

1. Title

Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Upgrade of Annotated Literature Website

2. Contact Information

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Budget update Feb 3

2058.89 spent in salary and benefits

216.00 spent for 2 years wordpress

Total received 2996.40 – saving \$ for next 2 years wordpress and final research meeting

= \$721.51

3. Proposed project mini-description (50 words)

The SoTL research website provides annotations of over 100 topics about post-secondary teaching and learning (see researchsotl.wordpress.com). Evidence of the value and impact of the website is based on over 1200 visitors from 13 countries over the last two years. This phase focuses on improving the site usability and searchability.

4. Description of the project including intended outcomes/deliverables

In 2013, with the support of an Educational Developers Caucus grant, a SoTL annotated literature database website was created to provide brief overviews of key

areas of research about teaching and learning in higher education. With the help of graduate students, that website has grown to over 100 entries. An internal grant provided for a graduate student to do a review of the site and its usability, including use statistics. The student recommended updates to improve the site format.

The review of the website revealed some challenges: The existing website does not work well with mobile devices and may deter visitors from accessing the website's resources. Evidence of this is the high visitor traffic landing on the home and table of contents pages. Far fewer views were noted on the annotation pages. For example, in 2017 the website's traffic statistics showed over 1200 visitors directed to the site from over 50 websites. However, the majority viewed only the home page and table of contents. This phase of the project therefore focuses on a website redesign to provide greater flexibility, usability, and tagging for search engines to encourage higher use.

Currently the Wordpress site uses a free template. Upgrading the site to a premium template (average cost approximately \$150/year) will allow for easier navigation and accessibility and will result in an improved user experience with the website's content. A redesigned site will allow access via a variety of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Content resizing will allow text to be viewed the same way across a variety of screen sizes, thereby providing consistency in how the website's content is seen across different screen sizes such as tablets, smartphones, and desktops (Garg, 2014). In addition, a dedicated domain name (included with upgrade cost) will be more appealing to web search engines and more memorable to site users.

This phase of the project focuses on transferring the content of the existing website to a paid WordPress responsive layout. The tasks include formatting the annotation tags to make them searchable for easy access, installing widgets and plug-ins to improve the website's functionality, and adding tags for annotations that were not previously tagged.

The Living Plan

The aims of this project align closely with the goals of the *Living Plan* (Educational Developers Caucus, 2016) growth area of *Enhancing, Supporting, and Advocating for Teaching and Learning Quality* by providing access to literature annotations on key literature about postsecondary teaching and learning research. In addition, a goal of the *Emerging areas: SoTL* is to “Facilitate and support faculty and instructor engagement in the SoTL by identify[ing] resources, communicat[ing] across disciplines, [and] provid[ing] guidance,” which is a key focus for the database. The database is a valuable resource for EDs in their role of providing resources to faculty for their teaching and SoTL and may also inform EDs’ own research, serving as a support to their professional development.

Intended Outcomes/Deliverables

1. Purchase a paid WordPress responsive theme that will allow visitors to access the website via a variety of mobile devices and will provide a layout that will bring annotation hotlinks to the forefront.
2. Make the search bar more visible so users can easily search by keyword or phrase.
3. Install widgets and plug-ins that are required to improve the website’s functionality. Widgets could be used to link annotations that match specific searches (e.g., annotations for research using qualitative design, etcetera) and to create a tag cloud. Plug-ins work behind the scene to modify any area of a website (Beck & Beck, 2012).
4. Transfer existing annotations and website data to fit the content area of the new layout.
5. Tag all existing entries with qualitative/quantitative/blended and discipline-based tags.
6. Update the annotation tags to make them searchable to facilitate increased accessibility (i.e., in addition to using icons to identify different research methods, tags can be assigned to each).
7. Plan and implement additional dissemination (to date has been via conferences and listservs; repeat these and add social media).
8. Survey potential users re: what would make the site more useful.

5. Budget

Item (including any applicable taxes)	Cost
<p>Graduate research assistant salary to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upgrade the existing SoTL website to a responsive searchable WordPress website. A premium WordPress theme is approximately \$10/month billed yearly • transfer existing annotations and website data to the new website layout • add tags to annotations that were not previously tagged • update the annotation tags to make them searchable • install widgets and plug-ins to improve the website's functionality • assist with survey design administration • create dissemination plan <p>\$ 30.00 per hour x 72 hours</p> <p>Plus 4% vacation pay</p> <p>Wordpress Domain and template</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase paid WordPress theme and domain (5 years) (\$150/yr) 	<p style="text-align: right;">\$2160.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$ 86.40</p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$ 750.00</p>
Total Cost	
Less matching funding obtained from other sources (e.g. Department/Dean)	
Less in-kind contributions	
Total amount requested from the EDC Grant Program	\$2996.40

6. Agreements

I/We agree to provide the EDC community, who funds this grant, with access to resulting information and resources for which the copyright remains with the author(s).

I/We acknowledge that I/we will submit an interim report and a final deliverable (as described below).

7. References

Beck, J. N., & Beck, M. (2012). Widgets and plug-ins. *WordPress* (2nd ed., pp. 125-127). Berkeley, CA: Peachpit.

Educational Development Caucus (2016). *EDC living plan*. Available online at <http://www.stlhe.ca/constituencies/educational-developers-caucus/edcprofessional-development-plan/>

Garg, A. (2014, December). *Responsibly responsive [e. learning Age]*. Retrieved from <https://www.upsidelearning.com/blog/index.php/2013/05/30/elearning-responsible-responsible/>

Simmons, N. (2013). *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning annotated literature database*. [Online resource]. <http://researchsotl.wordpress.com>