Melanie J. Hamilton, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN, melanie.hamilton@usask.ca

Going Public Review

[Book Review] SoTL Research Methodologies: A Guide to Conceptualizing and Conducting SoTL

KEYWORDS

SoTL, research frameworks, methodologies, dissemination

INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), the need for accessible, rigorous, and contextually grounded methodological guidance has never been more pressing. *SoTL Research Methodologies: A Guide to Conceptualizing and Conducting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, authored by Michelle Yeo, Janice Miller-Young, and Karen Manarin, responds to this need with clarity, depth, and a strong sense of purpose. This book is a timely and significant contribution to the field, offering a comprehensive and practice-oriented exploration of the diverse methodological and theoretical approaches that underpin SoTL research. The book's enduring relevance lies in its focus on foundational methodological principles, reflexive practice, and theoretically grounded inquiry, elements that continue to shape and sustain high-quality SoTL work across changing institutional and disciplinary contexts.

The book is thoughtfully structured to support both novice and experienced SoTL scholars. Each chapter introduces a specific research methodology or theoretical lens, such as research paradigms, methodologies, or data collection strategies. The authors wrote these chapters based on their deep expertise with the referenced approaches. In fact, one of the book's most compelling features is the authors' diversity of disciplinary (education, engineering, and English) and practice-based perspectives. From the very beginning, especially in the preface, they clearly articulate their unique positionalities and collaborative, transdisciplinary approach. For emerging SoTL scholars, seeing this kind of work modeled is both encouraging and instructive. The chapters balance theoretical depth with practical examples, making them approachable for newcomers while still offering valuable insights for more seasoned readers.

Given ongoing critiques that SoTL texts can presume Western perspectives, readers outside North America may also ask how the book attends to geographical and regional diversity. While the volume emphasizes disciplinary, institutional, and methodological context more than geographic variation, it consistently frames SoTL as deeply contextual or "high-context" work. Additionally, the authors are transparent about their own positionality and explicitly argue that such reflexivity is central to rigorous SoTL practice. This stance is further strengthened through the intentional inclusion of Indigenous scholarship, including contributions that directly critique Western knowledge systems. At the same time, the authors acknowledge that there remains important space for further engagement with SoTL traditions from Asia, the Global South, and other contexts, an invitation that aligns with current calls for greater global dialogue in the field.

As a SoTL educator and program lead at the University of Saskatchewan, I have adopted this book as a required text in all of our graduate-level SoTL courses. It is an invaluable resource for students engaging with the complexities of SoTL research design, implementation, and

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dissemination. Within a teaching context, this book's particular strength is how it unpacks theoretical frameworks in a way that is both accessible and intellectually rigorous. Students frequently report that it enhances their confidence in selecting and applying methodologies that align with their research questions and institutional settings.

The authors' introduction sets the tone for the volume by framing SoTL as a field that is both methodologically diverse and deeply contextual. They emphasize the importance of aligning research design with epistemological and ontological commitments, a point that is echoed throughout the chapters. New researchers who may be grappling with how to move from a teaching question to a researchable SoTL project may find this framing especially helpful. Yeo, Miller-Young, and Manarin also highlight the importance of reflexivity, positionality, and ethical engagement. They weave these principles throughout the book and reflect on current conversations in the field about equity, inclusion, and epistemic justice. Notably, the authors also emphasize the role of students as partners in the research process, reinforcing the relational and collaborative nature of SoTL.

One of the book's most compelling features is its attention to the relational and affective dimensions of SoTL research. The authors organized the volume into four parts: *Thinking About SoTL*, *Generating Data for SoTL*, *Analyzing SoTL Data*, and *Disseminating SoTL* (see Table 1). This structure provides a coherent and accessible guide for the full research process. The authors wrote the chapters in an approachable way, making complex concepts understandable without oversimplification. A recurring theme throughout the book is the human side of research, which is both refreshing and necessary in a field where scholars are often deeply embedded in the contexts they study.

Table 1. Chapter organization

Preface
Part I: Thinking about SoTL
Chapter 1: Understanding SoTL
Chapter 2: Developing SoTL Inquires
Chapter 3: Thinking about SoTL Research Frameworks
Part II: Generating Data for SoTL
Chapter 4: Generating Quantitative Data and Constructing Questionnaires
Chapter 5: Interviews and Focus Groups
Chapter 6: Artifacts, Observations, and Reflections
Part III: Analyzing SoTL Data
Chapter 7: Quantitative Research Design and Statistical Analysis
Chapter 8: Empirical Qualitative Approaches
Chapter 9: Mixed Methodology Research Design
Chapter 10: Interpretive Research
Chapter 11: Transformative Methodologies
Part IV: Disseminating SoTL
Chapter 12: Academic Genres
Chapter 13: Communicating Visually: Ideas and Data
Chapter 14: Amplifying Your Research
Final Thoughts

The chapter on "Thinking About SoTL Research Frameworks" is particularly valuable, especially for readers who may not have previously encountered concepts such as epistemology and

ontology. By introducing these foundational ideas in a clear and supportive way, the book helps readers build a stronger theoretical grounding for their SoTL work. The chapter also explores axiology, emphasizing the importance of values and ethics when making research decisions. Additionally, the book includes Indigenous perspectives alongside Western frameworks, offering a more inclusive and expansive view of knowledge systems. This thoughtful integration encourages readers to consider multiple ways of knowing and being, which is essential in contemporary SoTL practice.

Another strength of the book is its focus on dissemination. In the spirit of SoTL, going public with our findings is a vital part of scholarly practice. This volume includes several chapters that address how to share SoTL findings in ways that are meaningful to diverse audiences. These audiences include disciplinary colleagues, institutional leaders, and broader higher education communities. This emphasis on dissemination is particularly valuable for graduate students and early-career scholars as they learn how to position their work within and beyond their institutions. In addition, the inclusion of "further readings" at the end of chapters extends the book's usefulness by pointing readers toward additional resources. These curated lists support deeper engagement with specific methodologies, practices, or questions; they also reflect the book's commitment to supporting ongoing learning throughout the research process.

While the book is clearly designed to be a practical guide, it also makes a strong theoretical contribution. By foregrounding the relationship between methodology and theory, the authors challenge the misconception that SoTL is methodologically simplistic or atheoretical—a view that still persists in some academic circles. Instead, the book positions SoTL as a field that is intellectually rigorous, methodologically diverse, and deeply engaged with questions of meaning, context, and change.

For those already familiar with SoTL, this book offers valuable opportunities to deepen and expand their methodological practice. Experienced scholars will appreciate the nuanced discussions of methodological tensions, ethical considerations, and the politics of knowledge production that run throughout this volume. In particular, the chapters in Part III, *Analyzing SoTL Data*, introduce a range of analytical approaches that may inspire seasoned researchers to experiment with new methodologies during future SoTL projects.

In my own teaching and mentoring, this book has opened up rich conversations about what it means to do SoTL well. It encourages students to think critically about their assumptions, to engage deeply with theory, and to approach research as a form of scholarly activism. It also provides a shared language for discussing methodological choices. This is especially helpful in interdisciplinary classrooms where students bring a wide range of research experiences and expectations, and equally valuable in faculty and staff reading discussions, scholarly learning communities, and other forms of academic development where SoTL is taken up across roles, disciplines, and career-stages.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *SoTL Research Methodologies* is a landmark text that will shape the field for years to come. It serves both as a guide and a provocation. The book invites readers to engage more thoughtfully, rigorously, and ethically with the work of teaching and learning. Whether you are a graduate student embarking on your first SoTL project, a faculty member seeking to deepen your methodological toolkit, or a program leader designing SoTL curricula, this book offers the clarity, depth, and inspiration needed to support meaningful scholarly inquiry. I recommend it without reservation.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Melanie Hamilton (Canada) is the director of the Jane and Ron Graham Centre for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and an assistant professor in curriculum studies at the University of Saskatchewan. She teaches and supervises students in the centre's grad programs: grad cert. in SoTL, masters of SoTL, and PhD in education: SoTL focus.

REFERENCE

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