Reading Self-Study in/for Physical Education: Revisiting the Zeitgeist of Reflection

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Introduction

Self-study? To be honest I had never heard of self-study until a few years back when Alan Ovens described to me the focus of the Castle conference he attended. My discursive circles are clearly limited. Anyway, when Alan asked me if I would contribute a chapter to this collection along the lines of 'what self-study might offer the field of PE?', I accepted the offer in part because I wanted to find out about this 'thing' for myself.

I have subsequently learnt that self-studies take a teacher-as-learner stance and focus on the teaching and learning process as experienced by the participants themselves (Casey, this collection). I also learnt from Ovens and Fletcher (this collection) that self-study is never a solitary endeavour and that it has three broad framing features:

- A professional network of practitioners who share and evolve their practice;
- An inquiry oriented stance to one's own practice and an emphasis on the self;
- It enacts a disposition of desire; a desire to be more, to improve, to better understand

Apparently these features distinguish self-study from other forms of research such as action research, narrative inquiry, discourse analysis, interpretive phenomenology, or autoethnography (Ovens and Fletcher, this collection).

Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) see self-study as,

> …the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas … It is autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political … it draws on one's life, but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known and ideas considered. (p. 236)

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A. Ovens and T. Fletcher (eds.), *Self-Study in Physical Education Teacher Education*, Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices 13,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-05663-0_12, © Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2014

OK, thought I, this is interesting. There is plenty here that connects (in some way) with my own history as a teacher educator. In the interests of self-disclosure, I should tell you that I was part of the discourse community that constituted the 'Deakin perspective' on action research and critical pedagogy. I 'cut my teeth' on critical theory and over many years worked with teachers and student teachers in projects that came under the umbrella of action research. I wrote *Improving Teaching Physical Education* (Tinning 1987a), with the explicit aim of encouraging student teachers to become reflective practitioners by addressing, through action research, questions such as: 'What are the implications of what I choose to teach?' and 'What are the implications of how I teach?' I also wrote about my experiences and was an advocate for action research as a form of reflective practice (see Tinning 1987b, 1992, 1995, 1997).

So, in one sense, I have a long history of thinking and working with *some* of the ideas that seem central to self-study. So why had I not heard of it? Why had it not crossed my field of vision?

What I shall do in this chapter is to discuss some issues of interest with respect to my reading of self-study and then turn attention to reflection as the zeitgeist of self-study. I will finally offer some observations regarding the contributions that self-study might make to the field of physical education.

Issues of Interest

There are three issues that immediately captured my attention in my reading of self-study: similarities with action research; the place of theory; and the centrality of reflection to self-study. I will discuss each in turn.

Similarities with Action Research

Just for interest I did a search through the University of Queensland (UQ) library for holdings on action research and self-study. I found some 182 relevant holdings for action research and only 11 for self-study. Does this reflect the size of the field of scholarship or the specific interests of UQ academics? Are they actually two different fields of study? Considering their similarities and differences it would be useful to me in answering this question for myself.

Zeichner and Noffke's (2001) chapter in the fourth *Handbook of Research in Teaching* (Richardson 2001) provides a useful taxonomy of what they call 'practitioner research'… a broad church of the traditions of teachers (and others) studying their own practice. They include self-study as one of the five traditions. In their discussion of self-study they suggest that its main practitioners are teacher educators (rather than teachers) and that there is a preference for certain methods of inquiry – namely life history and narrative forms of inquiry.

Feldman et al. (2004), in a chapter in the *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Loughran et al. 2004) titled 'Self-study through action research' pursue the question: 'what are the ways that action research is and is not related to self-study?' (p. 943). Feldman et al. (2009) argue that Zeichner and Noffke's (2001) account does not adequately distinguish self-study from other forms of practitioner research. They claim that while action research can be a 'vehicle for systematic critical inquiry into one's self' (p. 943), self-study is more than a method. They suggest that being self-critical is one of 'three methodological features that would be present in self-study' (p. 943), and yet they also recognise that being self-critical as both practitioner and researcher is a feature of emancipatory traditions of action research. Confusing? It sure is.

For me, the search for the salient features that might distinguish self-study from action research, while interesting, does not provide a suitable answer to the question 'Why not call it all one thing?' In other words, why not just call it all action research? I search for a meaningful answer to this question not in taxonomy and defining features but rather in the notion of discourse communities. It seems to me that there are good practical reasons for being part of a smaller discourse community such as self-study.

An important dimension of self- study that Loughran (2004) explains is a desire by the teacher educator to model the type of teaching/learning process that they are advocating their student teachers should adopt. While modeling can by negatively conceived in terms of the old apprenticeship model of teacher education, Loughran's point regards a way of thinking about one's role as a teacher educator and the pedagogy needed to demonstrate that thinking.

In thinking of the marginal success of critical pedagogy within teacher education and PETE (see Tinning 2002), I am left thinking that there has been plenty of advocacy and theorising but very little modeling of what this pedagogy might look like in practice. We all know of the mixed messages conveyed by the 'lecture on inquiry teaching'. In the case of critical pedagogy, it seems to me that a teacher educator who was attempting to model such pedagogy and submit this practice to self-study might be making a step forward in regard to delivering on some of the claims made in the name of critical pedagogy.

Defending Itself Within the Academy

The need to defend one's research within the academy has long been an issue for educational researchers. Part of that defense has often centred on the issue of rigour and the expectation that research is a form of systematic inquiry. The need for self-study to be systematic and rigorous has certainly been identified as a concern for self-study scholars. LaBoskey (2004) informed self-study participants at the 2004 Castle conference that for self study to be accepted by the educational community it must be systematic, less idiosyncratic, and more rigorous (see Lassonde et al. 2009a).

Maybe the history of action research is instructive in this regard. Although action research is a very broad church (see Feldman 2009) I will use the interpretation of

Robin McTaggart's (1991) *Action research: A short modern history* as the historical source. McTaggart was part of the 'Deakin school of action research'.

McTaggart (1991) argues that the writings of Stephen Corey from the Horace Mann Lincoln institute at Teachers College, Columbia University, introduced and developed the idea of action research in the 1950s with many teachers in the United States. However, as McTaggart points out, his efforts to popularise and legitimise action research actually made it more vulnerable to its critics. Thus, during the 1950s, a time in which educational research was increasingly under the dominance of positivistic social science, action research failed to achieve legitimacy and its popularity declined. In this climate Hodgkinson (1957) regarded action research as a common-sense rather than a scientific approach and judged it against the criteria necessary for valid scientific experimentation. He concluded that it was 'only problem-solving ("easy hobby games for little engineers"); was statistically unsophisticated; did not lead to defensible generalization; did not help to create a system of theory; and was practised (and not very well) by amateurs' (McTaggart 1991, p. 15).

In contrasting the idea of action research with 'fundamental' research and in his efforts to argue that action research was a way of achieving 'generalisation', Corey was unwittingly paying deference to the prevailing dominant research ideology which in-turn 'owned' the criteria by which action research was to be judged. Thus 'action research was not to find and assert its own criteria for legitimacy' (McTaggart 1991, p. 11). My reading of self-study is that it is not going down 'that track' and seems a more hospitable discourse community that is articulating its own criteria (see Young et al. 2012) and may be less likely split into different factions as action research did.

Two trends in action research, it seemed to me, lead to a rather confusing and perhaps less encouraging future for action research. On the one hand it might be argued that action research became over theorised and even divided into its own smaller discursive communities. Maybe this was an attempt to prove its worth in the educational research community. Certainly *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research* (Carr and Kemmis 1986) was a seminal text in this regard, challenging as it did, positivistic research and offering what they called an educational science of action research.

On the other hand, in a completely atheoretical approach, many took the action research cycle as a simple set of procedures without any understanding of the ontological and epistemological ideals upon which the cycle was conceived. This led to an appropriation of the action research process as a tool of management, rather than a process of self-discovery and emancipation as originally advocated by Carr and Kemmis (1986).

I was most interested to read that action research has had a strong influence on self-study research and that it is considered to provide a useful method to conduct systematic inquiry into one's teaching practices (Samaras and Freese 2009). Samaras and Freese claim that action research 'involves a systematic approach to problem solving' (p. 4). This interpretation, however, confines action research to its technical orientation (Grundy 1987) and this has certainly been the main orientation when action research has been used in the physical education context (see Tinning

1992). This interpretation reproduces a rather limited understanding of action research since, as Kemmis and McTaggart (1990) make explicit in *The action research planner,* action research is not simply problem solving. Action research involves problem-posing, not just problem solving. It does not start from a view of 'problems' as pathologies. For Carr and Kemmis (1986) there are other orientations that action research can take and these include a practical and a critical orientation. It is these two orientations that, at least for me, offered the most potential for physical education.

The claim that self-study is open to public scrutiny and hence to judgments of trustworthiness seems to be a response to the need to defend self-study in the general educational research community. But the fact that self-study should be made public seems to me to be a feature that might give it a different future to that of action research. Action research, while often appropriated by the administration, seems to have run out of steam in the academy. Maybe it became too concerned with its own internal theoretical debates. In this regard, while there are plenty of debates within the self-study community, it seems (from the outside at least) that as a discourse community there is a more inclusive, less doctrinaire, attitude prevailing. That is a good thing.

The Place of Theory?

Some years back I read Frank McCourt's (2005) *Teacher man*. It's the story of McCourt's 30 years as a high school English teacher in New York. Perhaps you have read his most well known work, *Angela's ashes*. I loved *Teacher man* because it spoke to me about the indeterminate, unpredictable nature of teaching, and the increasing tensions experienced in trying to standardise teaching and the folly of considering schools as providers of an educational service to clients (be they parents or young people). McCourt's insight into the hearts and minds of adolescents is wonderful. His story is a powerful mixture of the voices of *mythos* and *thymos* (see Tinning 2002) as he dealt with the daily dilemmas of teaching.

The question for me is: Can McCourt's (or anybody else's for that matter) autobiographic account of his teaching be considered a form of self-study? Checking the features of self-study reported by Ovens and Fletcher (this collection) it seems not. McCourt is not part of the professional discourse community of self-study. His work is not inquiry-oriented but it is explicitly about the self, and finally there seems no premeditated desire to improve his practice.

There is another dimension of McCourt's autobiographical account of his 30 years of teaching that would seem to me to discount it as self-study. There is no explicit attempt to better understand his practice by means of theorising. In this regard I ask: Is theorising a necessary aspect of self-study?

Practice is clearly central to self-study and there is a good deal of theorising practice within the literature on self-study (*cf.* LaBoskey 2004; Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009). There is, for example, considerable attention to Polanyi's (1958) notion that tacit knowledge is part of all practice. Also, Clandinin and Connelly's

(2004) theorising of personal practical knowledge features prominently in discussions of practice in self-study. What is interesting, however, is that there is no connect within self study literature of the sort of theorising of practice that characterises the contributions to the edited collection: *Understanding and researching professional practice* (Green 2009). Moreover, the discourse community that makes contributions to Green's book makes no mention of self-study. It seems that there are at least two different discourse communities that orbit around the goal of understanding and researching professional practice yet they don't talk to one another. What's even more bizarre is that Green's book and that by Lassonde et al. (*Self-study research methodologies for teacher educators,* 2009b) were both published by Sense Publishers in the same year!

Of course this is not a novel observation. But it does speak to the perspectives offered by the different discourse communities. Although a simplistic analysis, I would contend that, while both communities give a cursory genuflection to the legacy of Dewey, the sort of theorising offered by the self-study community tends to be less philosophical and perhaps, as a result, more approachable for most teacher educators or teachers.

Goodson and Walker (1991) offer a caution that is worth considering in regard to the centrality of practice. They make a general claim that it 'does not follow logically or psychologically that to improve practice we must initially and immediately focus on practice' (p. 141). Their point is that 'to place the teachers' practice at the centre of the action [for action researchers or for self-study researchers] is to put the most exposed and problematic aspect of the teachers' world at the centre of scrutiny and negotiation' (p. 141). It seems to me that by placing the self in practice at the centre of its project, self-study may be vulnerable to such criticism.

Goodson and Walker (1991) go on to argue that the use of teacher biographies, examining the nature of teachers' work in the context of teachers' lives is a more appropriate and productive place to start. There are, however, numerous examples of self-study beginning with personal history (see Samaras et al. 2004) so it seems that self-study offers many ways to achieve its ends.

Theorising the Self in Self-Study

The reflexive project of the self is not an easy one. What dimensions of the self are to be exposed in order to better understand the self? Here we can slip easily into such fields of inquiry as psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic work of Alice Miller (1987) is interesting here. Miller first coined the term 'poisonous pedagogies' to refer to those unrecognised pedagogical 'strategies' that one picks up from one's parents and that are often, unknowingly, reproduced in the next generation of parenting. From her work we can see that understanding the self as parent might necessitate some psychoanalytic work on one's self in order to reveal deeply hidden pedagogical dispositions.

In this regard, Feldman (2009), in a chapter titled '*Making the self problematic*' (in Lassonde et al. 2009b) claims that 'existentialism and psychoanalytic theory provide us with perspectives that allow us to recognize the problematic nature of the

self in self-study' (p. 42). Of course there are many other perspectives, or theoretical frames (Tinning and Fitzpatrick 2012), that might be brought to bear in regard to better understand the self, and in particular the self in the practice of teaching. For example, Paugh and Robinson (2009) suggest that the unit of study for self-study is 'not an essentialized "self" but the relational self (or selves)' (p. 88). This picks up on what Gee (1990) termed the 'social turn' in postmodernity wherein the notion of selves is a social construction and always in relationship to context and power relations. My question is: How might such theorising of the self be pursued within self-study, and can it be useful (authentic) without it?

In his provocative book *The Heretics: Investigations with the enemies of science,* investigative journalist Will Storr (2013), introduces the reader to the contemporary brain research that demonstrates how we all self-delude. We constantly filter things that don't fit with our sense of 'which way is up'. Our own brain conspires to delude us. How can we be sure that self-study doesn't wallow in self-delusion? Is making self-study public and working with a critical friend/community all that is needed?

Self- study is certainly influenced by Merleau-Ponty's (1968) ideas about embodied knowledge. However, it seems that the self must always be understood as relational:

> While various theories of the self can be helpful as we engage in research on our practice, conceptions of the self are in many ways tangential since it is not the self but the self and the other in practice that is of most interest. (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, p. 12)

The Centrality of Reflection

According to Samaras and Freese (2009), 'Research in the area of reflection and reflective practice has had a strong influence on self-study' (p. 4). Further, action research as a form of reflective practice has had a 'strong influence on self-study research' (p. 3). In offering a take on what seems to be the potential for self-study in/for the field of physical education, I return to the notion of reflection and its possibilities and problematics.

Loughran (2004), however, argues that self-study is not the same as reflective practice. 'Reflection is a thoughtful process, but it is something that largely resides within the individual' (p. 25). Self-study, he claims ' …pushes the virtues of reflection further' (p. 25) because self-study requires that it is available for public dissemination and critique. Presumably this occurs largely within the discourse community of self-study teacher educators and teachers.

The 'Reflective Turn' in Teaching and Teacher Education

There is no doubt that one of the major trends in teaching, teacher education, and PETE over the last few decades has been the rise of reflection as a dominant concept. All across the Western education world it seems that reflective teaching/practice is part of the 'official' text.

But even as this trend began some scholars were concerned with the increasing popularity of reflective teaching. Liston and Zeichner (1987) argued that in the 1980s reflection was becoming something of an 'educational slogan…that lacks sufficient conceptual elaboration and programmatic strength' (p. 2). Smyth (1992) expressed concern that reflection is such a commonsensical notion that '…who could possibly be against reflection; it's an indisputable notion like "quality" and "excellence"' (p. 285). Also, because of its universal appeal, reflection can mean all things to all people and, accordingly, 'it runs the risk of being totally evacuated of all meaning' (p. 285).

Smyth (1992) suggested that '…we are witnessing… a kind of conceptual colonization in which terms like reflection have become such an integral part of the educational jargon that not using them is to run the real risk of being out of educational fashion' (p. 286). Even in the physical education community at that time there was concern that critical reflection was becoming 'the patchwork panacea of teacher educators of all theoretical persuasions' (Martinez 1990, p. 20). In 1991, Hellison and Templin (1991) also expressed a similar concern claiming that reflective teaching had become a buzzword in the educational community.

By the early 1990s Joe Kincheloe (1993) lamented that reflection had become just another checklist-type competency-oriented question asked in the process of making judgments on a teacher's performance. When reduced to a set of procedures, teacher reflection becomes little more than a skill to be learned as part of a larger battery of competencies. Viewed in this way, reflection sits alongside other technical skills such as classroom management, planning, and pupil discipline as competencies to be demonstrated. Reflection for the student teacher then becomes simply the rational exercise of determining the gap between their current level of competency and the required level need for certification. In this context, questions relating to the value or meaning of the actual competencies themselves are unlikely to be asked.

Another trend is the recent move in many countries (following trends in the UK and the USA) to develop a national set of competencies for teacher education (for example the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the USA). The thrust of the NBPTS in Physical Education is clearly upon self-assessment and self-renewal positing the responsibility for self-monitoring with the individual teacher while at same time using performative mechanisms of public submissions and appraisal as evidence of reflective practice (Macdonald and Tinning 2003).

Taking individual responsibility for one's self-assessment and self-renewal as a teacher is consistent with neo-liberal values that have come to dominate the educational landscape (see Luke 2002; Macdonald 2011). At first blush it might seem consistent with the ideals of self-study. However, self-study has a different take on individual responsibility. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) argue:

> The self in self-study research, positions the researcher as a particular kind of inquirer and declares the relationship of that inquirer both to the practice and to others who are engaged with the inquirer in constructing the practice. It also marks who takes responsibility for doing, understanding, enacting, and improving the practice. In asserting this position,

> inquirers embrace Dewey's (1933) notions of the learner as open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible, since it is these orientations of working to learn from, understand and take action toward improvement that the "self" in this kind of research embraces. (p. 12)

Reflective Practice: Ways of Seeing and Thinking in/Through PETE

Notwithstanding the expressed concerns over the ubiquitous, and problematic, use of the term reflection, several PETE undergraduate texts were written that placed reflection at the centre of becoming a (good) physical education teacher; for example, *A reflective approach to teaching physical education* (Hellison and Templin 1991), and *Becoming a physical education teacher* (Tinning et al. 2001). Moreover, there were some PETE programs that were clearly, and explicitly, being oriented around critical reflection (Ovens 2004). However, we know that attempts to date by teacher educators to introduce PETE students to some of the ideas and principles of the socially critical curriculum by means of critical pedagogy have been less than enthusiastically received (see Gore 1993; Tinning 2002; Macdonald and Brooker 1999). It seems that without a certain level of emotional commitment (a certain disposition) by the students to the values underpinning critical reflection, the success of teacher education will be marginal.

We also know that the results of encouraging reflective practice can be unpredictable. While Socrates was reported as asserting that 'an unexamined life is not worth living' the examined life is not without its problematic side.[1] Two decades ago O'Sullivan et al. (1992) argued that teachers of physical education were 'pragmatists to the core' and in the same year Smyth (1992) expressed concern that the kind of reflection most appealing to many teachers is one grounded in pragmatism – a technical form of reflection. The tendency in such pragmatism is for reflection to be an individualistic process that can very easily lack any understanding of the wider social and structural influences on schooling and teaching. This clearly raises some issues for the possible impact/success of self-study within the physical education field.

Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997, p. 4) argue that it is useful to think of reflection on two 'levels': micro-reflection 'gives meaning to or informs day-to-day practice whereas macro-reflection gives meaning to or informs practice over time'. In my view, however, the micro is always connected to the macro (even if rather distantly) and such a distinction tacitly legitimates technical 'reflection' as sufficient. The term *reflective practice* is a broader concept than the more common reflective teaching or reflection. The distinction is significant. Reflective practice can be considered to be a disposition which functions like a set of lenses through which to view all educational and cultural practices (both micro and macro).

Feiman-Nemser (1990) suggests that 'reflective teacher education is not a distinct paradigmatic emphasis but rather a generic professional disposition' (p. 221) that is found in different forms within the different teacher education program

[1] For an example of this in the PETE world, see Devis-Devis and Sparkes (1999).

orientations. As Ovens' (2004) own PhD study of a PETE program underpinned by the notion of reflective practice revealed, reflection is not something that is acquired as a form of discrete knowledge or skill but is something that is enacted as part of the discursive contexts in which student teachers find themselves. That is, the nature of the discourse community in which the individual is situated enables different forms of reflection (see Ovens and Tinning 2009, p. 1130). It seems to me that for teacher educators the self-study discourse community offers a supportive 'space' for development of more informed self-reflective practice.

I am attracted to Cherry Collins' (2004, p. 4) suggestion that, 'The quality of reflection on practice is dependent on the concepts and theories: the ways of seeing; to which teachers have access'. Moreover, these 'ways of seeing' will be taken beyond the classroom and reflective practice will be 'applied to' more than the act of teaching. *Reflective practice* will also engage issues relating to schooling and education as inherently political and ideological social structures. In this sense it will be critically oriented.

As I have outlined elsewhere (see Tinning 2010) my notion of reflective practice is underpinned by a way of seeing/thinking that embodies a sociological imagination (Mills 1970). According to Giddens (1994) 'The sociological imagination necessitates, above all, being able to *being able to "think ourselves away" from the familiar routines of our daily lives in order to look at them anew*' (p. 18 emphasis in original). The development of such a sociological imagination would necessitate some reflection on one's own personal epistemology.

According to Hofer (2010) personal epistemology is philosophy at the individual level and reflects how we think about knowledge and knowing. Not only is it important that student teachers begin to understand their personal epistemology and how it might influence their teaching, it is also vitally important for the teacher educator. In their recent book *Personal epistemology and teacher education* Brownlee et al. (2011) acknowledge the importance of working on personal epistemologies within teacher education. However, they make no reference to any work of the self-study community. It seems they have located their discursive lens to psychologically-oriented literature and have overlooked self-study. Self-study offers a way of pursuing such self-knowledge and its connection to practice.

As Ovens and Fletcher (this collection) point out, self-study enacts a disposition of desire 'to *be more*, to improve, to better understand' (p. X). I think that this desire is at least a close cousin of what Feiman-Nemser (1990) called a generic professional disposition or what I am calling a disposition to/for reflective practice. But how to develop such a disposition within a PETE program remains a crucial issue. Moreover, a disposition is always difficult to assess. It is hard to capture the zeitgeist!

Reflection, Writing and Embodiment in Self-Study

Importantly, if we are to better understand our self in practice (as a teacher educator) we need to remember that it is the *embodied* self that is the performer of practices (Ovens and Fletcher, this collection). Embodiment is, however, a challenging

concept within education, not the least because it's so hard to define – to grasp in a way that doesn't reinforce mind-body dualisms.[2] One thing is certain, however, discussion of embodiment draws us into the discourse on subjectivity and identity.

If, as the late Australian educator Garth Boomer once suggested, 'teachers teach who they are' then teacher identity/subjectivity is crucial and attempts to understand one's embodied self are important. Moreover, since 'the politics of identity is increasingly wrapped around configurations of the body' (Elliott 2001, p. 99), and the body (especially in physical activity) is a central focus of physical education, then understanding how one's embodied learning shapes one's identities and subjectivities (Gard 2006) and how this influences the embodied self as performer of practices would seem important for physical education teacher educators as well as physical education teachers.

Significantly, to develop such understanding requires seems to require some form of reflection – some practical enactment of a disposition. But the process of enacting reflection can be a difficult one. In this regard, although there are other forms of representation that can be marshaled in the pursuit of self-study, for example visual and artistic modes (see Weber and Mitchell 2004) or information and communication technologies (see Hoban 2004) it seems to me that the centrality of writing in the work of self-study should not be underestimated.

It seems that, as part of the reflective process the teacher educator or teacher will, often, need to keep some form of professional journal (see Holly 1984) or reflective portfolio (see Lyons and Friedus 2004) and maybe this requires something I might call a disposition to write and reflect. This, therefore, would be disposition that might be useful in enacting the disposition of desire 'to be more, to improve, to better understand' (Ovens and Fletcher, this collection, p. X). Maybe there are two types of people in the teaching/teacher education world – those who love to keep a professional journal/diary/portfolio and those that don't. Ash Casey's (this collection) confession that he has written some 300,000 words in his professional journal confirms that he is in the former group. There are also many for whom writing such a journal is like 'pulling teeth'. But is writing about one's feelings and emotions regarding one's practice really all that is needed to develop an understanding of the *embodied*-self that is the performer of practices? I'm not sure there is an answer to this question but my guess is that it is but one way *into* such an analytic space.

Regardless of the answer to this question, my (still limited) reading of self-study suggests that one cannot lay legitimate claim to self-study unless one is engaged in some form of reflection on one's self and one's practice. In this sense the notion of reflection is implicit in all self-study, it is the spirit of the time, the zeitgeist that lives in self-study.

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[2] I know that I have tried to give an account of embodied learning elsewhere (Tinning 2010) and have rightly been criticised (see Standal and Engelsrud 2013) for reinforcing the very mind-body dualism I set out to challenge.

An Ending?

In claiming that there is a zeitgeist of reflection living in self-study I am saying nothing new. But I am saying that reflection is a central ethic, a spirit of self-study.

I take away from this brief engagement with self-study a reinforcement of a number of aspects of professional practice that have long been central to my own mission as a teacher educator. For self-study to be worthy of its name it needs to embrace a reflective disposition to the self-practice relationship and to systematically pursue the inquiry with a critical edge and a certain openness to public disclosure.

In regard to public disclosure, it seems to me that the publication of self-study is a more appropriate/relevant practice for the physical education teacher educator than the physical education teacher. In most contexts the teacher educator now is required to research and publish. It's an institutional requirement of university tenure. So, for the teacher educator, self-study is a perfect form of scholarship on teaching (Boyer 1996). However, the situation for the average physical education teacher is rather different for although there might be expectations to be reflective, there is no expectation to publish.

Like other forms of practitioner research, self-study has some great possibilities. Whether or not one sees merit in identifying with the discourse community of other self-study participants will depend on many individual factors. Personally, I have found my engagement with self-study both illuminating and refreshing. It took me back to the agenda of my action research 'days', but it also took me beyond those days by providing me with new insights into better apprehending the complex nature of how to better enact a critical pedagogy of teacher education. In my view, we in the PETE community should welcome self-study and embrace the zeitgeist of reflection that lives within it.

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