



10th Anniversary Invited Reflections

Great Introspections: How and Why SoTL Looks Inward

ABSTRACT

Over its 10-year history, many pages of *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* have been devoted to explorations that feature introspection. At this moment as the journal's founding co-editors, we look at how introspection manifests itself in many ways in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). We propose a taxonomy to help us appreciate some of the forms introspection might take and explore some of the benefits and challenges inherent in committing to introspection as a value. Ultimately, we argue that introspection is a pillar of SoTL.

KEYWORDS

introspection, reflection, scholarship of teaching and learning

We weren't around for the emergence of chemistry as a discipline. We weren't there to witness the establishment of its traditions and conventions, the development of accepted methods of inquiry, or its language. So, we can't know for certain that this discipline, or any other really, went through a developmental process like the one we are experiencing in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. All the same, we wonder if SoTL's developmental processes have caused us to look inward in ways that many other fields have not. We wonder about this because as we reflect on the 10th anniversary of the inaugural issue of *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* (*TLI*), we are struck by the prominence of introspection evident in its pages.

Do chemists devote time and energy to what "chemistry" means and why it's important, as many SoTL scholars—including many of the authors in the inaugural issue of *TLI*—do? Do they write about the "existential isolation" they feel within the field of chemistry, as Chng Huang Hoon and Peter Looker (2013, 133) did about SoTL? Do they meditate on the pronouns they use in their published writing, like Helen Sword (2019) did? Do they challenge other chemists to recognize how their citation practices constitute political acts, as Nancy Chick, Sophia Abbot, Lucy Mercer-Mapstone, Chris Ostrowdun, and Krista Grensavitch (2021) did?

Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe SoTL has a uniquely strong penchant for introspection.

There is a temptation to explain our level of introspection as being brought on by the "kinds of people" who are drawn to SoTL, assuming that they are naturally drawn to SoTL because it is a welcoming home for "introspecters." As convenient as this sounds, we would caution against such thinking. Attempts to identify personality types that are drawn to various fields, whether it be SoTL, surgery, police work, or painting, generally don't hold up to scrutiny. No, this isn't about "kinds of people"; this is about the nature of the field's development and the day-to-day investigations and thinking it invites.

INTROSPECTION DEFINED

Introspection. n. in-trə- 'spek-shən. a reflective looking inward; an examination of one's own thoughts and feelings. (Merriam-Webster)

The dictionary definition of introspection doesn't quite cover the range of forms that introspection takes in SoTL. For the purposes of this discussion, a somewhat expanded, more operational definition is called for, so (at the risk of sounding a tad circular), we believe a closer look at introspection in SoTL is warranted. We looked back over the 19 issues of *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* and noticed a range of types of introspection, yielding a taxonomy of SoTL introspection, if you will. (See Table 1.) The scope of the introspection progresses through the taxonomy, starting with the practice of teaching, moving to students, then moving to individual practitioners, and finally broadening out to the field. None of these types of introspection will surprise readers familiar with SoTL, and no one type is unique to SoTL, but here we bring them together to illustrate the nuances of a widespread and even field-defining pattern in SoTL.

Table 1. A proposed taxonomy of the forms introspection takes in SoTL

Type of introspection	Description	Guiding questions
reflection on our teaching	making meaning about what and how we think and why	<i>What did I do? Why did I do that? What was I thinking? What was the effect? What does it mean?</i>
reflection on student thinking	making meaning about what and how students think and why	<i>What did they do? Why did they do that? What were they thinking? What was the effect of that thinking? What does it mean?</i>
practitioner identity exploration	exploring our (changing) identities as we do SoTL	<i>What parts of who I am are relevant to what and how I understand what is happening in this work, and in what ways? How is who I am changing as a result of this work? What matters most to me and why?</i>
practitioner contextualization	identifying how who we are affects our work in SoTL	<i>What informs my identity when I do this work? What roles do I play within the context in question? What roles did I play to influence the findings of my research?</i>
field definition	describing what this work is and the outer edges of SoTL	<i>What is this work? What is this field? Is it a field?</i>
assessment of the state of the field	evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of SoTL	<i>What important contributions are we making? What's missing in what we do?</i>
scrutiny of SoTL as community	analyzing how we treat each other as peers	<i>What is it about us as a community that makes us worth joining or not? How do we treat newcomers? What language do we use that invites or discourages participation? Does that language invite some and not others? Does it privilege some over others?</i>

A TAXONOMY OF INTROSPECTION IN SOTL

We look inward in many ways in SoTL. Because of this, we will begin with a description of some of these ways. We will explore how and why the field looks inward, and we will consider the impact of this tendency.

Introspection as reflection on our teaching

From early invitations by Donald Schön (1987), reflection has been framed as a vital process of meaning making (Clegg 2000) leading to growth through questions such as *What happened? Why did it happen? What are the implications of this for what might happen in the future?* These questions are embedded in the work itself, as framed by Pat Hutchings's (2000) taxonomy of SoTL questions, particularly the most common “what is” and “what works” (4). But introspection, we believe, is a particular kind of reflection by which we place ourselves within those questions. So, in addition to asking the questions that develop the project design, in SoTL, we also ask, *What did I do? Why did I do that? What was I thinking? What was the effect? What does it mean?* These questions can focus on our behaviour, our thinking, or our emotions.

When reflection takes the form of introspection, the mental work can get harder, in part because of the inherent subjectivity involved (Poole, Jones, and Whitfield 2013). From this perspective, introspection has the potential to make us better at what we do while at the same time challenging us to confront the realities of our work as objectively as possible. This is one of the beautiful tensions found in introspection and, by extension, in SoTL writ large. One consequence of this hard thinking is that many of the questions we ask—like those illustrated above—make us better teachers, scholars, and colleagues, and make our field stronger. David Pace's (2004) “Amateurs in the Operating Room: History and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” reminds us very much of the questions that arise from the “hard thinking” of introspection. In his essay, Pace describes gaps between what is known about teaching and learning and what is practiced—gaps that are best understood by an introspective exploration of who we are as teachers and what we do in the classroom.

Alison Cook-Sather, Sophia Abbot, and Peter Felten (2019) argue that this kind of reflection is so central to “the ethos of SoTL” that “all SoTL writing” should be “more explicitly reflective,” foregrounding our “local context, lived experience, and human interaction” as part of what it means to do SoTL (15, 23, 24). Lane Glisson, Shane McConnell, Mahatapa Palit, Jason Schneiderman, Cynthia Wiseman, and Lyle Yorks (2014) illustrate this kind of reflection in their 2014 article in *TLI*, where they describe their collaborative SoTL project as “Looking in the Mirror of Inquiry.” They set out “to determine why they often seemed so passive in the face of new knowledge” (8), but as they observe their students' behavior in their classes and their own in the collaboration, the authors realize that they “exhibited many of the behaviors we attributed to our students” (8), including similar patterns of passivity, difficulty, and discomfort. Ultimately, this project “fundamentally transform[ed their] relationships to [their] students and each other” (11).

Introspection as reflection on student thinking

Coupled with reflecting on our part of the teaching-learning dynamic, SoTL also revolves around introspection on students' thinking and learning. We ask: *What did they do? Why did they do that? What were they thinking? What was the effect of that thinking? What does it mean?* Much SoTL research and theorizing concerns student thinking, or cognition. For example, the area of “self-regulation” looks

closely at how students think—about a problem, about learning, or about what is required to succeed. Major conceptual frameworks in the field like Ference Marton and Roger Säljö's (1976) deep versus surface learning and Jan Meyer and Ray Land's (2012) threshold concepts focus on the ways students experience and construe learning—namely, what and how they think as they are attempting to learn. These inquiries often involve what teachers think learning in their field requires, which then leads them to delve into their students' thinking.

TLI has featured several articles in which authors study their students' threshold concepts: Shelly Wismath, Doug Orr, and Bruce MacKay (2015) in science, Holly Hassel and Christie Launius (2017) in women's studies, and Paul Corrigan (2019) in literary studies. A related set of inquiries revolves around how students learn the habits of mind of a discipline. Stephen Bloch-Schulman (2016), for instance, wants to surface his students' philosophical thinking, so he asks a few to do think-alouds while they are reading a philosophical text. As he reviews the transcripts of a philosophy major's think-aloud alongside a departmental colleague's, he notes both what the student did well and where he diverged from the expert philosopher. Similarly, Stephanie Medley-Rath (2019) wonders how her students apply sociological concepts in their everyday lives. After she quantifies the concepts in her students' photo-based assignments, she resists assuming the use of these terms means students learned them. Instead, she questions "how much new knowledge students are using as opposed to relying on preexisting or commonsense knowledge" (26). In thinking about the lack of depth in their work, she concludes, "as an introductory course, this might be exactly where students are supposed to be."

The pages of *TLI* are full of examples of these reflections on student thinking, the kinds of investigations Pat Hutchings and Lee Shulman (1999) invited us to undertake when they talked about "going meta" (13). This introspection is not just about stepping back for more macroscopic views of teaching and learning. It is also about digging more deeply within as we ask ourselves how well we understand that thinking.

Introspection as practitioner identity exploration

SoTL introspection also shows how we "go meta" when we step back and think deeply about ourselves as teacher-researchers and the effect on who we are. This introspection leads us to ask, *Who am I?*—not as an existential crisis but as an exploration of relevant parts of our identities. Who we are affects what we ask, what we see, how we interpret what we see, and how we respond when we do SoTL. We ask, *What parts of who I am are relevant to what and how I understand what's happening in this work, and in what ways? How is who I am changing as a result of this work?* Early on, Randy Bass (1999) wrote that "what matters most" in SoTL "is for teachers to investigate the problems that matter most to them." So when we do SoTL, we explore the question, *What does matter most to me and why?* Through this kind of introspection, we develop our identities as researchers and teachers.

Perhaps because many people who come to SoTL work end up making changes to the way they perceive themselves as researchers, teachers, and scholars, this exploration of identity has become an integral part of doing SoTL work. We may review our disciplinary backgrounds, home institutions, geographical regions, socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexuality, language, and/or political perspectives. We may reflect on our recent or long-time experiences with students. We may even reach back to our own days in school. Before even starting our first steps in developing a SoTL process, we pause and think about ourselves.

For many of us traveling the SoTL journey, this pause to define our identity has been an important step. Nicola Simmons, Earle Abrahamson, Jessica M. Deshler, Barbara Kensington-Miller, Karen Manarin, Sue Morón-García, Carolyn Oliver, and Joanna Renc-Roe (2013) explore their identities as disciplinary experts learning to become SoTL scholars. They claim that an “unsettling of identity” is “inherent to the process of engaging with SoTL” (10). After their collaboration, they consider their own experiences and observe, “SoTL has troubled our identities, but has simultaneously led us to new understandings of ourselves” (10).

Introspection as practitioner contextualization

This identity exploration is related to the introspection of turning an investigative eye to ourselves within the context of the research. Rather than considering who we are and how we are changing, here we look at ourselves as both the subject and object of our research, aligning this work with participatory action research (Miller 1994) and even “self study” (LaBoskey 2004), though we do not always frame it in those terms.

Because we are part of our inquiry, we take pains to describe our “positionality,” our place within the context of our work. Explicitly or implicitly, we ask, *What informs my identity when I do this work? What roles do I play within the context in question? What roles did I play to influence the findings of my research?* These are, of course, questions that require some degree of introspection to answer. Of course, SoTL is not the only field concerned with researcher positionality, but we acknowledge it here as another factor that urges us toward introspection in our SoTL work. We might ask this as a researcher, and we might ask it as a teacher who is part of the phenomena being studied. Barbara Cambridge (2013) connected this type of introspective self-study to hermeneutics, in which SoTL practitioners “recognize and engage their biases, illuminating and mediating them rather than trying to eliminate them” and “look for their assumptions and try to understand what influences them as readers of the evidence” (20).

A significant way this shows up in SoTL is when we acknowledge our contexts as defining features of our SoTL work. In the inaugural issue of *TLLI*, Erik Blair (2013) urged SoTL practitioners to explicitly “consider how the space that they inhabit might affect their practice within it and might likewise affect the learning that takes place there” (129). Rather than worrying about “situational bias,” he argued that SoTL scholars should first reflect on and then write about “their geographical situation; the point in history that they inhabit; the local politics; the ethos of the establishment in which they work; the demands of the community in which they are located; their institution’s philosophies on teaching and learning; their own pedagogical assumptions; and their perceptions of the current zeitgeist” (129). Also in that first issue, Chng Huang Hoon and Peter Looker (2013) encourage SoTL to add “*what works, where, and why*” (141) to the well-known “what is” and “what works” SoTL questions introduced by Hutchings (2000).

This “*where of SoTL*” (Blair 2013, 127) may be as broad as the attempts to respond to the pressures of national quality assurance programs on history teachers in Australia, described throughout the article by Sean Brawley, Jennifer Clark, Chris Dixon, Lisa Ford, Erik Nielsen, Shawn Ross, and Stuart Upton (2015). It may be as idiosyncratic as introspection exhibited by Terence Day (2015), who describes his pivot to remote teaching “due to a personal situation that made it essential for the professor to be at home and not on campus for a one week-period in January 2012” while having “no experience teaching an online course” (78, 77). These articles illustrate this pattern of introspection that situates the author-researcher squarely within the work of SoTL.

Introspection as field definition

Introspection is pervasive in SoTL, not just about our students and ourselves, but also about the work itself. We ask, *What is this work? What is this field? Is it a field?* Ah, yes, the elusive definition of SoTL. We must go there, though we often do so with a bit of trepidation. But fear not. Other fields have wrestled with definitions too. Wikipedia tells us that definitions of chemistry (or “chymistry,” as it was known in its early years) date back to 1661. The definition evolved as new discoveries made for the expansion of the field’s focus. It all seems straightforward enough, but in 2009, the Nobel prize for chemistry was awarded for “studies of the structure and function of the ribosome” —work that some chemists said was actually . . . biology (Nature Chemistry 2009). It turns out that this was not the first time a stir had been created regarding the boundary between chemistry and biology. If you are in one of these fields, you may well know about this. You may know about the field of chemical biology, just to stir things up a bit more.

This tendency toward self-definition is often attributed to SoTL’s “youth,” as Ernest Boyer’s coining of “the scholarship of teaching” was as recent as 1990. But the chemistry–biology skirmish occurred in a field that is well beyond its adolescence. It warms our hearts to learn that other, well-established disciplines have also grappled with defining themselves. Readers who have been around SoTL for any time at all will probably know that definitions of our field surface like burrowing animals on a golf course, and that the debates about such definitions take place with occasional sprinkles of angst. We have known people to shy away from SoTL because they were frustrated by what they perceived as the lack of a clear definition of the field. How can they enter a field, they ask, if they cannot tell their colleagues what it is?

And yet, definitions of SoTL abound on the pages of *TLI* and beyond—far too many to list with any comprehensiveness. Most, however, are implied and appear as brief descriptions that set the stage for the substantive focus of the article. A telling instance appears in Joëlle Fanghanel’s (2013) article in the inaugural issue. In her first paragraph, she notes that “an established view of SoTL is that it is a form of inquiry in student learning that informs and enhances teaching practice, and therefore improves student learning,” but she quickly announces that she’s staying out of “definitional quandaries” and instead will “reflect on what SoTL can do rather than on what SoTL can mean” (59–60).

Some of this field-definition is very simple, as in our inaugural editors’ introduction (“investigations of teaching and learning in higher education” [Chick and Poole 2013, 1]). Other instances are more complex, implied through explorations of SoTL’s borders. In the frequently cited “Principles of Good Practice in SoTL” from *TLI*’s inaugural issue, Peter Felten (2013) describes five traits that suggest the contours of “good” SoTL. If we jump ahead to 2021, we see Laura Cruz and Ellen Grodziak articulate SoTL’s relevance and responsiveness to the pandemic in “SoTL Under Stress: Rethinking Teaching and Learning Scholarship During a Global Pandemic.” And in this very article, we are joining the field-defining introspection by asserting that this is a defining characteristic of SoTL: it is intensely introspective.

Introspection as assessment of the state of the field

As a field that is still in its relative youth, we cannot take our credibility for granted. We need to be constantly assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the field and the work done by those in the field. This assessment constitutes yet another form of introspection. We ask, *What important contributions are we making? What’s missing in what we do?* The first issue of *TLI* featured nine articles that articulate the

various benefits of SoTL, even though our call was much broader— to “explore SoTL’s traditions or its cutting edges, its highest moments or the challenges that remain, its efforts to go public or its impacts in campus classrooms or hallways, its relevant constituencies or its unexplored audiences” (Chick and Poole 2013, 2). Joëlle Fanghanel (2013), for instance, describes SoTL as “agentive,” “dialogic,” “altruistic,” and “democratic,” a necessary alternative to higher education being “driven by competitiveness and international rankings that rely on objectivist understandings of practice for their judgments” (59, 67). Carolin Kreber (2013) writes about SoTL’s potential impact on “students’ academic learning and personal flourishing” and the resulting likelihood “for creating greater social justice in the world” (9).

We also do not shy away from critical introspection about our field. Before offering “an inclusive conceptual framework for SoTL research and to demonstrate how methodological and theoretical perspectives can be aligned,” (44) Janice Miller-Young and Michelle Yeo (2015) review a litany of problems they see in SoTL, including too-general criteria for assessing quality and the absence of theory expressed in SoTL work, all of which make it challenging for newcomers to understand what SoTL is and how to do it well. We also critique how we write about SoTL. For example, Helen Sword (2019) celebrates the increase in first-person pronouns in SoTL writing but challenges one of the ways we do it (as in this sentence), asking “What are the ethical implications of using the identity-flattening pronoun *we* in situations where there is clearly a power imbalance between co-authors?” (188). Nancy Chick, Sophia Abbot, Lucy Mercer-Mapstone, Christopher P. Ostrowdun, and Krista Grensavitch (2021) observe a “misalignment between these ideals [to be open, inclusive, and welcoming] and SoTL’s on-the-ground practices” in citation (16).

We hope our introspective analysis here joins the above list of articles in taking stock of the field’s strengths and weaknesses. We see this kind of field-assessing introspection as part of SoTL’s vitality and necessary to support its growth.

Introspection as scrutiny of SoTL as community

Adjacent to introspection that assesses the state of the field is our scrutiny of SoTL as a community. We ask, *What is it about us as a community that makes us worth joining or not? How do we treat newcomers? What language do we use that invites or discourages participation? Does that language invite some and not others? Does it privilege some over others?* In the earlier years of the field, Mary Huber (2004) yielded some important insights about the “balancing acts” required in making a career decision of this kind by analysing the costs and benefits in four specific cases. Then, this exploration moved beyond the individual decisions people make to join the fray to considering what it was about SoTL that drew people to it (or did not). For example, while reflecting upon the ways SoTL involvement has affected their identities, Nicola Simmons, Earle Abrahamson, Jessica M. Dëshler, Barbara Kensington-Miller, Karen Manarin, Sue Morón-García, Carolyn Oliver, and Joanna Renc-Roe (2013) describe the ways in which “SoTL becomes a second home that allows us to maintain a sense of self worth where otherwise we might have faced criticism” (15).

We are far from perfect at building community, however. In their article introducing a special section on “Arts and Humanities in SoTL,” Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Susan Wharton Conkling, Sherry Lee Linkon, Karen Manarin, and Kathleen Perkins (2016) argue that “SoTL would be more inclusive, more interesting, and more significant if, rather than attempting to enforce methodological conformity, we recommitted to the original ideal of disciplinary diversity and exchange” (110). In the inaugural issue of *TLLI*, Chng Huang Hoon and Peter Looker (2013) reflect on their experiences in Singapore where

they have felt excluded “from an important conversation” (136) and their hopes that future SoTL practitioners “will be reflectively and reflexively aware of” their contexts, their language, and their assumptions (142), so they and others will no longer feel “On the Margins of SoTL Discourse.”

To adapt Stephen Brookfield’s (2017) observation about the “cultural, psychological, cognitive, and political complexities of teaching,” this work “is never innocent” (2). Through this introspection, however, we remain vigilant in remembering that we are a field of humans and are thus infused with often unspoken power dynamics.

IMPLICATIONS OF COMMITTING TO AN INTROSPECTIVE FIELD

As our taxonomy illustrates, in SoTL, we look not just at what we do but how we do it. We look beyond our methods to the implications of those methods—and not just ethical implications, as important as those are. We look at sociological implications—for things such as inclusion and exclusion, social justice, and geopolitics. We also look at how we understand ourselves and each other, and how we treat each other.

Indeed, as SoTL scholars, we engage in a relentless process of introspection, and this comes with responsibilities. We inspect, for example, the assumptions that underlie our work as teachers, researchers, and community members. We inspect what it means to be a community member and the detailed nature of those communities. We do not just identify students as a focus of our study; we inspect the relationship we have with them as researchers, teachers, learners, study participants, study partners, and potential leaders. We do not just study institutional factors affecting teaching and learning; we think about our roles within those institutions and the obligations—moral and legal—we have to help build those institutions in constructive and just ways. This deep reflexivity can be exhausting, humbling and, at times, discouraging. But it is who we are.

THE DARKER SIDE OF INTROSPECTION

For the most part, SoTL’s propensity for introspection has been a good thing. But we must be cautious and consider what unproductive introspection looks like. Below are just a few of these pitfalls.

Rumination

The tension between the right amount of introspection and too much of it can be understood in terms of reflection versus rumination. Reflection is constructive, focused, and honest. Sometimes we can engage in it in solitude, and sometimes we need others to hold up that mirror. Rumination, by contrast, involves repetitive thinking, moving toward obsession, without yielding any constructive outcome. Rumination is introspection spinning out of control. If we are ruminating, as opposed to reflecting, we find ourselves having the same thoughts over and over, drawing no helpful conclusions. We are trapped on a circular journey that keeps taking us past the same unhelpful signposts. This is the stuff of insomnia. Lying awake at night, we fool ourselves into thinking that just one more pass at the problem will do the trick; either that, or we have gotten into a nasty habit of grinding out a problem, and we cannot break that habit. Whatever the reason, all we are achieving is a loss of sleep.

For any academic field, rumination is potentially stultifying. SoTL is no exception. A field that features such a strong tradition of introspection needs leaders who can say, “We have covered this ground a number of times in the same way. Are there new thoughts that can be added to this discourse—to this communal introspection?”

Paralysis

Sometimes, unproductive introspection is paralyzing, holding us in place for too long. In practical terms, we can see this darker side of introspection in the pursuit of a definition of SoTL. In some ways, this journey has led us to illuminating places, giving us a clearer sense of what we are doing and why. In other ways, however, the journey takes us down dead ends that have gotten us stuck at the beginning and have demotivated others to the extent that some have chosen not to join the field.

Navel-gazing

We also need to be wary of introspection that becomes navel-gazing by keeping our attention focused on ourselves. This narrow introspection may create a kind of house of mirrors as we develop an incomplete or distorted sense of what is beyond our focus. We may envision ourselves and our teaching as a closed loop, like the *Tiger* comic in which a boy brags that he taught his dog to whistle but, after the dog's silence, offers the caveat, "I said I taught him. I didn't say he learned it" (Blake n.d.). We may forget that SoTL is not just about us and our teaching, and we cannot fully understand our teaching unless we take steps to understand our students' learning as well.

We may also overestimate the extent to which other people think like us, experiencing a "false consensus effect" (Ross, Greene, and House 1977). In this line of thinking, we forget that we are situated within a particular context and particular set of experiences that inform how we think. We may make assumptions about the universality or generalizability of our perceptions, as if they are not perceptions at all and we are the center of the SoTL universe. This pattern has been observed in some SoTL when we are not careful and skip over the practitioner self-study introspection described above.

We can also, like Narcissus, become obsessed with our own reflections, especially when we like what we see. Certainly, celebrating SoTL's contributions and continuing growth is a good thing, but these very contributions and growth will stall if we are blind to the shadows and gaps in what we do.

Solipsism

We also must not focus on ourselves to such an extent that we separate ourselves from our relationships to others. Even careful reflection can be prone to exceptionalism, or a "false uniqueness effect" (Suls 2007) in which we see ourselves as being more different from others than is actually the case. This is an exaggeration of the critical role our contexts play. Certainly, the teaching and learning situations that occur on a large research-intensive university in Canada are quite different from those on a small liberal arts college in Ghana. But they are not so different that students' and teachers' experiences in the two places have absolutely nothing in common, or that they have nothing to learn from each other.

CONCLUSION: WHERE HAS INTROSPECTION TAKEN US?

Those of us who have lived the *TLI* journey for these 10 years have grown very accustomed to submissions that are written in the field's introspective tradition. We embrace that tradition and are proud of where it has allowed us to go as a field. In our editors' introduction to issue 2.1 of *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, we defended a type of introspection as one of two "Necessary and Dual Conversations in a Vibrant SoTL"; the other being reports on SoTL projects. We explained that:

We in the field devote much time, space, and copy to evaluating and theorizing SoTL (in addition to reporting on the work itself). We do this, not to belabor already exhausted topics or to suggest an immaturity of the field; instead, this meta-SoTL chronicles and even celebrates its ongoing sense of becoming and its confluence of diverse and serious inquiries from specific contexts (Chick and Poole 2014, 1).

Many years later, we are still impressed with the field's commitment to growing both outward by welcoming new colleagues and inward by monitoring how we act on (or don't) the values of the field. We accept the responsibility to stay on the constructive path of introspection and remain vigilant about some of its potential pitfalls.

Finally, in the spirit of the introspection we explore here and the resulting humility of this thinking, we must acknowledge that our taxonomy above and our cautions about the darker side of introspection are probably incomplete. We invite readers to expand upon, critique, apply, or revise our thinking here, perhaps continuing the conversation as *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* enters its 11th year.

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