Chapter 10
Complicating Coherence: Self-Study Research and Social Studies Teacher Education Programs and Practices

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The main argument of this chapter—that self-study offers great potential to promote more coherent social studies teacher education programs—is neither complex nor controversial. Indeed, there is so much "common sense" to the idea, I feel compelled to justify why such a straightforward proposition warrants an entire book chapter for its elaboration. Rather than provide that justification first, my hope is that an adequate justification emerges from my elaboration of the argument itself.

The elaboration takes several different turns. First I draw on recent literature on effective teacher education programs to complicate the ways in which program coherence has been conceptualized. Then I turn to teacher education research, particularly in social studies education, to highlight how self-study research might shed light on the nature and practices of preparing social studies teachers for professional practice. Finally, I further the elaboration through illustration, as I describe a social studies teacher education program that has been influenced by self-study research over a number of years and how this work has contributed to program reform, especially reform toward greater program coherence. In short, my case is that self-study research can generate important insights into the work of social studies teacher education, insights teacher educators might put to work in the service of more powerfully coherent programs.

Complicating Coherence

Returning to the idea of common sense, one hardly needs to mine educational research to find support for the idea that coherence is an important and valued feature that sets apart more from less effective teacher education programs. Teacher education programs grounded in strikingly divergent reform traditions and paradigms may reflect different aims, organization, and methods (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). Images of teaching and learning, sequence of courses, nature of

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field experiences, standards for admission, conceptions of subject matter, faculty commitment, collaboration with schools, forms of assessment, field supervision—how these and countless other shared features are organized and implemented define teacher education programs and distinguish them from each other. At its simplest, coherence simply refers to how well these features are arranged and work together toward shared purposes (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005).

Going further, Hammerness (2006) draws from Feiman-Nemser (1990) to distinguish two different forms of coherence—conceptual and structural—embedded in teacher education programs. Although not every feature of teacher education clearly falls within one category or the other, the two terms help set apart important features on the map of program coherence. Tom (1997) makes use of the same conceptual and structural distinction to group the 11 "design principles" he proposes to guide the reform of teacher education. Conceptual coherence refers to degree of shared vision held by teacher educators in a particular program. To what extent do they share agreement on the principles, ideas, and views of powerful teaching and learning supporting their work? To what extent do the views of cooperating school teachers reflect "collaborative resonance" (Cochran-Smith, 1991) with the intellectual commitments of university-based teacher educators? Structural coherence concerns the manner in which various program features and logistics (e.g., courses, practicums) are organized to work together. How does a particular sequence of various university-based courses support different kinds of field experiences? Does grouping preservice students in cohorts facilitate linkages between field and university coursework?

The ideas of conceptual and structural coherence provide a starting point for thinking about the design of coherent teacher education programs. Yet I believe the two categories fall short of encompassing what many teacher educators have in mind when thinking about coherence. Drawing from the field of curriculum studies, ideas of the enacted or experienced curriculum point to an additional way of recasting the problem of coherence. Ross (2001) describes the enacted curriculum in terms of "the day-to-day interactions among students, teachers and subject matter" (p. 30). The enacted or experienced curriculum is set apart from the formal curriculum by its attention to the actual learning that results from the educational moment, as opposed to the intended learning reflected in curriculum documents. The emphasis is on the quality of the particular learning experience for the learner.

This same idea applied to teacher education programs yields a third category of coherence—*enacted* coherence. Enacted coherence extends the lens of analysis beyond the conceptual (i.e., the concepts and ideas that form a program's vision for teacher education) and structural (i.e., the logistics, organization, and sequence of teacher education components) to include the ways in which prospective teachers actually experience and live their teacher education programs. Enacted coherence refers to the degree to which the actual experiences of a teacher education program fit together across time and settings and work toward program aims. In this sense, enacted coherence is not revealed in program descriptions, frameworks, and course sequences. As Zeichner and Conklin (2005) remind us, ". . .a program described by

teacher educators may be different from the one experienced by teacher education students" (p. 648). Howey (1996) echoes this point and suggests why enactment matters: "Ultimately preservice programs manifest their coherence in the type of pedagogy modeled for and engaged in by preservice students" (p. 143).

Yet enacted coherence, as I use the term, encompasses more than pedagogy. Clearly pedagogy is crucial to enactment, but so too are other concerns. Enacted coherence, the manifest coherence of a teacher education program, also is shaped by beliefs and perspectives about the work of teaching that prospective teachers bring with them to teacher education programs, contexts of teacher education programs, nature of learning community that forms among those who share time and space as they learn to teach, stances toward reflective inquiry communicated by teachers encountered in field experiences, and so forth. Everything that influences the way prospective teachers experience, how they makes sense of or give meaning to a program of teacher education can be understood to potentially affect enacted coherence.

Not only is it difficult to account for all that explains enacted coherence, the complexity of the construct, played out as it is in the remarkably dense nexus of programs and people in diverse contexts, means that enacted coherence is exceedingly challenging to identify. How would we know it, if we saw it? What does it look like? This same complexity also poses problems for teacher educators who would like to see more of it in their programs. Claims about enacted coherence are claims about how program experiences, the real and lived "what happens" of a program, work together, build, and develop meaning among those who live and learn in the program. The complexity borders on mystery and accounts for why we will never know for certain what teacher education "does" to prospective teachers (Britzman, 2003). The sheer and utter complexity of enacted coherence, as is true about many aspects of experience in teacher education, may go far to explain the refrain sounded over and over again in periodic reviews of research in teacher education, and stated colloquially—"we have lots to learn." What many teacher educators most want to know, what matters most to the quality of a teacher education program (e.g., how coherent is our program?) is often the most difficult to know.

As complex as it is to work with the idea of enacted coherence, the idea is central to my argument for what self-study might offer both research and practice in social studies teacher education. In the following section, I discuss social studies teacher education research with attention to what this body of work reveals about coherence, and even more important to the argument of this chapter, on what this work does not reveal. The contention is that collaborative self-study research can serve the aim of more coherent programs, and thus more effective programs, through the ways it provides insights into the complexities of enacted teacher education. Though I believe the contention is true for teacher education in any subject areas or grade levels, the case for self-study research in social studies teacher education is particularly strong for several different reasons including the nature of social studies as a curriculum area, as well as the climate, capacity, and context of social studies teacher education and teacher education research.

Researching Social Studies Teacher Education

What we know for certain about social studies teacher education from research in social studies teacher education is not much. This dim conclusion is echoed through research reviews of social studies teacher education in the last two decades (Banks & Parker, 1990; Adler, 1991; Armento 1996; Adler, 2008). All seem to agree that it is not so much the case that there is no important, telling, engaging research done in the field. Rather the persistent complaint is that whatever good research has been done has not been synthesized or connected within coherent programs of research organized around clear problems facing the field. Most often, diverse research methods are brought to bear on concepts and problems whose meaning and supporting theories either are not made clear or shift from study to study. Small-scale studies stand alone and disconnected from a program of inquiry that would allow the accumulation of formal knowledge. These problems beset research in teacher education more generally (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), but they also appear especially pronounced in social studies teacher education.

One part of the problem for social studies teacher education has to do with the nature of social studies education itself. As a place on the map of the modern school curriculum in the United States, social studies has suffered from a lack of agreement about both its definition and its purposes (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Evans, 2004; Ross, 2006). The apparent consensus around social studies as preparation for democratic citizenship masks deep and continuing disagreements about form (e.g., is social studies its own unified field or simply a confederation of academic disciplines?), methods (e.g., is social studies best taught through controversy and discussion or though stories and telling?), and conceptions of democratic citizenship (e.g., are good citizens critically engaged toward progressive social change or are they more inclined toward personal responsibility and civic duty?). These unsettled issues pose obvious problems for social studies teacher education, charged as it is with the preparation of accomplished teachers in a field so unstable about its vision of accomplished teaching. Disagreements over the proper aims and methods of social studies teaching and learning reflect themselves in the structures and practices of social studies teacher education programs. As a result, research in social studies teacher education is likely to mirror the fragmented nature of social studies itself.

Other important features that set the context of research in social studies teacher education include who does the research and the conditions in which this work is done. In the United States, social studies teacher education programs are well represented in college and university-based teacher education offerings, but the responsibility for these programs does not always rest with faculty who would identify as social studies education faculty. Secondary education and discipline-based programs, such as teacher education housed in history and other social science discipline departments, are common. A good indicator of the relatively small population of social studies education researchers is membership in the College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA), an associated group of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), consisting of higher education faculty members,

graduate students, and others who examine social studies from theoretical and research perspectives. In 2009, CUFA had a membership of 814. Compare this number to another research-oriented school subject organization—the National Association of Research in Science Teaching—with over 1800 members. Also telling are comparisons among memberships in various American Educational Research Association (AERA) Special Interest Groups: Research in Social Studies Education ($n = 266$), Research in Mathematics Education ($n = 595$), Science Teaching and Learning ($n = 423$), and Writing and Literacies ($n = 372$) (Bidyut Acharya, personal communication, July 16, 2009). Clearly the number of social studies education researchers is not large, and only a fraction of this population conducts and concerns itself with research on teacher education.

Those few who have taken up social studies teacher education research do so in college and university settings that make building coordinated programs of research in teacher education difficult. Labaree (2004) describes a dominant feature in the history of education schools as the tension between the struggle for academic status purchased through research and the less respected work of preparing teachers and other education professionals. Social studies researchers, like many (though not all) of their education school colleagues, find their professional lives influenced by this tension (Cole & Knowles, 2004). Most social studies researchers are social studies teacher educators as well. Like many of their colleagues across schools and colleges of education, they find themselves balancing institutional and personal expectations of research productivity on the one hand with the work of labor-intensive teacher education programs on the other. And this balancing act is played out in a field that offers little in the way of research funding opportunities. For example, big money federal grant programs, such as those available in science, math, and technology education, simply do not exist for research in social studies education. Since 2001, the Teaching American History grant program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, has been a notable exception, but the intent of this program is teacher professional development, not research on teacher professional development.

In this context, the lack of an accumulated research knowledge base to guide any aspect of social studies teacher education, including program coherence, is not surprising. And these conditions are not likely to change any time soon. Again, the problem is not that there is no good research done on social studies teacher education. Adler (2008) points to diverse and important work addressing socials studies methods courses, field experiences, teacher beliefs and perspectives, diversity, technology, and pedagogical content knowledge. The issue is more that the small-scale, individualistic nature of these studies makes it difficult to develop generally accepted claims about how social studies teacher education works. In addition, the survey and case study methods typical of much of this work, especially over the last few decades, tend to wash over the unique program and participant context features so important to investing findings with meaning. Put simply, the current body of research in social studies teacher education provides little insight into the nature, presence, and development of enacted coherence.

My argument is that self-study might address this shortcoming. By definition, enacted coherence is always situated coherence. The notion of situated coherence

draws on the view of teaching as "situated practice," an idea that Liston and Zeichner (1991) describe in terms of "teachers as social actors engaged in practices within particular context... [and] the unacknowledged institutional and social context of this practice as well as its intended and unintended outcomes" (p. 122). What is true for teachers is true for teacher educators. The various facets of a teacher education program always work together in ways shaped by its social and institutional context. Just as important, enacted coherence also depends on the pedagogies, manners of interaction, and perspectives of practice of those teacher educators who bring particular program designs and structures to life. Thus the very nature of enacted coherence works against the idea that research will ever provide a wholly integrated and connected "knowledge base" that would guide both policy and practice in teacher education, especially so with respect to understudied fields such as the preparation of social studies teachers.

Yet knowledge and understanding of enacted coherence are crucial in the work of meaningful social studies teacher education. For many, the appeal of self-study inquiries are their power to shed light on the mystery of teacher education programs where it matters most—in their enactment. The history of self-study of teaching and teacher education research reveals understanding and improving practice as the driving catalysts in the development of the field (Loughran, 2004a). Contributing to a broader and more public knowledge base of teacher education also has played a role. Although a real tension exists between those who advocate self-study for improved practice and those who would like to see self-study for more generalized knowledge production, Zeichner has argued these different sorts of purposes are not mutually exclusive (2007). For my argument, however, self-study research as a means of learning more about enacted coherence turns on a concern for making sense of, and improving, the situated practice of teachers and teacher educators.

Several features of self-study research serve the purposes of understanding and increasing the enacted coherence of teacher education programs. Foremost among these features, self-study research of teacher education practices, by its very nature, is grounded in the context of particular teacher education programs. Thus the context of a program, the situated space in which enacted coherence takes shape, finds its way into self-study research, even as the degree to which program context is identified, explained, or even made an explicit focus of the inquiry varies. Teacher educators must look at where they work, if they want to know how the features of their program work together. Research on the nature and conceptualization of coherence, how various program designs facilitate it, theories and cases of how it evolves over time—this work can provide valuable insights about coherence in general, but enacted coherence is unique to particular program settings. Self-study research offers opportunities to study these settings.

As well, the *self* in self-study research points to an examination of prominent features of program coherence—practices and practitioners. The pedagogies and ways of being teacher educators bring to their programs color the way the program is experienced by those learning to teach. Typically, self-study of teaching and teacher education starts from the concerns and felt needs of educators derived from the complexities and unique situations of their work. From this standpoint, Korthagen and Lunenberg (2004) set self-study research apart from traditional educational research

along two dimensions directly related to self in self-study: an emphasis on both the authority of practice and personal practical theories. The authority of practice broadens the category of valued knowledge about teacher education beyond a traditional focus on expert knowledge to include the wisdom made possible by learning from practice. Such wisdom feeds into the personal practical theories—the systems of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, and images that inform the decisions teacher educators make about and within their program contexts. In short, by a focus on practices and practitioners nested in particular contexts, self-study research focuses inquiry on potentially rich sources of insight, on crucial components of enacted coherence.

Besides a focus on practices and practitioners, self-study research stands to inform enacted coherence through its action or problem-solving orientation (Loughran & Russell, 2002). The problems and challenges of teacher education enactment prompt the research questions taken up in self-study research (LaBoskey, 2004). Of course, problems and challenges, especially those encountered in the ongoing activity of teacher education, are problems and challenges because solutions and fixes are not immediately apparent. Looking at teacher education programs as interrelated systems, the idea of enacted coherence emphasizes that problems and challenges encountered in one part of a program are rarely isolated phenomena. Even when self-study methods do not account openly for the interrelatedness of program activities, knowledge generated from self-study research often leads to changes in practices, if not changes to the "selves" of those who conduct/frame the research. These changes echo in the enacted coherence of the larger program.

Finally, the importance of collaboration is an important, repeated theme apparent in self-study of teaching and teacher education practices literature (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004). Other closely related themes include challenging assumptions, reframing practice, and including the voices of those closest to the focus of inquiry (Elijah, 2004; LaBoskey, 2004; Loughran, 2004b). All of these features of self-study research suggest powerful opportunities to both better understand and improve enacted coherence. Obviously, it is hard to imagine a coherent program in which program participants do not talk to one another. The perspectives of those who experience the full sweep of a program best serve the aim of coherence when they are brought together. Self-study research not only brings different perspectives together, but also does so intentionally, systematically, and often with reference to shared, mutual concerns.

All of these features speak to the potential of self-study research to help teacher educators develop understanding about enacted coherence, especially in fields such as social studies teacher education. The collective body of published research may leave the field wanting to know about how social studies teacher education programs work to support the development of accomplished social studies teachers. However there is little reason to believe that the conditions for research on social studies teacher education are likely to change soon. Yet settings already exist for talented and responsible teacher educators to learn more about their own practices and the work of programs. Self-study research is an accessible, realistic approach to developing understanding of the lived curriculum and practices of teacher education programs experienced by the students learning to teach in them.

Self-Study Steps Toward Coherence: An Example

The following section furthers my argument by providing an illustration of how self-study research prompted an examination of the beliefs and practices of a group of social studies teacher educators around an important, but previously underexamined factor central to the quality of enacted coherence in their program. The self-study research project that provides this illustration was not focused on coherence, but the collaboration and discussion occasioned by the self-study revealed numerous issues that speak to the ways preservice teachers experience the program. Here I describe what we learned about one such issue— the varying expectations about the honesty and authenticity program instructors encourage among the beginning teachers who work their way through our program.

Over the past 5 years, the social studies teacher education program featured in this chapter has been touched by self-study in a variety of ways. Numerous instructors have conducted self-studies of various features of their work (e.g., Powell & Hawley, 2009; Ritter 2007, 2009; Ritter, Powell & Hawley, 2007). Other inquiries into the ways and outcomes of the program have taken place via self-study research situated in regular seminars in which instructors have attempted to put into practice the idea of "collaborative inquiry," a core theme of the program. Many of these seminars provided opportunities for instructors to share problems of practice encountered in various settings (e.g., methods classes, student teaching field supervision, student teaching seminars, technology-mediated discussion forums, etc). Other seminars featured attention on how instructors struggled to come to terms with the principles and standards underlying the program itself. A recent year-long seminar—ESOC 9700—used Loughran's *Developing a pedagogy of teacher education* (2006) as a base text and took up the challenge suggested by the title to focus discussion.

Some explanation of the context for the seminar helps to frame my discussion of authenticity and honesty. Twelve times across the two semesters of an academic year, ESOC 9700 brought together several social studies faculty with social studies doctoral students serving as graduate teaching assistants in an undergraduate B.S.Ed. degree program leading to initial secondary teacher certification in one of four social science disciplines (i.e., history, economics, political science, and human geography). Although the seminar was pitched as an opportunity to work toward "developing a pedagogy of teacher education," most of the seminar time was spent in discussion of the various problems and issues participants brought to the seminar on any given day. Admittedly, many of the problems and issues featured in discussion related to the pedagogy of teacher education. However, the seminar unfolded more around the particular topics that seminar participants raised at any given meeting than according to a structured plan.

One commonality shared by all seminar participants was their teacher education work in the program. Yet their experiences within the program were diverse according to the length of time they were formally associated with the program, their history as instructors of particular courses and field experiences, and their formal role at the university. Of the nine regular participants in seminar, five were graduate teaching assistants in their first to fourth years in the program, two were tenure-track faculty in their seventh and third years in the program respectively,

and one was an academic professional who worked across several different teacher education programs including the social studies program featured in this chapter.

Another important feature of self-study work framed by this seminar is the structure and nature of the program itself. Most teacher educators would find aspects of the program's structural coherence (Hammerness, 2006; Tom, 1997)—particularly the courses and field experiences, and their arrangement—recognizable according to a conventional pattern familiar to many teacher education programs. An initial seminar and field experience (ESOC 2450) introduces potential secondary social studies education to the field. Those admitted to the major via a competitive application process then take upper-level social science and history courses in other academic departments, and finish their program with a one-semester "professional block" of three course/field experiences (social studies methods, social studies curriculum, practicum and seminar). The final semester of the program consists of a 12-week full-time student teaching field experience and a companion student teaching seminar. In structural terms of course and field experiences, this social studies program looks much like those found in other U.S. schools and colleges of education.

What likely sets this social studies education program apart from others is the set of "core themes" and related standards representing the intellectual commitments of the program. The arrangement of these ideas about teaching and learning in social studies speaks to the "conceptual coherence" (Hammerness, 2006; Tom, 1997) of the program. One such theme is rationale-based practice. Beginning in the introduction to social studies course (ESOC 2450), taken prior to admission to the program, students make their first attempt to articulate their best thinking on the broader purposes of social studies and what these might mean for both what and how they will teach (Conklin, 2009). They are encouraged to return to their initial rationales as they progress through the program. At the end of the program, after completing student teaching, students are asked to present their rationales as they stand at the end-point of the program, and as the centerpiece of a comprehensive electronic portfolio in which they discuss how their rationales are evident in the various domains of teacher competency addressed in this document. In addition to rationale-based practice, four other core themes are intended to serve as intellectual lines of connection across the field experiences and courses of the program—reflective teaching, collaborative inquiry, culturally relevant pedagogy, and a conception of good teaching as "active student engagement in worthwhile learning."

In this program setting, the seminar participants came together to explore problems and achievements from their own respective spheres of influence as teacher educators. In a sense, the seminar itself was a kind of self-study in the ways we investigated our own work within the program in collaboration with others to better understand a shared concern—our developing pedagogies of teacher education. Another self-study effort was taken up by a subset of seminar participants to examine both the nature and substance of the dialogue openings created by our "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) as social studies teacher educators. For this study, each of the 12 seminar meetings was audio taped and transcribed. These transcripts, along with notes taken during the meetings and follow-up conversations drawn from the seminar's online discussion forum, provided data

subject to analysis framed by a five-part model of "learning to teach in community" (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005) adapted to teacher education.

Drawing primarily from the transcripts of one seminar meeting, the following illustration provides an example of how self-study research provided a standpoint for exploring an aspect of teacher education work that shapes the enacted coherence of our program. At issue is the authenticity of voice instructors expect from preservice teachers in the various course and field experiences across the three semesters of our program. Authenticity is but one of a number of different threads of inquiry I might have chosen to highlight from the final hour of this one seminar meeting. I chose this particular aspect of the conversation because of the special challenges authenticity and honesty present for enacted coherence within our program. Of course, all teacher educators should consider expectations of authenticity and honesty, both of themselves in their own practice and of the students they teach. In the teacher education program featured here, however, the structural realities of 2450 (i.e. an introduction to social studies course taken prior to admission to the program, the initial rationale students write in this course, and a competitive admissions process that heavily weights the blind-review of these rationales) merge with the conceptual features of the program (i.e. rationale-based practice and the other core themes) in ways that make student honesty a particularly pressing concern of enacted coherence.

In this hour, we discussed a story I shared from my own sphere of influence that semester, the student teaching seminar. The story was about what appeared to me as a breakthrough moment for a student teacher in the final semester of our program, a moment that illustrates a principle of the pedagogy of teacher education that Loughran describes as "learner consent" (p. 79). As a class we had spent time unpacking one of the core themes and conceptual anchors of the program—the notion of good teaching as practice that promotes "active student engagement" in "worthwhile learning." Near the conclusion of his student teaching experience, Geoff confessed he felt like "an outsider" to the program because he did not believe he thought of "active student engagement" in the ways he believed the program conceptualized the idea. As instructor, I was struck that Geoff waited so late into the program to share how he felt. At the same time, I was relieved that he finally did express his concern. The moment raised the question of how honest students feel they can be in positioning themselves contrary to what they may perceive as the "party-line" of the program.

In our teacher education seminar, the story provided me an opportunity both to share a puzzling part of my own practice and to express how I value student honesty. In my own words:

> What was most vibrant and fresh about this for me is that Geoff said, "I felt like I'm not with the program." This consent/buy-in thing has been one of my seminar "problems of practice" extraordinaire, and I try and get at that in so many different ways, pleading for honesty... [T]he buy-in from Geoff was important for me, and had this moment not popped up, I think that Geoff could have easily skated through the final three weeks feeling, "I'm not buying into that program and I made that decision early on in the semester." It's staggering to me

> how those moments pop up throughout the semester and how easily they could be missed, if the discussion hadn't taken a slight little turn. (TD, Seminar, April 10, 2009)

This excerpt reveals an assumption supporting my view of effective teacher education programs. That is, teacher educators in a successful program should strive to create conditions wherein students feel they can be honest about, and willing to share, their developing thinking about teaching and learning. Even when honesty calls one to make the difficult admissions "I don't know yet what I believe about the core ideas of the program," or even "I disagree with the core ideas of this program," I believe a program that takes teacher development seriously must cultivate the spaces for such disclosures. Again, although I was pleased that Geoff found himself in such a space, I was concerned that it took until the final 3 weeks of the program before he voiced this view.

Moments later, Alex, a graduate teaching assistant who was nearing completion of his second time teaching the introduction to social studies course (ESOC 2450), expressed that issues of honesty complicate his own pedagogy of teacher education in his work with students at the very start of our program. He stated quite plainly to the group, "I don't know how to teach ESOC 2450." (AC, Seminar, April 10, 2009). With reference to the structured four-question rationale assignment embedded in ESOC 2450 and due at the end of the term, Alex continued,

> I don't know how to teach 2450.... Because, sometimes, I feel like I've got four questions. I've got to prepare them to answer those four questions. And, I feel like they don't have a choice in how they answer those four questions because there will be a group of unnamed others who will be looking at these papers, looking for certain ways, certain writing, and certain particular ways of answering these four questions that we've already set them up to answer. So, I had a student... they were doing a "line of contention" the other day. We were going back and forth, and I can't remember the question, but the whole class went on one side, and she said, "Well yeah. What did you expect? Didn't you expect us to all think the same way?" And then I was like, "Well, what am I doing?" We tried to set up these ways to think, and I think I've tried to give them choice and autonomy in where they go with this rationale, but to me, it seems forced, at least in 2450... We're telling them what it is: "A good social studies teacher will: 29 standards." We're telling them what it is. (AC, Seminar, April 10, 2009)

The seminar discussion continued with participants weighing in on a variety of concerns prompted by these two revelations shared by instructors teaching the bookend courses in the program. We considered the risks to authenticity that stem from a program admissions formula weighted so heavily on a rationale written after a one-semester introduction to social studies. Numerous participants picked up the question of whether there are some claims about good teaching in social studies that are beyond negotiation. Hilary, Daniel, and Brandon contested the idea of indoctrination. Both the "core themes" and the other 22 program standards organized in the program framework were problematized. Joseph troubled whether he should be more explicit about the program standards in his curriculum course. We also wondered whether program standards provide a shared language to talk about good teaching, even if we ourselves do not share unilateral beliefs about their meaning. Questions were posed about whether our program could benefit from a more

explicit, public statement about the vision of social studies we promote. Perhaps then, students would make decisions about signing on under full disclosure.

All of these issues appeared in the discussion, and arguably all provide insights into the nature of enacted coherence experienced by our students. Many of these issues relate to the question of the expectations of honesty held by instructors in this program. An analysis of the transcript of our seminar for conversation more directly focused on the question itself reveals a number of different voices that speak to the enacted coherence students experience across the full sweep of the program. The following provides an illustrative sampling of those voices in the form of "dialogue clips" or passages from the full conversation.

Mardi: So, is there an aspect of having that class and then having people espouse what you say in that class in order to get admitted that four semesters later, or however many semesters later, sets up this dynamic of "This is what the program wanted. I never really agreed with it, didn't work for me, never really believed it." Is it setting up that dynamic. . .?

Brandon: "This is what gets me in here. I'm just going to BS my way to get into this program and that's it." That's how a lot of them perceive it.

Mardi: It seems like those would be the people who are at the back end having all these issues about being resistant and not having "bought in." Because I can think about who some of those people are, and I don't know that they were people who probably did really grapple with these ideas meaningfully and start to incorporate them. I think they were probably people who did what they had to do to get in and then just did that all the way through, because that was the dynamic that got set up by how they had to get in. I don't think that we lost them somewhere along the way. I bet we just never had them from the beginning.

Todd: I don't know if this is helpful, but what makes me feel good as an instructor in [student teaching] seminar, and I think it would be true in 2450, is not that they're getting an answer that either they buy into or don't, but it gets to another core theme, this reflective teaching idea. Call it reflection or inquiry as a stance. I feel best in seminar when people demonstrate their questioning, their questions about these standards. . . I stress over and over again in e-portfolio night that the honesty push I'm trying to make here means it's okay to say, "I don't know, I don't know what I thought.". . . Is it possible that we could admit people into the program whose rationale read like this? "This next section, democracy, I haven't figured out yet. . . We've looked at several different conceptions. The one I'm most drawn to is this, but it still seems pretty abstract. [Walter] Parker says so on and so forth. That makes a lot of sense to me. At the same time, I can't see how that would play out in the classroom and it still seems abstract. That's what my thinking is about democracy and education. Next section." Would that person be penalized?

Daniel: I think it's interesting to hear you give an example... of a student who says, "I don't know." And then going on to begin explaining that you're okay with that, in juxtaposition to your saying, "I feel like there's certain answers to these questions that I am going to teach them, or that I'm supposed to teach them, to get entry into the program."

Alex: I don't know. I think terming it a rationale is dishonest at that point. I think later it's fine. But, I think terming it a rationale—it's not. It's an admissions document, and I teach it like an admissions document. I think that's a big tension that I have in the way that I teach that class... I just think as an introduction... the way we want them to think about democracy, and multicultural ed, and power and privilege—it's an impact that shatters the way that they've conceptualized life, social studies, teaching... And, I feel like I'm forcing their hand because I can't let them give, turn in, this kind of scattered, "I don't know what the hell multicultural ed is," because they have to give you an answer. I feel like I'm doing a disservice by not giving what I think is the answer.

Brandon: We ask them in the e-portfolio that one of the things they should do is question these things, and it's okay not to understand fully what's going on. But, at 2450, we can't expect that... I would love to take in a student that is questioning of something and still not sure of themselves, but when we compare that to another document and somebody else says, "Here's what I believe in." And we don't know that person, don't know what they learned or not, you tend to probably go with the one that actually argues a position as opposed to one who is still questioning about it.

Alex: You know, I don't know why I don't know things. I know I don't know them, but I don't know why I don't know them or why things seem confusing. I'm sure I could come up with something, but if there was a way for me to tell you why I don't know something, I'd rather pretend that I know and tell you that I know and see how that flies, at least in 2450. I know maybe the e-portfolio rationale is a little different ... but that's a different story. ... Part of it is I'm still entering the conversation, both as a graduate assistant and as a teacher educator, because this wasn't the discourse in my master's program. I'm learning that discourse, and part of my reason why I'm thinking that there's this kind of grand answer is because I'm still learning that answer. I'm not so sure that I can with confidence tell my students that it's okay to answer it [the rationale assignment] with a kind of loose interpretation and be completely confident that their answer in that manner isn't going to be rejected, because there's a certain discourse that I think is pleasing to our ears as a program.

Hilary: There are also these inherent contradictions in the course and in the assignment because I think, Todd, going back to the question you asked about whether this sort of answer about "I don't know" would be acceptable, one of the things that I've talked with students in 2450

about is what does a rationale mean? What does that word mean? It means a reason for doing something. "I don't know" I don't think is a reason for doing something. It's not a basis for action. The whole assignment, the name of the assignment is "what is your reason for teaching, what is your reason for action?" So, I guess I think it's not acceptable to say "I don't know" if we're saying. "This is your rationale." And, I think there is also this contradiction of choosing your own reason when we do have a stated—I mean, I've always felt this was a tension of teaching 2450, too, is that we do have an understanding of what we think our program thinks is good teaching, and we say that explicitly to a certain extent.

Todd: In [student teaching] seminar, I don't say this is a "social justice oriented" seminar. I do say, and I try and repeat this theme over and over again, what we're about here is this "collaborative inquiry" and "reflective teaching," and now it's about making sense. Let's get ourselves in the space of these 27 standards and cast about, muck it up, stir it up, think about different ideas, try and make sense of this for yourself in light of your rationale. Very challenging things to do.... But I don't know that we all believe that... Maybe we should re-frame the rationale assignment to something called "initial castings about regarding social studies," and then that will take some of the pressure off it.

Marty: Is it okay to be in a classroom and not know what you're doing it for?

Todd: I would feel disappointed if you asked those who came through our program, "Tell us what you think about, say, indoctrination and social studies," and they said, "I never thought about it, I don't know. What is indoctrination?" That would be only appealing to me because it's an honest response. What I would love to see is somebody say "Yeah, indoctrination is an issue that I've struggled with."... I want them to struggle with the difference between indoctrination and education. This is a fundamental expectation I think we should hold in an education program.

Daniel: I wonder how many of out student teachers exiting the program would say something to the effect of, "I BSed my way through a portion of this program or all of the program," or "These are some things I used in the rationale, and I think it's crap. I don't believe that at all." I don't know if that's a few students or if that's a lot. But, it's also true that I think just because somebody takes up a language or a way of talking that we might use in this department, that doesn't always equate to indoctrination. It may mean that they actually think that those are good ideas, you know, using those words. Just because they begin to sort of take on a certain language doesn't necessarily mean they're doing it just to BS their way through the program. It might mean that there's some value in it, not always though.

Joseph: I've been sitting here thinking about all of these things that we've said, and as I've been thinking, I've been mulling over in my head how this

idea of critique and this idea of saying, "I don't know," and this idea of honesty... And it's all environmentally contextual. I guess what I mean by environmentally contextual is I think about how a lot of all of this stuff is so dependent on the kind of environment we create within our own classroom space, and I'm really intrigued that he was able to say that, and I guess feel comfortable saying that because I know one of the things that I've struggled with from the fall semester to this spring semester and I've really, really worked really hard is to try to create a safe environment where people feel that they can be honest and be critical, and question, and I think that's a really key component that I don't know how much we've talked about so far.

Marty: I'm just thinking about them in the context of their first couple of years as undergraduates, and they're choosing between being a journalism major or a management major. They don't have to take a stance to be a management major. Like, they're not adhering to a philosophy, if that's the major that you choose. I think for them, they don't see education as a political act or a political decision the way that we think that it is, and so it's like this huge transition that they're totally unprepared for. They don't have to make a political decision to be a history major, and so when they switched over to education, I think it's going to be the same as just saying, "I'm going to be a management major." And then we don't think that it is.

Todd: We have 27 standards that give us anchor points. I don't know that it gives us a common vision because there's so much interpretation of each one of those, and the success of seminar for me is when they can find out that this framework is not directive, not prescriptive. These standards are all interpretation.

Alex: They don't have space for them. In 2450, they don't have space for interpretation. I think If I were to teach another course, I think I would be comfortable with the interpretation, with the okay, find a shade. I don't feel like they can find a shade or a mish mash.

In sometimes subtle and sometimes obvious ways, the multiplicity of perspectives apparent in this discussion informed the pedagogies of those who contributed to the entire range of course and field experiences in this social studies teacher education program. Clearly, the coherence of a teacher education program is heavily influenced by the expectations of honesty, authenticity of discourse, and conditions for engagement that students experience as they make their way through it. Self-study research provided a method that led us to reveal beliefs about teacher education, beliefs that previously worked under the surface of course descriptions, program frameworks, and other artifacts of practice. As we worked together to explore our developing pedagogies of teacher education, our collaborative self-study not only provided a space in which we could make previously hidden beliefs and practices visible, but also led us to record these views, review them through the lens of learning to teach in community (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford,

2005), and consider how they contributed to the experiences made possible by the whole program.

In this case, self-study research opened up avenues for generating understanding about the enacted coherence of a program that already had many of the trappings of coherence in place. Indeed, the social studies teacher education program featured in this research was developed with considerable attention to both conceptual and structural coherence. However, the idea of enacted coherence suggests the need to look beyond the arrangement of courses and signature ideas that give a program its shape and substance. In the process of looking closely at our pedagogies of teacher education, we uncovered assumptions we made about the core themes of the programs that very likely worked against the enacted coherence we seek. Do the core themes and the other 22 program standards represent answers to the questions of teaching and learning in social studies, or do they more represent questions, areas of inquiry that we use to frame our work with those learning to teach in our program? Collaborative self-study research helped us to understand an important feature of our work that might have easily remained in the shadows.

Those unconvinced that this example does much to illustrate my argument about the value of self-study research and its potential to promote program coherence might respond that conservations about expectations of honesty and authenticity, or about any other feature of the work of teacher education for that matter, are just that—conversations. Conversations only influence enacted coherence to the extent they shape the practices of teacher educators. As well, teacher educators need not rely on self-study to have these conversations. Both points are well taken. Indeed, there is a strong current of support for the idea that improvement of practice is a defining feature of self-study research (LaBoskey, 2004). Some would argue that self-study research is incomplete until the researchers can answer the question, "How have you changed?"

My response is that the episode of dialogue presented here represents something more than mere conversation. Self-study brought intentional and systematic discipline to the exchange of ideas in this seminar. The result was a deeper appreciation of important assumptions about our practice as teacher educators and more consideration of what these assumptions mean for the program than might otherwise have been the case had we simply shared conversation in the hallway, if such a conversation would have happened at all. Although our self-study was not designed to document the resulting changes in our practices as instructors in this program, the continued analysis of the transcripts of seminar sessions has kept the theme of the authenticity of student voice prominent in the thinking of the instructor/researchers who continue this self-study. Clearly this self-study stands to generate understandings that might improve program coherence within our particular program.

Self-study research also might produce knowledge about social studies teacher education that could serve the field more broadly. Sharing research into the problems and successes of on-the-ground teacher education creates much-needed openings for dialogue and critical examination among teacher educators. Turned to questions about enacted coherence, self-study could play an important role in expanding

professional conversation beyond descriptive accounts of the structural and conceptual features of program reform efforts and toward what preservice students actually experience as they learn about teaching social studies in our programs. Social studies teacher education represents a small place on the map of educational research. Even with a proliferation of self-study research, it is unlikely that the next review of research on social studies teacher education is likely to reach drastically different conclusions from preceding reviews (Adler, 1991, 2008; Armento, 1996; Banks & Parker, 1990). There still will be a lot we do not know about the preparation of new social studies teachers. Yet self-study research does present a viable, accessible, and powerful approach to better understanding of teacher education practices where they matter most—in their enactment. Common sense or not, the argument connecting self-study research and improved teacher education deserves attention.

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