Chapter Two

TEACHER EDUCATORS STUDYING THEIR WORK

> For a long time in teacher education, we have heard the voices of educational researchers who do not burden themselves with the work of teacher education . . . but we have not often heard the voices of teacher educators themselves. Now we are hearing these voices in increasing numbers despite the unfavourable structural conditions of teacher educators' work. (Zeichner, 1999, p. 11)

Zeichner's (1999) observation that teacher educators have become increasingly involved in researching their own work heralds a new paradigm in teacher education research. For many years the perspectives and voices of teacher educators have been missing from educational research literature. This has meant that the concerns and needs of teacher educators about their work has received little serious attention since those involved in the study of teacher education were rarely involved in its day-to-day practices. Their research agendas were driven by different priorities and methodologies and produced knowledge about teaching and teacher education that was not necessarily helpful for the messy, context-specific problems faced by teacher educators, themselves. However, the failure of traditional paradigms in educational research to improve teacher education has paved the way for new forms of research to emerge, forms that more faithfully reflect the experiences and concerns of those who participate in it. This chapter provides a backdrop to the research presented in this book, situating it within the rise of the self-study movement and the development of interest in a pedagogy of teacher education. The chapter chronicles the motivations, approaches and learning of teacher educators engaged in researching their practices through exploration of the following questions: How do teacher educators develop their knowledge of teaching teachers? What informs the approaches they take? How do their chosen approaches affect prospective teachers' learning about teaching? What happens when teacher educators research their own teaching and, how does researching practice influence teacher educators' understandings of themselves, prospective teachers and the process of teacher education?

HOW DO TEACHER EDUCATORS DEVELOP THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING TEACHERS?

Pathways of New Teacher Educators

Two pathways typify the entry of new teacher educators into the profession. One pathway leads from research, whereby researcher (as current research student, or newly conferred PhD) becomes teacher educator; the other pathway leads from classroom teaching, whereby successful teacher becomes teacher educator. However, describing these as 'pathways' into teacher education is a misnomer, since the term implies some sense of special preparation, or intentional career move, whereby intending teacher educators follow a structured path of learning about a scholarship of teacher preparation; a scenario that is, in fact, quite the opposite experience of most new teacher educators. The real situation is summarised well by Wilson (2006, p. 315) who says: "not . . . many scholars of this new generation have opportunities to learn to teach teachers in structured and scholarly apprenticeships; instead they are thrown into the practice of teacher education." Hence a major challenge for teacher educators lies in developing an understanding of their role in ways that are meaningful and helpful for the prospective teachers with whom they work (and that lead to effective student learning), particularly so when there is little in the way of ongoing professional support or mentoring (Zeichner, 2005; Lunenberg, 2002), or a well defined knowledge base of teaching about teaching (Korthagen, 2001).

The route via which they are jettisoned into their role impacts what new teacher educators bring to teacher preparation. On the one hand, those who have 'landed' as researchers, may bring much in the way of epistemic knowledge to impart to prospective teachers (although their research expertise rarely includes teacher education), yet little in the way of practical knowledge about teaching or an understanding of the current issues that face teachers and learners in schools (Zeichner, 2005). On the other hand, classroom teachers who move into teacher educator roles may bring considerable subject specialist expertise and a great deal of practical wisdom about dealing with the everyday realities of schooling, yet little in the way of theoretical understandings about teaching and learning. Because their knowledge has been developed within the practice context, classroom teachers often do not know how to offer what they know about teaching to prospective teachers in forms other than 'tips, tricks and good activities'. Unfortunately neither background is, in itself, particularly helpful for effectively supporting prospective teachers' learning about teaching, since teacher educators are required to play a "complex dual role" (Korthagen, Loughran & Lunenberg, 2005) that demands expertise both in teacher education research and in the kinds of skills and understandings that come from experience as a practitioner. This makes the role of teacher educator unlike that of their academic counterparts in other university faculties or professionals in other fields; teacher educators must both teach their subject area (i.e., teacher education) at the same time that they serve as role model practitioners for neophytes (ibid, 2005). Further, they must be able to

articulate their pedagogy in ways that are comprehensible and useful for prospective teachers (Loughran & Berry, 2005).

Compounding these difficulties for new teacher educators are prevailing assumptions about teacher educators' work as a relatively straightforward task (i.e., that teacher preparation is a matter of 'simply' telling new teachers what they need to know), and unimportant within academia (compared with the more rewarded and valued tasks of research and grant writing). Hence, while new teacher educators may be well intentioned, they often do not recognise the complexities associated with their tasks, or that the knowledge they bring is insufficient for their new role. Two consequences of this situation are that, for a long time, the knowledge developed by teacher educators about their practice has remained static, tacit and weakly conceptualised (Berry & Scheele, 2007), and as an enterprise, teacher education has been more easily controlled by those outside the profession, since it is not well structured on the inside.

A growing number of teacher educators dissatisfied with these traditional 'plot lines' (Clandinin, 1995) of teacher education have been prompted to investigate its processes and their roles within it. They have resisted the forces compelling them to conform to traditional institutional norms and practices and instead have begun to construct new and different stories about teacher education (see for example, Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar & Placier, 1995).

Developing Knowledge as a New Teacher Educator

Mary Lynn Hamilton's account of her initial experiences as a teacher educator reinforce the notion that, for a long time, there has been no specialized knowledge of teaching about teaching for teacher educators to draw upon.

> When I ask myself how I became a teacher educator, I am left puzzling about the first time I thought about doing that or left wondering if I ever really initiated a learning-to-be-a-teacher-educator process. I suppose though that I first began the process long before I became conscious of it. In the unconscious moments I worked hard to train teachers to integrate their curricula with multicultural perspectives or gender concerns. I spent long hours designing materials to be presented to teachers for use in their classrooms. But who taught me how to do that? Really no one taught me. I learned by watching those people around me, by reminding myself what happened in my own classrooms with high school students, by trying to remember the stages of development and how these might fit with what I needed to do. I also learnt by making errors, major errors in front of the classroom. No class at the university discussed the process of becoming a teacher educator. (Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar & Placier, 1995, p. 40)

Two issues from Hamilton's account help to explain why a collective knowledge of teacher education has been slow to develop: one is that learning about teacher education is often experienced by the teacher educator as a private struggle, the other relates to the role of experience in developing knowledge as a teacher educator. Others have also reported these issues in their transition into teacher education

(Kremer-Hayon & Zuzovsky, 1995; Murray, 2005; Dinkelman, Margolis & Sikkenga, 2006). An individual, trial-and-error approach to learning about teacher preparation means that each teacher educator must 're-invent the wheel' in terms of learning to recognize and resolve problems encountered in the practice context. This is not to say that the development of knowledge through experience is not a worthy pursuit – it offers considerable potential for teacher educators' learning about practice – yet what is learnt is dependent on the skills and motivation of each individual teacher educator in how such experiences are analysed and understood. This is a point raised by Murray (2005, p. 78):

> Practical knowledge – developed in suitable settings, for worthwhile purposes, in appropriately reflective ways – can and should form an important part of what it means to be a teacher educator. However, if those conditions for the settings are not met, then that practical knowledge is in danger of becoming narrow, haphazard, technical and uninformed by a sense of the broader social and moral purposes of teacher education.

Developing one's knowledge of practice as a teacher educator in the absence of any structured support also leads to a tendency, at least initially, to reproduce practices experienced in one's own experiences of schooling or teacher education. Such re-enactment of past practices seems to occur whether or not the experience was regarded as helpful for learning (Kremer-Hayon & Zuzovsky, 1995; Ducharme, 1993). Interestingly, in institutions where support is offered, such as the setting in which Murray (1995) conducted her research, new teacher educators felt unsure about what support to ask for, since they did not yet know what they needed to know in order to progress in their roles (a situation that parallels that of many prospective teachers during their teacher preparation). Crowe and Whitlock (1999) offer an alternative perspective from their experiences as doctoral students and teacher educators. Both praised their faculty community as one that provided support and that valued experience and reflection on experience.

However, despite the difficult circumstances of their work, increasing numbers of teacher educators have become interested in better understanding and developing their knowledge of practice. Over the past decade, the study of teacher education by teacher educators themselves has moved from being a mostly private, ad hoc struggle to become a publicly acceptable academic pursuit. The American Education Research Association (AERA) Special Interest Group, Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP), created in 1992, (with a current membership of approximately 260), is testament to the acceptance by teacher educators (at least) of the relevance and value of examining the nature and development of their work with prospective teachers.

Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices

Self-study offers a means for teacher/educators to examine their beliefs, practices and their interrelationships (Hamilton, 1998). Self-study shares features with reflection and action research such that each involves identifying and clarifying 'problems

of practice' and working towards deeper understandings of those problems and changed practice through planned and purposeful inquiry. Importantly, self-study builds on reflection as it takes both the individual and the 'problem' being studied beyond the level of the personal into the public domain to make what is learnt available to others. Through making self-study a public process, the knowledge and understanding that is developed can be "challenged, extended, transformed and translated by others" (Loughran, 2004, pp. 25–26). Also, while self-study may operate via the parameters of action research (for instance, using cycles of reflective inquiry) it is not restricted to these parameters. The manner in which self-studies develop is often more responsive to the given situation compared with a predefined problem-action cycle.

An important feature of the self-study process is that it "yields knowledge about practice" (Dinkelman, 2003, p. 9). The knowledge produced is intended both as a means of "reframing" (Schön, 1983) teacher educators' personal understandings of practice and stimulating the development of knowledge of practice amongst the community of teacher educators, more broadly. In so doing, self-study researchers aim to contribute to the knowledge base of teaching and generating new understandings of the world (Hamilton, 2004). A significant challenge for the self-study community lies in developing approaches to representing the knowledge produced by individual teacher educators that are consistent with the purposes of self-study and that can contribute to informing a pedagogy of teacher education.

The growth of interest and involvement of teacher educators in self-study has been supported by particular changes in the research climate over the past decade. Changes include increased attention to the concept of a profession and the knowledge base of professionals (how professionals 'know' and use what they know), growth in research methodologies that more faithfully represent the experiences of those who are portrayed in research (particularly women, and research employing feminist methodologies), and the development of forms of research that explore the particular pedagogical concerns, tensions and dilemmas that drive everyday practice (for example, action research and practitioner research). Changing conceptualisations about the nature of knowledge in teaching and learning have been important to the ways in which teacher educators have come to understand, describe and value their work.

Views of Knowledge and the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices

Views of knowledge have traditionally been categorised as belonging to one of two different forms: knowledge that is propositional or theoretical, and knowledge that is experiential or practical. This dichotomous approach has led to the notion of a theory-practice divide. The separation between forms of knowledge has inevitably shaped the ways that knowledge has been organized, understood and valued in researching education (Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001). As a consequence, a pervasive and enduring tension exists within teacher education concerning the status

accorded each of these forms of knowledge production and the usefulness of each form in the work of teaching.

Much of the knowledge produced about teacher education (and education more generally) has been reported in the form of theory and made available through a science-oriented research approach. Knowledge produced in this way is usually in the form of generalizations, or propositions, that are considered applicable to a wide range of context-independent situations (Korthagen & Kessels, 1996). Such forms of knowledge production have long been privileged within academia because they fit with academic ideals of technical 'elegance' and the pursuit of knowledge as 'timeless truths.' And, while knowledge produced in this way is intended for teachers (and teacher educators) to use, it has proved to have limited use for teachers because it does not recognize or respond to the difficulties associated with individuals' needs, concerns and practices. This is due to the fact that such knowledge is often stripped of the particulars of individual situations that are most relevant to the work of teaching. Teacher/educators want, and need, more practically oriented knowledge than what has traditionally been made available through empirically driven research. This is not to suggest that such knowledge is not useful, but to observe that it is not commonly made available in a form readily accessible to the practitioner.

In contrast to traditional forms of knowledge and knowledge production, practical knowledge is personal, context-bound, and gained through experience. It includes implicit knowing, that is, a kind of knowledge that is embedded within action that cannot be separated from that action (Eraut, 1994). Practical knowledge has not been accorded the same high status as 'traditional theoretical' knowledge within academia because the individual nature of what is learnt and how it is learnt does not conform to established paradigms of standpoint, validity and reliability. Despite this, the concept of practical knowledge has attracted increased attention by researchers looking to more faithfully capture the nature of experience in their work. A variety of constructs has been associated with the acquisition of such knowledge, including tacit understandings (Polanyi, 1966), reflection (Schön, 1983, 1987), authority of experience (Munby & Russell, 1992, 1994), nested knowing (Lyons, 1990) and reframing (Schön, 1983). Munby and Russell (1994) use the term "authority of experience" to capture the status of knowledge derived through personal experience, compared with other, traditional forms of authority such as the "authority of position" or the "authority of scholarly argument."

An important element of practical knowledge that is inevitably connected to the practice of self-study is self-knowledge. Acquiring practical knowledge involves the study of self and the notion of "putting the I in the centre of research" (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996, p. 17). Central to this process is developing an increased awareness of how one's philosophy of teaching has been informed by the deeply embedded images, models, and conceptions from experiences as a learner (Brookfield, 1995) and the impact of these on teaching relationships with others.

Differentiation between knowledge types is apparent in the literature in many ways and to varying levels of specificity. For example, Fenstermacher (1994) differentiates between two types of practical knowledge: embodied knowledge or personal

practical knowledge, exemplified through the work of Elbaz (1983) and Connelly and Clandinin (1985), and practical knowledge that is developed through reflection on practice, based on the work of Schön, and researchers who have built on Schön's work, including Munby and Russell (1992), Grimmett and Chelan (1990), and Erickson and Mackinnon (1991). Both types of practical knowledge, Fenstermacher argues, "seek a conception of knowledge arising out of action or experience that is itself grounded in this same action or experience" (p. 14). For self-study practitioners, conventional social science methods have been unhelpful for the development of understanding of practice; hence the search for new forms of representation that can capture the complex and personal nature of the knowledge acquired. Self-study has built on this development of alternative approaches to framing knowledge as the need for more appropriate and helpful conceptualizations for researching, understanding and describing teacher educators' work have been sought (see, for example, Carson, 1997; Korthagen, 2001; Fenstermacher, 1994). The work of Korthagen has, for many, been a useful way of revisiting these issues about knowledge and knowing, in his drawing upon the Aristotelian distinction between episteme and phronesis.

> *Episteme* can be characterised as abstract, objective, and propositional knowledge, the result of a generalization over many situations. Phronesis is perceptual knowledge, the practical wisdom based on the perception of a situation. It is the eye that one develops for a typical case, based on the perception of particulars. (Korthagen, 2001, pp. 30–31, italics in original)

Episteme and phronesis are useful constructs in understanding knowledge developed through teaching about teaching because they help to define the nature of the knowledge that is sought, developed and articulated both by teacher educators themselves and by the prospective teachers that they teach. However, simply categorizing knowledge differently does not necessarily reduce concerns about how knowledge influences practice for, as Korthagen further notes, "many teacher educators actually work from an episteme conception" (p. 29), even though they want that knowledge to be useable and useful to prospective teachers. This leads to teacher educators' ongoing dilemma of better aligning intentions and actions in practice, a dilemma that is often a catalyst for self-study. Korthagen sees promise in understanding the difference between episteme and phronesis, as he asserts that a better understanding of the interaction between both kinds of knowledge is important in the development of understanding of learning to teach others effectively. This kind of understanding is a crucial issue in self-study.

Munby, Russell, and Martin (2001) report "overwhelming evidence" to support the idea that knowledge of teaching is acquired through personal experience of teaching. Phronesis, then, offers an excellent means of conceptualising the knowledge developed through experience. It involves becoming aware of the salient features of one's experience, trying to see and refine perceptions, making one's own tacit knowledge explicit, and helping to capture the particularities of experience through the development of perceptual knowledge (Korthagen, 2001). It also involves selecting epistemic knowledge that links with particular contexts and situations to further make

sense of experience, rather than imposing epistemic knowledge as the starting point. Korthagen's (2001) proposal for teacher educators "to help student teachers explore and refine their own perceptions . . . [by creating] the opportunity to reflect systematically on the details of their practical experiences" (p. 29) is also important in the process of knowledge development of teacher educators in their learning about teaching about teaching.

Teacher educators who engage in self-study may be viewed as responding to the development of knowledge as phronesis. Recognising the need to develop knowledge in this way does not automatically equip a person to do so, because holding knowledge in the form of phronesis requires both a collection of particular experiences and a grasp of generalities that arise from them. This means that inexperienced teacher educators, lacking a store of specific experiential knowledge to draw from and attempting to respond to traditional forms of research and knowledge, often find themselves in 'unchartered territory' as what they seek to know and their ways of coming to know are not always congruent. Phronesis links closely with Munby and Russell's (1994) notion of "authority of experience". An important consequence of viewing knowledge through the frame of phronesis is that perceptions of knowledge and its status change. The perceived privilege of traditional research knowledge is moderated, as it becomes only one part of the professional knowledge required for understanding practice.

Reconsidering different forms of knowledge and knowledge production in the light of episteme and phronesis frames traditional research as the production of epistemic knowledge and, practical inquiry as the investigation of phronesis. In many self-studies, teacher educators develop their phronesis as they learn how to make their knowledge available, practical and useful in their teaching about teaching. For some, investigating practice often begins by searching for knowledge about practice in the form of assumptions or taken-for-granted beliefs (Brookfield, 1995) that guide teaching actions. Practical inquiry aims to uncover such assumptions and to explore their effects in teacher educators' work. Often these assumptions elude investigation because they are so deeply embedded in an individual's approach. Brookfield (1995, p. 2) describes the process of assumption hunting as "one of the most challenging intellectual puzzles we face in our lives." He identifies the process of critical reflection as crucial to the assumption-hunting endeavour. Self-study involves locating one's assumptions about practice through the process of reflection, in order to facilitate the development of phronesis. Thus it appears that self-study involves developing knowledge as phronesis, understanding the conditions under which such knowledge develops, understanding the self, and working to improve the quality of the educational experience for those learning to teach.

Defining Knowledge Developed through Self-Study Matters

Teacher educators working to understand their own practice in their individual contexts may not necessarily be concerned with what kind of knowledge they are developing about practice, rather that they *are* developing a better understanding of

what they do. However, examining the knowledge arising from self-study is important because if the efforts of individuals are confined solely to their own classrooms and contexts, the problems of teacher education will continue to be tackled individually and in isolation. In self-study, there is also a need to find ways to share what comes to be known in ways that are both accessible to others and that can serve as a useful foundation for the profession. This inevitably involves discussions of the nature of knowledge since self-study seeks to position teacher educators as knowledge producers, and therefore challenges traditional views of knowledge production as external, impersonal and empirically driven. When what teacher educators know from the study of their practice is able to be developed, articulated and communicated with meaning for others, then the influence of that might better inform teacher education, generally.

WHY ARE TEACHER EDUCATORS INTERESTED IN STUDYING THEIR PRACTICE? WHAT INFORMS THE APPROACHES THEY TAKE?

Teacher educators who engage in the self-study of their practices recognise teacher education as an enterprise that is fundamentally problematic by virtue of the complexity and ambiguity of its various demands. By researching their practice, teacher educators ask themselves about the problems of teacher education and question how their own actions contribute to these problems. Unpacking the complexity of teacher education through its sustained study has led to important insights about the unique nature of teaching *teaching,* compared with teaching other content, for example, social studies, psychology or working with special needs students. Such insights then, begin to illustrate that 'just being a teacher' in teacher education is insufficient to highlight the subtleties, skills and knowledge of teaching itself. Russell (1997, p. 44) identifies a "second level of thought about teaching" in teacher education that is "not always realized . . . one that focuses not on content but on *how* (author's italics) we teach" (ibid, p. 44). Loughran (2006) builds on this idea, explaining that how we teach involves more than modeling practices consistent with our messages to prospective teachers, it requires being able to articulate decisions about how we teach, as we teach, in ways that "gives students access to the pedagogical reasoning, uncertainties and dilemmas of practice that are inherent in understanding teaching as being problematic" (p. 6).

Developing an understanding of practice as making explicit that which is usually 'unseen' and, as a consequence unexamined, involves a shift in thinking about teacher preparation from a process of acquiring information and practising techniques to learning to recognize, confront and learn from problems encountered in practice. Viewing teacher education practice as a "learning problem" as opposed to a "technical training problem" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 1) is an important indicator of this shift occurring and one that is closely connected with teacher educators'

motivations to study more closely the relationship between teaching and learning in their work.

Motivations for Self-Study

Teacher educators engaging in self-study commonly share a broad motivation to improve the experience of teacher education through improving their teaching practice. Whitehead (1998) articulates this motivation to improve practice as a series of questions: "How do I improve my practice?"; "How do I live my values more fully in my practice?"; and, "How do I help my students improve the quality of their learning?" Teacher educators who choose to study their practice also draw on the idea of credibility as a motivating influence in their work. They ask themselves, "How can I be credible to those learning to teach if I do not practice what I advocate for them?" Heaton and Lampert (1993) remind us that the credibility of teacher educators is at risk if they do not use the practices that they envision are possible for others.

Teacher educators' specific reasons for engaging in self-study vary and include:

Articulating a philosophy of practice and checking consistency between practice and beliefs

Some teacher educators seek to better understand the various influences that guide their thoughts and actions. From a more well-developed understanding of these influences, more informed practice may result. For some teacher educators (particularly those new to teacher education/self-study), this may involve investigation of their transition into their new role, so as to better understand and subsequently shape, their developing identities as teacher educators (Dinkelman, Margolis & Sikkenga, 2006; Ritter, 2006). For others, it may mean learning to articulate a philosophy of practice through investigating practice (see Nicol, 1997a). More experienced teacher educators may be prompted to explore the coherence between philosophy and practice to uncover possible discrepancies between espoused beliefs and the realities of practice (see Grimmett, 1997; Tidwell, 2002; Aubusson, 2006; Crowe & Berry, 2007). In a related study, Conle (1999) identified her need to become more informed about aspects of her teaching practice that may have been otherwise hidden from her view: "I undertook to study my teaching not because I saw particular problems (I did see several), but in order to discover if there were problems I did not see" (p. 803).

The desire to investigate practice can also be linked to a personal need to ensure that one's teaching practice is congruent with expectations for prospective teachers' developing practice. For example, although not explicitly identified as self-study, Lampert identified the importance for her colleague, Heaton, of aligning her practice as a teacher educator more closely with her expectations for her students' practice as teachers. Lampert observed: "the pedagogy of mathematics

she [Heaton] wanted to teach teachers differed from her own practice of teaching mathematics. She could not live with the dissonance" (Heaton & Lampert, 1993, p. 77). Through ongoing reflective examination of professional practice, thinking about teaching and teacher education is challenged and teacher educators' awareness of the influence of curricula and pedagogical decision-making is raised (Cole & Knowles, 1995).

Investigating a particular aspect of practice

Some self-studies are focused more specifically on the influence of a particular approach or task on prospective teachers' thinking about, or approach to, practice. For example, Holt-Reynolds and Johnson (2002) investigated artifacts of their practice (assignments for students) as a way of learning about prospective teachers' needs and concerns. These two teacher educators each developed assignments for their classes that were intended to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to work in different ways and to promote professional growth. Both teacher educators were puzzled to find that few students in their classes took up these opportunities in their assignment work. Through critical analysis of the assignment tasks they had set and their students' responses to these tasks, Holt-Reynolds and Johnson learned that prospective teachers' concerns about available time combined with habitual, ingrained ways of working outweighed their motivations to work differently. Other examples of self-studies investigating particular aspects of practice include Trumbull's (2000) analysis of the kinds of written feedback she provided on students' work and the congruency of her feedback with the messages about reflection that she was trying to promote, Mueller's (2001) study of the journal task she was using to promote reflection with prospective teachers and Brandenburg's (2004) study of the use of 'Round Table Reflection' as a means of enhancing critical reflection in her Mathematics methods classes.

Developing a model of critical reflection

Teacher educators seeking to make explicit to prospective teachers their pedagogical reasoning may use self-study as a means of monitoring their efforts. Heaton identified that "by making her teaching available for study to people who do not ordinarily engage in the careful analysis of actual practice . . . [she] makes available a situation in which the problems entailed in implementing those practices can be directly examined and understood from alternative points of view" (Heaton & Lampert, 1993, p. 46). Loughran's (1996) self-study of his modeling of reflection for his students and Hudson-Ross and Graham's (2000) investigation of the effects of modeling a constructivist approach in their teacher education practice are further examples of this type. Winter's (2006) self-study of her efforts to explicitly model and critique with prospective teacher-librarians her approaches to teaching, illustrates the considerable challenge associated with this task.

Generating more meaningful alternatives to institutional evaluation

Self-studies may be generated as alternative means of representing teacher educators' practice to their institution for purposes of promotion or tenure. Values about teaching that are implicit in standard teaching evaluations may be at odds with the kinds of values that teacher educators hold as most helpful for promoting prospective teachers' learning about teaching. For example, teaching evaluation questionnaires are often based on a 'teaching as delivery of information' model. By choosing to evaluate practice through self-study, teacher educators may be in a better position to more faithfully represent their intentions for practice to others. The experiences of Fitzgerald, Farstad and Deemer (2002), belong to this category.

An alternative way of categorising purposes for self-studies is according to the "levels of concern" that the study addresses (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998b). "Microlevels" are local; they begin from the immediate context of the classroom and involve questions such as, "How do I encourage participation of all students, rather than allowing a few to dominate?" Self-studies that begin from "macrolevels" are initiated from more global concerns such as, "Can I help promote social justice in schools through my work with prospective teachers?" The self-studies compiled by Tidwell and Fitzgerald (2006) illustrate well macrolevel issues of social justice, multiculturalism and equity.

Distinguishing and classifying different purposes for self-study is a difficult and potentially misleading task. The nature of investigating practice is such that these purposes cannot be easily categorized or 'held still in a spot.' The boundaries blur because what is being studied offers insights into practice that then influence practice and inevitably, alter the focus of the study. Categorizing studies according to purpose is also difficult because teacher educators rarely study one aspect of their practice at a time; what is central at a particular time can move to the periphery as other issues come to occupy the teacher educator's focus of attention. For example, a teacher educator seeking to learn more about a particular teaching practice may be led as a result of her enquiries to a more general investigation of practice, which may lead to the uncovering of assumptions about teaching and the articulation of a philosophy and then back again to the original practice.

What this illustrates more broadly is that knowledge developed in teaching about teaching usually emerges from teacher educators' efforts to solve "learning problems" (Cochran-Smith, 2004). These problems may present themselves as 'surprises' encountered in the course of their work, or they may be the result of a teacher educator's deliberate decision to investigate a particular aspect of practice. Importantly, self-studies begin from inside the practice context, emerging from a real concern, issue or dilemma. In this way, a phronesis perspective of knowledge development is demonstrated as teacher educators begin to apprehend, describe and investigate their problems of practice. Through this process, better understanding of the particular characteristics of individual contexts is developed, together with an appreciation of that which is unique to a pedagogy of teacher education.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TEACHER EDUCATORS RESEARCH THEIR OWN TEACHING?

Pathways of Self-Study

While the term 'self-study' seems to suggest an exclusive focus on the teacher educator, the 'self' in self-study encompasses a more diverse variety of selves than the teacher educator alone. Inquiry into the nature of teacher preparation to better understand the experience of teaching prospective teachers can begin from a study of self where 'self' is the teacher educator, or through investigating an aspect of prospective teachers' experience where 'self' is the student/s. Alternatively, collaborative conversations with the 'selves' who are colleagues may serve as a starting point for the study of teaching about teaching.

Although the beginning points may be different, the 'selves' are intertwined in such a way that the study of one 'self' inevitably leads to study of an 'other'. For instance, teacher educators who begin by investigating prospective teachers' understanding of an aspect of their teacher preparation may be led to apprehend something about the nature of their own actions as a teacher and about the unintended effects of those actions. This, then, may set in motion an investigation of the teacher educator's own actions that were not part of the initial intention of the investigation. This is illustrated for example, in Dinkelman's (1999) inquiry into the development of critical reflection in preservice secondary teachers, a study that unexpectedly evolved into a powerful examination of Dinkelman's own teaching. By interviewing prospective teachers from his classes about their processes of reflection, Dinkelman came to learn that his own teaching approach was "unknowingly squelching . . . the most valued objectives of his teaching" (p. 2). He was drawn into a new kind of investigation of his teacher-self as a consequence of his willingness to listen to, and learn from, the prospective-teacher-selves who experienced his teaching.

In other studies, teacher educators intentionally begin from prospective teachers' experiences in order to access understandings of teaching practice that might otherwise be invisible to them. For example, Freese's analysis (2002) of a student's apparent resistance to reflect on his own teaching and Hoban's (1997) investigation of students' understanding of the relationship between his teaching and their learning are two self-studies in which the teacher educator deliberately sought to use prospective teachers' experiences as a mirror to look into personal teaching practice. Hoban described the reciprocal learning process that occurs when prospective teachers are asked to study their own learning, which then stimulates the teacher to study personal teaching practices.

Critical conversations with a colleague about her practice led Bass, a teacher educator, to scrutinize her own classroom interactions more closely (Bass, Anderson-Patton & Allender, 2002). Bass invited a colleague, Allender, into her classroom for a semester to give her feedback about her practice. Through the critical conversations they shared, Bass came to recognize 'points of vulnerability' in her approach to practice. Using this heightened awareness, Bass began to investigate how these

vulnerable points were played out in her interactions with her students. The above shows that self-study is not a straightforward process, and this leads to a consideration of the ways in which learning from self-study is conceptualized.

SUMMARY: CONCEPTUALISING LEARNING FROM SELF-STUDY

Teacher educators have learnt a great deal that is worth sharing from the self-study of their practice. Their work makes a significant contribution to understanding and articulating a pedagogy of teacher education. However, for many teacher educators, capturing the learning associated with researching personal practice is a difficult task. Their difficulties lie not so much in recognizing their work as messy and complex (this is readily apparent to them), but in finding ways to represent the learning developed in such a way that honors the realities of practice in its messy complexity, and yet, is sufficiently meaningful and useful for a range of other readers. Addressing this issue has been a significant challenge for teacher educators and one that is taken up in this book through the notion of 'tensions of practice'. In the next two chapters, (chapters 3 & 4) these tensions of practice are introduced. Chapter 3 describes the research approach for the self-study reported in this book, introducing 'tensions' as an analytic frame and in chapter 4, these tensions are further elaborated and linked to the literature of self-study.