feedback into their performances
For each thing you expect your students to learn or be able to do, explicitly link what you expect your students will learn or be able to do as a result of participating in your SoTL project with the relevant measure. Theatre students will develop the ability to collaborate with a director on character portrayal. Ability to collaborate will be measured through conversations with the students and through observations of their performances. Conversations will be rated according to student ability to justify their own written sketches of their characters, and observations of performances will be scored using a rubric targeting the extent to which those performances effectively incorporated director feedback.	

What, specifically, do you expect your students to learn or be able to do as a result of participating in your project?	What approach are you going to take to determine this? What is your measure of student learning?
For each thing you expect your students to learn or be able to do, explicitly link what you expect your students will learn or be able to do as a result of participating in your project with the relevant measure.	

You've just articulated an plan for your SoTL project—a statement related to your project goal that describe measurable standards by which you will evaluate project accomplishments. In very specific terms, you've described changes you intend to achieve through the project and what measures you're going to use to determine the extent to which those changes occurred.

Next steps…

Review and reflect on your SoTL plan.

- Does this plan really speak, ultimately, to what you want for your students? Does it align well with your goal?
- Does the measure that you're using *really* make sense to you?
- Who is the anticipated audience for this work? Will your objective and measure make sense to them, too?

If your answer to any of these questions is "no" or even if you find yourself feeling unsure, then review all of the ideas you've developed so far to determine where you should revise. While it may seem like a significant undertaking, it'll be worth it because your project will be grounded in a well-articulated and cohesive foundation. And if your foundation is well-articulated and cohesive, it'll be easier to plan and execute the project, and it'll also be significantly easier to write about it later.