



# Reflection Prompts

After reading chapter 2, use these questions to reflect on your teaching, research, and professional practice. Consider how your experiences, values, and context shape your approach to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

## Why You?

Consider how your early experiences and current practices shape the way you approach, define, and value research:

- What are your early memories of doing meaningful research? What inspired your curiosity, and what made this research meaningful and memorable to you?
- In your professional work now, what is research? How do you do it? What do you do first in a research project? Then what? Then what? How do you know when it's done? What is its goal, result, or outcome?
- What five words do you associate with the kinds of research you most like doing?

## Positionality

Consider the following questions to reflect on your positionality:

- How do parts of your identity motivate your teaching, research, or other professional activities?
- How does your positionality suggest possible areas of focus for your SoTL? For example, might you be particularly interested in student mental health and well-being or the learning experiences of international students, those who are first-in-family, or women in science?
- Given where you are in your career, what are your current professional responsibilities, ambitions, and opportunities? How much professional time and attention can you give to SoTL right now?
- What do you want the next five to ten years of your career to look like? How could SoTL fit into that future?
- In which parts of your work do you find joy or fulfillment? How might SoTL enable you to spend more time and energy doing these activities?

## Collegial Connections

These questions can help you reflect on how and why your collegial connections matter:

- With whom do you—or would you like to—talk about teaching and learning?
- When and where do—or could—those conversations occur? How could you make them happen more often, or for longer periods of time?



- What do you talk about when you talk about teaching and learning? If you find some of these conversations unconstructive (e.g., complaining about students), how might you redirect them to be more meaningful and constructive?

## Your Teaching Practice

Explore your teaching strengths, challenges, and contexts:

- What are your strengths as a teacher? How do you know, and how could you build on these strengths to enhance your teaching?
- In what ways do you most want to grow and change as a teacher? What would you need to learn or understand to support this development?
- How is your teaching informed by different aspects of the context in which you teach? For example, how does class size (i.e., the number of students you teach), the modality of your teaching (e.g., in-person or online), type of institution (e.g., teaching- or research-focused), or when you're teaching (e.g., during a politically charged historical moment, just after a global pandemic) shape your teaching practice?
- What do you do to make visible and assess student learning? Given SoTL's panoramic view of learning described in chapter 1, how might you expand or enhance your assessment practices?

## Your Students

Use the questions below to explore your understanding of your own students, and perhaps to push up against the limits of that understanding:

- How would you describe your current students? Who are they—including but not limited to demographic details? For instance, where do they excel, and where do they struggle? When do they seem to learn deeply? What do they value and hope for? What do they want to do with their lives? And how do they differ from one another in these aspects?
- Given your responses to the above questions, what are the implications for what motivates students and how they learn?
- Most importantly, are you sure about your responses? How do you know?
- When you talk with colleagues about students, what do you tend to talk about? How can your collegial conversations about students inform (or perhaps distort) your understanding of students?



## Your Institutional Context

Analyze how your institutional culture supports or constrains your SoTL work:

- How does SoTL fit within your institutional culture - its explicit values, and its implicit microcultures? If it doesn't fit well right now, what aspects of its culture, values, and microcultures might SoTL align with or support?
- In what ways does your institution align with Boyer's belief that higher education's purpose is "not only to prepare students for productive careers but also to enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose; not only to generate new knowledge but also to channel that knowledge to humane ends; not merely to study government but to help shape a citizenry that can promote the public good" (1987, 119)?
- How confident are you about your understanding of your institutional culture's approach to SoTL? In other words, just as our beliefs about students sometimes are rooted in false assumptions or lore, the same might be the case here. How might you learn more by, for example, reading policy documents or talking to experienced colleagues?

## Disciplinary and Professional Standards

These questions can guide your reflections on how SoTL can bring together what Shulman describes as your two professions:

- What is your discipline as a whole grappling with related to learning and teaching? For example, STEM fields are engaging seriously with active learning and issues of equity, and many disciplines are wrestling with how generative AI is changing what and how students should learn.
- If where you teach uses a framework for national or disciplinary professional standards, how might you explore one part of that framework as it applies to your specific practice?

## Public Aims of SoTL

Connect your SoTL work to your values and commitments to the public good:

- What motivates your professional work and your teaching? Do you have concerns about the public good (e.g., sustainability, democracy, justice) that could—and should—influence how you approach and do SoTL?
- What would it look like if your SoTL spoke to your "higher values" (Bass 2020, 19)?