

Becoming a SoTL Scholar

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SECTION 3

SUSTAINING SOTL ENGAGEMENT

While one of the themes of this book so far has been how the breadth of SoTL can initially be overwhelming for those new to the field, experienced SoTL scholars may have their own needs and challenges. The four chapters in this section speak to a growing demographic in higher education: scholars who have engaged in SoTL and are now looking for ways to continue or even enhance their participation in the field. The authors in this section explore different pathways to continued engagement, such as finding and building on others' work, mentoring others, and reflecting on one's own learning and identity trajectories.

The opening chapter in this section, “**You’re Here! Now What? A Taxonomical Pathway for Sustained SoTL Research Engagement**” by Jeff Paul, Jillian Seniuk Cicek, and Renato B. Rodrigues, presents a taxonomy for SoTL as a tool for developing a SoTL research agenda. Since the taxonomy was derived from a systematic review of the literature, the authors describe how it maps the field, while also acknowledging that a taxonomy may be too reductionist for some readers and too holistic for others. Ultimately, they argue that such a taxonomy provides a common language within SoTL, thus building understanding and connecting studies across the breadth and depth of the field.

Next, in “**Complex Journeys and Theory as Scaffolding: An Illustrated Guide to the SoTLscape**,” Janice Miller-Young experiments with how illustration can contribute to the SoTL discourse. In a graphic essay consisting of four illustrations, she encourages readers to think meta about SoTL in order to situate themselves and their work within a landscape of practice. If scholars need to



compare and contrast their findings with others who've done similar studies, a meta-level view helps them see how to look across studies and make meaning across multiple studies. Her illustrations pull together ideas from the literature on SoTL, identity, career development, academic development, and communities of practice. In the first two illustrations, she highlights literature that contributes to her working definition of SoTL and demonstrates how she thinks of it as a six-dimensional space. In the second two, she shows some of her own SoTL research trajectories, explores what a "landscape" might look like if we are not constrained to three dimensions, and introduces the metaphor of theory as scaffolding. Ultimately, her chapter complements the taxonomy in the previous chapter, as both present very different tools for experienced SoTL scholars to chart their path through the "SoTLscape."

The next chapter in this section is Brett McCollum's "**SoTL Mentoring for the Mind and the Heart.**" In this autoethnography, McCollum describes the development of his professional identity as a SoTL scholar and mentor by using a model of professional identity based on work by Paterson and colleagues to analyze entries from his journal on his teaching and his SoTL work. He reflects on "unlearning" assumptions about research that he learned as a chemist, as well as learning the "hidden curriculum" he encountered in SoTL and how these unlearning/learning processes continue even now as an experienced SoTL scholar. Finally, he argues that the targets of SoTL mentoring should not just be the scholarly mind, but also the scholarly heart.

In the final chapter in this section, Michelle Eady reflects on "**Cultivating International Collaborations Towards Sustained SoTL Engagement.**" She discusses how she reached a point in her SoTL journey where she aimed to broaden her community and extend her influence. She outlines particular initiatives and strategies that can be valuable for scholars at any stage of their SoTL career, also suggesting that these approaches can be especially beneficial for individuals who find themselves isolated within their local contexts. Eady



underscores the importance and benefits of nurturing relationships that endure beyond formal, international project collaborations.

The chapters in this section are written by authors who have been in the midst of shifting their identities for some time. They share various ways to sustain SoTL involvement, whether by gaining a broader view of the field that helps them see where they are, where they've been, and where else they might go, or by developing meaningful relationships with others in the new space (or both). They describe how they cultivate relationships with new ideas as well as people and communities, demonstrating an openness to change which is an essential element in the journey of becoming a SoTL scholar.