Chapter 1
On the Journey of Becoming a Teacher Educator

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Introduction

As editors of, and contributors to this collection, we invite you to share in the personal and professional narratives of a diverse group of teacher educators, as they take you through their unique and thought-provoking journeys of professional becoming. This book arose from discussions of our own journeys from primary school teacher to teacher educator, coincidently in our own alma maters, where we undertook our initial teacher education, many years before. We met at the 7th Castle Conference, hosted by the Self Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Education Research Association (AERA) at Herstmonceaux Castle, East Sussex, England, in 2008. There we shared many similar experiences of being primary school teachers, eager to expand our intellectual and pedagogical horizons by undertaking graduate studies, culminating in a doctorate and moving into academia. Over the next 3 years or so, we maintained contact, including visits between our respective universities. As we shared our experiences, we discussed our professional learning as teacher educators, and the challenges and opportunities afforded by the transition from teacher to teacher educator. One outcome of these discussions is this collection of narratives from teacher educators who share their own varied and interesting professional journeys, and contribute meaningfully to the collective wisdom of the profession of teacher education. During our discussions we pondered the questions: What do we wish we had known at the beginning of our transition into teacher education? How can we provide

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important insights into what it means to be(come) a teacher educator in times of political, economic, pedagogical and social change, that would be of value to others, particularly those starting out on their own journeys? The collection that follows is a response to those questions.

Why Collect Stories?

In an appeal to move the field of self-study of teacher education practices forward, Loughran (2010) argued that we need to go beyond stories of individual teacher educators' practice to understand more deeply how teacher educators become teacher educators:

> It is crucial that we do not stop questioning the 'so what' of self-study. There is a need to balance the doing of, and the learning in practice, and going beyond stories is one way of continuing to push the boundaries of teacher education practices in meaningful and productive ways, for ourselves as scholars of the teaching of teaching and for our students of teaching (Loughran 2010, p. 225).

Loughran's concern that producing "just another story about practice" (ibid p.221) puts self-study researchers at risk of being sidelined by the broader educational research community, is echoed by Zeichner (2007) who argued that "unless self-study research in teacher education begins to be taken more seriously as research by policy makers and the broader educational research community, the findings in these studies will continue to be dismissed by those who make policies affecting teacher education programs" (p. 38). Of course, convincing those who make policy to take any form of educational research seriously can be a difficult task when ideological, political and fiscal agendas come to dominate the considerations. Alexander's 'cautionary tale' (2014), for example, illustrates the ways in which policy-led research, rather than research-led policy can dictate the development of primary education in England, where the former Secretary of State for Education summed up his own perspective with one of his signature sideswipes in 2013:

> In the past, the education debate has been dominated by education academics - which is why so much of the research and evidence on how children actually learn has been so poor (Gove 2013, p. 1).

McNamara et al. (2014) bring a number of perspectives on the role of workplace learning together in showing how the political drive towards school-based 'teacher training' in England ignores and contradicts much of what has been learnt from decades of developing school/university partnership and rigorous, practice-based research in the field. In the case of teacher education, as demonstrated in this book, 'education academics' are usually people who have been teachers in school for some time before moving on to work in university-based teacher education. Knowledge and insight gained from reflection and analysis of their own experience of being teachers themselves centrally informs the work they do with those who are preparing to be teachers. Significantly for us and for this volume, the influential

McKinsey Report (2007), which examined 25 school systems worldwide, concluded that generating positive change in education systems needs to be at the individual teacher level and involve: (1) self-awareness of one's own beliefs and practices, (2) gaining understanding of best practice through the demonstration of such practices in authentic settings and (3) high expectations and a shared sense of purpose (McKinsey and Company 2007, p.27). These points resonate throughout this book as all of the accounts and analysis of experience and practice in teacher education which follow demonstrate each of these features. The individual stories contribute to a larger story of the phenomena and the profession of teacher education. Each one provides a first-hand account of how teacher educators' personal experiences of becoming are ultimately not just about their own professional growth, but offer insights into the nature of professional learning for the broader community of teacher education practitioners.

As Zeichner (2007) argued, we need to make connections between such studies of teacher educator professional learning in considering the aims and strategies as well as the institutional and policy contexts of teacher education. While there is a good deal of evidence that teacher educators who conduct self-studies of their own work benefit from the process and become better at what they do (e.g., Russell and Munby 1992; Lunenberg and Hamilton 2008; Kosnick 2008; Kosnick and Beck 2009; Russell and Loughran 2007), it is more difficult to gather data and draw conclusions from the individual accounts in a way that can directly inform the direction of policy and practice. We acknowledge the need to move beyond the stories themselves if we are to contribute towards the knowledge base of teacher education by gathering and presenting the articulated wisdom of analysed experience. We also agree with Davey (2013) in recognising that the narratives offer both the essential foundation of our knowledge about what it means to be a teacher educator, *and*, potentially, an answer to the *so what*? question, derived from the telling and sharing of these stories. Clearly such questions may be answered for individuals on reading the accounts of others. If to narrate one's story is to reframe and understand it and the surrounding context in a new way, then to read the narratives of others allows us to consider our own stories in the wider context and the relating phenomena in a new way. Thus the individual story is always, at least potentially, part of the larger story. While we are bound to find differences as well as things in common within them, and precise generalisations are not possible across a range of locations and contexts, these individual yet connected narrative threads contribute towards a rich tapestry of experience, wisdom and analysis for others to consult wherever they may be on the journey of becoming in teacher education.

Exploring Diverse Experiences of Becoming

The stories of becoming contained in this collection draw on the experiences of a diverse group of teacher educators from a variety of countries – Australia, Canada, Chile, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Through a narrative inquiry approach, each of these teacher educators has examined their personal professional journeys of becoming, and how transition and transformation have shaped their professional knowledge, identities and practices over time. While most of the authors are self-study scholars, this is not a collection of self-studies. Rather, each chapter is an exploration of how the author 'became' a teacher educator with particular reference to personal and/or professional transitions and transformations. We chose this as the overarching theme of each narrative, and of the book, because it provides a useful lens through which to examine the dynamic and complex nature of professional learning – to explore the twists and turns of professional journeys in diverse contexts and to see how individual teacher educators respond to and learn from critical moments of change or transition. The work of Mezirow (1997) is important here, because self-reflection and learning from change are hallmarks of all professional learning, not just that undergone by teacher educators. Mezirow argued that transformation in professional learning occurs when a person's frame of reference changes to become more "inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" (p.5). He maintained that people transform their thinking through critical reflection on the assumptions held about practice; "We can become critically reflective of the assumptions we or others make… or when we are involved in communicative learning…Self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations" (p.7). The authors featured in this collection illustrate how diverse transformative experiences can be, but also how the learning taken from these diverse experiences provides valuable insights into professional becoming in a range of social or cultural contexts.

Narrative Inquiry

The stories of transition and transformation presented here illustrate the experiences and practices of teacher educators while informing theoretical understanding of how narrative informs professional identity. Through a range of approaches and from a range of international perspectives, the authors employ narrative inquiry in contributing towards the wider international discussion and debates about the role of teacher education in the early twenty-first Century. Rosen (1993) said that stories live off stories. He argued that:

> Of all the genres learned through language . . . narrative is the genre we are most comfortable with. From a very early age we gather a rich experience of stories and learn more and more how they work, their methods and devices. So in our tellings . . . we use this hidden repertoire. . . . We are all story tellers if only we are given the chance (p. 151).

As Wells (2007) observed, narrative inquiry provides an ideal lens for a detailed examination of the structure and content of a story with its significance in relation to psychological, sociological, or historical frames of reference. The narrative methods in this book illuminate the first-person accounts, while retaining the storied nature of the data. This allows for qualitative analysis of personal experience in

relation to time, social condition, and place which merges life-story into life-history. Through the examination of stories of experience, narrative inquiry provides ways in which these teacher educators construct and develop their knowledge and practice in order to positively negotiate some of the ambivalences and uncertainties of their work. If, as argued by Bruner (1991), Goodson (2012) and Russell and Loughran (2007), identity, learning and pedagogy are each constructed through a self-narrative of lived experience within all its historical, social and cultural contexts, it follows that the experiences of teacher educators offer insight and illumination in this key area of education.

Self-Study Research

Self-study of teacher education practices has increased greatly over the last two decades or so, particularly with the advent of the Self Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group within the American Education Research Association. According to Loughran (2004) self-study is an approach to research of teaching practice in order to better understand: oneself; teaching; learning; and the development of knowledge about these (p. 9). The central tenets of self-study research include: concern with the links between the self, teaching practice and student learning; questioning of taken for granted assumptions about teaching and learning; making private reflection public; challenging teachers to deconstruct their practice; the centrality of collegial approaches and support; and a focus on tensions, dilemmas, and challenges (Loughran et al. 2004). Samaras (2011) claimed that even after two decades of research and collaboration, it is still difficult to explicitly define self-study research so that it accurately encompasses all the various approaches, methods, data and interpretations that are evident in the literature. Despite this, she argued that the essential characteristics of self-study research can be described as being: (1) personal situated inquiry; (2) critical collaborative inquiry; (3) aimed at improved learning and teaching; (4) transparent and rigorous research process; and (5) knowledge generation and presentation (pp. 10–11). Despite the wide variety of methods used in self-study, the narrative accounts of learning through self-study and with self-study colleagues presented in this book, are indicative of the value of self-study research in building a body of knowledge about teacher educators' professional identity and practice.

As shown in this collection, the growing body of narrative and self-study research in the field of teacher education is testament to the importance that teacher educators attach to examining their own practice in order to more deeply understand their pedagogy and professional identity, and to share this knowledge with the teacher educator professional community. Evidence of how self-study and the narrative accounts of others do influence and change the perspectives and practice of colleagues near and far away can be seen in the narratives in this volume and in the wide body of self-study in teacher education research, most notably in *Studying Teacher Education*: *A journal of self-study in teacher education practices* published

by Routledge. Many of the authors cite other self-study scholars who have shared their experience and insight. For example, Fuentealba Jara and Montenegro Maggio (Chap. 13), show how Kitchen's research and writing about *relational teacher education* (Chap. 12) has influenced their own work. Bullock (Chap. 3) discusses the influence of the reflexive work of Russell (Chap. 2) in his own development as teacher educator practitioner and scholar. Such dialogical development represents the establishment and growth of an international community of practice of self-study in teacher education as discussed and demonstrated in chapters by Ritter (Chap. 4), Senese (Chap. 10) and Russell (Chap. 2). Hayler and Williams (Chap. 1) are a further example of this development: based on opposite sides of the world we recognised a range of common experiences and dilemmas in our work when we shared our research after first meeting in 2008. Learning from each other we have become close colleagues and collaborators with the aid of technology.

The Aim of This Book

The central questions posed for the authors featured in this book were:

What important changes, transitions or transformations have you experienced in your career?

How have these changes impacted on your professional knowledge, identity and practice as a teacher educator?

As foreshadowed above, the primary aim of this book was to capture the collective wisdom of a diverse group of teacher educators, at different stages of their careers, and in diverse international contexts. Wisdom gained from their experiences of professional becoming can be instructive for teacher educators at any stage of their career, either to support their induction as beginning teacher educators or to enhance their own professional development and renewal at later stages of their career. The narratives contained in this book document the phenomenon of 'constant becoming' in new and diverse professional contexts, and show how becoming a teacher educator is a dynamic personal and professional journey over time. This collection further aims to uncover the complexity and uniqueness that characterizes each individual teacher educator's professional journey, while providing links between the individual stories that contribute to a shared knowledge of the professional learning of this particular group of educators. In doing so, the authors and editors take up the challenge set by Zeichner (2007) and Loughran (2010) to delve more deeply into the stories of individual teacher educator's experience and practice to understand how they arrived at their particular pedagogy of teacher education, and to make connections across the different contexts of practice (institutional, political, inter-national) to contribute more solidly to knowledge about the profession of teacher educator.

Becoming Ourselves

As teacher educators as well as editors of this collection we want to stand as colleagues with the chapter authors, rather than arms-length functionaries who solely ensure that the book production process is achieved. In addition to providing feedback and working with the authors during the preparation of their manuscripts, we wanted to position ourselves as members of the same professional learning community of teacher educators, and to contribute to the intellectual ideas of the book. Our work as editors is firmly grounded in our mutual belief in the value of self-study and narrative inquiry; in a deep respect for the profession of teacher educators; and in a strong desire to make our collective work as teacher educators the best it can be for the children and young people, student teachers and communities that we serve. To that end, we each present a brief personal professional narrative of our own journeys of becoming that enables our voices to be added to those presented in the following chapters.

Mike

I think my eldest son Glen really is to blame. In September 1989 he took me with him on his very first day at school and showed me how things had changed. I was not aware of having considered being a teacher in those years since I 'got out' of school in 1975, but it may have been somewhere at the back of my mind since primary school when I thought that my teacher Mr Marley seemed to be having a good time. I did not have to leave Glen in the playground on his first day and he really was much happier at school than I had been. A door opened that day. I was approaching the end of my undergraduate course at the polytechnic and it was time to think about some paid work again. The computer at the careers department came up with 'teaching' as my most likely career choice, although I had not told the computer that I had been permanently excluded from school in '75. I began the primary Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the same polytechnic in 1990. Fifteen years later I came back to the same rooms at what was now a university and started teaching on the PGCE.

It was being a student on the PGCE that allowed me to believe that I could be a good teacher and enjoy it, but I never did completely get rid of the feeling that someone might come into the classroom and ask me what I was doing there and tell me to leave. I saw the ways in which pressure and stress as well as values are passed down the line from politicians to children and the part that teachers can play in that process. I was able to research, examine and write about this in my part-time MA and the Doctoral studies but I never did manage to change it within my own situation. I took on some part-time initial teacher-education work at the university teaching a module about inclusion. It seemed to offer the perfect combination of ideas into practice that I had been struggling with and I thought I knew what I wanted to do for a job at last. When I started a full-time job in the school of education at the

university it felt like coming home. But coming home is often a mixed experience and it did not work out for me this time. I had the unusual experience of becoming less confident the longer I worked there and I felt less and less authentic as the months went by until it felt as though the scales had tipped and I could not enjoy the parts of the job I had loved at first. There seemed to be even less time to think and to reflect upon things although I was in the habit of doing that now. After 3 years I knew I had to leave. That year I came to self-study while working on my doctoral thesis about teacher educators. I wanted to consider my own experience of education. I found Laurel Richardson and her work on writing as a method of enquiry waiting for me with Russell and Mumby's collection on self-study and I started writing my own story. One morning in 2008 I set out for a castle not far from where I live in Sussex to meet the S-STEP scholars and find my way back to teacher education. This time it would be different.

Judy

I sat at the study table, settling into another round of analyzing data, drafting chapters and generally despairing about my ability to complete my doctoral thesis before I was due to return to the classroom as a primary teacher, and recommence my career of almost 25 years. I glanced at the newspaper sitting unread, and thought that a break in my study routine wouldn't do any harm. Just a few minutes to glean the news of the day – and my usual casual glance at the employment pages. You never know what might be lurking there. Then I saw it. An advertisement by my own university, asking for classroom teachers interested in tutoring in classes in the Faculty of Education. After much thought, and internal deliberations – "*Could I do this*? *I've never taught adults before. Maybe it will be just sitting around a big table*, *talking about how to teach. No big deal*, *I could do that*." After preparing my application, I attached it to an email, hovered the arrow over the 'send' button and clicked. My official career as a teacher educator had begun.

Fast forward nearly 10 years. When did I cease being a teacher and start being a teacher educator? I don't think it is possible to answer that question. I began my journey as a teacher when I was a child at primary school, a common experience of many teachers. My career path was really never going to be anything else. When did I start to 'become' a teacher educator? Was it when my application was accepted and I began tutoring a class of first year primary pre-service teachers? Not really. That was the beginning of my *employment* as a teacher educator, but I can trace the beginning of my *practice* as a teacher educator to my experiences as a mentor of pre-service teachers in my own classroom. I loved having them in my room and teaching with them, and somehow I seemed to grow as a teacher just by having them there. I was keenly aware of the reciprocal nature of the learning relationship and was always keen to put my hand up with the next batch of student teachers arrived. In fact, I can still remember one student saying, on his last day of placement, that he had learned more from me and the children in my classroom in the 3 weeks that he

was there, than he had learned at university in 3 years. Surely not, but I started to think…maybe there was a teaching life for me beyond the primary classroom.

Over the last 10 years in teacher education, including my doctoral studies, my focus for research, teaching, scholarship and service has been teacher professional learning – identity development and teaching practice. On an intellectual level I believe this is essential work, as the quality of education in our schools depends largely, although not solely, on the quality of the teachers-as-learners in the classrooms. However, I am certain that the emotional basis for my work in teacher learning, especially career transitions, lays in a strong desire to understand my own experiences and to use these insights to support and mentor those around me. That aspect of learning and becoming never stops. One of the most significant career transitions for me was my introduction to the self-study community, my involvement in which was actively supported by my Monash colleagues, who were leaders in the field. Although I was well into my PhD, I still lacked a sense of connection to the Faculty and the academic community within it. I felt out of my depth, unsure of my ability to be anyone other than a teacher in a primary school – a real sense of the 'imposter syndrome' often recalled by others with a similar sense of dislocation. However, the welcome I received into the self-study community was career-affirming and inspiring. At last I had found my intellectual home.

Outline of Chapters

In bringing this collection of narratives together, we have taken note of Zeichner's (2007) lament that "there is… very little evidence of efforts in the opening and closing chapters of book-length collections of studies to look across a set of studies to discuss how [they] inform the field as a whole on particular substantive issues" (p.39). This is our particular challenge as editors and authors. The chapters that follow are organised in such a way that they provide a narrative in themselves – across and between the various experiences of becoming depicted in each. Although each narrative can be read as a stand-alone account of one teacher educator's professional becoming, when taken as a whole, clear connections and commonalities become evident, although often presented from very different perspectives. In the final chapter, we weave these threads together to examine how they inform and develop the field of teacher education.

We have provided an overview in Chap. 1 of the reasons for embarking on this project, a discussion of the key theoretical underpinnings, an explanation of the methodological approach, and the professional positioning of ourselves as editors and teacher educators in relation to the collection as a whole.

In Chap. 2 Tom Russell shares his thoughtful analysis drawn from experience over four decades as a teacher and teacher educator. The chapter both explains and demonstrates the central themes of learning through deep reflection on experience, and developing understanding of one's own pedagogy through listening-led dialogue with learners. Tom highlights the transitions and development of his own

teacher-education pedagogy while tracing the development of self-study in teacher education, which remains central to his work.

In Chap. 3 Shawn Bullock continues the conversation about the importance of learning from experience as he guides us through various 'acts' of his self-directed performance of building a career that spans school teaching, graduate school, doctoral studies (under the mentorship of Tom Russell) and finally emerging as a teacher educator. Shawn's narrative is grounded in an epistemological stance that positions experience at the heart of learning, and through his educational journey, shares his evolving understanding and development of a distinct pedagogy of teacher education.

Jason Ritter brings a reflexive synthesis of 11 self-studies to the meta-analysis of Chap. 4 which he uses to consider four 'transformational turns' in his own experience of working with those who are preparing to teach in the USA. Using cultural psychology as a theoretical frame, Jason deconstructs 'folk theories' about learning and teaching, and shares his journey of becoming a teacher educator as one of challenging these implicit assumptions in the quest to realise his vision of what teacher education can and should be.

For Chap. 5 Avril Loveless draws three narrative story lines to illustrate and examine micro, macro and meso perspectives of teaching and the education of teachers in England. Her autoethnographic narrative analysis weaves theoretical and experiential threads together in considering depth, scope and reach towards a pedagogy of teacher education refracted through 30 years of transition and transformation.

Susan Elliott-Johns takes us on a long and winding road in Chap. 6 as she traces her journey to becoming a teacher educator from her initial teacher education and time as a beginning teacher in the United Kingdom, across the Atlantic as her career advanced from teacher to administrator to graduate student, and finally to an academic career in teacher education. Susan argues that becoming a teacher educator takes courage and tenacity, and is embedded within supportive collegial relationships.

In Chap. 7 the importance of supportive collegial relationships is again highlighted by Amanda Berry and Rachel Forgasz as they present a dialogic interrogation of the 'secret, cover and sacred' stories that they encountered during their, at times, unsettling experiences of becoming teacher educators. Like Susan, Amanda and Rachel also conclude that this process requires courage and collegial support. Like other authors, they were emboldened to research, examine and share their professional becoming through self-study.

Crusader Rabbit (aka Dawn Garbett) hops into Chap. 8 as she takes us through her journey from school girl in the north of New Zealand to university student, teacher and finally teacher educator. Dawn draws on the wisdom of the Maori people who acknowledge the importance of looking to the past to guide us on our journey into the future. She highlights the significant contribution of people, contexts and events over the course of her career, not the least of which was her ultimately successful battle to have scholarly teaching recognised as a basis for academic promotion in the university.

Chap. 9 introduces us to Alan Ovens' quest for justice and democracy in education. Alan takes us through his educational, pedagogical and philosophical evolution from school student to teacher and high-profile New Zealand sports star, to doctoral student and teacher educator who places critical theorising at the centre of his work with student teachers. Like others, Alan believes in the central importance of relationships in learning and teaching, and in inviting learners to actively participate in their own pedagogical journeys of discovery.

It takes most of Chap. 10 before Joe Senese will admit to being a teacher educator. Identifying himself primarily as 'a teacher who teaches teachers about teaching', Joe's narrative analysis of action research and the development of four wise axioms of learning to teach, illuminates some of the 'discomfort' with academia often felt by teacher educators while offering sound advice for practice.

Democratic teacher education is the central theme of Nathan Brubaker's journey, presented in Chap. 11. After feeling 'imprisoned' in unsatisfying and often painful teacher education classes at undergraduate level, Nathan embarked on a journey of transformation to becoming a democratic teacher educator. Although passionate about his cause, Nathan experienced stages of surprise, unexpected disaster, genuine disappointment and failure, complete let-down, but ultimately satisfaction as his personal, pedagogical and professional beliefs converge.

The seven characteristics of 'relational teacher education' take centre stage for Chap. 12 where Julian Kitchen considers how the theory and approach that he developed and shared 15 years ago has guided the development of his philosophy and practice, helping him to negotiate some of the tensions between institutional and pedagogic requirements through a 're-imagining' of teacher education.

In Chap. 13 Helena Montenegro Maggio and Rodrigo Fuentealba Jara draw on their dialogue of conceptual transition and pedagogical change in relation to their own professional pathways, in relation to each other, and in relation to the development of teacher education in Chile.

The contribution to knowledge about teacher educators and their work that this volume makes is in relation to how teacher educators become learned professionals, how they respond to and learn from change during their journey of becoming a teacher educator, how this knowledge might be used to determine how they can be supported in this on-going journey of professional growth, and what knowledge and wisdom can be gleaned from these accounts to inform and support those embarking on a new career in teacher education. These contributions will be discussed in more depth as we consider some of the key themes and ideas in the **concluding chapter**. For now, we invite you to enter the world of the authors as presented in the next 12 chapters, to follow their personal and professional journeys of becoming teacher educators, and hopefully, to see something of your own journey that invites reflection and engagement and assists you in your continuing quest to become the learner, teacher or teacher educator you are destined to be.

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