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Which Way to SoTL Utopia?

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Keywords
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Where is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement headed? This paper offers a vision for the future by using an Aristotelian model of virtue to sketch an account of intellectual habits. We argue that these habits allow students, teachers, and scholars to engage in the endless pursuit of learning. We call this place 'SoTL Utopia' as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is the vehicle that allows us to reach this destination. While utopian, we argue that these habits will improve learning in higher education through more ubiquitous engagement in SoTL.

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Introduction: Why Do We Need a SoTL Utopia?

It has been twenty years since Ernest Boyer distinguished between the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of discovery in an attempt to address the inequity awarded to research (Boyer, 1990). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching put its leadership behind invigorating the scholarship of teaching and raising its prestige so that faculty could be rewarded for it. The then Carnegie President, Lee Shulman, hoped that by 2005 we would "begin to see a fundamental reconception of our shared understanding of good teaching. Ultimately, investigative work into teaching and learning [would] not be an intriguing aside, or an add-on, but an essential facet of good teaching – built into the expected repertoire of scholarly practice" (Shulman, 2000). It has been ten years since this initiative began and it seems safe to say that SoTL's presence is not nearly as ubiquitous as Boyer and Shulman had hoped. So where do we go from here?

The current state of SoTL is a matter of considerable debate. Some argue that SoTL has been less successful than hoped because SoTL itself is in desperate need of reform (Boshier, 2009). In the U.S., for example, efforts have been fragmented and often lack institutional support (Timmons et. al 2009). Others argue that SoTL has been reasonably successful. In the UK, £315 million over five years, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council of England, financed 74 Centres of Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Even granting some success, there remain questions concerning SoTL's ability to influence practice, both in terms of teaching and in terms of institutional activities.

Norton *et. al.* (2005) have shown that while teachers in higher education may have student-centred approaches to teaching, their practices differed. So while some teachers believed that teaching should be student-centred, their actual practices were not. In some instances, SoTL has been conflated with exemplary teaching and not seen as scholarship *per se*. Kreber and Cranton (2000) argue that teaching excellence is only part of a scholarship of

teaching; it must also include theory and research as well as experience based knowledge on teaching. There are many contextual factors that influence what faculty staff actually do in relation to SoTL, such as:

- the relationship between research and teaching (Weimer, 1997; Prosser et. al 2005),
- the role of theory in SoTL work (Hutchings & Huber, 2008),
- underlying differences in the interpretation and perceived value of SoTL within a discipline (Neumann et. al 2002), and
- rewards and promotion policies and practices (Price and Draeger, ISSoTL 2010). There is

further criticism of SoTL in its absence of students from representations of SoTL as partners in the enterprise who are often regarded as 'neophyte scholars' (Trigwell & Shale, 2004).

We would not be the first to suggest that 'SoTL' means different things to different people (Brew, 1999; Clegg, 2008; Kreber & Cranton, 2000; Trigwell & Shale, 2004). The scope of interpretations range from generating meaningful data that can be scrutinized in a public arena, to practitioner-driven creative teaching. The latter seeks to improve the student experience in a particular learning context, while the former attempts to document effective practice across learning contexts and disciplines. There is no doubt that these issues will continue to be hotly contested, but perhaps resolving them is not as important as it might seem. As with all concepts, we should recognize the context of application. For example, informal conversations around the coffee machine can rekindle an interest in teaching. Even if it is true that faculty would benefit from reading the latest SoTL reviews, it may not be reasonable to expect that everyone will keep up with everything all the time, especially given other demands on faculty (teaching staff) time. However, faculty and policymakers would be remiss if they did not consider methodologically robust data when contemplating substantial reform (e.g., shifting from face-to-face to on-line distance education). Indeed, it may be irresponsible to consider any such changes without consulting the relevant literature. However, providing an overarching model that can represent SoTL in all circumstances in all contexts is clearly problematic.

The consequence of this is that we need to think carefully about what works, in what ways, at what times and places, and for what purposes. While time for introspection may be in short supply, it is sometimes important to stop and ask 'why we are in higher education – what is driving us and why'? 'And what should we be doing to support our students'? It is these questions that have driven us to consider a SoTL utopia, and what might help us to get there.

In this paper, we articulate a vision for the future. It is the place where we believe institutions of higher learning should be headed. In particular, we offer a model of an ideal learning environment in which learners of all kinds including students, teachers, and scholars, develop a wide variety of virtues as a vehicle to SoTL Utopia. The approach is similar to those arguing for a set of intellectual traits or virtues necessary to engage in critical thinking (Paul, 1990; Nosich, 2009), though we believe that the virtues apply to learning more generally. While utopian, virtuous learning environments are not restricted to the most selective colleges and universities. Rather, they can emerge within any institution of higher learning. We call this place 'SoTL Utopia' because the hope has always been that the scholarly investigation of teaching and learning will lead to substantial improvements in the ways all of us learn, and that includes students. Our work is inspired by Aristotle's

theory of virtue, in which both individuals and communities identify goals and then develop traits which increase the likelihood of achieving those goals. We shall call these positive attributes 'virtues' and argue that they go hand in hand with the goal of ubiquitous SoTL.

The next section will outline some of the important features of an Aristotelian account of virtue. The following section will draw on these insights to sketch an account of pedagogical virtue. The final section argues that learning environments will improve once learners have mastered (at least aspire towards) these virtues. If this is where institutions of higher learning should be headed, then SoTL is important as the vehicle that will help us get there.

A General Framework: Aristotelian Virtue, Health, and Utopian Communities

This section draws on an Aristotelian model of virtue or excellence (Aristotle, 1984). The appeal of this approach is that it is intuitively simple, but it also offers endless opportunities for nuance and variation. According to Aristotle, the goal of any life is to flourish. For an acorn, this means taking in the right amount of moisture, sunlight, and other nutrients to grow into an oak tree. For a squirrel, this means finding food, shelter, and a reproductive partner. Both the acorn and the squirrel must contend with various environmental factors, and strategies for success will differ from one climate to the next. Even so, flourishing is intimately connected to the ability to meet particular needs under a variety of circumstances. Comparatively, human beings have a complex set of needs.

Consider the basic need for physical health. Imagine a person wanted to become healthier. How could this be achieved? The simple suggestion is to eat properly and exercise, but this is often easier said than done. While fruits and vegetables tend to be health promoting, bodily needs vary from one person to another. An eating plan is good only if it renders this particular person healthier than some other alternative. Thus, if the goal is physical health, then people are likely to flourish when they are in the habit of eating the right things at the right time according to their own individual constitutions. This isn't to say that we should become fetishistic about our diets. It may be appropriate to eat lots of junk with our kids as part of a fun day out, but the point is that the health conscious person will reflect upon when such indulgence is warranted. There may be times when we don't feel like eating the right things (e.g., chocolate looks better than broccoli) or times when we eat the right things but not for the right reasons (e.g., we want to impress our health conscious neighbors). However, long-term success requires coming to enjoy healthy food and eating it for the right reasons.

Following Aristotle, we might define virtue as the habit of doing the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reason with the proper feeling under the right circumstances (Aristotle, 1984). Notice, however, that we've only been talking about physical flourishing in terms of good eating habits. Since health is much more holistic than eating well, we will need to consider an exercise program that suits a particular person in a particular circumstance (e.g., medical history, level of preparedness, fitness goals). A person would be ill-advised to attempt to run a marathon on the first day of training. Indeed, this goal may never be realistic or desirable. As with eating plans, fitness programs must be tailored to the individual in question. While this requires considering a wide variety of contextual factors, people are likely to flourish when they exercise in the right way at the right time for the right reasons given their circumstances.

Because fitness goals are only one component of a person's overall flourishing, they must be balanced against other goals (e.g., family and career). Furthermore, a person's physical

health is interconnected to psychological health, which is related to relationship health, and relationship health is set within larger institutional structures (e.g., gender roles and prevailing economic conditions). Because physical health is related to many other aspects of life, trying to isolate "fitness virtues" will always be somewhat artificial. It is not as if the fitness virtues alone can guarantee flourishing. Still, thinking about fitness virtues as "success" allows us to glean the following additional insights.

First, eating healthy foods and exercising regularly might be things that we do to get into our summer swimsuits, but the true benefits are long term. Becoming physically healthy is not a static end point. It remains an ongoing project because bodies are always "works in progress." As we shall soon see, the same is true of intellectual health. Second, knowing what our bodies need requires empirical investigation. Doctors and fitness experts can point to what is likely to promote better physical health because they use well-established methods. This too is the role of SoTL scholars. Third, success requires cultivating certain habits. Aristotle tells us that "for the things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts" (Aristotle, 1984, p. 1743). On the one hand, this seems terribly unsatisfying. We want a formula, a roadmap, or at least some direction. Aristotle's point, however, is that we can only develop skills by surrounding ourselves with experts who have already mastered the skills and then doing them ourselves. Like learning a new language or a new musical instrument, we must engage in the activity if we are ever to become proficient.

Groups can help their members achieve individual goals (e.g., get in shape) and groups can also work together to achieve a common goal (e.g., build a healthy community). Both types of joint pursuit are valuable because of what they help us achieve. However, there is also "value in doing things together" (Sherman 1993). We might think of childhood play or a late night conversation with an old friend. These activities are characterized by an "in the moment" quality of engagement. Childhood play, for example, doesn't have to go anywhere in particular. It merely requires throwing yourself into it. Conversing with friends involves a similar form of engagement. The value of these activities is found in the pursuing and not (or at least not solely) in the achievement of some particular end. These shared pursuits are valuable not simply because they improve the lives of individuals and even the group as a whole, but because the pursuits are themselves valuable. Learning, as we shall argue, is a similar unending pursuit that is good in itself.

Applying the Framework: Pedagogical Virtue and Intellectual Health

The previous section sketched an Aristotelian theory of virtue. Drawing on this view, this section suggests that building a healthy learning environment can be understood in terms Aristotle's model of vigorous physical health.

The underlying principle is that teachers, students, and scholars should flourish through cultivation of the relevant virtues. By analogy with physical exercise, students should seek out rigorous academic challenges that are appropriate to their needs and levels of preparedness. Students have different conceptions of learning (Marton, Dall'Alba, & Beaty, 1993; Marton & Säljö, 1976; Säljö, 1975, 1979a, 1979b) and approaches to learning (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Säljö, 1997; Svensson, 1977). They also come from different backgrounds with different levels of preparedness and different long-term aspirations (c.f. Price and Richardson, 2004). Hence, pedagogical virtues must respond to those individualized needs. In particular, the learning environment must be set up so that

it can support student learning in a manner that suits their temporal and contextual requirements. Similarly, a model of a healthy teaching environment would recognize that different faculty members have different approaches to teaching (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999) influenced by their underlying beliefs about teaching (Kember & Kwan, 2000; Martin *et al*., 2000; Trigwell *et al*., 1999). While it might be true that teachers should push themselves outside their comfort zone, not every approach works for every person and many are at different points on their SoTL journey.

Teaching, learning, and scholarship are only pieces of a person's overall flourishing and therefore each must be balanced against other facets of a person's life. Because these aspects are interconnected, isolating pedagogical virtues will always seem somewhat artificial. Still, we can talk about learning environments which are more or less nourishing according to their ability to satisfy individual needs. Lurking in the background are deep questions about the nature of education. While we cannot hope to articulate the final goal of a university education here, we might explore several plausible candidates, such as:

- giving the tools necessary to succeed in the workplace,
- building a liberal arts foundation (Cronon, 1998),
- enabling deep learning of the sort that allows students to engage in conceptual transformation (Trigwell and Prosser 1991, Trigwell *et. al.* 1999, Prosser et. al 2005),
- ensuring that students have the ability to engage in lifelong learning (Cropley & Knapper, 1983), and,
- preparing learners to be informed citizens (Nussbaum, 2002).

These goals are diverse and there is no reason to suppose that they cannot be pursued simultaneously. Preparing students for the job market, for example, is certainly one reason we educate. Indeed, we would be failing our students if the skills they learn from us did not translate in some way to future employment. It is also true, however, that the value of these activities is more than job training.

Consider lifelong learning. Students are often interested in what will be on the exam, but becoming a lifelong learner requires cultivating a passion for learning itself and thus studying because it is something worth doing and not because this piece of information will be on the exam. Like physical fitness, learning does not have some fixed end point. We never reach a point in which we say "I've learned all there is to learn." Rather, being a lifelong learner requires acquiring the ability to intellectually navigate an ever changing world.

Or consider deep learning. If students are to move beyond mere surface rote learning, then they must engage in deep learning approaches in which they attempt to integrate atomic bits of information into larger conceptual wholes and change in the process (Trigwell and Prosser 1991). Deep Learning seems to improve the quality learning outcomes:

> Although the relationship between study behaviour and performance is by no means straightforward, achievement does tend to be positively related to desirable forms of study behaviour and negatively related to less desirable forms' (Richardson, 2006, p. 869)(see also Richardson, 2000, p. 182-183 for a review).

However, student approaches to learning vary across contexts. For example, students who lack prior knowledge of the material are more likely to adopt surface approaches (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Hazel *et al* 2002) and first year students more likely to adopt surface strategies as these are familiar high school strategies (Minasian-Batmanian, *et al* 2005). Because student approaches to learning are not stable across contexts, a deep learning approach in one context need not transfer to the next (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999). Therefore, if students are to achieve quality learning outcomes, then deep learning must become a stable and lasting feature of their learning. Intellectual virtues that are motivated by the intrinsic value of learning could encourage the exercise of stable judgment across a variety of complex circumstances.

Aristotle would remind us that we become successful only by practicing the relevant skills. He might concede that persistent effort is necessary, but it certainly is not sufficient for success in higher education. This is because human beings are deeply social creatures. In particular, learners need mentors and community support. Communities also create cultures of value (e.g., deep and lifelong learning) as well as information and other guidance. Thus, it should come as no surprise that deep learning approaches among students are more likely when academics have a holistic (and not atomistic) understanding of the material themselves (Prosser, 2005) and when faculty adopt conceptually transformational approaches to their own research (Prosser *et. al.* 2008). If teachers adopt a deep learning approach, students are likely to follow, as they tend to adapt to their teachers' approaches, (Trigwell *et al* 1999).

We have been arguing that virtue requires being in the habit of doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons, with the right motivation, under the appropriate circumstances. SoTL is important because it can document the most effective ways to acquire virtues and the conditions most likely to allow them to thrive. As with physical health, however, individual learners will need to acquire the habits for themselves.

The particular intellectual virtues that promote learning (c,f.,Paul, 1990; Nosich, 2009) include:

Courage Willingness to move away from the pedagogically familiar and fears associated with learning (e.g., being aware of the possibility of failure, but willing to take risks that will promote intellectual growth).

Humility Willingness to acknowledge personal limits (neither understating nor overstating, but proceeding with an open attitude to the as yet unknown).

Curiosity Willingness to explore new lines of inquiry (subjects, questions, lines of thought)

Patience Willingness to either moderate or supplement a passion for learning so that learners can complete a particular line of inquiry.

Charity Willingness to give new avenues of learning (subject matters, theories, applications, case studies, opposing arguments) a reasonable chance. While these avenues might not ultimately take learners where they want to go, they will at least be given

	the benefit of the doubt.
Collegiality	Willingness to engage others as fellow investigators without being cantankerous or prone to empty flattery.
Generosity	Willingness to offer reasonable assistance to others in their intellectual pursuits (e.g., striking the balance between being helpful without allowing another's pursuits to preclude achieving one's own).
Balance	Willingness to juggle a variety of educational and non-educational goals.
Integrity	A willingness to maintain high standards even when under pressure to lower them.

We shall now discuss the virtues in more detail, but the list is not meant to be exhaustive and the order of their discussion is not meant to imply a hierarchical ordering or value judgment.

Courage

Learning can be frightening because it is almost by definition the process of making ourselves vulnerable to the unknown. Fear is healthy because it reminds us that failure is always possible, but we should not be paralyzed by it. If learning requires navigating the discomfort associated with the struggle to understand, then learning requires intellectual courage. In particular, being courageous requires having the proper amount of fear. Utterly fearless people may not flourish as they may endanger themselves. There are some challenges too daunting (especially if one lacks the proper preparation or resources). It would be foolish not to recognize this fact. By contrast, people consumed by the unwarranted fear of failure act cowardly. They can't learn because they are afraid to take intellectual risks. The acts of the intellectually courageous are somewhere in between the pedagogically foolish and the pedagogically cowardly, where it is recognized which challenges are worth attempting at a given time in a given context.

Courage is important to the student trying to decide upon a course of study as well as the student trying to find the wherewithal to ask an unconventional question. In both cases, courage requires practice and a cultivated sense of which risks are worth taking. Again, however, the intellectually courageous will take a risk when they judge the conditions to be right. The decision rests upon many contextual factors (e.g., level of preparedness, overall interest, and educational goals balanced against non-educational goals). It is sometimes the case that students act for the wrong reason (e.g., by accident or to impress another person and not because learning is intrinsically valuable), however they are still on the way to acquiring intellectual courage. Long-term flourishing as a learner will require developing the habit of identifying and facing those intellectual challenges likely to lead to growth. Like physical fitness, this virtue is acquired one challenge at a time.

This analysis also applies to teachers. It may be the case, for example, that a teacher has settled into a particular style over the years. While it works reasonably well, there may be alternatives that would be more effective, especially given changing student demographics. The use of certain technology, for instance, might better suit the needs of a particular population of students. Something similar might be true of the content of a person's courses. Most of us have encountered seasoned instructors who continue to lecture from

the same set of notes long after the ink has faded from the parchment. Teachers, as intellectuals, would benefit from taking risks with content. This is not to suggest that change for the sake of change is always beneficial. Young, enthusiastic instructors are sometimes faulted for re-inventing the wheel each semester without perfecting the delivery of some particular set of content. The point, however, is that the courageous teacher will take calculated risks when appropriate.

Humility

Intellectual humility sets the stage for future inquiry (Paul, 1990; Nosich, 2009). For a student planning a course of study, humility might remind the student of the importance of prerequisites and building a foundation. Intellectual humility might prompt instructors to learn more about their students. Expertise in a field, for example, often does not mean that someone can effectively convey material to students. Humility requires that people acknowledge both what they know and what they do not know. However, humility should not be confused with a lack of confidence. If students are reasonably prepared for a new course of study, then they should have the courage to give it a try. Teachers should learn what they can about their students in order to adapt time honored techniques to new conditions. In this way, the various virtues are mutually reinforcing (Paul, 1990). Humility encourages us to take a careful look at our capabilities, while courage uses that assessment to help ensure intellectual growth.

Scholars of teaching and learning can help map out the pedagogical terrain. For example, they can document strategies that have been empirically tested and shown to be effective under the relevant circumstances. Both teachers and students should look to this evidence to create environments in which learning can flourish (e.g., identifying activities or technologies likely to facilitate learning under a given set of circumstances). Some insights into learning environments will be discipline specific and others will not.

Curiosity and Patience

Intellectual investigation benefits from a willingness to explore new lines of inquiry (e.g., subjects, questions, and lines of thought). While cultivating curiosity is important, learners must also practice patience. Mastering new skills and content takes time and effort. When someone's passion for learning wanes, the person might need to find ways of re-igniting the wonder that fuels learning. This again underscores the importance of cultivating the habit of learning for the right reasons (e.g., aspiring towards deep or lifelong learning). While some learners may need to supplement their passion, others may need to moderate their enthusiasm. Over exuberance, for example, may impede critical thinking. We might think of students so eager to learn that they spend time compiling a bibliography without taking time to read the items on it. Or we might think of students so captivated by a new school of thought that they are incapable of criticizing it. Again, virtue requires cultivating the right response for that particular circumstance.

Charity and Collegiality

Charity is meant to capture both the importance of intellectual empathy and fair-mindedness (Paul, 1990; Nosich, 2009). Learners may not always like moving into unchartered territory. For example, students may come face to face with "symbol phobia" when asked to study mathematics. Some may be put off by Shakespearean English and others scoff at the seemingly "squishy" business of interpreting modern art. It is not at all uncommon for students to encounter controversial and sometimes threatening schools of thought. Intellectual charity, however, requires wiliness to give new avenues of learning (subject matters, theories, applications, case studies, opposing arguments) a reasonable chance. While these avenues might not ultimately take learners where they want to go,

they should at least be embraced with an open mind. Something similar is true of the interpersonal conditions for learning. Students must not assume that difficult teachers are too old or out of touch to have anything meaningful to say. Teachers must not assume that struggling students are too ill-prepared, disinterested, or lazy to engage in meaningful learning. Both groups would benefit from the virtue of collegiality, namely a willingness to engage others as fellow investigators without being cantankerous or prone to hollow praise. This draws on one of the three unities of the Humboltian model of university education: the unity or freedom of teachers and learners to act in a democratic community where neither has 'ownership' of knowledge (Ash, 2006; Pritchard, 2004). Again, the virtues work in concert. Some people and ideas may prove to be unreasonable, but charity requires first giving them a favorable chance.

Generosity and Balance

Charity and collegiality are related to the virtue of generosity, namely a willingness to offer reasonable assistance to others in their intellectual pursuits. Like the others, this virtue requires being in the habit of adapting actions to the time and context. Some scholars can be faulted for their single-minded pursuit of their research to the detriment of student need. But some teachers can be faulted for allowing their own intellectual pursuits to wither because of a single-minded devotion to student need. Similarly, colleagues should be praised for offering constructive feedback on another's work. However, generosity has its limits, especially if it impedes the progress of a person's own pursuits. Thus, students, teachers, and scholars must learn to wisely allocate their resources.

Both generosity and collegiality underscore the importance of balancing competing concerns. When designing a course, for example, teachers must decide how to balance skill development and discussion of content. They must decide whether to expose students to a broad range of material in the field or deeply engage a smaller portion of it. Then there are the challenges associated with supporting a large group of learners at very different levels of interests, ability, and preparedness. Such choices ought to be made by considering the underlying complexity of various student needs as well as the empirical evidence behind how best to meet those needs. Students and teachers flourish when teachers can wisely balance a host of competing concerns. As with crafting an effective eating or exercise plan, there are many ways to be effective, but the ultimate test is whether those choices allow this particular group of students to flourish. Again, SoTL scholars have an important role to play in determining which environments are most likely to contribute to student flourishing.

Integrity

Pedagogical trade-offs must be done with integrity which often requires a willingness to maintain high standards even when under pressure to lower them. In the U.S., for example, there is a general difficulty maintaining academic standards in the face of a commitment to increase access to public education (Exley, 2002). This is especially true given that increasing class sizes mean that students are less likely to receive individualized attention (Cope & Staehr, 2005). Junior members of faculty are often under added pressure because their job security may depend on student evaluations. Because many feel that upholding rigorous standards damages their student evaluations, they feel pressure to "dumb down" the material (Payne *et al*. 2005). This is despite studies which suggest that positive student evaluations depend upon an appropriate level of difficulty and perceived relevance more than expected grades (Centra, 2003). However, teachers must uphold high standards even in the face of such challenges. This will undoubtedly require courage, but the virtuous educator will be in the habit of doing the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reason under a given set of circumstances. It helps, of course, if instructors have institutional and communal support.

This section has sketched an account of pedagogical virtue based on the model of physical health. It suggests that flourishing learning environments require teachers, learners, and scholars do the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reasons under a given set of circumstances. We head towards SoTL utopia by cultivating these habits both in particular individuals and larger communities.

Towards SoTL Utopia

SoTL utopia is not some distant land where there are more hours in the day and fewer demands on one's time. SoTL utopia can be instantiated in the here and now if individuals and educational communities work to cultivate pedagogical virtue. We do not argue that this will be easy given the demands of academic life. Anyone struggling to become more physically fit knows of the many obstacles that can be found in the way. However, it is possible to become physically healthier and the same is true of learning environments. A person might begin with a self-reflection activity asking himself "when was the last time I took an intellectual risk (with content, with course design, or in my scholarship)? When was the last time I stopped to take stock in what I knew and what I have left to learn? Did I dedicate myself to filling that gap? Have I lost the sense of wonder, passion, zest, or curiosity that got me into the business of learning (and teaching) in the first place? If so, then have I done anything to get it back? Am I charitable with new modes of thought or have I become entrenched? Do I listen to what students actually have to say or do I presume that I have heard it all before? Would I like to be my colleague or my student? When was the last time I sat down to prioritize the many roles that I am asked to play on campus? Have I allowed my standards to slip because it is easier or because there is institutional pressure to do so? What did students get out of my session that they could not have gotten from the textbook?" Asking such questions will not make a person virtuous, neither will answering them. However, the virtuous person will be in the habit of engaging in that type of activity that addresses these issues by crafting the best response under the circumstances.

Given what has just been said, it should come as no surprise that SoTL utopia is not a destination but a way of navigating educational complexity. By analogy, physical health is not a state that we reach and then proceed as if we've reached a permanent state of attainment. Rather, maintaining physical health remains a constant challenge because our bodies and our environment are constantly changing. Similarly, SoTL utopia will be an ever changing world in which students, teachers, and institutions are continually being challenged in new ways. It will also be a world in which students, teachers, and institutions will have developed life-long skills to cope with that complexity. Like Shulman's dream for SoTL ubiquity, SoTL utopia remains an ideal and as such is merely an aspiration. However, if the analogy between physical health and a healthy learning environment holds, then the SoTL movement should aim for SoTL utopia — a "place" where students, teachers, and scholars display a wide range of intellectual virtues in the endless pursuit of learning.

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