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Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology

Unraveling a Complex Interplay

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Unraveling a Complex Interplay

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Introduction: Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Research Methodology: A Readers' Guide

In the last decade, interest in self-study research has grown and, with that, also the teaching of self-study methodology. Experienced self-study researchers have developed initiatives to teach and support groups of colleagues and students to conduct self-study research in their own local contexts. Within the self-study community, this development was looked on with interest, but at the same time, it also evoked questions. For example, could "teaching" self-study research not – unintentionally – enforce a rather instrumental or technical approach? How might these collaborative research projects fit with the strong notion of ownership and personal involvement embedded in self-study? As Loughran writes in the first introductory chapter to this book, teaching about self-study has its challenges, these certainly being examples of them.

In this book, we present a kaleidoscope of self-studies on teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study research by self-study scholars working to develop the knowledge base of teaching and facilitating self-study research. In one part, self-studies are situated within a single university, while other parts involve participants from diverse schools, colleges, and universities. The studies are carried out in self-study research communities in different countries, as well as across different continents. The contributions also show a variety of theoretical and practical approaches to teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study methodology which extend our understandings.

The first part of this book is situated in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at Duquesne University (USA). Here, Jason Margolis, a Department Chair within the School of Education, motivated by his own experiences with self-study research, initiated a self-study group in 2014 to create synergistic opportunities between teaching and research and to support the professional development of his faculty. Jason K. Ritter was asked to take lead of this group, translating his own knowledge of, and experiences with, self-study research into facilitating similar work with his colleagues. In his contribution to this part, Ritter analyzes how this translation seemed to work out and what tensions he encountered. Next, the seven group members each offer reflective insights with regard to how they have experienced their participation in the group. They introduce themselves and describe their backgrounds, their challenges,

and the tensions they met. Then they reflect on how they understand, relate to, and use self-study research. Each of these seven chapters ends with a description about what the author experiences as strengths and limitations of self-study research. The final chapter of the part, by Jason Ritter, Rachel Ayieko, Xia Chao, Odeese Khalil, Laura Mahalingappa, Christopher Meidl, Carla Meyer, Sandra Quiñones, and Julia Ann Williams, is a collaborative self-study of the group. This study offers insights in the groups' processes and progress and offers perspectives for the next phase of their scholarly work together.

The second part of this book is situated in the Netherlands. In 2007, VU University invited Dutch teacher educators from colleges and universities to partici- pate in a self-study trajectory. In later Dutch self-study activities, school-based teacher educators were also involved. Given the fact that most teacher educators in the Netherlands have a teaching-only job, from the start it was obvious that facilita- tors were needed to support the participants of these self-study activities. This part starts with an overview, by Mieke Lunenberg, of the development of teaching self- study research in the Netherlands since 2007, building on Dutch experiences as well as on the increasing number of international publications on facilitating self-study research. The next chapters consist of a collaborative self-study of four teachers of self-study research, a reflective vignette about learning, conducting, and presenting self-study research by a school-based teacher educator, and an individual as well as a collaborative self-study of participants of the Dutch self-study activities. The final chapter of this part is a conversation among all authors of the part (Mieke Lunenberg, Amanda Berry, Paul van den Bos, Janneke Geursen, Els Hagebeuk, Ari de Heer, Jorien Radstake, Martine van Rijswijk, and Hanneke Tuithof) on what has been learned about teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study methodology, which results in some suggestions to inspire others to also start self-study activities.

The third part of this book is situated in Flanders (e.g., the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium). The focus of the chapters in this part is on reliving and retelling the story of a self-study project that took place between 2009 and 2011. The project not only represents the very first attempt in Flanders to use the methodological and conceptual insights of the self-study approach but also aimed to contribute to the improvement of support for student teachers' learning during internships. The latter reads as the underlying thread in the part. In the first chapter of this part, the facilita- tors Geert Kelchtermans and Eline Vanassche, together with Ann Deketelaere, describe the context of this collaborative project and present the protagonists and the script underlying the different acts. They also present a number of lessons learned from their attempts to meaningfully support and facilitate a self-study research group. This chapter is followed by three chapters that present both an account of, and a looking back on, three different self-studies included in the proj- ect. In each chapter, the authors invite the reader to a 'narrative tetralogue' in which the teacher educator who performed the self-study (Ludovicus Beck, Koen Kelchtermans, Elien Peeters), together with the facilitators, looks back on the teacher educator's particular experiences, findings, as well as the development of one's practice as a teacher educator practice since the project ended.

The contribution of Hanne Tack and Ruben Vanderlinde forms *an interlude* between part three "Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology in Flanders (Belgium) and part four "Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology in Polyvocal Professional Communities". They argue that to develop a personal pedagogy of teacher education practice and thus to professionally develop as a teacher educator, teacher educators should be encouraged to become a "researcher" of that practice. As they state, the interpretations of what this means, however, range from occasionally engaging in self-reflection and sporadically exploring published research literature to conducting and publishing research in research journals. The authors of this chapter offer a theoretical framework to clarify this situation. They introduce the concept "researcherly disposition," i.e., "Teacher educators' habit of mind to engage with research – as both consumers and producers – to improve their own practice and contribute to the knowledge base on teacher education."

The fourth part of this book extends self-study research across multiple disciplines and across continents. The authors of the chapters of this part are faculty members of the George Mason University (USA) and faculty members of several South African universities engaged in the Transformative Educational Studies project (TES). These two communities have worked together since 2012. In the first chapter, building on self-study research of teacher education practices and their individual experiences of supporting self-study research in transdisciplinary groups, Anastasia P. Samaras and Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan present and underpin the concept of polyvocal professional learning, i.e., bringing into dialogue multiple points of view and voices. In so doing, they share what they each have come to understand and practice through collaborating with others as Design Elements for Self-Study Research in Polyvocal Professional Learning Communities. In the second chapter, by Megan Madigan Peercy, Dalal Alkandil, Rebecca Caufman, Seth Hudson, Shante Lane, Alice E. Petillo, Eric Reeves, and Andrea Sonnier, a self-study teacher educator, interested in teaching self-study methodology, invites seven doctoral candidates from diverse backgrounds to share their self-studies and how they came to understand the value and the process of self-study as a methodology for examining their professional practice. The third chapter is a collaborative meta-self-study conducted by Lesley Smith, Lynne Scott Constantine, Allison Sauveur, Anastasia P. Samaras, Autum Casey, Anya S. Evmenova, Seth Hudson, Seungwon "Shawn" Lee, and E. Shelley Reid, with contributions from others, which demonstrates how faculty came to build new teaching and research capacity via three lenses: the self-study methodology; collaborative research and learning across colleges, disciplines, and statuses; and the medium of visually rich digital environments. Next, the fourth chapter brings into dialogue the voices and perspectives of two South African teacher educators who are engaging in arts-informed self-study research (Anita Hiralaal and Refilwe Matebane) and their doctoral research supervisor, Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan. The fifth chapter by Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan and Anastasia P. Samaras (with contributions of others) brings together multiple voices and stories from this transnational self-study research community and reflects on the powerful learning opportunities offered by polyvocal professional learning communities.

By offering the broad range of perspectives and contexts described above, this book opens up possibilities for encouraging the collaborative and continuous growth of teaching self-study research within and beyond the field of teacher education. The breadth of the original research presented in the peer-reviewed chapters also expands scholarly conversations about designing, representing, and theorizing self-study research. None of the chapters, or the book as a whole, ends with fixed conclusions, straightforward principles, or final answers to complex questions of how to meaningfully teach and support the development of new self-study researchers. But by documenting and understanding what teaching and learning self-study looks like in different contexts and what factors might influence its enactment, the book as a whole contributes to building a *kaleidoscopic* knowledge base of teaching, learning, and enacting self-study methodology.

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Learning About Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices

John Loughran

Context

The Self-study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) has an allure to which teacher educators are drawn, and it has been that way since it emerged as a field of study in the early 1990s. S-STEP (often abbreviated to self-study) grew out of the work of reflective practice, action research and practitioner inquiry and is closely tied to teacher educators' sense of identity and desire to ensure (as much as possible) that they 'practice what they preach'.

It is not hard to see why reflective practice has been a major influence on self-study for as Dewey (1933) noted so long ago, at the heart of reflection is the recognition of a problem. However, problem is not meant to carry negative connotations, rather it is about recognizing and responding to a curious or interesting event; something that draws one back into the situation, to mull it over and to reconsider it in different ways. As a 'felt difficulty', the problem invites further exploration; when that invitation is accepted, the teacher educator may initially do so with the hope of a 'solution', but more often than not, the reality is that it leads to a better understanding of the situation.

Donald Schön (1983) developed the notion of 'problem setting' by illuminating the process of coming to better understand situations through the use of 'reframing'. Reframing is a powerful idea that encourages practitioners to entertain the idea of seeing a situation (a problem) from varying perspectives. Clearly, for teacher educators, one perspective of import is that of students of teaching. The value of seeking to better understand others' experience of a given situation resonates well with teacher educators, especially those concerned with quality in teaching *and* learning

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about teaching. Being open to questioning one's own practice as a teacher of teachers can be a catalyst for self-study. Yet reflection alone is not self-study:

> 'Reflection' has various interpretations and often means many things to many people, and 'self-study' is in danger of being viewed similarly … Self-study builds on reflection as the study begins to reshape not just the nature of the reflective processes but also the situation in which these processes are occurring … Reflection is a personal process of thinking, refining, reframing and developing actions. Self-study takes these processes and makes them public, thus leading to another series of processes that need to reside outside the individual … the generation and communication of new knowledge and understanding. (Loughran and Northfield 1998, pp. 14–15)

It could well be argued that reflection highlights an attitude about teacher education practices that goes to the heart of what it means to take teaching and learning about teaching seriously. Adopting a reflective stance encourages a 'teacher educator as researcher' perspective (Cochran-Smith 2005) through which inquiry complements and informs practice. Again, it is not difficult to see how those teacher educators concerned with quality in teacher education would be drawn to examine their practice and the learning of their students of teaching in ways that might make a difference to their shared teacher education experience. Moreso, a teacher educator as researcher approach demands moving beyond experience-centred opinions and to seek evidence of impact (or lack thereof) and to therefore recognize and respond in meaningful ways to both confirming and disconfirming data.

Just as action research and practitioner inquiry highlight the importance of data, so too self-study is data driven. But it always needs to be remembered that self-study defines the focus of a study not the way the study is carried out (Loughran and Northfield 1998) and that self-study is self-initiated and interactive (LaBoskey 2004). This interactive nature of self-study is an important point. As a problem is explored, reframed and better understood, that which is uncovered changes the nature of the problem and in turn, the data sought for as initial analysis reveals insights into the situation, so the situation changes. Self-study is therefore dynamic.

As a teacher educator's understanding develops and changes through doing self-study, the research focus shifts because the outcomes of the research influence practice and, equally, the changes in practice that flow from doing the research influence both intent and outcomes. This close link between research and practice is a defining feature of self-study and in many ways reflects the problematic nature of teaching (it is dilemma based and the dilemmas are managed, not necessarily resolved), and as noted above, being problematic is a common feature of self-study.

Although it can be difficult to fully define self-study, there are many descriptions in the literature that are helpful, largely because they shed light on the methodology. For example, Samaras and Freese (2006, pp. 40–53) described what they considered to be central characteristics of self-study including:

1. Situated inquiry
2. Process
3. Knowledge
4. Multiple in theoretical stance, method and purpose
5. Paradoxical: individual and collective, personal and interpersonal and private and public.

These central characteristics hint at a need to move beyond the 'self' (collective, interpersonal and public) while still acknowledging that one major aspect of change is explicitly linked to better understanding self. Perhaps this is one of the great challenges of self-study – despite the language of 'self', it does not mean that the 'self' is all that matters. Just as is the case in scholarship across the disciplines, so too self-study is defined by the knowledge, skills and abilities that are able to be recognized, developed, articulated and shared, all of which are derived of serious inquiry. In addition to these features, self-study largely exists as a community through which critique, mentoring, support and knowledge creation are touchstones for ongoing development of individuals and the community more generally.

Teaching About Self-Study

As the previous section of this chapter makes clear, the nature of self-study can be quite complex, which, in turn, can make it difficult to easily define for others. Although a simple explanation of self-study could be posited as 'researching one's own teacher education practices', the reality is that understanding and enacting self-study are not as straightforward as that statement might suggest. For example, although the self in self-study might often be viewed at the individual level, the self can also be at a collective or institutional level; each is embedded in different contexts with different expectations, needs and concerns. Hence the importance of understanding self-study as a methodology carrying with it the commensurate recognition that the focus of the research informs the method to be employed – as opposed to the strict application of a defined method that directs the nature of the research.

If explaining what self-study is and how it might be conducted is not easy, then it is little wonder that teaching about self-study has its challenges. As even a cursory glance at the literature demonstrates, there is a paucity of work on the teaching and learning of self-study. This book – and the work of the editors in bringing it together in a cohesive manner – sheds light on the teaching and learning of self-study in ways that are informative, useful and, importantly, illustrative of what it means to facilitate self-study in different programmes, institutions and countries, as well as across different continents.

The interplay between teaching and learning about self-study creates new opportunities for thinking about what it might mean to professionally develop as a teacher educator. As briefly noted earlier, there is a major difference in research focus between, for example, studying one's practice from a personal perspective compared to that of the perspective of students of teaching. Self-study offers a window into learning about practice (individually, collectively and institutionally), but how can a teacher educator learn about self-study, understand what it involves and invest in their own professional development if a range of examples of such work are not easily accessible? Again, the editors have assembled a range of authors to create such access and offer a lens for looking into learning about self-study in informative ways.

As is a common theme across the chapters in this book, the value of self-study for teacher educators, teacher education programmes and schools/faculties of edu-

cation may appear to some to be self-evident. However, having said that, researching practice through self-study needs to be understood as an invitation not an instruction. So what does it mean to teach and learn about self-study so that such an invitation might be positively received?

Creating a space for self-study may be part of the answer. Perhaps conceptualizing what a space for self-study looks and feels like and musing over some examples are helpful. Again, the sections in this book certainly draw attention to what is possible and how such a space might look in reality. This book offers an invitation for the reader to consider more than just what self-study might be but also how it might be enacted within a supportive space. But the point of pursuing all of these ideas around self-study takes on new significance when considered in light of the importance of creating new knowledge about teaching *and* learning about teaching. Therefore, integral to all of this work is the notion of scholarship.

Scholarship

Initially, in the early 1990s, many critics expressed concern about the 'acceptability' of self-study as a form of research. In some ways, the self-study community offered validation of the work, but it was in moving beyond the individual through (in particular) collaborative self-studies that the rigour and significance necessary to offer evidence to others about its value began to stand out. Especially so through researchers' questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions (Brookfield 1995; Bullock 2011), the pursuit of disconfirming data and the detailed analysis of alternative perspectives on pedagogical experiences (Berry 2007; Brandenburg 2008; Bullock and Russell 2012).

Scholarship matters, and as is the case in academia generally, scholarship is inexplicably linked to what it means to develop new knowledge. Boyer (1990) made powerful arguments about the scholarship of teaching that continue to be pertinent and applicable to the work of self-study. He argued that advancing knowledge in a field and making that knowledge public, open for critique and useable, were key attributes of scholarship. Similarly, and again as the chapters in this book consistently illustrate in a range of ways, knowledge development is crucial to ensuring that self-study extends beyond the individual and offers more than 'just a story' (Berry and Kosnik 2010).

It is through the explication of teacher educators' learning, the insights from self-study and the ability to articulate, apply and develop knowledge of teacher education practices that self-study genuinely holds a significant place of its own in research and practice. But it could also be argued that it is only through being involved in doing self-study that these things may be seriously realized – it is also why the 'self' continues to resurface as a focus, a focus that takes on new meaning when considered in terms of knowledge development. Such knowledge development has been described by some as a pedagogy of teacher education (Korthagen and Kessels 1999; Loughran 2006; Ritter 2007; Russell 2007), the knowledge of

theory and practice of teaching and learning about teaching that is explicitly enacted in a teacher educator's practice.

The nature of this knowledge development is important because for self-study to continue to be useful to teacher educators, it must feed into their pedagogy of teacher education and support their ability to articulate that knowledge in, and through, practice in ways that illustrate that teaching teaching extends well beyond the technical. If simply transplanting school teaching into teacher education is all that teacher education is about, then teacher education can rightly be critiqued as doing little more than training prospective teachers. If that were the case, challenging the status quo of schooling, creating a vision for a professional career and encouraging new ways of enhancing teaching and learning would be limited. However, if teaching teaching is about the specialist knowledge, skills and abilities of teacher educators, then it means that teaching can be understood as more than 'doing'; it can be conceptualized as a discipline (Mason 2009) – and all that entails in terms of a specialist field of study.

For students of teaching, seeing beyond just 'doing teaching' and the inevitable desire to accumulate a bag of 'tips and tricks of teaching' matters if they are to value what they are as practitioners and what it might mean to professionally develop and grow across a career. It could well be argued that the same applies to teacher educators, and as the authors in this book make clear through their studies, such a conceptualization appears strong and coherent.

Conclusion

When self-study burst onto the scene in the early 1990s, it was driven by a keen desire of many teacher educators to explore ways of researching their practice in order to become more informed about teaching teaching – to develop an evidence base from which to develop their wisdom of practice. That purpose continues to drive many today, and their learning through self-study helps them to define their identity, develop their scholarship and build pedagogical experiences that challenge their students of teaching to see practice as more than just 'doing teaching'.

To support others to learn about self-study and to understand why it can be so difficult to teach about self-study, it is perhaps helpful to envisage the process as a journey of learning, a journey with a destination that may be arrived at in many and diverse ways. The journey is guided by signposts designed to offer support, encouragement and direction rather than to define a single route. By asking questions about the road to be traversed, undertaking the journey with purpose and taking in the sights along the way, it is not just the destination that attracts self-study travellers' attention. Williams and Hayler (2016) captured this idea of a journey well when they stated that:

> … as fellow teacher educators: What insights from our colleagues would have been most valuable as we were embarking on our own professional journeys to becoming teacher educators? What advice would have supported and informed our developing professional

identities and practice? These are questions that perhaps other beginning teacher educators, or indeed teacher educators at any stage of their career, might also ask as they grapple with the complex and often confronting web of relationships, ideologies, institutional structures and policies that inform their daily work … we conclude that the process of becoming a teacher educator is as much about the journey as the destination. The road … is a winding path of diverse experiences and unfamiliar spaces, which provide opportunities for reflection on learning, both within ourselves and with our colleagues … this road helps us to reframe our understanding of learning and teaching, and to enact a pedagogy of teacher education … it is essential that we seek out our colleagues, learn from experience (theirs and ours) through deep reflection, direct our own performance, and develop and enact ethical pedagogies that ensure that the education we provide for teachers is based on sound morally ground principles. (Williams and Hayler 2016, pp. 207–208)

Understanding self-study through the metaphor of a journey and thinking about that metaphor in relation to the destination can help explain the difficulty of simplistically defining self-study. So too paying careful attention to the relationship between a pedagogy of teacher education, its enactment and development in teaching teaching can help to explain why that journey matters. In reading the chapters in this book, it is clear that they offer signposts to support a self-study traveller find a way to not only embark on the journey of becoming a more informed professional teacher educator but also to realize the valuing in seeking out that destination.

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Part I
Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology in the United States

Self-Study Research as a Source of Professional Development and Learning Within a School of Education

Jason Margolis

Introduction: That Was Then – Self-Study Research as a Teacher Education Doctoral Student at a Research 1 University

I remember vividly the day in the summer of 2000 that Dr. Todd Dinkelman approached me to participate in and work on his study. His intention, he said, was to fill what he saw as a significant gap in the teacher education literature – the transition from being a practicing K-12 teacher to a practicing university teacher educator. The specific focus of the study would be on individuals who make this transition within a research university's School of Education – and I fit that typology. He also informed me that when the University of Michigan School of Education had hired him, they promised him 1-year worth of a part-time graduate assistant. He had never cashed in on that promise. In my second year of doctoral education, I became that promise by becoming both the researcher and the researched.

For my own part, by my doctoral sophomore year, I had already begun to rebel against traditional positivist research paradigms, and Todd's idea for this innovative approach to teacher education research was appealing to me. Upon entering the Doctoral Program in Teacher Education, I had initially been placed on a research project where my role was to go into elementary classrooms and "check off," at different time intervals, listed teacher behaviors that might promote student reading skills as I saw them. After many of these observations, the teachers would approach me with questions: *What do you think? Did you notice…. Yeah, that didn't go exactly how I planned.* While the elementary teachers wanted to "talk shop" with me, by the

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study's protocol, I was not allowed to reflect with the teachers. This would make the data invalid.

I left that project, against the advice of my advisor who warned me of a two-tiered status separating graduate students who "do" teacher education (e.g., supervising student teachers, reflecting with them) and those who research teacher education. I took the risk that I could do both, as both my experiences as a New York City public high school teacher and my early explorations as a doctoral student led me to view the *doing* and *studying* of teaching as inseparable.

For the next year, I worked on developing a new pedagogical process for English Education student teachers to both think more deeply about and improve their emergent practice with their own students. I supervised six English student teachers and also taught a three-credit seminar with that same group once a week. I studied them, studied with them, and studied myself, in the design and implementation of "literary action research," which ultimately led to my first peer reviewed publication in *English Education* (Margolis 2002).

Meanwhile, Dr. Dinkelman facilitated a multi-tiered self-study of the process that I and another graduate student experienced transitioning from "teacher" to "teacher educator." The methodology was blended and somewhat new, "combining case study and self-study of teacher education practices" (Dinkelman et al. 2006a). We were up against some serious headwinds, however, in institutional valuing of these teacher education practices alongside – and as part of – teacher education research. Ultimately, the synergy of the collaborative project transcended recalcitrant hindrances, as "Much of Jason's anxiety was eased when he realized that researching practice was an acceptable endeavor within the institution, or at least within the context of teacher education" (p. 18).

Still collecting and analyzing our data, we presented our emerging findings at AERA in Seattle in April 2001. It was my first trip to AERA. The title of the presentation was "From teacher to teacher educator: Experiences, expectations, and expatriation," and we were accepted to present within the new AERA Special Interest Group focused on *Self-Study in Teacher Education*. The only thing I remember about the actual presentation is saying, during my carefully planned 8 min, "It was interesting being the researcher and the researched at the same time." This phrase stood out in my mind because of the ways people's eyes and nodding heads in the audience indicated its resonation. The notion certainly resonated with me as well, as it was quite an experience to code interviews of both myself, and others, within the same theoretical framework examining the same research questions. After the presentation, in the room and hallways, several scholars whom Dr. Dinkelman later described as "international all-stars" praised our work. They would later publish our study in two separate articles (which is largely unheard of these days) in the new self-study-focused journal publication *Studying Teacher Education* (Dinkelman et al. 2006a, b).

By the time of the publishing of the articles in 2006, self-study was most definitely gaining legitimacy as a way to link teacher education practice and teacher education research. As of the writing of this book chapter in early 2017, these two articles had been cited 228 times in total. Interestingly, the theme of "legitimacy" was prominent in both papers, as Karl (who also participated in the study) and I

sought to maintain "street credibility" as teachers while slowly drifting further away from those K-12 practices as beginning teacher educators. The additive legitimacy of the teacher-teacher educator connection and the teacher education practice-teacher education research connection harkens back to one of the conclusions of our study: "the growing acceptance of research on the practice of teacher education, particularly that by practitioners themselves, is promising" (Dinkelman et al. 2006b, p. 130).

In the 2000–2001 time period when primary data collection for this study occurred, self-study played an important role in linking research and practice for new teacher educators seeking to build an emergent identity and better understand how to think and act in their new role. The tension between "those who think and write about teaching" and "those who do teaching" were real and palpable.

However, significant changes in the educational landscape since then have made teacher education self-study all the more important to a School of Education. The rise of the federal government in K-12 education (through No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top), accrediting bodies over university teacher education (e.g., NCATE, CAEP), and questions of the legitimacy of university teacher education writ large necessitate the type of scholarly reflection that self-study can facilitate. This type of systematic inquiry can lead to improved and more innovative teacher education practices, data trails for accrediting bodies looking for evidence of programmatic "continual improvement," as well as scholarly insights into emergent, transformative teacher education practices which can then be shared across the larger teacher education community.

New Questions and Methods of Inquiry

In July 2011, I joined Duquesne University as a Department Chair beginning my ninth year in academia. Within weeks, I was faced with multiple challenges – enrollment declines, accreditation anxieties, and budget cuts. As my inaugural months continued, an additional challenge facing my faculty writ large became clear: tenure and promotion standards for teaching, which were always high, were now being matched by standards for research productivity. The faculty in my department were not only responsible for quality courses appealing to students, marketable programs appealing to the wider public, and standards-driven assessments to align with accreditors – but now they also needed to have their own recognizable niche as scholars. Or they were gone.

As my second year began, I processed and distilled these dilemmas into the following question: *How can I, as Chair, create synergistic opportunities between teaching and research during a time when standards for faculty in both areas have increased?* Being increasingly aware of larger systemic dynamics as well as trends in the educational field, I then linked this overarching question to a sub-question – *How can I evolve a place of self-study within a school of education?*

Over the next 4 years, I documented this journey through primarily qualitative data sources. These included self-reflective memos, artifacts, emails, and meeting

minutes. For the purposes of this chapter, the data was coded first by individual source and then analyzed across data sources.

Initial analytic themes included (1) pragmatic synergies between teaching and research; (2) facilitating authentic, dynamic program renewal; (3) finding opportunities to link self-study to mission; and (4) mining opportunities for community building based on the lived experience of the work of teacher education rather than platitudes about collaboration. Then, these themes were further explored in relation to the two primary research questions. This led to additional insights and findings regarding *creating a place for self-study research*, including (a) the processes of gaining institutional legitimacy, (b) balancing insider vs. outsider expertise, and (c) employing strategic budgeting.

These findings will be analyzed in more detail in the next section. Additionally, the above themes will be explored chronologically – a rhetorical move designed to elucidate the *process* of finding a sanctioned space for self-study within the contemporary university teacher education landscape.

Additionally, as much as possible during analysis, I sought to distance myself from data in which I was a subject. Nevertheless, being "the researcher and the researched" always poses analytic dilemmas, both promoting and diminishing research authenticity in different ways.

This Is Now: Promoting Teacher Education Self-Study as a Department Chair at a Research Intensive Tuition-Driven Institution

It was just days before the official email announcement that I had spoken with Dr. Ritter about facilitating a self-study group within our department. Several tenure-track research faculty had recently been drawn to work with us, in part because of Duquesne's teacher-scholar mission. But the demands of both excellent teaching and a definable, productive research agenda were already wearing down some of these new faculty and putting fear into others. It was clear that the synergy between teaching and research through self-study both had noble and pragmatic applications for my department. Dr. Ritter, who had just received tenure and was gaining a national and international reputation in the area of self-study in teacher education, agreed to take on this endeavor. In an email announcing this to my department faculty, I included the following information (1/20/15):

> After speaking with several DILE faculty members, I am pleased to announce a new initiative which will be facilitated by Dr. Jason Ritter – The DILE Faculty Teacher Education Self-Study Group.

> Faculty interested in engaging in systematic self-study of their teacher education practices (new or existing) will meet on an on-going basis with a national self-study expert – our very own Dr. Jason Ritter. Dr. Ritter will share methods and approaches to self-study within teacher education, assisting participating faculty in obtaining scholarly insights into their

teacher education practices. Additionally, Dr. Ritter will study the facilitation process itself. Expected outcomes include advancements in teacher education practice and research. Because of this, DILE Innovation monies will be available to support this project.

In this formal announcement, I sought to create *institutional legitimacy* for the initiative. My language was intentionally "official," using phrases like "scholarly insights" and "expected outcomes" to frame the endeavor in terminology increasingly valued by the university and therefore increasingly on the minds (and full plates) of faculty. Additionally, at the end of the announcement, I let the entire department know there would be some money behind this. After several rounds of budget cuts and "cost-containment" exercises, I intuited that this financial dimension of the project would illustrate just how much weight it carried. For similar reasons, I began to include updates on the DILE Self-Study Group as an agenda item for the majority of our Department faculty meetings (artifact, 2/12/15).

As initial meetings of the group began, I suggested to Dr. Ritter that he would use some of the monies for food: "Jason – when you set up your next meeting, let me know if you want to do it over lunch and we will provide food. I want everyone to feel 'nourished' in this important endeavor!" (email, 2/3/15). In addition to having a line item in the larger department budget, I believed that food at meetings would signal to many faculty that there was some recognized "value" in the coming together of individuals at the meeting.

However, Dr. Ritter, like many faculty in today's leaner university times, took nothing for granted in a subsequent email to me (2/17/15): "We just set up another s-step meeting … Is your previous offer to provide lunch still good for that next meeting time? If not, no worries." I assured Dr. Ritter that I was "absolutely committed to supporting this effort both financially and spiritually (and food can fit into both categories!)" (email, 2/17/15). Dr. Ritter would continue to email me throughout the rest of the year to check in on this food issue, seemingly in disbelief that it was not a "onetime deal" but something they could "count on for their monthly meetings" (email, 4/7/15). I assured him that "food is still in the table – so feel free to put it on the table! Consider it a standing incentive" (email, 4/7/15).

While it may seem trivial, the formal and regular approval of food seemed to provide an additional layer of institutional legitimacy needed to launch the project. In fact, it became one of the few ways that monies were spent. I had set aside $5000 in the first full year of the project (later to become $2000/year when another round of budget cuts came through). Inclusive in this budget was offering group-determined micro-grants to support individual projects within the larger group's endeavors. While Dr. Ritter did submit a request for a high-quality audio recorder to start recording the meetings (artifact, 4/14/15), rarely did the group spend money on anything but food. Yet the work of the group was still taking off, as Dr. Ritter emailed me on 2/25/15 to let me know:

> I just wanted to thank you again for the lunch, and let you know that we had another great meeting of the DILE S-STEP group today. All were present, and wheels are turning…

While internal, institutional supports – like a budget and food – were important to provide, I also wanted faculty to know they were participating within a larger

teacher education self-study community that transcended institutional, state, and even national borders. My intent was to create a *scholarly legitimacy* that many of these tenure-track research faculty needed to know existed in order to invest their most limited resource: their time. To that end, Dr. Ritter and I brought in the first of two nationally renowned speakers with expertise in teacher education self-study, Dr. Mary Lynn Hamilton. Her visit in May 2015 included both a presentation to the larger School of Education faculty, *Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practice Methodology – Possibilities and Pitfalls*, and a more intimate and intensive workshop with faculty interested in applying self-study methodology. All members of the DILE Self-Study Group attended the workshop, as well as a subsequent one by Kate Strom, California State University, in October 2016 on rhizomatics and self-study. The DILE Self-Study Group was now part of a larger legitimized group within the teacher education research community.

Phase 2: An Authentic Community Emerges

As the next academic year (2015–2016) began, the group's identity evolved. Historically in the School of Education, many collaborations had been of a controlled, contrived nature. Faculty would meet with each other at a "retreat" to figure out how to respond to a number of perceived accreditation requirements, for example, participating in meetings on how to measure teacher candidate's "professional dispositions." In contrast, the DILE Self-Study group set its own agenda and faculty collaborated by choice. Interestingly, many of the insights that would ultimately emerge from the group were helpful to accreditation processes as evidence of "continual improvement" efforts within our teacher education programs. But this was an outgrowth of the meaning in the work itself, not a predefined outcome of "what must be worked on today whether we like it or not."

Two new faculty members joined our department that academic year, and Dr. Ritter reached out to them just 2 days after their contract began (email, 7/3/15):

> I hope this email finds both of you doing well and beginning to get settled here in Pittsburgh. My name is Jason Ritter and I am one of your colleagues in DILE. I am writing this email for two reasons. First, I wanted to officially welcome you to Duquesne! We are more than pleased to have you in the department. Second, I want to make you aware of a collaborative research initiative/opportunity if you are interested. In short, we have a research group we started last year called *The DILE Faculty Teacher Education Self-Study Group*. We meet about once every three weeks and are primarily interested in conducting individual and collaborative self-studies so that we may obtain scholarly insights into our own evolving teacher education identities and practices. The group mostly consists of pre-tenure faculty looking for ways to both improve their teaching and their scholarly productivity at the same time … Please take your time to think on this. There is no need for a quick reply, as the offer is a standing one.

In a way that I never could as Chair, Dr. Ritter offered these two new faculty members an immediate comfortable, collegial, and potentially productive space in which to work. Though I didn't fully realize it at the time, having studied different

models of distributed leadership by myself (e.g., Margolis and Huggins 2012), Dr. Ritter was now helping to lead the department. His self-study group provided in situ mentoring and was itself a support for scholarly productivity. This led to making the work more enjoyable and more fruitful – dual and interdependent goals important in leading any group.

Perhaps not surprisingly, both new faculty members joined the group, with one commenting that he believed it would "definitely help with critical and thoughtful subjective/objective insights that would help in getting publications accepted" (email, 7/3/15).

A few days later, I let Dr. Ritter know that he still had a working budget for resources, research supports, internal mini-grant funding, food, and bringing in outside speakers/consultants. I emphasized that "In allocating these funds, I hope it becomes even more clear how important the work of this group is to the Department, the School, and Duquesne as a whole" (email, 7/9/15). However, I also knew that any initiative receiving any type of funding during these increasingly tight budgetary times would need to produce tangible results. Because of this, I added:

> Additionally, I ask that you produce a report at the end of this coming academic year that summarizes some of the highlights of the group's achievements (at the teaching, research, and/or programmatic levels). By then, the group would have been functioning for about 1½ years, and it will be important and enlightening to begin to document the progress of the group as well as the individual group members.

While my call for evidence, and even some degree of "accountability" related to the group's progress, was in part perfunctory, I would get far more than a standard end-of-the-year accounting of achievements in grid or bullet format. Dr. Ritter and his colleagues/my faculty were about to write a book.

Phase 3: (Very) Tangible Outcomes

In January 2016, as the university continued to buzz about budget cuts, Dr. Ritter emailed the group to let them know that "I see value in our ongoing meetings with or without additional funds" (email, 1/19/16). As the semester progressed, it became clearer why the group had begun to take on a life of its own. Dr. Ritter began to strategically connect the work of the group to the larger scholarly self-study in teacher education community. In this sense, *institutional legitimacy* became less important to the group as signs of its *scholarly legitimacy* increased.

In April 2016, Dr. Ritter announced that both he and another member of the group had presentations – direct outgrowths of the group's work – within the Self-Study SIG at AERA. He also invited all those attending the upcoming 2016 AERA conference to many of the S-STEP sessions, as well as its Saturday night business meeting.

When Dr. Ritter came back from AERA, he shared with me that he had secured two opportunities for the group: an edited book and a special issue of the journal *Studying Teacher Education*. At the same time, there was $1500 in unused monies

left in the group's budget that needed to be spent by June 30. I suggested to Dr. Ritter that he use this money as a resource to buy 100 h of graduate assistant support, at $15/hour, to support moving these projects forward. Dr. Ritter then crafted a job description that included "assisting in the development of a book proposal" and "interviewing faculty members" (artifact, 5/2/16). We hired a student within days.

While generally hands-off with the group, as Chair I certainly had an important role to play if it were to be successful. I began by seeking to create a sense of *institutional legitimacy* and then supported efforts to link that to a larger *scholarly legitimacy*. But legitimacy alone does not lead to work products. For *tangible outcomes*, the *budgeting is needed to become more strategic* and the work more focused on particular products. Directly tying monetary expenditures to mission-driven goals with meaningful ends was something that I, now in my fifth year as Department Chair, had become much better at. In coaching Dr. Ritter in how to spend money strategically to support the important work of his group, I hoped to model a type of thinking that would help the group's work get to "the next level."

In July 2016, at the beginning of AY16-17 and the group's 30th month, Dr. Ritter announced in an email (7/14/16):

> I am taking a break in-between writing accreditation reports, and wanted to touch base with you all of you about a couple of S-STEP related things … the book idea is definitely still on. Currently, I am conceiving of it as three sections. The first will be our story as a departmental learning community situated in the U.S … it is quite the international project we are embarking on!

Slowly, organically, and meaningfully, our "departmental learning community" was moving toward a series of product that would be of use to individual faculty at an institutional level (e.g., publications for tenure and promotion, evidence of embodying the teacher-scholar mission), as well as the research community more generally (at a national and international scale). Additionally, the irony in Dr. Ritter's comment about "taking a break from accreditation reports" was not lost on me. It left me wondering: How much more productive would we be if our time was spent in meaningful collaboration about practice instead of time-consuming, often meaningless tasks, in seeking the latest accrediting bodies' stamp of approval?

At our September 2016 Department Faculty Meeting, Dr. Ritter declared that the "book proposal is being viewed favorably" (artifact, 9/8/16). In November, he announced that the book proposal had been submitted and in January that the "book proposal was accepted which will be multiple publications for multiple people" (artifact, 1/12/17). Further, to underscore the *scholarly legitimacy* of this type of work, at the same meeting, he announced that a manuscript he submitted about the leading of the group was not only accepted but was "being rushed to publication to be put in a journal."

And this is how we got here. Now, the only form of support he needed from me was to write this chapter.

Final Thoughts

In my 2015 annual evaluation as Chair of Dr. Ritter's work, I highlighted that "Dr. Ritter expanded his role taking leadership within DILE by facilitating the 'DILE Self-Study in Teacher Education Group'." I added that (artifact, February 2016):

> Dr. Ritter has a national and international name in the self-study in teacher education community, and I encourage him to publish in multiple ways in this arena. These may include analysis of his own teacher education work, targeting multiple audiences (self-study, general teacher education, Social Studies Education), and collaborative pieces with Duquesne colleagues looking at practice collectively.

At the time I wrote this, I thought I was giving the "institutional pat on the back" that faculty often seek from this genre of writing. But, luckily and unknowingly, I was sowing the seeds for something more important.

In November 2016, I announced that I would serve out my term as Chair through June 2018, but no more. Seven years would be enough, and the phrase "Leave it better than you found it" begins with the often-ignored two words "Leave it."

When it came time to start talking with faculty and administrators about a succession plan, I immediately thought of Dr. Ritter. Perhaps because of his informal leadership role leading the DILE Self-Study Group for nearly 3 years, Dr. Ritter shared that he was open to seriously consider the more formal role of Department Chair as well. Time will only tell what will come there. But considering the ways Dr. Ritter has facilitated deep, meaningful, and collaborative connections between research and practice, I could certainly work for him.

In conclusion, I will return to the two questions that initiated this inquiry:

> *How can I, as Chair, create synergistic opportunities between teaching and research during a time when standards for faculty in both areas have increased?*
> *How can I evolve a place of self-study within a school of education?*

While these questions fueled my own self-study, if this type of work is done well, it may also resonate with some relevance in other contexts – perhaps even yours. Looking across the data, my own self-study leaves me with some learnings that may assist others leading in teacher education focused higher education institutions as well. In summary, I:

- Read my faculty for their resources as well as their anxieties
- Distributed leadership in areas of faculty areas strengths
- Sought to create institutional legitimacy for the work
- Sought to create scholarly legitimacy for the work
- Engaged in and modeled strategic budgeting to help manifest work products

And finally, I had the opportunity to return to my roots as a doctoral student engaging in self-study of my own teacher education practices. This connection also helped me draw from my teacher roots to enact my leadership as Department Chair. And in many ways, this integration of my teacher and teacher-leader self was, after all, what I was trying to do by going into academia in the first place.

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On the Tension-Fraught Enterprise of Teaching Self-Study to Colleagues

Jason K. Ritter

Introduction

Many of the key events leading up to the founding of the Duquesne University Department of Instruction and Leadership in Education (DILE) Faculty Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Group were addressed in the preceding chapter written by the Chair of the Department, Dr. Jason Margolis. As was already mentioned, the genesis of the group traces back to Fall 2014 when Dr. Margolis approached me to see if I might have any interest in facilitating a self-study group for some of my colleagues. To the best of my knowledge, his request came about organically after several in the department expressed their desire for better induction, support, and modeling of the teacher-scholar model embraced by our university. This model can be unnerving because it demands excellence in teaching at the same time as it places great value on research productivity. Nonetheless, I quickly agreed to lead the group owing to my affiliation with and affinity for S-STEP work over the last 10 years (see, e.g., Bullock and Ritter 2011; Ritter 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2017; Williams et al. 2012), coupled with my belief in its ability to serve as a meaningful link between research and teaching. I viewed my facilitation of the group as a great opportunity to demonstrate leadership and deepen my understandings of self-study while simultaneously providing my colleagues with a meaningful way to think about their own work as teacher educators and educational researchers. Despite my outward excitement, I did quietly wonder to myself what I would do to actually lead the group. I felt like I knew how to do self-study but questioned if I knew how to teach it.

The question of whether knowing how to do self-study might translate into knowing how to teach self-study to others fixated my thinking throughout the early days of the group. Indeed, I actually studied my own facilitation of the DILE S-STEP group

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over the course of our first 2 years together and reported out on my findings in a recently published article (Ritter 2017). After analyzing journal entries and other artifacts that I had created for our group meetings, I describe in the article how I experienced challenges in at least three ways as I attempted to facilitate my colleagues' learning and practice of self-study. First, I struggled from an instructional perspective to actively plan and execute learning opportunities for the group. Second, from a relational perspective, I struggled to forge educative relationships with my diverse group of colleagues in a new professional context. And, finally, I struggled with teaching about some of the methodological features of self-study given its highly personal nature and the profound ways in which it diverges from other research methodologies. I found that my experience as a self-study practitioner was useful to my teaching in that it enabled me to select resources to socialize my colleagues to the norms and practices of the S-STEP community more easily, and because I had more readily available examples derived from my own practice to share when questions arose in the group related to the purpose and methodology of self-study. Still, with respect to the question of whether or not knowing how to do self-study translates into knowing how to teach self-study, I concluded there was not a direct transferability.

Rather than simply revisiting the aforementioned findings here, I intend to use this chapter to achieve two additional goals. First I will give more specific examples of the kinds of teaching I engaged in during the DILE S-STEP group meetings through the inclusion of certain artifacts from my teaching. Second, I will invoke Berry's work (2004, 2008) on tensions to further shed light on my experiences teaching self-study to my colleagues. Berry (2004) argued how the development of knowledge and understanding of practice gleaned through self-study could be conceptualized as tensions, explaining how the construct is "intended to capture both the feelings of internal turmoil that many teacher educators experience" and "the difficulties that many teacher educators experience as they learn to recognize and manage these opposing forces" (p. 1313). Tensions identified across Berry's work include those between *telling and growth*, *confidence and uncertainty*, *action and intent*, *safety and challenge*, *valuing and reconstructing experience*, and *planning and being responsive*. Using tensions in the framework seemed appropriate because I viewed my facilitation of the S-STEP group as a form of teaching and needed ways to accurately represent the pedagogically complex, emotionally challenging, and dynamic nature of that work. Further differentiating this chapter from the already published article is the fact that the analysis here extends into our third year together as a group. In what follows, additional context will provided for the DILE S-STEP group, and then the work of the group will be characterized and discussed as it has unfolded over the last 3 years.

Context

The DILE S-STEP group was not necessarily formed only for pre-tenure- and nontenure-track faculty members. Presumably all faculty of a school of education have an interest in improving their teaching practices and in putting out quality

research. Still, for whatever reason, it has been the case that only pre-tenure and nontenure-track colleagues, excluding myself as the facilitator, have participated in the group over the last 3 years. Initially five colleagues joined me in forming the group. Two colleagues worked in the ESL program, one focused on English/Reading, another focused on Mathematics, and the last one focused on Early Childhood Education. All varied in how they were prepared as researchers, with only one of the initial five leaning toward qualitative research. None in the group had any experience with self-study. After the first year, the group lost one member to a different institution (ESL) but gained three additional members. The three new members were all pre-tenure and diverse in terms of their backgrounds and expertise (ESL, Early Childhood, Literacy). Although these three additional members were proficient in qualitative research, they were also all new to S-STEP methodology. The group of seven (eight including me) that started participating in year two is the same group that continues to meet to this day and who share their accounts of participating in the group later in this section of the book.

It was decided, as a group, in year one to officially hold meetings about once every 3 weeks for 2 h each to learn about incorporating S-STEP in our work. As the facilitator of the group, the substance and structure of the meetings was left to me. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to share everything that occurred during our meetings in the last 3 years, representative activities included instructor-led presentations, resource sharing, coding activities, question and answer sessions, hosting guest speakers, open-ended discussion, and supporting each other in planning self-study inquiries. Most of our group meetings were marked by somewhat organic conversations. In addition to our group meetings, we created a blog that had individual spaces for us to reflect whenever we were so moved and also a space where we could collectively engage in discussion. Below I describe some of the major happenings from each of our 3 years.

Year One: Searching for an Identity and Purpose

The issues of how we should best use our time together and how I might best engage my colleagues in learning S-STEP methodology weighed heavily on my mind from the moment I agreed to lead the initiative. Unsure of how to officially begin the group, I prepared a short two-page handout (Table 1) for the first meeting that included typical questions individuals seem to have about self-study and some of the common responses I have heard given to those questions.

As with any other artifact of teaching, the overview I provided in this instance had both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, it was relatively clear and concise and served as a nice reference for our future conversations and work together. Still, I disliked the idea of making it seem as if the answers I provided to the questions were correct in any kind of an absolute way. To document my unease at some of my own pedagogical moves, and to provide my colleagues with a win-

Table 1 Self-study frequently asked questions

Self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP)
Where did self-study come from?
Russell (2004) suggested that self-study has emerged from and built on the work done in fields such as reflective practice (e.g., Dewey 1933; Schön 1983, 1987), action research (e.g., Kemmis and McTaggart 1988, 2000), and practitioner research (e.g., Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993)
How do teacher educators define self-study?
Self-study is usually thought of in a manner consistent with the definition offered by Samaras (2002) as a "critical examination of one's actions and the context of those actions in order to achieve a more conscious mode of professional activity, in contrast to action based on habit, tradition, and impulse" (p. xxiv)
Why do teacher educators engage in self-study?
Louie et al. (2003) found that most self-studies could be grouped into one of the following three categories based on the focus of their inquiries: identity-oriented research, the relationship between teaching beliefs and practice, and collegial interaction
Cole and Knowles (1998) claimed self-study usually has two main purposes:
Teacher educators, many of whom were classroom teachers prior to entering the academy as university-based educators, engage in self-study both for purposes of their own personal professional development and for broader purposes of enhanced understanding of teacher education practices, processes, programs, and contexts (p. 42)
So how do you do self-study?
Several authors have noted how self-study is not a prescriptive methodology (LaBoskey 2004a; Loughran 2005; Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009); self-study researchers draw on a variety of research traditions in their work including action research, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and other, mostly qualitative, traditions
LaBoskey's (2004a, pp. 859–860) four methodological considerations for conducting a self-study tend to be cited often as useful guides to self-study researchers in their research process:
1. Self-study is aimed at identifying and reframing problems of practice encountered by the researcher with a view toward improving his or her own pedagogy
2. Self-study challenges the researcher's tacit understanding about teaching and learning by encouraging interaction with colleagues, students, and educational research
3. Self-study generally employs multiple, usually qualitative, methods that are used in the broader education research community as well as qualitative methods that are unique to self-study research
4. Self-study should be made available to the broader education research community for the purpose of consolidating understanding and suggesting new avenues for research
These methodological considerations underscore the fact that while the specific methods used in self-study may vary, "the common element is the reflective, critical examination of the self's involvement both in aspects of the study and in the phenomenon under study" (Hamilton and Pinnegar 1998, p. 240)
Is there a place for interaction or collaboration with others in self-study?
Self-study is not wholly synonymous with personal reflection. According to Loughran and Northfield (1998), "reflection is a personal process of thinking, refining, reframing, and developing actions. Self-study takes these processes and makes them public, thus leading to another series of processes that need to reside outside of the individual" (p. 15)

Table 1 (continued)

Also, many have found value in engaging in collaborative self-study. Louie et al. (2003) found three benefits to this collaborative aspect of self-study, including its ability to increase social support, to foster a culture of reflectiveness that results in higher-level discourse and critique, and to help researchers avoid solipsism and increase the chances they will create transferable knowledge
So how do we recognize a good piece of self-study research?
Self-study is far more complicated than simply describing features of one's pedagogy that worked well. Both the problematic and the unexpected features of practice tend to be of the most interest to the research community, particularly since self-study methodology "looks for and requires evidence of reframed thinking and transformed practice of the researcher" (LaBoskey 2004a, p. 859)
Obviously self-study is not generalizable in terms of traditional research paradigms. Instead, there is an emphasis on the "trustworthiness" of the findings. LaBoskey (2004b) suggested that researchers involved in self-study seek "to generate local, situated, provisional knowledge of teaching" as well as to "trigger further deliberations, explorations, and change by other educators in their contexts" (p. 1170). Further to this, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) noted how "the aim of self-study research is to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle" (p. 20)
Personal examples of self-study:
I have used [collaborative] self-study to investigate the shifting roles (Bullock and Ritter 2011), understandings (Ritter 2009, 2011), expectations (Ritter 2007), practices (Ritter 2010a, 2012a; Ritter et al. 2011), and identities (Williams and Ritter 2010) associated with becoming a teacher educator, both at the university (Ritter 2010b) and in the field (Ritter et al. 2007; Ritter 2012b)

dow into my thinking as the facilitator of the group, I started writing reflections after each of our meetings and made them public in our group blog.

In addition to facilitator-prepared and facilitator-led presentations, we also did a lot of resource sharing and discussion in subsequent meetings during year one. I would often bring in resources that I thought would be useful, including but not limited to the proceedings from previous Castle Conferences (http://www.castleconference.com/), copies of *Studying Teacher Education: A Journal of Self-study of Teacher Education Practices* and the *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*, videos found on the S-STEP Special Interest Group (SIG) website through the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and occasionally guest speakers. One of the reasons for this focus on resource sharing was to counter my impulse to simply tell my colleagues everything I knew about self-study, a move that does not align with how I think individuals learn. I wanted our early meetings to include lots of conversation and discussion. My selection of resources was also meant to help socialize my colleagues to the larger S-STEP community. I felt like this was an important step in encouraging them to move from learning about self-study to actually doing self-study.

In addition to my formal presentations as the facilitator of the group and our attempts to share and discuss relevant resources, a final feature of our meetings during the first year was that we spent a lot of time talking about possible individual

and/or collaborative self-study projects. After one such discussion, I reflected in my journal how:

> it was gratifying for me to hear about these projects for at least two reasons: first, I think they touch on such important issues, and, second, because I think self-study will be an effective and powerful means to investigate those issues. If I remember correctly, some were interested in how we might better facilitate teacher candidates to be reflective practitioners and/or advocates. Others seemed curious as to how to effectively teach our mostly monocultural student population about social justice and issues of diversity without being perceived as "pushing your agenda" as faculty of color. Another was interested in exploring the transition to a new position where expertise was assumed. All fascinating in their own right! (April 2015).

The only issue was that, for all of our talk about doing self-study, many in the group still did not have a clear sense of how to move their ideas forward as the academic year came to close. We also had yet to agree or follow through on any kind of a collaborative self-study. Indeed, in retrospect I think it is fair to suggest that the group grappled for that first year with finding an identity and purpose. In a broad sense, I knew that my role was to facilitate my colleagues' understandings of, and to support their attempts to engage in, S-STEP methodology. Similarly, my colleagues knew they had signed up to learn about, and to learn how to do, self-study. Yet our inability to explicitly address how to accomplish these objectives led to an uneasy interplay.

Year Two: The Search Continues While Relationships Are Navigated

While it would be nice if I could write how I came into year two with a more dynamic and purposeful plan for the group other than to learn about and to learn how to do self-study, that simply did not happen. I was excited and energized at the prospect of resuming my work with the group; however, my summer was spent catching up on writing and doing accreditation work. It was not spent thinking about a formal plan for how we could move our S-STEP work forward.

For the first meeting of the second year, I put three items on the agenda: to welcome new members and to provide a brief overview of self-study and the purpose of the group, to have all members check in on the current status of their self-studies, and to discuss how we want to spend our time moving forward. Below is excerpted from my reflection after the meeting:

> In terms of the first item, I was never sure how to approach the task nor am I sure how well we succeeded. One immediate issue was that only one of our two new colleagues was able to join us; so we may run into the same issue of how to welcome a new member again for our next meeting. But probably the larger issue was that I did not know how to recap what has already been done (without boring those who have been in the group) while simultaneously providing an adequate overview of purpose and methodology of self-study for those new to the group. This tension reminded me of when I was a classroom teacher and used to have students come into my class in the middle of the year. I never knew what to do then,

and I am similarly confused now. So I basically asked the existing group members to tell our newest member what they thought of self-study and the purpose of the group. This helped me to kind of assess where everyone was in terms of their understanding, and it also got me off the hook for being solely responsible for the welcome and overview. During this part of the meeting, I mostly listened and jumped in when it seemed appropriate or useful. I am not sure how well I did, but I am eager to hear the recording of the meeting…

In terms of the second item, I was pleased to hear that everyone did at least have something to check-in about regarding their individual self-study projects. Some seemed further along than others, but everyone still had their self-study on their minds. And everyone still seemed excited about the prospect of studying some aspect of their practice! So I will take that as a victory for now…though I am hoping we continue to work together toward more concrete outcomes derived from our time together.

In terms of the third item, I must admit that I still am not clear on how we should spend our time together in the future meetings. There was a lot of talk about our joint participation in the group and how to turn that into a collaborative proposal/article at some point. There was also some talk about doing better with holding ourselves accountable to the group, and ironically enough to ourselves. But I do not remember us agreeing to anything concrete…so I am going to leave this out there as something for further discussion. All in all, I would say that a nice (and hopefully valuable) time was had by all. Until next time… (August 2015)

Sensing that some may have needed an extra push to get moving with their self-studies, I came to future meetings with more prepared content and a renewed focus on the "nuts and bolts" of actually doing self-study. In one instance, I prepared a grid with some of my self-study articles on the left side of the page, a description of the data sources used in the middle, and then a description of my methods of analysis all the way on the right (see Table 2). I did this for a couple of reasons. First, with two new members to the group, I thought such examples might be helpful in understanding what self-study can look like in practice. Second, for all members of the group, I thought seeing some of the data sources I have successfully incorporated into self-study might encourage us all to think about some of the different options that exist or that could be imagined regarding our own data collection methods.

We mostly followed a pattern in our year two meetings that included some kind of a practical exercise followed by a whole group debriefing around how it specifically relates to S-STEP. Examples of these exercises include practicing coding using my blog reflections, reviewing self-study proposals and discussing the feedback, and reading self-study articles.

Some of the same challenges from year one continued to present themselves to me in year two, especially around my instructional decision-making. But it also seemed as if additional challenges surfaced, most notably related to the relationships I was attempting to forge with my colleagues within a new professional development context. I felt like we had good relationships prior to the formation of the group, but attempting to teach them about self-study represented a new dynamic in our workplace associations. Since my colleagues are seasoned teacher educators and researchers in their own right, I am afraid that my teaching may have been unduly influenced by me making too many assumptions about their comfort levels getting started in self-study, their motivation to maintain their inquiries in the face of ambiguity and/or setbacks, and their wherewithal using different research

Table 2 Personal examples of self-studies

Self-study article(s)	Data sources	Methods of analysis
Ritter, J. K. (2009). Developing a vision of teacher education: how my classroom teacher understandings evolved in the university environment. *Studying Teacher Education 5*(1), 45–60	My field texts included the following sources: (a) personal journal entries, (b) discussion board interactions written for peers, (c) discussion board interactions written for colleagues, (d) discussion board interactions written for students, (e) formal observation reports written for student teachers, (f) formal papers written for professors, and (g) conference papers written for the wider community of scholars	Engaged in a collaborative process of "self-critical reflexivity," described by Ham and Kane (2004) as an "iterative and consciously self-analytical reflection on, repetition of, and gathering data about, the purposeful actions that are the center of the study" (p. 129)
Ritter, J. K. (2010a). Revealing praxis: A study of professional learning and development as a beginning social studies teacher educator. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *38*(4), 298–316		Inductive thematic analysis informed mostly by literature on the socialization of college faculty and teacher educators to their new roles
Ritter, J. K. (2011). On the affective challenges of developing a pedagogy of teacher education. *Studying Teacher Education*, *7*(3), 219–233		
Ritter, J. K., Powell, D., Hawley, T. S., & Blasik, J. (2011). Reifying the ontology of individualism at the expense of democracy: An examination of university supervisors' written feedback to student teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *38*(1), 29–46	Random sample of 36 field observation reports written by the authors as feedback to student teachers	Interested in testing the preexisting theory of the independent self against empirical data, cross-case content analysis of a random sample of 36 field observation reports was employed to facilitate the emergence of themes regarding the supervisors' proclivities to invoke cultural values held as European American
		Deductive coding and sorting into the cultural construct categories identified by Shweder et al. (1998)

Table 2 (continued)

Self-study article(s)	Data sources	Methods of analysis
Bullock, S. M., & Ritter, J. K. (2011). Exploring the transition into academia through collaborative self-study. *Studying Teacher Education*, 7(2), 171–181	Decided to explore the potential of a collaborative weblog, or blog, as a shared safe space to write to one another. We did not have any particular timeline for posting, rather each author wrote a post whenever he encountered a problem of practice or a situation that he wanted to share. The blog posts were supplemented by email conversations. Emails took on a more immediate, conversational feel and likely helped to ameliorate against the inherently asynchronous nature of posting on the blog	Developed the concept of a turning point as our term for identifying excerpts in the data that share four criteria:
		1. There is an affective (e.g., emotional or motivational) element to the data 2. The data frames a problem of practice 3. The author of the data is implicitly or explicitly asking for help from the critical friend 4. The data is bounded by the action-present; there is still time to take action on the problem
Ritter, J. K. (2012). Modeling powerful social studies: Bridging theory and practice with preservice elementary teachers. *The Social Studies*, 103(3), 117–124	To effectively capture the degree to which I was modeling the promotion of a view of powerful social studies in my practice, this study employed a couple of data collection methods. First, and most importantly, a research assistant was invited in for each course meeting to keep field notes. Her field notes were intended to be objective accounts of everything I said and did during the course sessions. In addition, I wrote reflections after each course meeting in which I attempted to explain what I planned to happen, what actually happened, and my perceptions of how well I had modeled powerful social studies teaching and learning	These data sets were analyzed, with the help of my research assistant, for their content in relation to modeling powerful social studies. Categories for the data were predefined according to the four types of modeling identified and described by Lunenberg et al. (2007). This content analysis involved reviewing each unit of analysis (i.e., my attempts at modeling as revealed in the data sets) and then categorizing it according to the predefined categories (Ezzy 2002)

approaches and methods. I also struggled with negotiating the induction of new members and, at times, with meaningfully traversing difference. Since self—and by extension self in relation to others—is key to self-study, who we are matters a great deal. So an important question lingers regarding how to teach others a research methodology that relies so heavily on the personal.

Year Three: Learning by Doing

A watershed moment for the group came toward the end of year two. It had been on my mind for quite some time that not enough is known about the process of teaching self-study to others. Similarly little is understood about how self-study is learned and then enacted by its practitioners. It dawned on me that all three of these activities were occurring simultaneously with our regular meetings of the DILE S-STEP group. That seemed like a story worth telling, so I approached John Loughran, a leading voice in the self-study community and editor of the Springer S-STEP book series, at AERA in 2016 with an idea for a book that would do just that. His support and encouragement prompted me to contact some of my other colleagues with experience in facilitating self-study groups and eventually to formally put together a book proposal. You are now reading the result.

In any case, by this time the noticeable momentum of the group led the Chair of our Department, Jason Margolis, to suggest that I will use my remaining funds for our second year to hire a research assistant. He offers a more comprehensive account of these events in the preceding chapter, so I will simply add that I took him up on his offer and devised a plan for how I wanted to use the assistance. What is important to know here (more is written about this in the final chapter of this section) is that the RA primarily spent his time interviewing DILE S-STEP group members and then transcribing those interviews. I thought such interviews could help us to reflect on where we had been and where we are now in terms of our understandings while also potentially acting as data sources for various individual and/or collaborative self-study ideas.

After 2 years of me "teaching" and my colleagues "learning" self-study, we decided in our first meeting of year three to spend our time collaboratively analyzing our responses from the interviews. I had the RA organize all responses by question in a single master transcript. Prior to our meetings, I would then assign a question or two for homework, and all group members would individually analyze the responses through coding. We then used our face-to-face meetings as a place to debrief our individual findings, and to forge a collaborative understanding of what we felt was going on with each interview question. More is written about the impact of this process on individual participants in the chapters following this one, and more is written about the results of this process in the final chapter of this section. What is important to note here is that our decision to collaboratively analyze the interviews during our year three meetings was an important development for the group because we were *all* finally, actively *doing* self-study in an environment that had grown to be both critical and supportive. While it is true that I encouraged my colleagues to begin their own self-studies from the very beginning of our time

together, some were—and some continue to be—reticent about actually initiating and maintaining the self-study research process. Nudging learners of self-study to take action seems like a powerful source of learning that may have been too often overlooked in my earlier attempts at facilitation.

A Tension-Fraught Enterprise

Although my work facilitating the DILE S-STEP group has been one of the more rewarding experiences of my professional life, this should not be mistaken to mean that it has always been easy or instantly gratifying. In terms of Berry's framework (2004, 2008), the struggle for me from an instructional perspective primarily revolved around the tensions of "telling and growth" and "planning and being responsive." There were many times in my planning when I felt unsure of myself and many times in my teaching when I had to resist the urge to just tell my colleagues what I know about S-STEP from my own experiences. The familiar desire to reach some destination with my colleagues constantly pushed up against what I knew was the equally important need to simply encourage their journeys. As you will read in the following chapters, these instructional tensions were also felt by the participants in the group. Perhaps not surprisingly, some appreciated the way I navigated my decision-making, while others grew impatient. In addition to my planning and teaching, I felt certain relational tensions, primarily between "safety and challenge" and "valuing and reconstructing," in terms of how I interacted with my colleagues in a new professional setting. I tried to honor the experiences that everyone brought to the group, but fear this sometimes prevented me from pushing the group in new directions, owing both to oversight and reticence. The pedagogical and relational issues I experienced while facilitating the self-study group worked together to challenge my own feelings of self-efficacy in relation to teaching S-STEP. Although my confidence was not necessarily diminished in terms of my ability to do self-study, I regularly grappled with uncertainties when it came to its teaching. These uncertainties included questions around what and how to present, when to take a more active versus a passive role, what to do when I was unable to offer suggestions or guidance, and how to find contentment when my colleagues were all over the place in terms of their progress with self-study. A tension that played into my self-efficacy here was the one between "confidence and uncertainty"; that is, I wanted to enhance my colleagues' confidence in doing self-study at the same time as I wanted to promote awareness of the messiness of the process. But there is a danger of not seeming knowledgeable when you are promoting awareness of messiness in a context that does not have clear boundaries or causal connections. Further to this, and in a culmination of sorts, my own feelings of efficacy seemed influenced by the tension between "action and intent." Whether related to different aspects of pedagogy or relationship building, I was always somewhat concerned with how my actions were perceived by my colleagues as I attempted to facilitate their understanding and practice of self-study. More is written about my colleagues' experiences in the group in the following chapters.

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Identifying Tensions and Striving to Improve International Mathematics Teacher Educators' Practice Through Self-Study

Rachel A. Ayieko

Introduction

I have been a mathematics educator for 23 years in two distinct continents: Kenya in Eastern Africa and the USA. I began my teaching career in an urban boys school as a certified teacher with an undergraduate education degree specialized in teaching chemistry and mathematics and later obtained a master's degree in mathematics education in Kenya. Upon completion of my masters' degree, I taught applied mathematics for 5 years in two middle-level colleges in Kenya. In 2008, I moved to the USA and pursued a doctoral degree in Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education with a focus in mathematics education at Michigan State University (MSU). I was interested in learning new ways of teaching mathematics and engaging in research in a developed nation with the aim of improving the mathematics learning in a developing country such as Kenya. Using the concepts of tensions (Berry 2007) and assemblage (Strom 2015), I discuss my transition to becoming a teacher educator and how I am incorporating self-study in my work as a teacher educator. Finally, I consider my perceptions on the strengths and limitations of self-study within my teaching and scholarship.

Similar to other teacher educators (e.g., Canning 2004; Ritter 2007; Williams and Ritter 2010), I transitioned from being a high school mathematics teacher to a teacher educator. My transition, however, was different in some important ways. For example, unlike Ritter (2007) whose secondary level teaching experience *and* teacher educator experience occurred in the USA, my teaching experience was at both the secondary and college level in Africa (i.e., Kenya) and my teacher educator experience, thus far, has been in the US context (i.e., Michigan and Pittsburgh, PA). My trajectory to becoming a teacher educator involved crossing geographic and cultural

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boundaries as I created new images of teaching while working in different contexts. I crossed boundaries as I evolved from being a high school mathematics teacher, onto an applied mathematics instructor, then to an elementary field instructor and mathematics education instructor, and finally to a PK-12 mathematics teacher educator.

The numerous competing forces and challenges that I faced as a beginning teacher educator have formed my teacher educator identity. Berry (2007) referred to these challenges or "internal turmoil" that teacher educators go through as *tensions* (p. 32). Connected to these tensions was an *assemblage* consisting of different forces, experiences, cultures, and beliefs that contributed to my co-constructed knowledge of practice. According to Strom (2015), the view of teaching as an assemblage means "considering the various components of the classroom, the students, the teacher, the content, the classroom… as working collectively to shape teaching practices" (p. 66).

Tensions as a Developing International Teacher Educator

While I was at MSU, the assumptions made by the program coordinators in charge of field instruction took me by surprise. I was required to pass an English language test before I was assigned field instructor duties as part of my assistantship. Although I was from an English speaking country, Anglophone Africa, the department set a cutoff point for the English language test to ensure I was proficient in the spoken and written language. I quickly realized that my English was considered somewhat different to that spoken by the future teachers, my native-speaking peers, and native-speaking faculty in my department. I also found myself confused on what constituted classroom management after visiting one of the field sites for student teaching. The questions that went through my head were, "Why are the students so noisy? Why do the students keep going to the bathroom while the mentor teacher is teaching? What do I debrief about with the future teacher when my view of a successful lesson seems so different?" After some debriefing sessions in which the future teachers needed reminders about writing out a lesson plan before teaching, I found myself wondering what communication style was effective yet not considered mean or uncompromising. I wondered if my previous experience from a different context would offer the future teachers a richer experience in their learning to teach or set them on a path of confusion. It seemed that my lived experience as a field instructor compelled me to see my background in a deficit perspective.

As an instructor of the mathematics methods course for preservice elementary teachers and a research assistant at MSU, I noted that the content area vocabulary and terminology in the US mathematics curricula materials were different from what I had used in my previous experience. For example, the acronym for the order of operations I was used to was BODMAS, but in the USA, it was PEMDAS. Other confusing terms I encountered were a trapezoid instead of a trapezium, scientific notation or standard form, Pythagorean or Pythagoras, among others. Similarly, Biber (1987) found linguistic differences in American and British writing. These differences in the language of mathematics relate to explanations provided by

Halliday ([1978](#)) about the development of the mathematics register.[1] Halliday explained that the mathematics register comprises the reinterpretation of existing words, the creation of new words from native and nonnative languages, words borrowed from other languages, and the creation of locutions.[2] Considering these differences, as a beginning teacher educator, I found myself nervous about the possibilities of not knowing other mathematics language differences that I should be aware of when teaching and engaging in scholarly conversations. A significant part of my induction as a teacher educator was navigating sociolinguistic and contextual differences in mathematics interpretations (or content area vocabulary).

The instructor position was challenging at first because I had to teach mathematics methods courses at a different level to that of my teaching experience. I was among those assigned to teach the elementary mathematics methods courses. Considering that I had a high school mathematics teaching experience, it was a new experience trying to learn what constitutes the elementary mathematics teaching knowledge. As I prepared for the lessons, I had to reevaluate my conceptions about mathematics learning to understand how elementary students think mathematically, how to introduce concepts to students for the first time, and what assumptions not to make. I noted that I had developed "automaticity of skills" (Gagné [1983](#), p. 15) while learning and teaching mathematics in high school and middle-level college, but I now had to think of ways to support future elementary teachers to introduce basic concepts for learning elementary mathematics. Automaticity in mathematics is the development of skills that can be used to solve more complex mathematical task with minimal conscious attention (Gagné [1983](#)). Also, I had to learn about teaching reform mathematics while having learned and taught mathematics using traditional approaches. Many times I had to make a conscious effort to think about the mathematics skills because it was easy to forget that elementary students are still in the process of learning these somewhat obvious skills. In short, I had the opportunity for exploring both self-positioned teacher educator identity and other-positioned teacher educator identity.

Assemblages

My research experiences, apprenticeship opportunities, collaborations with colleagues, critical engagement with different future teachers, and tensions, have all contributed to my development as a teacher educator. Similar to the assemblage framework used by Strom ([2015](#)), these factors did not occur linearly but instead combined to shape my enacted practices in teacher education. Although some of the experiences were intended for supporting my teacher educator development, I stumbled across other experiences that were valuable for my development.

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[1] It is a "set of meanings that is appropriate to a particular function of language… includes the words, structures that express these meanings (Halliday [1978](#), p. 195)."

[2] A composite of words found in the mathematics register. Some examples are least common multiple, greatest common divisor, etc.

Participating in teacher education research projects and my dissertation work was influential in deepening my knowledge in teaching future teachers. In the first year of my doctoral studies, I worked as a research assistant in a project focused on the development of future teachers' content knowledge in mathematics content courses for elementary teachers. I was able to observe videos of different instructional approaches used by teacher educators across the USA. Additionally, I learned about teacher education through my doctoral dissertation work, which was a cross-national study of teacher preparation for teaching mathematics. These research experiences were valuable in helping me understand what other teacher educators were doing in preparing future teachers to teach mathematics through the use of autobiographies, video analysis, lesson planning, and developing conceptual understanding of school mathematics.

I gathered insights about being a mathematics teacher educator from the available apprenticeship opportunities. I was able to observe different instructors teaching mathematics content courses before I took instructor duties. Further, shadowing field instructors during field supervision was meaningful in learning how to be a teacher educator in an unfamiliar context. Also, attending the course preparation meetings allowed me to learn the curriculum materials, the topics emphasized, and the different approaches used by the various instructors. Observation, as reported by Grossman (1990), is one of the essential resources for the development of knowledge for teaching. These experiences that included different teaching approaches used by instructors helped me to reinvent my teaching identity.

I was able to get materials for teaching and learning about the American education system through collaborations with colleagues. My colleagues included former elementary school teachers, senior faculty, and fellow instructors of the courses. I attended monthly meetings with team members teaching the same courses to discuss course readings, assignments, and class materials. I noted that different course coordinators emphasized different aspects of teaching for the future teachers. For example, the different foci included classroom discourse, lesson study, complex instruction, and reflection on practice. As an evolving teacher educator, working with various instructors expanded my perspectives on teaching teachers. I felt more confident starting to teach because I had access to different resources.

Future teachers with different experiences are a resource that I have continued to learn from as a teacher educator. For example, learning about future teachers' experiences in different cohorts by reading their autobiographies has informed my instruction. Also, some of the strategies that future teachers use to solve selected mathematics tasks have built on my repertoire of mathematics strategies that students might use. As a beginning teacher educator, each class brings future teachers with different needs, backgrounds, and expectations, all of which push me to reflect and improve my practice to better serve their needs.

In recognizing the changing demographics of the student population in the USA, I used my background knowledge to help future teachers understand about diverse students' thinking and dispositions. As an instructor of the global cohort at a University in the Midwest, I shared with future teachers about the differences in the mathematics register and algorithms used in selected countries. Although I experienced tensions initially when faced with teaching the future teachers, I later used

my expertise to introduce future teachers to the differences I had noted. My aim was for the future teachers to know that students from different countries learn mathematics in different ways, use different expressions to explain their thinking, and have differences of opinion about communication in mathematics classrooms.

Finally, my experience in teaching school mathematics at a different level was valuable in building future teachers' *horizon knowledge* of the mathematics curriculum. In teaching future elementary teachers, I was at first nervous that I did not have classroom teaching experience at this level. I thought about the core competencies that high school students have developed and realized that it was beneficial to know the topics and processes that should be articulated at the lower levels for students to transition to advanced level mathematics topics. For instance, in the development of algebraic understanding, it was important to support future teachers to engage in the meanings and misconceptions of the equal sign. Therefore, the knowledge of mathematics teaching at a different level then became a resource that I used to select readings and classroom discussions.

Is Self-Study the Way to Go?

In my development as a teacher educator, I have experienced tensions and successes and continued to improve on my practice as I get more familiar with the content and processes of teaching teachers. I modified my approaches to teaching based on feedback from the students in the midsemester evaluations, collaborative meetings with other mathematics education instructors within and off campus, peer evaluations, and engagement in professional organizations and forums. Although one of the elements of teaching that I emphasized in the mathematics methods course was reflection-in-practice and reflection-on-practice (Schön 1987), my reflective practices remained tacit. Therefore, the formation of a community of practice with my colleagues to discuss and engage in self-study in teacher education provided a forum to engage in a disciplined inquiry into my practices as a teacher educator.

There is a growing population of teacher educators with international backgrounds in the USA and perhaps an undertheorized area of self-study. These teacher educators face numerous challenges in their practice. If they are to model good teaching to the future teachers, then it is important to consider ways to improve their practices. Sharing one's actions, ideas, tensions, and reflections provide evidence of a teacher educators' walk that can help others to gain a better understanding of the process (Hamilton and Pinnegar 1998) and improve on "chaotic aspects" of their teaching (Loughran 2005, p. 10). Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) defined self-study as, "the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas, as well as the *not-self*" (p. 236). As an international teacher educator, improving on my practice through self-study can help me bridge the gap between experiences in ways that can enrich the future teachers' knowledge for teaching.

My initial understanding of self-study evolved as we continued to meet with the community of practice at our institution. The self-study approach at first seemed very similar to action research that I had read about during my doctoral study.

Through shared readings and monthly discussions, I learned that self-study was a disciplined form of inquiry that included data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings and that self-study is a form of empirical research with data from either journals or oral inquiries (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993). Understanding the sources of data was challenging considering that most of my research involves large-scale data analysis using quantitative methods. To shift my thinking from data as numbers to data as reflection accounts from journal entries was confusing even though it helps to maintain distance from my teaching practice and allows for the exploration of my professional identity and pedagogical development. However, oral inquiries as a form of data involving two or more teacher educators seemed to fulfill the reliability requirement expected in other research methods. Finally, our discussions about peer observation in self-study allowed me to understand the role of *critical friends* in self-study research.

In my present teacher educator role, I have grappled with issues that could be examined through self-study. For example, I noted that the future teachers needed more support in learning about equitable practices in mathematics. As an amateur in self-study research, I thought of conducting a self-study of my approaches to teaching about equitable practices and collecting information on what they learned from the course. From the discussions with our team, I learned that I needed to write journal entries after each lesson. Journaling provides knowledge about my practice. This type of inquiry "captured situated complexities of teachers' work and classroom practice" (Lyons and Laboskey 2002, p. 15). I wanted to analyze my approach to teaching about equitable practices in learning mathematics and reflect on ways to improve or change my practice. The journal writing process proved to be very tedious, and I missed many entries. At the end of the semester, I had very few entries that I could draw from to understand my practice. I also realized how depending on student reports would not provide the best picture of what the future teachers had learned about equitable practices because of their concerns on grading. I realized that I needed to be more consistent with writing journal entries to understand my practice, myself, and my students' thinking if I was going to use any data for self-study research.

My present self-study research has been more intentional and is focused on a self-study teaching a cross-listed course. My intention was to learn about my practice and improve my teaching by demonstrating how to differentiate instruction. For this study, I was able to write journal entries after every lesson. The process was tedious, but I was excited that I had data that I could code and report the findings (forthcoming). I realized that in the following year teaching the same cross-listed course had different challenges. Such a study attends to the problems of reduced enrollment in the schools of education across the country and ways that schools of education have dealt with reduced enrollment. This self-study provides information on one way of teaching cross-listed courses that attempts to meet the needs of the different students signed up for a course.

Self-study in my teacher educator experiences is beneficial for the improvement practice but can be challenging across multiple levels. For example, after joining the self-study team I realized that I had more questions about my practices and found it helpful to keep a journal about my experiences in the classroom. I also thought

about the tensions I faced as an international scholar and how I could use these challenges to enrich future teachers enrolled in my courses. Engaging in self-study at the institutional level is helpful for the general improvement of teacher education practices. For example, identifying an issue to study across disciplines within a school allows for shared understandings and collaborations with colleagues. The benefits of improved teaching and research publications make it an attractive method to meet the requirements for tenure and promotion. Within the field of mathematics education, issues related to teaching future teachers and practicing teachers about equitable practices in mathematics classrooms are a "hot topic" of discussion that self-study approaches build on. For example, a recent issue of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators Professional Book Series edited by Christine Browning focused on teacher educators' commentaries of their practices in *Facilitating Conversations about Inequities in Mathematics Classrooms*. Self-study, in general, is an inexpensive research paradigm that can be adopted at multiple levels and across disciplines for the improvement of practice in teacher education.

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"Self-Study" Is Not "Self:" Researching Lived Experience in Teacher Educator Development

Xia Chao

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore my practice as a teacher educator in participating in a self-study group in the Department of Instruction and Leadership in Education at Duquesne University. By examining the intersection of self-study and pedagogy, I illustrate how self-study acts as a mechanism for reflexivity, change, and innovation as well as unites research and teaching in my classroom. In what follows, I first briefly discuss my background, reasons for joining the self-study group, and its influence on my theoretical understanding. Next, I focus on my understanding of the nature of self-study and its nuances and uniqueness to the teaching context. This is followed by an analysis of how self-study translates into my teaching before concluding with a discussion of implications.

From Lived Experience to Lived Research

I was born in Beijing, China, with limited economic opportunities. My father was almost illiterate, which means not knowing how to read and write. This unique constraint had him face discrimination and prevented him from career promotion, even though he excelled in his job. Being illiterate, in my father's words, is "a forever hurt." My mother was well educated. My parents perceived the value of education as one of the main priorities. They created a print-rich home for me and my siblings. Informed by my personal experience, I learned about the importance of literacy and education in an individual's life.

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My personal experiences inform and influence my research. My research focuses on the role of linguistic and cultural contexts on second language learners' academic achievement and social integration in a multicultural and multilingual society. Grounded in poststructuralism (Bourdieu 1991; Foucault 1982; Weedon 1987), I use ethnography or ethnographic methods to examine the interactions among language, pedagogy, and culture. My role as an ethnographer and my evolving role as a teacher educator are also influenced by my work and built upon my self-reflection. Ethnography is a process in which researchers identify both the culture of the researched group and self-perceptions through intensive participant observations and field notes.

For me, self-reflection is a lifelong commitment to research and teaching. It became one of the reasons that I joined the self-study group. The reasons for my participation in the group are twofold. First, when I moved to Duquesne University in the summer of 2015, I was new to self-study. The term *self-study* sounded closely connected to my work and self-reflection commitment to research and teaching. Second, as a newcomer to Duquesne University, I hoped that the self-study group would mediate me to "local knowledge" (Geertz 1983). Such knowledge would not only facilitate my academic socialization in the new community but also learn about the features of the student population at Duquesne University. Hence, I initially perceived that the self-study group enabled me from being a peripheral participant to a full participant. It was also a bridge connecting me from being an outsider to an insider to the institution. However, this role has changed with my increased participation.

From Peripheral Participation to Full Participation

I initially oriented myself as a peripheral participant of the self-study group. If I could not have a sense of academic belonging, I would give an excuse and withdraw. At the first two meetings, I changed myself from being a passing traveler to an attentive audience because of the participants' enthusiastic and dialogic discussions on self-study and its influence on classroom and research practices. I wondered what made these colleagues so open. This curiosity led me to code the colleagues' talks, comments, and experiences with self-study and tried to identify the emerged themes. I sought nuances between self-study and my ethnographic work and classroom practice. At the third meeting, I shared with the group the intersections of self-study and my work including poststructuralism, critical perspectives, and reflexivity in language and literacy education. Dr. Ritter reinforced my perspective and connected my understandings to the conceptions of "critical friends" (Berry and Russell 2014; Costa and Kallick 1993) and "reflection" of self-study. From the self-study lens, "critical friends" are those teacher educators who build trusted relationships and share ideas generated from pedagogical practices. This term for me seems consistent with the conceptions of "community of practice" and "community of learners" from the sociocultural perspective (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Dr. Ritter's verification and confirmation encouraged me to explore the intersection of self-study and my work. I searched *Studying Teacher Education: A Journal of Self-study of Teacher Education Practices* and self-study articles published in *Journal of Teacher Education* and *Teacher Education Quarterly*. My search and increased participation in the group expanded my knowledge base and furthered my understanding of self-study. Thus, I added self-study in my theoretical lenses in examining my teaching and research. For instance, self-study changed my perception of reflexivity, which refers to internal dialogues "shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their contexts and vice versa" (Archer 2012, p. 1). Namely, reflexivity is situated in context and exercised by internal dialogues. It is socioculturally conditioned self-awareness. However, from the self-study lens, reflexivity seems to be practiced by both internal and external conversations. It is activated through a community of self-study. The internal and external conversations allow individuals to critically reflect on minds and actions. Self-study developed my understanding of reflexivity and provided me with an alternative mode of thinking and self-positioning. I participated in the self-study group as a learner, teacher educator, and scholar. My self-study experience attuned me to the subtle differences of my self-positioning. I became a self-explorer and a collaborator. Such positioning strengthened my perspective that being a scholar and teacher educator is a lifelong process. My participation in the group indicates that self-study is a dialogic, context-embedded, power-balanced, and paradoxical process.

Self-Study as Dialogic and Collaborative for Teacher Educators

I learned a great deal relevant to my work in the self-study process. First, the open and collaborative dialogues surrounding teacher education influenced me. The participants in the group became critical friends to each other. We commented on, suggested, and shared our ideas with regard to challenges and questions we encountered in teaching practice. These shared conversations and discussions crossed the disciplinary boundaries and became a useful tool for analyzing our pedagogy. While we are teacher educators from different content areas, our conversations and discussions demonstrated a shared interest in integrating theory and classroom practice as well as exploring problematic aspects of pedagogical practice in teacher education classrooms. We together reflected on how our practices and suggestions could be helpful in our pedagogy. Also, since the participants in the self-study group come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, our discussions enriched the nuanced relationships between preservice teachers and teacher educators in terms of their cultural, racial, and social backgrounds. These discussions increased my sensitivity to preservice teachers' backgrounds and that of their future students as well as my own. Also, these discussions helped me be proactive about potential issues and problems which would occur in the teacher education classroom. The

discussions created the "Thirdspace" (Soja 1996) of teacher education development in which teacher educators' pedagogical exploration and learning are reciprocal processes. An open, trusted, and collaborative relationship between my colleagues and me is essential for the dialogic process.

I identified that the dialogic nature of self-study is built on the power of balance. Every participant of the group became both a learner of self-study and a knower in their disciplines. I benefited from the balance of power, because it seemed to reinvent my professional development and local culture. Instead of being normalized and reproduced, the balance of power translated into my agency and ownership of learning in the self-study group. My reflection was process oriented. It contributed to my increased interest and engagement in self-study. The balance of power in the self-study group is inseparable with the attitudes and leadership of Dr. Ritter. In his words, "I don't want to be a master" of the group. He served as a facilitator of discussions and a mentor and critical mediator of self-study. Dr. Ritter orchestrated authentic interactions surrounding teaching practices. Such balance of power merits attention in self-study. Traditional teacher educators' development seems top-down, and power structures place teacher educators as recipients of theory and practice. For me, self-study is a bottom-up practice. The issues, confusions, and complexities we discussed were generated from our own pedagogical practice. Self-study places the participants as both a knower and learner. It is an approach to professional development *with* teacher educators rather than *to* teacher educators. I viewed the balance of power as a tool for reinventing my teaching and communication with students. The collaborative, dialogic, and power-balanced discussions in the self-study group enlarged my capacity to teach.

Furthermore, I argue that self-study seems paradoxical. The term *self-study* indicates a private study of an individual and emphasizes subjectivity. Yet, my participation in the dialogic and collaborative self-study group illustrates that self-study is *NOT* self. It is a collective study with trusted professional colleagues and "critical friends" who may provide alternative perspectives and practices. For me, self-study is an intersubjective activity in the community of practice. Reflection in self-study is always collective; it is reflection on lived experiences, particularly struggles that my colleagues and I encountered in the classroom. My own experience is also the possible experiences of other teacher educators. Self-study sets up a dialogic and collaborative learning space by mobilizing participants to reflect on their own experiences to identify the deeper and nuanced themes of these experiences. For example, my colleagues and I co-coded teacher educators' interview transcripts through multiple interpretive lenses such as resilience and critical race theory. The lenses enlarged the boundaries of my reflection. This interpersonal practice constructed learning, interpretation, and critique of shared experiences and struggles. In this sense, the term self-study seems somewhat ambiguous. Literally, self-study is private, personal, individual, and subjective. In practice, self-study is dialogic, collective, interpersonal, and public. It is mediated through interaction with self and colleagues. Such interaction offered me a pedagogy of possibility as follows.

From Participating in Self-Study to Translating Self-Study into Pedagogy

My engagement in self-study helped me reinvent pedagogical practices and built my classroom as the Thirdspace (Soja 1996). For example, from the self-study lens, I helped students experience learning as occurring within a situated context. Such context-embedded learning activated authentic interactions among classmates, guest speakers, texts, and field data collected by students and me. In my undergraduate class entitled *Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners*, I posed critical questions for students to consider their perceptions on themselves and their careers: (a) Who are English language learners (ELLs)? and (b) Teaching ELLs for what? I hoped that these questions would encourage students to think about the intersection of teacher identity, students, families, and communities. These questions could connect students' learning to the complex and unique issues surrounding teaching K-12 ELLs in a multicultural and multilingual society. I had students reflect their own understandings of the questions through interaction with classmates, ethnographic interviews and observations, texts, and self-reflection. These authentic, collaborative, and dialogic practices allowed students to perceive similarities and differences of understanding ELLs from each other. The process-oriented reflections and discussions regarding the questions served as mechanisms for preservice teachers to validate and challenge each other's perspectives. Through applying self-study in preservice teacher education, my students described their participation in my classes as "an eye-opening experience." Some students told me that by re-recognizing themselves and their lived experiences in schools and communities, they began to think outside their comfort zones toward a variety of ELLs' cultural, social, racial, historical, and linguistic backgrounds. Applying self-study in the classroom seemed to help preservice teachers become reflexive teachers and learn teaching values.

With my 2-year participation in the self-study group, I recognized that this group served as more than a mechanism for me to attain "local knowledge" and to change me from being an outsider to an insider to the institutional community. Unlike the understanding of self-study as a methodology, I would consider self-study as an alternative mode of learning, thinking, and being in teacher educators' professional development. The dialogic, collaborative, context-embedded, and power-balanced nature of self-study enabled me to develop a pedagogy of possibility. Coppola (2007) illustrates that a scholarly teacher educator should be informed and their work and contribution should be theory laden, intentional for implementation, and documented for their own and others' evaluation. Through creating a dialogic and collaborative learning space, self-study would be a tool for becoming a scholarly teacher educator. Current research of self-study and its implementation for pedagogy have focused on beginning teacher educators (e.g., Fletcher and Bullock 2012; Ritter 2007). Scholars can benefit from conducting more research on experienced teacher educators and/or a mixed group of beginning and experienced teacher

educators. My practical and critical engagement in self-study, may, invite more teacher educators into a dialogic and collaborative learning space, expanding and diversifying their knowledge, experience, and epistemology.

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Self-Study to Help Teachers Engage in Diversity

Laura Mahalingappa

Background and Training

When I began graduate school, I had no idea I was going to become a teacher educator. After a number of years teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), I started my Ph.D. studies in theoretical linguistics, hoping to focus on historical or sociolinguistics and, one day, become a professor and share my love of the study of language in an academic community. However, as much as I enjoy theory, I have always tended toward the applied aspects of linguistics, trying to be practical with knowledge production. During my coursework, I followed a path that focused on language and its integration into varying fields, taking courses and working on projects in second language studies (education), language acquisition (psychology), language policy (sociology), and sociolinguistics (anthropology). When applying for jobs after completing my doctoral studies, I considered all positions that had language as a focus, and many were in the field of language education, specifically ESL. Entering academic life with the idea that I would be able to positively affect the teaching of ESL – and thus the successful learning of ESL – made me feel that I would put my work to good use.

However, what I soon discovered is that I had never been fully prepared in the pedagogy of teacher education. I assumed that because I had been a good language teacher and had taught other university-level content courses in linguistics and cultural studies, I would automatically know how to be an effective teacher educator. The first year I taught in my current program was thus a trial by fire. When I started teaching in the program, I had mostly graduate courses focusing on English linguistics and grammar for students who planned to be ESL teachers. Since I had studied and researched grammar, first and second language acquisition, and multilingualism,

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I was eager to share this acquired knowledge to students studying to be ESL teachers. In addition to the structure of English, I incorporated a critical view of language, language policy and ideology, and linguistic diversity in my courses. Part of becoming a language teacher is to understand how powerful language is in everyday life and how important it is to respect individual identities in ESL learning contexts. I was successful in meeting these goals in my courses, making good connections with students and preparing them for a future with language teaching as a focus.

However, after completing 2 years in the program, I then started teaching a State-required course to help undergraduate preservice content-area teachers learn how to support ESL students in K-12 schools. This was truly my beginning as a "teacher educator." I went from the comfort of helping graduate students and future ESL teachers – who had already "bought into" the idea of supporting and advocating for diverse and often marginalized students – better understand language to the challenge of helping 19–20-year-old undergraduate students learn about how to help a population of students with whom they had little experience.

The core problems I had encountered at the beginning, discovered after much reflection and study, centered around the interaction of course content, the students' backgrounds, and my own approach to the topic. I had to teach a course that was crammed full of competencies required by the State, all of which are important and all of which would be better served with more time spent on them. Another aspect of the course was its focus on cultural and linguistic diversity, topics with which the vast majority of the students in the class had little experience. However, many had come with ideologies about multilingualism and immigration firmly in place, which were mostly negative. Finally, after working with future ESL teachers, I was used to delving straight into critical pedagogy and advocacy for diverse learners, an approach that did not quite work with most of the students in this new course.

Unfortunately, there is little validated research or conversation about the most effective methods for preparing teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse students (see Faltis and Valdés 2016), so I had to use general methods employed in teacher education and try to tweak them for the course. In addition, my own identity as a faculty of color and the daughter of an immigrant perhaps influenced my attitude toward the class, my approach to the topic, and my students' perceptions of me. Self-study seems like a natural outcome of my struggle to prepare teachers within the context of the program and to account for my students' notions about the content and our backgrounds.

Evolving Understanding of the Nature and Purpose of Self-Study

At the beginning of each new semester, I had to somewhat reflect on my performance since, at the minimum, I had to update my syllabus and decide whether or not I would be using the same assignments, readings, and activities as previous

semesters. I had taught this same undergraduate course for the past 7 years, so I had some time to think about what had worked and what had not. As a program, all faculty who teach the course would also get together once a year and give input on the course and make decisions about whether and how to change the syllabus. Over the years, we, as a collective, have made substantial changes to our course. However, I had taken a haphazard approach to thinking about what I could individually do to improve my own teaching of the course.

I had the inkling that I should do something to assess whether or not the course was achieving what it should after the first year that I taught it. The second year, I conducted a pre- and post-survey of students to assess learning outcomes based on change of beliefs. This is what I was trained to do – survey research with some follow-up interviews. While the research that I did showed that the course did have a significant change on my students, I still felt that the course was not doing enough, so I continued to tweak aspects of the course and tried to investigate ways to make learning outcomes better. However, I always put the locus and burden of learning on the student, which I was kind of trained to do in a "student-centered" classroom, but I did little to acknowledge what I brought to the table since I had never done a systematic evaluation of myself and what I took into the classroom with me – I had never really done a reflection on my own teaching.

When our chair announced the new initiative called "self-study," I was intrigued and thought "why not?" I was willing to learn about any new approach, and I went in with no expectations either way – I did not know if it would help me at all, but I was not against trying it out. Coming from a non-education background, I had no preconceptions about the field of self-study and how it fit into the overall picture. I was interested in learning.

My introduction to self-study was like dropping a non-swimmer into the deep end of the pool. While I had received training in many different methods that fit into varying fields surrounding the study of language, ranging from quantitative methods with larger data sets to qualitative studies focusing on interview data and discourse analysis as an analytic tool in linguistics studies, I had never gone beyond that to narrative inquiry, grounded theory, case study, or other terms that were being bandied about in the initial discussions in our group (see Corbin and Strauss 2008; Creswell 1998; Stake 1995). Thus, I tried to understand the qualitative side of education while also learning about what the nuances of self-study were.

I had also previously attended a group that focused on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) at the university's Center for Teaching Excellence. I had never fully engaged in that group since it seemed like they were only at the beginning stages of assessing student learning outcomes (which may or may not have been actually true, just my own perception) and did not give me what I was looking for at the time in terms of supporting my own teaching. However, I think I spent a couple of months of self-study trying to suss out exactly what the differences were between self-study and SOTL. In the first year in the group, I was simply trying to figure out what this whole "self-study thing" meant and how I could use it to help me improve my own teaching and, by extension, student outcomes in my class.

In the end, after reading through articles on self-study methodology (Loughran 2007; Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009; Samaras 2002) and articles using the methodology (Ritter 2012), along with continuous discussions in our self-study group, I honed in on an understanding of how self-study would be useful in my own endeavors – the study of one's own practice to be a better teacher (although operational definitions are, of course, more eloquent and, by necessity, more technical). I realized that self-study could be an invaluable way of examining my practice, which included not only my materials and activities but also how I delivered those activities and how I portrayed myself in the process. Through my reading and discussion, I also addressed one of my most pressing concerns – what would this work mean for others in the field?

Incorporation of Self-Study in My Work

Although I went into the self-study group with no idea what it was, I still had a project in mind that I had been working on with a colleague – it turned out that this project fit the self-study approach well. A colleague of mine and I had started talking about being faculty of color trying to teach the so-called diversity courses about a year previously. It started out more of a casual conversation in the hallway – kind of a mini-support group session that allowed us to vent about the difficulties we had trying to teach a subject that we considered extremely important while also struggling with being representative of the groups we were advocating for. We both had struggled at times in our courses and had encountered similar issues. After a few conversations, we realized that we may not be the only faculty experiencing these kinds of situations, so we decided to write a paper detailing how we approached our courses and changes we had made, all with an eye on improving student outcomes. The student outcomes in this case were positive dispositions toward culturally and linguistically diverse learners, advocacy for the underserved, understanding of institutionalized privilege, and reflection on their own biases.

When we started thinking about how to approach such a paper, we hit a bit of a wall. I had come from a more quantitative background (doing discourse analysis involved counting variables), and neither of us had done this kind of work before. This was where self-study came in and filled an important gap for us. After participating in the self-study group and understanding the methods used and the proposed outcomes, we decided to do a self-study of our approach to teaching in our classes.

The first thing to decide was which methods to use. Although I had thought that self-study had its own strict methodology, my understanding grew that beyond the importance of rigor in one's study (i.e., using multiple data sources and using effective data collection techniques), and collaboration (having critical friends), the particular methodological stance was not fixed. Both quantitative and qualitative data and data collection methods could be used. Although I was comfortable with quantitative methods and would indeed use surveys within the study overall, we decided to use a co-autoethnography or collaborative autoethnography (see Chang et al.

2016; Coia and Taylor 2009). We thought that our study should be somewhat autobiographical in nature (see Bullough and Pinnegar 2001), but since we came to this topic through our discussions about our class, it should be collaborative in nature, not just the two of us telling our stories. The ethnography aspect appealed to me since I had some training in those methods in graduate school, and it allowed us to be able to grasp the whole picture, instead of just our own individual perspectives. Again, within autoethnography, there's a wide range of data sources available.

We chose to engage in a number of activities to produce the data that was required to provide rigor for our study. We wrote reflective journals after classes that we shared with each other, we started recording our discussions about class topics and had those recordings transcribed, and we observed each other's classes to provide feedback about activities by taking observational notes. We examined themes that emerged from our data points and found ways to improve our classes and, in fact, still continue to do so. We have decided to write one manuscript detailing the results from our self-study to provide an example of ways that other faculty of color may approach similar courses and a model to perhaps do their own self-study. We have also decided to write another manuscript that not only focuses on the self-study itself but concentrates more on autoethnography itself, without an intent focus on improving practice. Ultimately, self-study for me has to lead to positive results in my instruction rather than only looking inward.

Strengths and Limitations of Self-Study in My Work

I have found self-study to be effective in many ways in my own work to become a better instructor for preservice teachers. It has helped me become a better reflector on my own teaching by making reflection a regular and systematic part of my routine. Instead of being haphazard, I now know that in order to make real change happen, you have to be regular about it and not take snapshots of what is going on. Self-study has also helped me understand that reflection is not enough – you have to look for direct evidence that what you are doing has positive effects on student learning. That evidence can be widely varied (surveys can be a part of it!), but it has to be rigorous.

The hardest part of doing self-study has been the honest reflection required to make self-study worthwhile. This might be the biggest drawback to using this methodology. It takes self-awareness and self-confidence, something that many new (and experienced) faculty may not have an abundance of, to be able to critically look at yourself, admit that you may not be doing the right thing, and make a change. For a variety of reasons, teachers may not have the luxury of taking the time to engage in a self-study. For my part, sitting down and thinking about how my class went took an emotional toll on me that was sometimes cathartic and sometimes paralyzing. If one is not accustomed to self-study and systematic reflection (aka baring of your soul), the time that it takes to conduct such a study can perhaps distract faculty from meeting the goals of tenure in today's academy.

Finally, while I think that self-study is something that would benefit any teacher in any context, self-study in the end is good for what it is good for. By definition, self-study is highly contextualized and cannot be generalized (except for the methods). During my self-study and the idea of publishing the results to a wider audience, I have often thought about how this would help other people. Without big numbers and generalizability, what can this study do to help other faculty who may be in the same boat as I? I think my quantitative self has finally come to the point where I believe what I have to say will speak to others and perhaps help to spur thinking and change in their contexts, but it has taken me a while to get there.

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Using S-STEP to Understand Faculty Roles in Establishing Teachers of Color

Christoper Meidl

Introduction

While I have used multiple forms of qualitative research (e.g., case study, grounded theory, etc.), I have only recently been exposed to S-STEP as a methodology. Its utility provided a structure for the messiness that came with exploring how I as a faculty member might create change, personally and systematically, in getting more males of color into early childhood education (ECE). The following sections provide a framework of my initiation into teacher education and S-STEP as a methodology, guided by "Background as a Teacher Educator and Researcher," "The Evolution of My Understanding of the Nature of S-STEP Methodology," "A Current Study Using S-STEP," and "Strengths and Limitations of S-STEP for the Current Study."

Background as a Teacher Educator and Researcher

Becoming a teacher educator is something I was drawn into during my development as a pre-K-12 teacher and various classroom experiences over time. My teaching career started with substitute teaching in Beloit, Wisconsin, but I truly found my identity as an educator after joining Teach For America (TFA). I taught high school English at an urban high school in New Orleans with a student population 80% African-American and 20% Vietnamese-American. While I enjoyed teaching high school, I knew from my days in substitute teaching that early childhood teaching came more naturally. I went back for a master's degree and certification in ECE

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from University of New Orleans. From Louisiana, I then moved to Texas, teaching in La Joya Independent School District, where the student population was 99% Mexican-American. This experience provided me an opportunity to loop with the same class of children teaching them in prekindergarten and kindergarten. In each of the locations I taught, reflecting on my teaching, the community I served, and my own positionality was a major part of how I self-evaluated my performance.

My experiences in an urban high school, with African-American and Vietnamese-American students, as well as an elementary school within a rural Mexican-American community shaped my belief that real teaching is about the relationship developed between teacher and student. These relationships were fostered by discussions about race, poverty, and privilege. After reflecting on positive and negative interactions during class, I learned to adjust instruction and pedagogy to become culturally responsive. With that in mind, as a high school and elementary teacher, reflection and reflexivity were important for building, maintaining, and understanding how relationships impact learning.

The impetus for becoming a researcher/teacher educator was to speak to such issues and provide a voice for educators. Thus, I decided to focus my efforts on curriculum and instruction in ECE at the Pennsylvania State University. My coursework during my doctoral program included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, in a breadth over depth sort of a way. I became familiar with the work of qualitative methodology scholars such as Creswell (1998), Maxwell (2008), Corbin and Strauss (2008), and Stake (1995). In one particular course, I used a case study format to investigate environmental influences on character education at three different schools. This study influenced the methodological approach to my dissertation, designed as grounded theory.

Because qualitative inquiry created a context to tell the story of teachers, preservice teachers, and students, it was and still is my methodology of choice. My dissertation was done as a grounded theory methodology (GTM). GTM is recognized as being subjective and personal. Sensitivity is an important perspective that Corbin and Strauss (2008) emphasize as a means to make meaning out of data. More so, they provided techniques for "probing data" including "use of questioning, making comparisons, various meanings of words, drawing upon personal experience, waving the red flag, looking at language (in vivo), looking for words indicating time, thinking in terms of metaphors and similes, and looking for the negative case" (Corbin and Strauss 2008, p. 68). While GTM provided new and interesting information on the topic of character education, it caused some publication reviewers to question the use of the methodology. This is the challenge with dissertation research. It may get you through your program but not published.

Since receiving my Ph.D., I've experimented with mixed methods and phenomenology. My current research is grounded in both critical race theory and feminism. I have recently explored critical race theory and Black feminist theory as counter narratives to the dominant White cultural expectations influencing education and educators. The focus of my most recent research was, and continues to be, increasing the number of preservice teachers of color in the ECE program. The challenge for me is getting a handle on whether this endeavor is research, in the investigation

of it; teaching, in looking to provide supports for students; or service, in knowing I would have to take an active role in recruiting students despite having no experience doing this.

The Evolution of My Understanding of the Nature of S-STEP Methodology

My focus on getting more Black males into ECE left me in an ambiguous space where research, teaching, and service all came together, with none necessarily being prevalent. At the same time, I was invited into a self-study group, which became an opportunity to establish a methodological framework for my focus. This was important as a junior faculty member because there is so much pressure to make sure what you do *counts*: whether as research, teaching, or service. I chose the use of self-study (S-STEP) methodology as qualitative research to guide the project in which I was struggling to find a scholarly framework. Other theoretical approaches I had considered were reflective practice, action research, and the scholarship of teaching. However, none of them fit because of methodological incongruity, where research fits but teaching does not or vice versa. Although I am still learning how to use self-study, I have found it be very inviting as a means to link the relationships between teaching, scholarship, and service.

Some research intends to solve various problems (i.e., psychological, social, racial, emotional, etc.) by isolating variables either quantitatively or qualitatively. However, for me, self-study allows for self-thought, self-inferences, and self-beliefs to influence the outcomes. S-STEP acknowledges those constructs as valid sources of epistemology. S-STEP can be the application of both epistemology and ontology. Samaras (2002) provides the definition for self-study that fits my application the best, as a "critical examination of one's actions and the context of those actions in order to achieve a more conscious mode of professional activity" (p. xxiv).

Self-study, as methodology, allows the decisions I make as a teacher-researcher to be structured and valued as scholarly, which is important because it often becomes our research expertise. In academia, students leave doctoral programs with varying degrees of experience with research. Most researchers have only two to three methodological frameworks that they learned as part of their program. The typical approach to research then is to only use those two to three methodologies because our research gets done in isolation from most of our peers.

As mentioned above, I was invited to the S-STEP group that had started the year before I arrived at Duquesne as a new member. Qualitative research was my main approach to most research projects I had done, and the group seemed like a good fit. I recognized very quickly that this gathering was a great way to share ideas in a safe zone, where my abilities were not judged but rather nurtured. We talked about projects, methodologies, and coding. Colleagues provided vulnerability in acknowledging limits of knowing and experiences with methodology. The group was led by a

scholar who had established himself within the S-STEP field. Using that expertise, he guided the group in a natural evolution of understanding and competence in a low-pressure environment. This group allowed for discourse about challenges we faced as researchers and teacher educators, which led to bonding and connectivity as colleagues and scholars.

The interactions and resources provided by the S-STEP group have provided me with a personal description and definition of self-study. I would now define self-study as a systematic methodological framework that applies critical analysis to an instructor's approach to teaching, learning, and academic endeavors. Self-study, then, could be described as a way for individuals to investigate how their ideas and beliefs influence what they do as well as how they make changes to those approaches. Self-study needs to be systematic, reflective, and formative and includes another person who can be a critical friend to challenge one's interpretations (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009).

To establish itself as methodology, self-study necessitates a systematic approach in order to identify sources of data and ways to validate analysis and interpretation. Without question, using reflective questioning plays an important role in the process of self-study. The other essential part of self-study is that it is progressive in nature. It is uncertain when or if it should end as research and/or pedagogical practice. In my case, I am open to continuous improvement in my teaching and learning. There always seems to be something new that can be added or adjusted, sometimes not to make it better but to meet the needs of different students in the class. S-STEP allows researchers/instructors to study themselves as participants.

A Current Study Using S-STEP

Self-study emerged as a methodological approach to answer my research question: Where are the men of color in ECE and how do we get them there? This question has led me to rethink my identity as a faculty member in ECE. Specifically, I am exploring a deeper understanding of the calling to be an agent of change. The problem I am investigating is the lack of representation of men of color in ECE. Therefore, my work has informed my understanding of how administration and faculty must take part in a strategic approach to recruit, develop, graduate, and maintain the presence of male teachers of color locally and extending nationally. Using a self-study methodological framework (Louie et al. 2003; Cole and Knowles 1998), I am exploring my role as a faculty member in recruiting of men of color in the Early Childhood Pre-K-4 licensure.

Self-study allows me to sequentially investigate my identity, past experiences, values, and beliefs, as they influence my current focus. This focus emphasizes teacher preparation but has shown opportunities beyond that by working with school districts. Initially, I pondered how I am involved in recruiting preservice teachers of color and supporting them. Data sources in this planning stage include (1) internal grants for this proposal, funded and unfunded, along with comments; (2) qualitative

data from a focus group with multiple stakeholders to establish needs for successful implementation, including program type and a plan for longitudinal change in coursework and faculty pedagogy; and (3) data gathered in securing foundation grants for tuition and support.

Reflection as data sources included personal journals reflecting on interactions in multiple community spaces. Grant applications themselves are sources of data along with feedback and my own journaling about how I use that feedback. Interviews with those recruited could be analyzed to unpack their perceptions about our interaction. A final component to apply S-STEP methodology would include consistently having a "critical other" or "critical friend" as necessary questioning of my perceptions (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009).

The identification of research goals and project organization guided the development of a strategic plan to guide research and a framework to apply for funding. In attempting to develop more Black male early childhood educators, two phases of this project evolved: the planning phase and the implementation phase. Within the planning stage, I explored how to coordinate with multiple stakeholders to establish what needs to happen in order to successfully implement this proposal. This means establishing who is involved both internally and externally with various groups who see the benefit of this proposal. Goals are definitely a staple of self-study, and for this project I hoped to establish who, individuals or organizations (i.e., Duquesne University, public schools, childcare centers, churches, 100 Black Men, Black Male Leadership Institute, etc.), might provide support financially or with human capital, a recruitment plan, and innovative teaching and learning plan for inclusiveness.

The next phase of the project, implementation, provides the opportunity to evaluate whether goals are being met and how they are being met using S-STEP. Implementation of this project would include securing a foundation grant to fund recruitment, tuition, and training and support postgraduation. S-STEP could include reflections on recruitment/networking, going out into high schools and the community, and comparing the goals with the pragmatics of implementation.

As a cohort is developed, providing support for the participants would occur with mentorship and discussions as a group. These discussions would also provide opportunities to hear about challenges and analyze my role as faculty and readjust my support. Part of this goal is to change how IHEs approach, develop, and apply pedagogy to meet the needs of the cohort members. Its intent is to establish culturally responsive pedagogy for preservice teachers of color that takes into account how they learn and recognize assets they bring to the field. Monthly gatherings of these cohort teachers within their first year of teaching would be facilitated in order to understand triumphs and challenges within the field. Other stakeholders would participate within these gatherings to provide various perspectives on situations.

Summarily, self-study promotes work being done to guide critical self-analysis while being accountable to the evaluative nature of research becoming public. Publication is the mark of successful research. Collectively, the knowledge from the multiple research projects needs to lead to scholarship such as the development of a handbook for universities, school districts, and communities with suggestions for developing a student-to-teacher pipeline emphasizing local growth.

Strengths and Limitations of S-STEP for the Current Study

The methodological approach to research can influence the utility of the findings. Therefore, the utility of using self-study to understand how to get more Black men into ECE consists of both strengths and limitations. Strengths of using self-study in this work include providing an avenue of scholarly articulation of actions, interactions, and thoughts that are anecdotal and potentially ambiguous. They collectively are the foundation of understanding this phenomenon. Strengths include feedback from the rejection of an institutional grant, as well as the success of a smaller grant. Research from this smaller grant has yielded results leading to a submission for publication being accepted with revisions. Tensions exist because my research has led to guidance on my next steps, but I have not been able to act on it. Do I go out to do recruiting or do I set up another research study that explores impacts of recruiting? There are multiple paths, and I am not sure which is the most productive direction to take. However, one achievement that occurred was being invited into a school district as a member of a group working to attract more teachers of color to the district.

The limitations include various interpretations of actions, interactions, and thoughts that might be seen as less than scholarly. The connections made and assessments introduced are large and messy and not always connectable. Although that is the strength of self-study, it acknowledges interactions and relationships within the teaching and teacher education community. While self-study has allowed me to connect multiple avenues of understanding, I have not found a way to use it to get any Black males into ECE. I understand the challenges better, but until I reach my goal of getting Black males into the ECE program, my process remains a moving target. Also, from a scholarly perspective, peer-reviewed publication of this research will make it public and validate its contribution to the field.

Conclusion

S-STEP is becoming an ever more important part of my scholarly identity. It allows me to improve my practice and to explore research that is often difficult to situate in other traditions yet nonetheless vital to my identity as a teacher educator. There remains uncertainty in using self-study as a methodology, particularly as the structure of my larger research project, in establishing metrics of what I am doing, and in having ways to evaluate those metrics. But that is the redeeming and influential power of S-STEP methodology; it provides an outlet for understanding the messiness of complex problems that are pedagogical, institutional, social, and cultural.

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My Journey as a Teacher Educator

Carla K. Meyer

Introduction

As an academic, I identify myself as a literacy educator whose charge is to study the literacy skills students need and how to best prepare students to face the literacy challenges they will encounter as a contributing member of a democratic society. Whether working directly with K–12 (most commonly 6–12) students, or in-service teachers, I am most comfortable when I am conducting intervention studies. Simply put, I am interested in developing and implementing literacy instruction that improves student learning or refining literacy instruction for K–12 students. However, I must admit when I first heard about the possibility of a S-STEP study group, I was intrigued and motivated to join the conversation. S-STEP piqued my curiosity because of the possibility of focusing on my instruction. But as I sit here today, I cannot count the number of times I have sat down to write this chapter. Each time I find myself feeling unsure, uncomfortable, and at times completely at a loss. Although I have participated in our self-study group for nearly 3 years, at times, I still feel like an interloper. Nonetheless, I persist in my exploration, my learning, and my implementation of S-STEP because, despite my uncertainty, I find S-STEP an important framework to delve into my role as teacher educator in the complex world of literacy and learning. In the remainder of the chapter, I explore My Journey as a Teacher Educator, My Fluid Conceptualization of S-STEP, A Current Study Using S-STEP, and Strengths and Limitations of S-STEP for the Current Study and Beyond.

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My Journey as a Teacher Educator

My journey as a teacher educator began at the same starting point as many others in our field, as a K–12 teacher. I graduated from a large university with a degree in elementary education with a K–8 certification. I accepted a job as a middle school English language arts teacher. During my first year, I often found myself frustrated. As a preservice teacher, I learned to reflect upon my instruction and make changes to address my students' needs, but nothing I changed seemed to increase engagement or achievement for my students. I realized I still had a lot of learning and growing to do as an educator. As a result, the next phase of my journey began with my pursuit of a master's degree in reading education where I found my passion. I quickly transitioned into the role of reading specialist and soon after found a grant position as a literacy coach. In this role, I had the opportunity to design and implement professional development for and provide onsite master's level classes to Baltimore City middle school teachers. While not working in a formal teacher education setting, this position served as the catalyst for me to pursue my doctorate degree.

I pursued my Ph.D. in Literacy Development and Learning Problems from a traditional program at a large state university. While I had courses that explored qualitative research and the philosophy of education, the program emphasized literacy courses which were framed mainly using cognitive theories. I completed five research methods courses, four of which were quantitative. In my qualitative class, we focused on Maxwell (2005), and in my philosophy course, we studied works by Gilligan (1993), Friere (2000), Foucault (1995), and Flyvbjerg (2001), which all influenced how I viewed the world but not how I researched. I believe the disconnect between my world view and my research occurred because at the time, I typically focused on the cognitive aspects of literacy. In other words, what are the cognitive processes that occur when children read and write? And how do I design instruction to support children for whom literacy does not easily come? In my quantitative courses, I studied typical statistical tests such as correlation, regression, ANOVAs, ANCOVAs, etc., and learned how to use SPSS (Field 2009) to analyze data. Furthering my development, I moved into more complex statistical studies which involved multivariate tests, factor analysis, and item theory. My mentor professors, including my dissertation advisor, were quantitative researchers who focused on literacy instruction and learning of K–12 students. The times I encountered qualitative research, it was typically in the form of mixed methods. Moreover, I was taught to see myself as a literacy educator; my focus was on the K–12 learner not the preservice teachers. At times, my research focused on professional development, but, even at these times, the focus was on improving literacy instruction, not the teachers or my role.

After I earned my Ph.D., I accepted a job at a state university in the south whose faculty's theoretical frames and research methods mostly mirrored my own. I become part of a large productive program faculty who supported my research and invited me to research with them. I spent several years at the institution during

which time I obtained several research grants related to disciplinary literacy and professional development and contributed to a large study in which our research team investigated the reading profiles of at-risk students as determined by the state assessment. However, during this time, I also looped back to my days as K–12 educator. As a K–12 teacher, after each lesson, I would always reflect on the success of my instruction. Sometimes I would just write down a few notes to refine the lesson; while at other times, I would spend hours noting the lessons strengths and weaknesses with the intentions or rewriting the lesson for later use. One of my institute's stated goals was to "help preservice teachers become reflective practitioners." As I guided my students to reflect upon their instruction, I began to do the same. At this point in my career, revisiting this old habit seemed natural. I would note items and texts that I did not feel worked. I reflected upon the differences between my students and myself and how the differences may have affected my instruction. I used these notes to make changes and hopefully improve my instruction. It became a regular part of my instructional process as a teacher educator.

A few years ago, I found myself at a crossroads and decided for many reasons, both personal and professional, to move to Duquesne University. While I continued to engage in research which investigated literacy processes and interventions, I was no longer part of a large program with similar theoretical frames and research interests. Coming from a state school with a large faculty, I often felt isolated during my first year at Duquesne. Additionally, for the first time in my career, I did not have colleagues interested in the same research line as mine. Coupled with my angst about tenure, my department chair encouraged me to align my research and instruction and encouraged me to join the fledgling S-STEP study group.

My Fluid Conceptualization of S-STEP

With the prompting of my department chair, I joined our S-STEP group at the onset. During the initial meetings, our S-STEP group spent a great deal of time wrestling with our conceptualization of S-STEP as a research methodology. While the definition seems straightforward – the careful study of one's teaching practices in order to become more cognizant of your role as an educator (Samaras 2002) – for someone who has been trained to research in terms of K–12 student literacy outcomes, the focus on self is quite hard and often elusive. My research gaze had always been outward and to turn it inward felt foreign.

As we continued to meet, my comfort with and conceptualization of S-STEP would ebb and flow. Loughran's (2007) work especially spoke to me when he addressed many of the tensions and concerns I had about S-STEP. Specifically, he attended to my biggest questions: what value does studying my teaching practices provide for others in the field? And, are researchers in my field going to value S-STEP? In his article, he clarifies:

> When the researcher and practitioner are one in the same, careful scrutiny of what is being done, how and why, becomes all the more important if the outcomes are going to genuinely affect understandings of the practice beyond the individual self. (p. 12)

This helped me understand S-STEP would require me to meticulously plan and implement my research. Additional discussions and suggested readings (i.e., Hamilton and Pinnegar 1998) helped me to also understand that S-STEP in fact requires collaboration. The role of the critical friend was completely foreign to me yet helped me recognize the rigor of S-STEP. As my understanding of S-STEP grew, I recognized its potential to help me understand the challenges I faced implementing an assignment in the young adult literature course I teach.

A Current Study Using S-STEP

The S-STEP study I developed investigated the implementation of an immigration unit included in a young adult literature course. Research suggests teacher educators should consider curricular activities which will support our students' growth (DeMulder et al. 2014; Graff 2010; Gregor and Green 2011; Heinke 2014). Based specifically on the work of Gregor and Green (2011), this unit was designed to strengthen students' perceptions of and empathy for immigrant populations, with a specific focus on children. It consists of four book clubs in which the students read immigration stories from four regions of the world: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Central America. In addition to the book clubs, students are asked to write an immigration story of their own. Prior to my tenure at Duquesne, I taught the unit several times in a master's level advanced children's literature course. The unit was always well received by the students. Frequently in class discussion, students would share how the unit changed their perspectives.

On rare occasions, students even joined advocacy groups which supported immigrants or children of immigrants. With the success of the unit at my previous institute, I was taken aback by the resistance with which the unit was met at Duquesne. However, upon initial reflection, I identified several possible reasons for the difference of attitude toward the unit. First, the unit was originally taught to in-service teachers who were master-level students. At Duquesne, the young adult literature course was mixed-level with students who were either undergraduate or graduate students pursuing their initial certification. Moreover, the two institutions differed significantly in that one was a state school and one was a private catholic institution as well as the fact the universities reside in differing regions of the United States. As I mulled over these differences, the more I realized I needed to seriously and systematically study my instruction and this unit if I wanted the unit to have the same impact at Duquesne. As such, I designed the S-STEP study to investigate how my approach to implementing unit could lessen the resistance from the students.

Data collection for the study includes multiple data points. First, I kept a reflective blog. After every class session in which the unit was addressed, I would reflect upon the day's activities, my approach to instruction, and the reactions of my students. My research assistant who was familiar with the project acting as my critical friend would respond to the reflective blog. Additionally, he and I would meet on a weekly basis to debrief. In an effort to triangulate my data, an 18-question, forced-choice, online

anonymous student survey was created. The last question solicited students for focus group. The semi-structured focus group was conducted by my research assistant and critical friend. Finally, the student artifacts from the class were collected over three consecutive semesters. We are currently analyzing the final semester's data.

Strengths and Limitations of S-STEP for the Current Study and Beyond

After several years, I have come to appreciate the strengths of S-STEP. In relation to the current study, S-STEP provides an avenue for me to investigate how my instructional practices can hamper and/or strengthen the intent of the instructional unit. Throughout the study, I have used what I learned to refine the immigration unit in several ways. First, I included an introduction that walks the students through the challenges immigrants face due to the complexity of immigration laws. I also included a quiz based on the citizenship test an immigrant must pass prior to becoming naturalized citizens of the United States. These activities help challenge the myths many have heard through the media. Students have noted in the focus group, they did not realize how complex and expensive it is to legally immigrate to the United States. I revised the blog component of the book study to be less structured and allow the students to reflect upon the initial gut reactions to the stories in the book club. The students directed each other and asked difficult questions. Overall, the students responded better to this format.

The current S-STEP study also strengthened my scholarship as well. As a researcher who typically uses qualitative approaches for mixed methods research, this study helped me deepen my reflections and made me learn to consistently write my reflections. In a sense, I have learned the importance of "I" in the research. Overall, S-STEP has helped me broaden my conceptualization and appreciation for various types of research. No longer do I skim through my research journals to note intervention studies for deeper reading. I now search out methods that differ from my own, so that I can continue to learn and grow as a researcher. I also think S-STEP has a place in literacy research. Those of us who teach literacy must not only focus on how children learn appropriate twenty-first-century literacy skills but how we teach our educators to teach these skills in the K–12 setting.

My foray into S-STEP has not come without challenges and limitations. In some ways, it is not the limitations of method but rather my own struggles focusing inward. At times, my study focused too much on whether the immigration unit "effectively" changed my students' perceptions. In so many words, I have difficulty distinguishing between Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) and S-STEP. In my mind, I would return to "but what does this mean for the students?" The tensions between my background and S-STEP created internal discord; I had great difficulty adjusting to the concept that the research subject was me. The term "navel gazing" frequently entered my mind. I just could not fathom how this study could "add to the

literature" of literacy research. Without the support of the S-STEP study group, I believe my confusion and insecurities would have been prohibitive. I would have abandoned the project for safer research pastures. Luckily, within the S-STEP group, I had colleagues who shared my struggles, a mentor who provides support – a community in which I could struggle and stumble but still regain my footing.

While I believe that literacy research would benefit from the inclusion of S-STEP, it is not a methodology typically found within my field. A keyword search (self-study and S-STEP) in the last three conference programs for the Literacy Research Association yielded no results. Moreover, conversations with colleagues from the literacy field in which I mention S-STEP elicit either blank stares or heavy skepticism. While not all quantitative researchers, literacy researchers tend to focus on the other. Research subjects tend to be youth (in and out of school), teachers, communities, policy, children's and young adult literature, etc. We might discuss our biases and roles as participant researchers, but we are not the subject of the research. As such, I have found only a few who are even aware of the methodology and even fewer who show an interest in it. As I move forward with S-STEP, I anticipate my struggles will continue simply because I do not feel entirely at home in the S-STEP world nor do I feel my research world is ready for S-STEP. However, with the support of my colleagues in our S-STEP group, I hope to continue to incorporate S-STEP into my research agenda and maybe someday, I will feel home within the S-STEP community and S-STEP will find a home in the world of literacy research.

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Begin with Yourself: Using Self-Study Methodology in the Process of Cultivating Mindfulness

Sandra Quiñones

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret how I used self-study methodology to examine my journey with mindfulness practices. What prompted my interest in mindfulness was a deep desire to pay attention to how I respond to stress and emotions, particularly in my role as a tenure-track teacher educator at a research intensive institution. More specifically, I was looking for alternative ways to alleviate chronic migraines and digestive pains that were challenging my ability to "effectively" juggle research, teaching, and service.

To learn more about mindfulness in education, I enrolled in a professional development course for teachers called Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE for Teachers, see www.care4teachers.com). This mindfulness training for teachers was offered in the Spring of 2016 (March–April). According to the publicity flyers for the program, "**CARE** helps teachers handle stress and rediscover the joys of teaching, without introducing new curriculum. CARE begins with you by fostering understanding, recognition, and regulation of emotion so you can bring greater awareness into your classroom." The CARE program sounded incredibly timely and relevant.

Coincidentally, at that same time, I started attending the DILE S-STEP group meetings led by Dr. Jason Ritter. I joined this group because I wanted to learn more about self-study methodology in a collegial context supported by the chair of our department (see Margolis 2018). At the beginning of our February meeting, I was commenting on how I had just registered for the CARE mindfulness training. Then, one of the S-STEP group members said, "Sandra, why don't you do a self-study

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about your participation in that mindfulness course you are taking?" And just like that, my self-study research project was born.

Background and Development as Teacher Educator and Researcher

As part of the data collection process over a 9-month period (Spring 2016–Fall 2016), I kept a researcher journal where I reflected on my participation in the CARE course. The researcher journal, which served as the primary data source, was also a place where I recorded general thoughts, questions, or autobiographical writing as sources of data. I also collected a variety of print and digital artifacts. For example, data sources include the CARE program manual, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, research articles, and resources distributed to participants of the CARE for Teachers program.

After the CARE course ended, I continued to collect artifacts about mindfulness that I came across either in the university context or larger community context. For instance, at the Spring 2016 Department Retreat held on May 4, a Duquesne University colleague from the School of Pharmacy shared her journey with mindfulness and led the faculty through several mindfulness practices. Additionally, our department chair gave all faculty members a copy of Deborah Schoeberlein David's (2009) book titled "*Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness: A Guide for Anyone Who Teaches Anything*." As another example, while paying for food at a local co-op, I picked up a magazine with the question "*Does Mindfulness Belong in Public Schools*?" on the front cover. I found the carefully articulated responses by Gunther Brown (2016) and Santorelli (2016) regarding this debate truly insightful and engaging (researcher journal, May 1, 2016).

In one of my early research journal entries (March 15, 2016), I realized that the invitation to discover mindfulness in education first happened during my doctoral studies at the University of Rochester's Graduate School of Education in New York. There was a school-wide "brown bag" lunch about the topic of mindfulness. I had a recollection of the faculty member in the counseling and human development department who shared his journey with mindfulness as way of managing chronic back pain and improving his own sense of well-being. Years later, this resonated with my own journey into mindfulness as a means of responding to health concerns and increasing my sense of well-being.

I began infusing the topic of mindfulness in teacher education as a graduate assistant for the Urban Teaching and Leadership (UTL) Program. For instance, the book titled *The Mindful Teacher* (MacDonald and Shirley 2009) became one of the required readings for our cohort that year. Yet, at that point in my career, one could say I was merely "dabbling with mindfulness." As expected, most of my time was focused on developing research skills as I participated in an ethnographic study of Latinos and African Americans within an urban community change initiative

(Quiñones et al. 2011; Hopper and Quiñones, 2012) and a mixed methods study about the experiences of Latino students and families in an urban school district (Quiñones and Kiyama 2014; Quiñones 2015c). I was also developing my qualitative dissertation research focused on the experiences and perspectives of bilingual-bicultural Puerto Rican teachers around notions of being a well-educated person (Quiñones 2012, 2014, 2015a, b, 2016). My multiple and interrelated research interests were informed by my experience as an elementary school teacher in New York and Puerto Rico. As a bilingual-bicultural scholar, I was invested in research about Latino education in the United States context (Martínez-Roldán and Quiñones 2016; Nieto et al. 2012). Thus, mindfulness in education was a periphery topic during graduate school.

As a graduate student, I did not use self-study methodology or S-STEP. However, most of my professors in graduate school were qualitative researchers who had a passion for critical and/or reflective qualitative methods such as ethnography, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and critical discourse analysis. I also used autoethnography as a methodology in an advanced seminar course with sociologist Dr. Signithia Fordham (see Fordham 2004). I get a sense that my own background and preparation as an educational researcher had facilitated a welcoming comfort level with self-study. For instance, I was already keen on the centrality of researcher positioning and self-reflection as part of qualitative methodologies such as self-study and autoethnography. Therefore, inviting self-study as a research methodology seemed like a natural part of my own trajectory of being – and continuously becoming – a teacher educator (Strom 2016).

Evolution in My Understanding of the Nature and Purpose of S-STEP

Before entering the self-study group, I knew that the department colleague leading the group, Dr. Jason Ritter, was a social studies teacher educator who used self-study methodology. I also knew he had established a solid and ongoing publication trajectory. Additionally, he was granted tenure and seemed well-connected in collaborative S-STEP networks. All of these factors informed my decision to join the S-STEP group at Duquesne University.

The self-study group provided a faculty development opportunity where "authentic conversations" (Kitchen et al. 2008) over a structured and sustained period of time contributed to our individual and collective understanding of self-study methodology in teacher education (Gallagher et al. 2011). Given my passion for research and learning, this group recovered that "time to read and explore because I love to learn" aspect of graduate school that was hard to recreate as a tenure-track faculty member. I particularly enjoyed our discussions about "tensions" in the field as discussed by Berry (2008) and Bradenburg and colleagues (2008). Through this self-study group, I gained a better understanding of how S-STEP researchers acknowledge

and respond to tensions in their writing and their practices as teacher educators and researchers. I also benefited from our discussions about the role of critical friends in self-study, particularly with regard to notions of rigor, quality, and validity or trust-worthiness in S-STEP (Breslin et al. 2008; Feldman 2003). I found this individual and collective practice of reflexivity in research both grounding and inspirational (see Chao 2018).

Results

In a kind of mirror effect, inviting self-study into my work as a teacher educator essentially allowed me to study the evolution in my understanding of the nature and purpose of mindfulness practices in teacher education. In what follows, I briefly describe two instrumental themes from my self-study:

Theme 1 "Seeking Community": Using Self-Study to Understand my Journey With Mindfulness

> "The need for peace, relaxation and well-being is universal. Mindfulness can help us better manage the stresses of life." (Stephanie Romero, Ed.D., Executive Director, *Awaken Pittsburgh*

A salient theme in my self-study was *seeking community*. That is, over the course of a year, I began building relationships with K-12 teachers and higher education faculty who were interested in mindfulness practices and mindful education. For instance, I established a collegial relationship with Dr. Stephanie Romero, who also participated in the CARE for Teachers program offered in the Spring 2016. She also led monthly meetings with educators interested in discovering ways to bring mindfulness to his or her professional life. Moreover, during data collection for my self-study, Stephanie was a doctoral candidate at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research was about mindfulness in education (see Romero 2016). Meeting Stephanie was instrumental in my own journey with mindfulness. Her direct experience and scholarly expertise on the subject both challenged and inspired me as a practitioner of mindfulness.

Naturally, part of my own inquiry process included reviewing the rapidly growing scholarly literature about mindfulness in education. For this reason, I was grateful that Dr. Romero's (2016) timely dissertation provided a solid review of the literature. Nonetheless, I realized quickly that doing a self-study "takes time and *is* work – just like other research approaches take time and are laborious" (researcher journal, November, 2016). Thus, the dual experience of being a participant in my own self-study about mindfulness, as well as a participant of a self-study professional development group, has led to a greater appreciation for self-study both as an individual research practice and as a collective form of faculty development.

Theme 2 Begin with Yourself: An Inward Turn Toward Direct Experience with Mindfulness

> We can engage our jobs sanely and openly without giving up on success or disregarding our feelings or ambitions. What is required is surprisingly ordinary: simply to be *who we are where we are*, to subtly shift from *getting somewhere fast* to *being somewhere completely*. By taking such an approach, we discover not only a larger view of work but also a basic truth about being human: by genuinely being ourselves in the present moment, we naturally become alert, open, and unusually skillful. (Carroll 2006, p. 8).

A second theme in my self-study was *an inward turn toward direct experience*. That is, I needed a direct experience with mindfulness as a teacher educator. The self-study process *began with me* because in order to *teach* mindfully, I need to *be* mindful (Rechtschaffen 2014). To cultivate my own attention and compassion, I engaged in self-care practices that were modeled and practiced in the CARE for Teachers program. For instance, I became aware of, and practiced breathing and practiced body scanning techniques to calm my nervous system and reduce stress. I began to cultivate awareness by bringing my "complete attention to the experiences occurring in the present moment" (Baer et al. 2006, p. 27). I realized how simple that sounds, yet how challenging it was for me to focus on my breathing and practice sitting in meditation for more than 10 min. I practiced how to be aware of my emotions and how I respond to work-related stress. This was helpful for better regulating my emotions and managing stress at work. I practiced mindful listening and mindful waking techniques with my peers in the CARE program. This allowed me to notice how inattentive and distracted I can be. I learned that it is difficult for me to "fully listen" to others because I tend to think of what I am going to say next or otherwise cut off others when participating in a conversation. How can I complain about a student's poor listening skills or a student's distracted nature if I engage in these behaviors and actions myself as a teacher educator? For these reasons, having a direct experience with a variety of mindfulness-based techniques was an important part of the journey. Simply stated, I needed to have my own mindfulness practice before sharing it with my students.

Paying attention to my experiences was an integral part of the self-study process. In the Fall of 2016, I started using mindfulness-based techniques in the university classroom, such as starting class with a chime and taking three deep breaths. I even diffused lavender and peppermint essential oils as a complimentary aromatherapy component to the classroom learning experience. These intentional mindfulness-based practices brought a new element to my literacy education courses. Consequently, student evaluation comments described me as a "mindful" and instructor with a "welcoming" and "calming" classroom atmosphere. Prior to my journey with mindfulness, student comments described me as "frazzled" and "scatterbrained." Thus, going from frazzled and scatterbrained to "mindful" was a notable change in student perceptions of me as a teacher educator.

In addition to student perceptions, I also noticed perception changes with colleagues. For instance, my department chair stated that he saw a qualitative difference in me as I entered my fourth year. In his words, "This mindfulness thing is working for you! You seem more calm" (researcher journal, September 2016). Indeed, the intentional practice of cultivating awareness and well-being was bearing fruit that was "visible" to my students and coworkers. Naturally, I viewed such

anecdotal comments from my students and colleagues as evidence in the self-study research process.

Further Reflections and Recommendations

As a teacher educator building my professional identity in the context of a tenure-track position, self-study methodology not only linked research and practice, it also allowed me to better understand how to think and act with intentionality (see Margolis 2018). I found that mindfulness practices were helpful for achieving some clarity and balance amidst work-related stressors (Carrol 2006). I also found that mindfulness practices improved my health and sense of well-being. Given that "professors' well-being is inextricably linked with student learning" (Berg and Seeber 2016, p 6), I view self-study about mindfulness as a "double caring" process. That is, I am caring for myself as a teacher educator, and I am caring for my students as future teachers of children. This idea reminds me of Thich Nhat Hanh's question in a letter to a young teacher. He says, "We cannot go on with things as they are now. If teachers are unhappy, if they do not have harmony and peace with each other, how will they help young people to suffer less and succeed in their work?" (Letter to a Young Teacher, 2014, reprinted in Nhat Hanh and Weaver 2017).

Mindfulness practices can serve as an antidote to increasing stress in teacher education (and the academy). Developing a greater awareness of the present moment – and how we respond to it – is a skill that is useful in our personal and professional lives. In closing this chapter, I can say that using self-study to investigate my own journey with mindfulness was instrumental for regaining a sense of well-being and cultivating a deeper awareness of myself as a teacher-scholar. To me, that greatly matters and makes a lot of sense. Therefore, I recommend that you begin with yourself and use self-study in the process of exploring your journey in teacher education.

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Being Othered and Finding My Voice: Using Self-Study to Better Understand My Experiences as an Early Childhood Teacher Educator

Julia Ann Williams

My Worldview Perspective

My journey as a teacher educator was an unusual one. Very early in my life, I knew that I was called to be a teacher. Becoming a teacher was a burning desire that permeated every area of my life. As a young child during every play opportunity, I was the teacher, and all of my friends were the students. Without question when entering into college, I knew that my field of study would be education. Education in my family was the key to countless possibilities. It was considered precious, and the opportunity to get an education came with the responsibility to advocate for others.

During my college years, as a student I recognized that not all educational opportunities for young children were equal. I was determined to excel in school and make a difference in the lives of young children. I was able to accomplish my goal, and as a result I was contacted by a school to obtain my first teaching assignment working with preschool/kindergarten children. This opportunity led to my promotion as administrator for the school. Under my leadership our school became well known within the city, and we served as an exemplar to many programs seeking to enhance early childhood programs. I loved working with families and providing quality experiences for young children. I felt I was making a difference one student at a time. However, as time went on, I was finding that this was not enough of an impact on children. I needed to make a change. The notion that preparing those who ultimately teach young children would be a greater impact began to tug at my heart.

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An Open Door

After 17 years of administration and teaching, I was contacted by my undergraduate catholic private college to consider joining their faculty as the director of their early childhood program. They had heard about my work, and I was recommended by a faculty member who was leaving the college and moving out of the city. The president of the college who remembered me from when I was enrolled said: "Julia what do you think about teaching in higher education? I believe you can do it and help develop our program." With hesitancy I said yes, and the new chapter in my life began. The department had a mighty number of 10 faculties. But they were very welcoming and were open to new ideas and appreciated my experience and expertise in early education. The student body, although not very ethnically diverse, was very open to my style of teaching and focus on creating a community of learners. During my tenure I easily connected with the students, and they valued my wealth of experience in creating a developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum. I was an administrator and faculty member at this institution for 15 years.

During that same period of time, I harbored a desire to pursue earning a doctorate in education. It had been a personal goal of mine. Although the current institution was considered more of a teaching college rather than a research college, I wanted to deepen my knowledge in early childhood as well as improve as a teacher educator. I researched several doctoral programs and selected one that met my need to remain working and caring for my preteen children.

Carpe' Diem: Seize the Day

While in the doctoral program, I was encouraged to apply for the director of early childhood within the school of education. The private catholic university had a similar mission focus as my previous college. At first I declined; however, after 2 years the position became open again, and I was again strongly encouraged to apply. I was very hesitant. I loved my current position. I was earning the highest teaching evaluations from the student body, I was working on several grant initiatives, and I had become a professional development facilitator for several child care programs. I was very comfortable in my little fish bowl.

Still, over the years I had often encouraged my students to never stop advancing in knowledge that will have a positive impact on children. The motto at our college was Carpe' Diem, which caused me to wonder how I could continue to encourage my students when I was not open to doing the same. So, I applied and was selected. I talked with the president of the college and the chair of my department. I shared with them my reason for departing was to be closer to my dissertation committee, so I could more seamlessly complete my dissertation. The president wanted me to remain with the college and offered an increase in salary. I declined because the move to this new institution was more about personal growth than financial gain.

You Are Not in Kansas Anymore

When I reflect on the first year at the university where I am currently a teacher educator, it brings a smile to my face. I think about the movie *The Wizard of Oz* and the scene where the movie changes from black and white to color. I remember sitting at the first full faculty meeting of the year and thinking, "*Oh my goodness what have you done*!." I was no longer in my comfortable fish bowl of 10 faculties but now facing over 50 faculties from all over the country and some international. Most of the faculties were tenure-track or in advanced tenured positions. I did enter the school of education with a few other nontenure track faculty, but I was the only African-American in my department. And there were only three African-Americans in the entire school of education. However, I was excited and ready to meet the challenge. I was confident in my teacher educator abilities based on my accomplishments at the previous college, and I was excited to work with my new students. The first few years at the university were invigorating. I was engaged in a research project, had a sizeable 5 year grant, and was having a positive experience with some my students.

At the same time as I was beginning my work at this institution, the university undertook a major shift in focus. As part of strategic planning to increase ranking, the administration decided to become more of a research focused university as well as to attract more students from prestigious high schools with a moderate to high G.P.A. Due to this shift in focus, our school attracted more diverse international research faculty which made our school the most diverse faculty on campus. In addition, our student body came from more affluent non-people of color families. As a result we had more white affluent students than ever before. This change in the student body significantly changed the dynamic between myself and the students. I became very discouraged with the challenge of connecting with my students and how they can feel connected to me and the content I was teaching. As an African-American female nontenure track assistant professor, I am finding it more and more challenging to connect/relate to my students who enter into the early childhood program from backgrounds that have limited exposure to diversity. I find that in many instances, I am the first African-American teacher they have experienced and certainly the first one as an administrator.

The 2012 academic year was the most frustrating year for me as a teacher educator. I was teaching a team taught course where my colleague and I created the syllabus, course assignments, and rubrics together. We felt confident that we had created an engaging course, and we were excited about the opportunity to share our expertise in class and for our students to receive the benefit of listening to different perspectives which we felt would be a dynamic experience. However, during the course I was beginning to feel resistance from some of the students. Many times students challenged my decisions and challenged my knowledge during class (see Ladson-Billings 1996; McGowan 2000; Stanley 2006).

At the end of the semester when the teacher evaluations were disseminated, I was disheartened by the ratings and comments with regard to the syllabus and content of the course. My evaluation comments included that the syllabus was not clearly

written and that the assignments were unclear and considered busy work. The questions on the teacher evaluation that related to my engagement with the class included comments in which I was described as rude, not receptive, and disruptive to the other instructor; all when I had felt I was simply sharing my opinion. That was particularly interesting to me since both of us shared our insights during each class, and we had not noticed the same things.

By way of contrast, my colleague received raving reviews. Although the syllabus was jointly created by her and I, and much of our teaching was communal, the comments she received stood in stark contrast to my own. For my colleague, students described the syllabus as well written, the assignments as very engaging, and her expectations as clear. They also felt that my colleague was very knowledgeable about the content even though I had already earned my doctorate and had more teaching experience in the content. As a result of all of this, I questioned how it was possible for the same syllabus to receive two different ratings.

The next academic year was slightly better but not at the level of quality ratings I had received at my former institution. I started questioning my ability to teach and connect with my students. I decided to utilize the professional development resources that we have at our institution to reflect and improve on my teaching practices. However, the methods that were recommended seemed to me very mechanical and really did not get at the heart of reflective practices. In addition, I was very interested in the teacher/scholar model. Although as a nontenure track faculty member, research is not a firm requirement; I was very interested in engaging in research that serves to advance my teaching.

Help Is on the Way: A Light at the End of the Tunnel

In 2014 I received an email announcement indicating that a group would be formed to learn about and possibly participate in S-STEP research. I quickly responded to the message that I would like to participate. I truly wanted an opportunity to reflect on my own teaching practices and to work with other colleagues using this model. I was looking forward to discussing my challenges and listening to the challenges of others as well as framing how to address our individual concerns. In my mind, this would be an opportunity to work closely with other colleagues who have common interests and journeying together to meet our goals for improving our teaching practices.

The first year and a half felt to me like identity formation. We came to the meetings sharing what particular struggles we were facing in our teaching practices and how the S-STEP process could help us with our concerns. Our faculty facilitator, Dr. Jason Ritter, did an excellent job in facilitating each session. He was careful not to provide definitive answers. He listened and provided resources that could serve as a guide for our individual work. As a group we agreed to write reflections about each session to get a pulse of how we were developing as individuals as well as a group. Dr. Ritter tried to keep us involved on this level, but consistently sharing our thoughts

on a discussion board was more of a challenge for the group. However, during our face-to-face sessions, we had the opportunity to share our progress and struggles.

A breakthrough for me was in the Spring of 2015 when our department invited Dr. Mary Lynn Hamilton to come to our campus and provide a workshop on "Self-Study and Teacher Education." The exercises from the workshop helped me frame questions around what I would like to address about my teaching. The questions I had were: (1) How do I address the tension between preparing leading teachers and supporting past experiences? (2) How do I walk with the learners when they see me as "the other/different"? (3) How do I keep my own uniqueness while desiring to be accepted/appreciated by the students? (4) How do I help my students appreciate learning from the lens of the African-American female experience when they only seem to embrace white female and white male perspectives? As a result of the workshop, the S-STEP group seemed more energized and felt like we had direction and momentum. Within the first year and a half, I felt like I was heard, validated, and encouraged. I was even more determined to deeply reflect and improve on my teaching practices. I was fortunate to have a graduate assistant assigned to me and we selected one course in the fall and spring semesters to focus on for a study. I intended to share my plans with the group for suggestions when the new semester began, but my plans did not work out as expected due to changes in our group.

Being the "Other": Again?

There was a shift in the dynamics of the group when more tenure track faculty became interested and joined the group. The shift in dynamics had unexpected consequences for me. As I mentioned earlier, the initial members of the group shared their struggles and encouraged one another. Dr. Ritter continued to guide and encourage us to reflect on the process. I felt we were on a journey focused on the process of "becoming" but not on any particular end product. But as the new faculty members entered the group, the dynamics changed – not necessarily for the worse but definitely a change from my perspective. The group became much more "product" versus "process" driven. We spent several sessions discussing what will be the result of our collective and individual participation and how it can be connected to the requirements of the tenure process. We also discussed our goals including timelines to produce a presentation or paper. Our sessions became more focused on how to code interviews and identify themes. Several members had varying experiences on how to effectively code data. Although this was very useful, especially since we can apply this process in our own S-STEP work, I felt the "voices" of getting to the "product" overshadowed the illumination that can be had by the "process." For me process means to embark on a journey, not knowing where the twists and turns may occur, but reflecting and learning throughout until you get to an end "product." This stands in contrast to focusing on the "product" and finding the most efficient method to get there. "Products" are important, but real lessons are learned, and

enlightenment happens through the "process." Those moments when what you are experiencing clicks and you have an "aha" moment may resonate with others.

At some point early in that second year it occurred to me! The unexpected! I found myself again as the "other" in that I was the only nontenure track member of the group; a group that suddenly seemed to embrace norms and have priorities that were at times at odds with my own participation. During our sessions there were unspoken assumptions and behaviors that were manifested in the group. When my teaching schedule allowed me to attend the meetings, I would often find my colleagues engaged in discussions about coding, ethnography, and other such research jargon. When I gave suggestions and/or opinions about these topics, I felt like my comments were mostly ignored. During one meeting we discussed the fact that self-study research lends itself more easily to those who have experience in qualitative research methods. One faculty member counted the members present that they felt had experience in qualitative versus quantitative research and said a number. Our faculty facilitator Jason Ritter mentioned that I also had experience in such research methods, and the faculty member raised an eyebrow. Although there had been times in the later stages of the group that I didn't feel as an equal member, on this occasion I felt particularly devalued and othered. This experience reminded me of the following scripture from the Bible: "But now indeed there are many members, yet one body and the eye can not say to the hand I have no need of you… those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary" (I Corinthians 13:19–22). Although tenured and nontenured members of the S-STEP group all have our own unique set of skills that can enhance the work of the collective group, everyone has something valuable to contribute.

Finding My Voice

In the article, *Constructing the Meaning of Teacher Educator: The Struggle to Learn the Roles,* Guilfoyle (1995) states how "voice provides the power to critically examine a situation and confront it, rather than be dominated by it" (p. 39). I had to find the courage to voice what I have been experiencing within the group as well as in the classroom. I no longer could continue to choose to be the observer in this situation but had to confront it through writing about the experience.

So I am sure you are wondering why I am still in the group? Well I have found the overall experience thus far very freeing and for the most part energizing. Since I have been able to talk about my struggles I have been having with my students, I have found myself more open in class. I talk with my class about building a community. I feel less frustrated and I am certainly more reflective. I believe this is mostly due to being a participant in the S-STEP group. Being a member of the S-STEP group has opened opportunities to seek out collaborations with other faculty in the early childhood community and address the different perspectives we are challenged with in teaching our students. Even writing this has been a challenging but freeing experience for me. When we were first asked to write about our

experiences with the S-STEP group, I was excited, but my excitement quickly was overshadowed by fear of inadequacy. I can remember reading over and over again the suggestion Jason provided to guide our writing. I remember how frozen I was at the computer to even write a sentence. So much was on my mind to share, but the emotion of expressing it was difficult as I put it in writing. I was gripped with the fear of not being able to write in the same quality as my colleagues. I also was concerned about their response to my feeling of "the other" within the group.

The S-STEP group has illuminated my perspective as an educator, a facilitator of learning, particularly as an African-American woman nontenure track assistant professor. Self-study as a methodology in teacher education has provided me with insights about how to walk along side of my research track colleagues. The first step in this process with my colleagues is to shine the light and address our unique differences. I am looking forward to our continued unpacking of the individual and collective meaning of this process, and I believe we will truly become a community of researchers that will be able to transform our teacher candidates as well as inform the teacher education community.

One key factor for those who may be considering entering the S-STEP research process is that the right facilitator, such as the one we have, be in place. A facilitator who has experience in the S-STEP process can help the group develop an individual and collective identity and set of practices. They will be able to guide, refocus, and energize the group. Dr. Jason Ritter, as our facilitator, with his nonverbal accepting behaviors such as nodding his head in affirmation during discussions, making sure to remain silent and waiting for responses even when the silence seems to be a long period of time, and his outward offering of support has helped make this an inclusive experience for me.

Although this journey continues to have many unexpected experiences, I must say it has been worth it, and the overall reflective experience I am sure will ultimately make a positive impact on me as a teacher educator as well as my students. I encourage others to embark on this meaningful journey.

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Insight Gleaned from Our Participation in a Faculty Self-Study Learning Group

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Introduction

The first chapter in this section, written by the department chair who oversaw the formation of the Department of Instruction and Leadership in Education (DILE) self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) group, explored some of the challenges and opportunities in creating a place for self-study research within a school of education in the United States that, like so many others, desires to offer quality courses taught by faculty who are experts in their field and productive as educational researchers. The second chapter in this section reported on the experiences of the facilitator of the self-study group as he tried to plan and execute learning opportunities for his colleagues to help them better understand and use S-STEP methodology to advance their teaching, research, or both. The chapters immediately thereafter consisted of individual accounts from each member of the group addressing issues related to their learning of self-study and its application to their work. For this final chapter, we present the findings of a collaborative self-study focused on our experiences in the group and our collective learning of self-study research. Specifically we explore issues related to who we are as teacher educators that made us interested in self-study, what we wanted to get from our participation in the group, our collective understandings of self-study methodology, and our perceptions of the usefulness of the group in relation to facilitating such understandings of self-study.

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As was discussed in earlier chapters of this section, the first 2 years of the group were met with mixed results when it came to individuals actually initiating and maintaining self-studies of their practice. The expectation was that everyone would engage in a self-study investigation, yet there seemed to be a holding pattern for implementation. Although the facilitator of the group, Jason Ritter, felt like he encouraged group members to study their own practices from the beginning, some of us were—and some continue to be—more reticent about actually conducting self-study. This haste may be attributed to our discomfort with our positionality as methodologists as well as our vulnerability as junior faculty members. Regardless, something fortuitous happened at the end of our second year together when Jason Margolis, the department chair, emailed Jason Ritter with a question about what the group intended to do with its remaining funds from the budget. After considering a few different options, Margolis suggested investing the money in a Summer Graduate Research Assistantship position to help support and move the work of the self-study group forward. Ritter selected an individual to fill the position and decided to utilize the research assistant to interview all of the DILE S-STEP group members. The idea was that the data that emerged could be analyzed and interpreted for any number of different projects the group was interested in pursuing, one of which included the present inquiry about how the group was collectively evolving as collaborators and practitioners of self-study research. After 2 years of Ritter taking the lead with "teaching" and the rest of the group mainly focused on the "learning" of self-study, the group decided to spend year three engaged in collaborative self-study, using our interview data to explore our perceptions of the theoretical and methodological utility of self-study. This was a most important development for the group because it made it so we were *all* actively *doing* self-study in an environment that had grown to be both critical and supportive.

Methodology

As mentioned above, all group members were interviewed by a research assistant during the Summer of 2016, immediately prior to the commencement of our third year of DILE S-STEP group meetings. The interview guide (see Appendix) was developed by Ritter, who was the facilitator of the group and the individual to whom the research assistant was assigned. He had an interest in discovering what motivated his colleagues to join the group, their experiences participating in the group, as well as their views on the usefulness of self-study to their work. He also thought the process of being interviewed might help the group members to reflect on the answers to these questions for themselves. Ritter did not participate in any of the interviews nor did he read any of the interview transcripts until the group devised a plan for what to do with them. During the first meeting of the third year, a mutually agreed upon plan was hatched to group all of the responses from the interviews together in one master transcript, totaling 78 single spaced pages, and to spend our remaining meetings collaboratively analyzing that data. The group continued to

meet about once every 3 weeks for 2 h meetings during the 2016/2017 academic year. Most of our time was spent in the meetings discussing/doing our analysis.

The analysis process itself evolved over the course of our time together. Since the group is quite diverse and individual members were trained to do research in a variety of ways, we began slowly by simply having discussions on the underpinnings of various methodologies and methods (Moss and Haertel 2016), as well as strategies for data probing (Strauss and Corbin 1998) and coding (Saldaña 2016). From there, Jason Ritter started assigning "homework," usually in the form of ten or so pages of the transcript at a time, for everyone to attempt to code in preparation for each meeting. The collaborative analysis process for the group most resembled inductive content analysis in so far as we were not operating from preexisting theories on how individuals learn self-study methodology. Instead we individually reviewed the transcripts and identified those words or phrases that emerged for each interview question through identifiers of salience such as primacy, frequency, uniqueness, negation, emphasis, errors, omission, isolation, and incompletion (see Alexander 1988). Each group member's individual findings were then shared and discussed in our meetings, where we would dialogue with each other to reach shared understandings around the codes to our interview questions. Our coded responses to the interview questions, verified and enriched by discussion during our meetings, were ultimately consolidated into four categories that are presented in the findings section of this chapter. While we acknowledge our own subjectivities and theories of learning influencing our coding, as with all qualitative research, we also believe the process for collaborative discussion and joint authorship of this manuscript serve to provide a reasonably trustworthy account of our collective experiences learning self-study.

Findings

Although some overlap is inevitable, we attempt to present the findings of our collaborative self-study below according to four categories: (a) who we are as teacher educators engaging with self-study research, (b) what we wanted from our participation in the self-study group, (c) what we now understand about self-study methodology, and (d) on the usefulness of the group in relation to facilitating such understandings.

Who We Are as Teacher Educators Engaging with Self-Study Research

Research exists that documents why individuals choose to become teacher educators (Ducharme 1993) as well as their early experiences becoming socialized to their new roles in higher education (e.g., Dinkelman et al. 2006a, b; Harrison and

McKeon 2010; Murray and Male 2005; Ritter 2009). However, not as much is explicitly known about why certain teacher educators turn to self-study in their work, especially when already accomplished and trained in other research methodologies. The first two sections of these findings respond to this gap in the literature.

The interview data from our self-study group indicated striking similarities in our responses to the question of how our values and/or beliefs factored into our career choices. For example, a personal love of learning and recognition of its potential importance to others factored into all of our decisions to pursue our chosen profession. Rachel explicitly addressed how she loves her subject matter and enjoys putting it to use in figuring out problems, claiming "I love mathematics. I love the beauty of mathematics. I love the intrigue of doing mathematics, and I like the satisfaction of playing around with numbers and coming up with a solution." Sandra also expressly stated: "I love to learn. And I love to support the growth and development of myself and others, but mostly others. So, to me teaching was just a natural profession, and a service profession." The interviews collectively indicated how members of our group desired to pass this love of learning on to their students and help them to recognize why such a stance might be important to their students as future teachers.

Coupled with the idea that teachers should be—and should strive to facilitate pupils who are—lifelong learners, members of our group also uniformly cited the importance of empathy and care in the educational process. For instance, Laura stressed how people often "forget about the cultural aspect, or identity issues that [student] may have when trying to fit in….I think that's what got me into the field I'm in….the empathy and diversity." Julia made it clear how she understands that her students come to her "wholly, holistically. So I need to keep that in mind when teaching them." Similarly, Rachel claimed "something I believe in is helping my teachers to create a caring environment where students feel safe to express their ideas and to critique each other's ideas." These responses suggest that, for members of our group, empathy and care ought to represent the conditions under which learning occurs *and* the ends toward which our learning should be directed.

In addition to these broad values, certain core beliefs appeared across the interviews. These beliefs focused on the importance of providing equal opportunity to students, empowering students through critical thinking and more open ways of being, and focusing on relationships to improve communities and society. In terms of equality of opportunity, Carla made it clear how she has "always been someone who thinks everybody deserves an equal chance, who believes where kids are born or what their circumstances are shouldn't dictate what opportunities they are given." Laura similarly proclaimed her belief "in equality for everybody, and education [as] the big equalizer." While access to opportunity is part of the challenge, it also matters what teachers do with the given students under their charge. In this way, everyone in the group also professed the importance of empowering students through

critical thinking and more open ways of being. For example, Xia described how she thinks "to educate" means to "let [students] think thoroughly and critically." She continued:

> being an educated person is not only how much knowledge you know, it's about how you think. And so I think I just want to make some difference in my students, and let [them] have a broader horizon so they can have more options for their life.

Perhaps as a corollary to our beliefs on the importance of opportunity and empowerment for all, everyone in the S-STEP group believed education should involve forging relationships to strengthen and improve communities. Christopher discussed how he came to recognize that he "really values relationships, so often what I'm doing is challenging [students] to build those relationships." Sandra similarly stated how she values education, "not only in terms of individual improvement, but also the self and others….I value interdependence, community."

The interview data presented in this section serves to portray members of our S-STEP group as teacher educators who recognize and have experienced the power of learning for themselves and who desire to help others experience that same learning and power so that they might be emboldened to work toward improving or strengthening their own relationships and communities. While it is not possible to definitively claim that such values and beliefs caused any one of us to join the DILE S-STEP group, we can acknowledge that each of us saw something about the group and its focus that we believed would help us to more fully embody or live out our values and beliefs in our practices as teacher educators and/or researchers.

What We Wanted from Our Participation in the Self-Study Group

Interest in joining and participating in the DILE S-STEP group seemed to derive from five sources. In no particular order, the interview data revealed how group members were motivated by the notion of finding a space to reflect, focusing on or improving their teaching, becoming better socialized to the norms and practices of the institution, fostering collegiality, and facilitating their own ongoing learning. For some, the need for a space to reflect harkened back to their days in graduate school and what they understood as effective teacher education practice. Rachel noted how during her first semester as a faculty member at Duquesne she realized:

> we were not reflecting on what was happening as the course went on. And that is something that I was used to doing as a teaching assistant. We would meet every month and reflect on what was working, what was not working. Without that, I found myself on a sort of island where I felt the course was not going in the way in which it should go, and we were not talking about what could we change.

For Rachel, regular meetings of the self-study group would help to fill this void. Similarly Carla shared how the group "has really helped me to be reflective with a critical eye."

Closely connected to the desire for a space to reflect was our collective interest in focusing on or improving our teaching. Christopher appreciated the inherent recognition in self-study that "what we're doing teaching-wise is worth studying." Julia claimed her reason for joining the group was because she "wanted to look at my own teaching practices." Rachel also noted the importance of studying one's teaching but highlighted the role of self-study in improving teaching for her as well as others. She noted how in "self-study the reflection goes a step further in that you talk about what is happening in the process of reflection, what changes you are making, and giving that out to other people. It makes your practice and potentially the practices of others better."

Perhaps owing to the fact that many in the group were newer to the university and not yet tenured, the interview data also revealed a more general interest in joining the DILE S-STEP group to become better socialized to the norms and practices of our university and to foster collegiality with other faculty in the department. As an example, Xia commented "I came here last summer. I really want to socialize into researchers' professional lives here. This is a good opportunity for me to be a part of that community of practice." Christopher, another new hire with Xia, noted how he was drawn to the group after Ritter's invitation "to the table" because there seemed to be "a collegial aspect to it [self-study] and I thought it was a great opportunity." Sandra similarly noted how she "values collegiality and creating a support network with your peers and colleagues." She continued, "Getting a publication is almost icing on the cake. But the process, the collegiality and the learning that happens is great."

As one final motivation, some members of the group expressed an interest in their ongoing learning and development. Sandra described the self-study group as "a space where we meet to learn, where we learn from each other in a safe, purposeful way. But it's work. And I really love that." Laura also noted how she thought of the group:

> as an opportunity to explore other ways of looking at my own practices….I was intrigued, I guess. I was intrigued by the idea of it. And I like the idea of Dr. Margolis starting the group with a leader. It was almost like grad school. Having a teacher, but not a teacher. Not being graded, but still trying to learn something. I think, as a faculty member, unless you have a specific research team or mentor assigned to you, mostly about how to be a faculty member, not about research, it's hard to discover new things. I mean, you might go to conferences and things like that. You're kind of on your own.

Although initial motivations for joining and/or wanting to participate may have varied slightly from participant to participant, Laura's hope and desire of wanting to discover "new things" (e.g., about our teaching, our research, our institution, each other)—but discovering them in a way that is not so insular or competitive—cut to the core of what all found intriguing and rewarding about participation in the S-STEP group. Interestingly, some of the most important features of S-STEP methodology (see LaBoskey 2004)—like focusing on the legitimacy of teaching, critical reflection, and interaction/collaboration—coincided with what members of our group sought when they joined the group in the first place.

What We Now Understand About Self-Study Methodology

Although everyone in the group was a newcomer to S-STEP at the outset of our journey, by the end of our second year together, the interview data revealed a more or less shared understanding of the methodology. Specifically, 11 recurring codes emerged from the data related to how we discussed our understandings. These descriptors included how S-STEP is intentional, focused, systematic, reflexive, critical, exploratory, ongoing, interactive, emotionally laden, tied to development, and outcome-oriented. Upon further discussion of these codes, the group decided the first nine codes seemed to be indicative of what self-study actually involves and should look like in practice.

To that end, intentionality featured prominently in how Rachel answered the question of what self-study means to her, stating, "it is the intentional reflection on my teaching that includes research on what I do, why I do it, how I do it…basically the process of doing it and sharing it with others in my profession." Julia shared a description of self-study with a similar focus when she claimed, "I think it's being intentional. Utilizing what you have gained in being reflective. Looking at the impact that you have on your students. Understanding how you can frame that. Being more deeply reflective." She further explained, "I think reflection becomes easier, that is more intentional, when things aren't going well, but even reflecting on when things go well, you have to stop and take time to do that." In addition to being intentional, there was agreement within the group that self-study should be focused. Laura noted how self-study should be "really focused on the self"; similarly Rachel noted the "need to think about what I want to study and how to focus on what it is that I am doing. More than that, I also need to focus on why I am doing it." The group further developed the understanding that for self-study to move beyond simple reflection it has to be systematic. Christopher spoke on behalf of the group when he defined self-study as "a systematic and structured way to think about your teaching, and I'd add the component where you change or adjust or critically analyze what you do to make a change or adjustment. I think it's a systematic methodological framework."

Xia perceptively described additional features of S-STEP when she stated how "self-study means two words for me: reflexivity, criticality… both reflexivity and criticality focus on self-study, on self-exploration." Describing self-study as a methodology, Carla also focused on the importance of:

> reflection, critical feedback. That's huge. That you have to have somebody looking at you and saying, "Hey, did you think of it this way?" or "What could you do here?" It's just talking that process through, having that 'critical friend' as they call it in the method going and looking over your shoulder and saying, "Are you being honest?"

In addition to its reflective and critical aspects, the group also understood self-study as exploratory in nature. Laura commented how "it's about thinking about who you are as a person and how that interplays with what you do." Connected with the exploratory nature of self-study was the recognition that self-study is likely to be an ongoing process as opposed to a finite journey. Carla discussed how self-study has

helped in "how I approach things and when do I need to approach things to make it align with my students better, to meet the needs of my students better." Moreover, as an important way to assess when such changes should take place, the group also came to understand self-study as interactive and/or collaborative. Sandra explicitly stated how "part of the process is you have to talk to others about your work." She went on to note "I value collaboration….I value self-learning."

In terms of ground-level practice, there was also an undeniable recognition among the group that self-study represents an approach to research that can be emotionally laden. Rachel shared how "the fact that I have initiated the self-study is, how do I put it….it's initiated by something that I'm struggling with or that I want to try out, so it comes out of my own way of teaching." In teaching a course that our students seem particularly resistant to learning about, Laura acknowledged how self-study has been "helpful and therapeutic in the same way. With the faculty who teach the diversity course, it's nice to talk about the issues, it's good to talk about what other people experience….it's good that we're not alone thinking about it." Julia also recognized the emotional element of self-study, claiming "you can be so actively engaged, you have to pull yourself out from what happened."

Finally, for our group, the last two codes identified in the interview data came to represent what we believed to be the purpose of engaging in self-study. To this end everyone expressed how engaging in self-study should be outcome-oriented by contributing in some way to our professional development as teacher educators and educational researchers. Many in the group appreciated how self-study contributed to our sense of both efficiency and efficacy. With self-study it was possible to simultaneously concentrate on improving our teaching while also writing about those efforts. This helped to ease the pressure to publish by always being in a state of data collection and writing. There was also a sense that this data could ultimately be used to change our individual courses and larger programs offered through our school of education. Laura spoke of the professional development side of self-study in terms of her teaching when she claimed "that's what self-study is about. It's about looking at how you can make yourself a better teacher." Sandra addressed self-study as both a research and teaching professional development tool when she stated, "I think some people see [self-study] as narcissistic or convenient or easy. But it's not easy. Maybe convenient. Not narcissistic because I'm doing it because I want to be a better teacher educator. You can't really argue with that." Indeed, taken as whole, the interview data presented in this section demonstrate how the group developed nuanced understandings of both S-STEP methodology and the purposes it can serve in furthering professional development and, potentially, in fostering institutional change over time.

On the Usefulness of the Group in Relation to Facilitating Such Understandings

In terms of the usefulness of the DILE S-STEP group, the interview transcripts revealed how we collectively felt the group was beneficial because its nature and structure (group dynamics)—coupled with the process used in our meetings (collaborative inquiry)—enabled all group members to learn about and become enculturated to the norms and practices of the wider S-STEP community. With regard to the group dynamics, everyone seemed particularly grateful for two features of the group: our diversity and our supportiveness. Carla addressed the usefulness of diversity within the group when she noted how the "cross-content [aspect of the group] is important … to see the similarities across teacher education that I might not have paid attention to before." Sandra also made clear her beliefs on the value of such diversity when she commented about the group, "So, we're teaching different disciplines, but we're all teacher educators, so it brings a nice potpourri of perspectives around self-study methodology. And I really appreciate that." Perhaps owing to such diversity and varying areas of expertise, there was a clear recognition in the group that we were all learning together. This translated into an unusually supportive learning environment. Carla highlighted the importance of this aspect of the group when she stated: "the collaboration of the group… having that critical discussion… and just having support… I couldn't imagine trying to do this on my own." Rachel echoed the importance of collaborating in a supportive environment when she noted:

> this group has been there for us to bounce off ideas for what we can do, how I can begin writing about what I already have. And we've had sessions in which we share with each other about what we think we are studying, and we're getting ideas on how to improve.

Many expressed how they felt encouraged to share their experiences with other colleagues in the group. Xia recalled how she did "a lot of homework….And then I listened to what other people think about this term, and then I internalized this term into my particular field." Reflecting on her participation in the group, Xia continued: "I would like to say it expanded my thinking."

Our group dynamics and the way in which we chose to engage with each other facilitated the learning of self-study and our collective socialization to the norms and practices of the S-STEP community. Rachel noted how:

> what I really like in the group was we had been talking about what self-study actually is. We've also talked about how to collect data, and we've talked about what is data. And then we've talked about the importance of having critical friends, and then we've talked about what counts as evidence.

This suggests that we were learning about the methodology by engaging in collaborative inquiry with one another. The facilitator of the group, Ritter, deliberately tried to choose resources that would help all members feel more comfortable with the central tenets of S-STEP methodology and its scholarly legitimacy. Xia shared

how her initial questions and confusion were reduced by having access to such resources, stating:

> I did not know what they were talking about [after my first meeting]. Self-study? I had joined in the middle. By the second meeting of this group, I was kind of clear about what they were talking about especially after I read the journal associated with this group.

When asked if the group helped her develop a better understanding of the process, Xia replied: "Yes. Definitely. Especially they give us some examples of how, in a particular content area, they would use self-study. So, this is really a cool example for me to expand my understanding about self-study in my expertise." Rachel also shared how "We've been introduced to the conferences that promote self-study, and in the process I've also learned to find out what can be a good self-study topic and how to go about it."

Of course, despite these successes, there were also ways in which members of the group felt our time together could have done more to contribute to our developing teacher educator and researcher identities. One common theme in the interviews revolved around the notion of providing more support in action. This was noted to include things like practicing presenting and actively writing articles with an S-STEP audience in mind. To the first point, Rachel suggested that the group work together more by not only discussing the self-study journals but also by practicing presentation for conferences. She said: "We could also use the group to rehearse what we are going to be talking about in our presentations, to get ideas." Sharing her hopes for the future, Rachel continued by describing how she "would like if our group became a writing group where our group could sit together and read each other's work, critique each other's work, improve each other's work, and make us better self-study researchers." Sandra also noted how it would be useful to engage more with actual self-study articles so that she might better understand "what it might look like or sound like in publication form."

Related suggestions for improvement involved our efficiency as a group. Christopher directly remarked on how he "thought some of the sessions were not used as efficiently as they could have been." Perhaps shedding some light on this perceived lack of efficiency, Laura said "He [Ritter] does this inquiry-based style. I'm too old and impatient for inquiry. I need to be given the information directly. Inquiry works well with students, but maybe just a little more direct with us." Sandra further elaborated on how:

> sometimes I get anxious, not anxious but impatient, because I want the meetings to be work time where someone brings an article and we discuss it on the spot, or we have something to read and we come back with it with our notes. Not just a session where we just talk.

Given the expectations and demands placed on faculty members, especially pre-tenure faculty members, members of the S-STEP group were especially eager to not waste time. After missing a couple of meetings in a row, Carla shared how "finding the time to meet and actually have that dialogue is really hard with all the other demands that are placed on us. So it's not really a criticism of the group, it's a criticism of how things are."

Finally, there were hints that some members of the group might like greater autonomy and/or self-direction. For instance, Rachel discussed how maybe instead of leaving the planning of the meetings to Ritter exclusively, perhaps the group members "can also help him, and make his work easier." She continued by stating how the group members should start

> suggesting things we can do in the group rather than him always calling for a meeting, and he has to think about what's going to happen in the meeting, which he has been very good about, but I think there needs to be more input on our side.

Xia further suggested how "maybe, in one or two years, we can explore something further and something more interdisciplinary… I'd like to find more integrated ways to develop my research through participating in this group."

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to take a closer look at the DILE S-STEP group and to more fully examine what we learned about, and though, our participation in a faculty self-study learning group. To that end, in the preceding sections, we considered four facets of our group, including who we are as teacher educators engaging with self-study research, what we wanted from our participation in the self-study group, what we now understand about self-study methodology, and the usefulness of the group in relation to facilitating such understandings.

With regard to who we are as teacher educators, we found that, as a group, we not only valued learning for ourselves but also felt a strong desire to share that learning with others so that they might feel empowered to work toward change in their own lives and communities. We noted how each of us saw something about the DILE S-STEP group that would potentially help us to more fully embody or live out our values and beliefs in our practices as teacher educators and/or educational researchers. When fleshed out, some of these motivations included finding a space to reflect, focusing on or improving our teaching, becoming better socialized to our institution, fostering collegiality, and facilitating our ongoing learning. Although we are not dealing in causal relationships here, interested readers can still glean insight regarding who might be attracted to joining faculty learning groups such as the DILE S-STEP group and what they might be looking for out of their participation.

Further to this, the nature and structure of the group—coupled with the collaborative inquiry process we used in our meetings—enabled group members to develop nuanced understandings of S-STEP methodology and the purposes it might serve. The group collectively came to understand self-study as something that is intentional, focused, systematic, reflexive, critical, exploratory, ongoing, interactive, emotionally laden, and outcome-oriented, contributing in some way to our professional development as teacher educators and educational researchers. It seems likely that some of this nuance naturally developed or flowed from the inherent

diversity of the group, while some of it came about as we worked over the course of 3 years to create a climate that was both challenging and supportive.

Still, for all of the positive features and success of this group, the interview data did reveal a shared notion, at times, that what the group really needed was "a little less talk and a lot more action." Many commented on the need for more support in action (i.e., carrying out, writing, and presenting a self-study). Despite our regular meetings, there was reticence among some in the group to actually conduct a self-study. This fact, coupled with the criticism that not all of the group meetings were very efficient and possibly consisted of too much inquiry or talking at times, prompted us to consider how there should probably be structured time in early meetings for individuals to hash out specific plans for conducting a self-study. This initial planning should be purposefully followed up on in subsequent meetings to ensure that learning about self-study is accompanied by doing self-study. We realize that not all faculty learning groups will have 3 years time together to grow and mature as we did. Yet we also understand that self-study, similar to any other methodology, takes time to know, respect, and utilize. Findings from this collaborative self-study group highlight the transformative nature of collaboration, which asks for vulnerability and reflection from all participants.

Appendix: Interview Guide for S-STEP Group Members

Could you briefly describe what led you to becoming a professor of education?

How did your beliefs and values factor into the decision to become a professor of education?

When you were in graduate school as a doctoral student, what were your expectations of doing research and how were you trained to do so?

Could you tell me about some of your research interests?

What methods or approaches do you usually use to explore your research questions?

What led you to become interested in joining the DILE self-study group?

What did you hope to get out of the self-study group? What were your expectations?

Now that you have participated in the group for some time, could you tell me what self-study means to you?

One methodological consideration for self-study is that it should be "self-initiated" and "self-focused." How does this relate to your notion of what self-study is?

Another methodological consideration for self-study is that it should be interactive and/or collaborative. Could you describe what this might look like and why it might be important?

Self-study does not have a prescribed set of methods, but rather incorporates a variety of methods to answer a research question. How does this compare to other methodologies you have used?

An important part of self-study methodology is making the work public. Could you provide some examples of how you think this aspect of self-study might be fulfilled?

How you have started to use self-study in your own work as a teacher educator and researcher?

What, if anything, has been useful about the group in terms of developing your understanding of self-study methodology?

What, if anything, has been useful about the group in terms of your development as a teacher educator and researcher?

Could you describe some ways the group could have contributed more to your development as a teacher educator and/or researcher?

Is there anything you would like to add to the interview?

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Part II
Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology in the Netherlands

Teaching and Learning Self-Study Research: Tracing the Map

Mieke Lunenberg

Context

Since the beginning of this century and in line with international developments, such as the call for more attention to practice and the growing attention for research in teacher education, there has been a significant shift in Dutch teacher education. On the one hand, the attention for the practical part of the teacher education program has increased, and on the other hand, the attention for research qualifications of Dutch teachers and teacher educators has also grown.

As a consequence of the first aspect, the collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools has been intensified, responsibilities have been reallocated, and mentors have been trained to become school-based teacher educators and to take over part of the responsibility for the education of new teachers. Dutch school-based teacher educators know the curricula of the different teacher education institutions that send student teachers to their school for their apprenticeships; they coach the student teachers as well as subject teachers who are the students' mentors. Hence, they have become a linking pin in teacher education. Although this change is not easy, in comparison with other countries (e.g., England), the transition in the Netherlands goes relatively smoothly.

With regard to the second aspect, the growing demands for research qualifications for teachers and teacher educators, the situation is more complicated. The specific settings in which Dutch teacher educators are teaching their students create important challenges that define the context for teaching and learning (self-study) research. Reality is that more than 80% of Dutch teachers are educated at colleges which traditionally did not have a research task. Less than 20% of the future teachers are educated at a university. As a consequence, most teacher educators in the

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Netherlands still have a job description as "teacher of teachers." This is certainly the case for school-based teacher educators, who are increasingly responsible for the teacher education programs. Until recently, being an experienced primary or secondary school teacher was the most important qualification for becoming a teacher educator. Hence, both institution-based teacher educators and school-based teacher educators have a rich background, knowledge, and experience in teaching, but only a small number of them have a research background. Moreover, most teacher educators do not have allocated time to systematically engage in research. In the last decade, however, influenced among others by international trends, colleges and universities started to recognize the importance of research in teacher education. Increasingly, student teachers are requested to carry out a research project in their final year of teacher education. Consequently, teacher educators need to be able to support student teachers to do so, and this leads to attention for enhancing the research competences of teacher educators, more recently also including school-based teacher educators who coach the student teachers' field work. In this context, in 2007, the self-study project "Teacher educators study their own practice" was initiated by Rosanne Zwart, Fred Korthagen, and me.

In a sense, this project was a follow-up on several projects my team had carried out before 2007 (Lunenberg and Willemse 2006). *Taking into account, as* Cochran-Smith (2003) *pointed out, that many teacher educators did have neither the time nor the knowledge to study their own practices systematically, we had been looking for other ways to support the professional development of teacher educators. We tried to connect our academic task of conducting research with supporting the professional development of fellow teacher educators. We adapted the interpretative paradigm in which "education is considered to be a process and school is a lived experience"* (Merriam 1998, p. 4). *The focal aim of this paradigm is "to understand the subjective world of human experience"* (Cohen et al. 2000, p. 22). *In this respect, our previous studies shared a key characteristic with self-study; they concern unique practices and the recognition of the value of personal experiences. In our research program on the professional development of teacher educators, multiple case studies were most common. We always took care to discuss the results of each case study with the teacher educator involved with the aim to support the further strengthening of his or her practice. We also invited teacher educators to interview and observe each other, using the instruments we had developed. To do so, we organized instruction meetings. Next, we analyzed the data the teacher educators had collected and then discussed the results with the two teacher educators (interviewer/observer and interviewee/observant) involved in each case. None of these studies, however, devoted any attention to our own practices. In that sense, our studies lacked a major characteristic of self-studies: we did not study our own practice and make ourselves vulnerable. The decision to start the project "Teacher educators study their own practice" would change this.*

Teaching and Learning Self-Study Research in the Netherlands: An Overview

As mentioned above, a decade ago, the attention for research in teacher education became more prominent. The reason to begin the self-study project "Teacher educators study their own practice" was twofold. This project was meant to contribute to the introduction of self-study research in the Netherlands as well as to the growth of the participants' scholarship. Coppola (2007) states that "scholarship" implies that scholars have to be informed; that their work should be intentional, i.e., goals and methods should be aligned and defensible; that they understand that their contribution is tentative and theory-laden; and that they should provide documentation that allows others to evaluate their work.

Taking the Dutch situation into account, it seems necessary to support the participating teacher educators to further develop scholarship through self-study research. In this context, in 2007–2008 as well as in 2008–2009, self-study trajectories were offered that supported teacher educators from several Dutch universities and colleges in studying their own practice. In 2009 eight participants and three facilitating teachers formed a community of self-study researchers and met regularly until 2013. The trajectories as well as the self-study research community were extensively researched. This time not only the participants were studied, but we also studied our own learning as facilitators and members of the community. Below I further elaborate on the theoretical underpinning, the framework, and the results of these activities. Building on the experiences from these 5 years, in 2015 a third self-study group started that was also extensively researched (see the next chapter of this section).

The Trajectories

The design of the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 trajectories was inspired by the work of Hoban (2007) on "creating a self-study group." Hoban emphasizes that attention to (1) a connection with one's own practice, as well as to (2) an external goal (publication, presentation at a conference), is important in supporting self-study. Equally important are (3) the availability of literature and external sources, for example, for learning about the technical aspects of research. Hoban also points to (4) social aspects such as organizing meetings, because of their support function but also because of the "voyeurism aspect" ("hearing from colleagues what I did not know about them"). Very important but sometimes difficult to organize is that (5) the facilitators create a sense of "being next door." This means that the participants experience feedback from the facilitators as being "just in time" and easy to get. Finally, Hoban draws attention to (6) the finalization of the self-studies and to discussing possible follow-ups, to prevent the results from fading into oblivion.

Hoban's study (2007) became an important starting point for the project and for the way the support process has been studied.

   The trajectories started with individual intake interviews (Lunenberg et al. 2010). Then, during almost a year, eight monthly meetings took place. Between the meetings the participants were coached individually by one of us. Every 3 weeks the participants wrote a pre-structured logbook entry. At the end of the trajectory, an exit interview was held. The group meetings consisted of four main parts: (1) guided reflection, (2) information about research phases, (3) discussion and independent individual work, and (4) focus on the self-study community. The reflection was led by one of us and was meant to support the switch from the daily teacher education practice to conducting research, offer emotional support, and create a sense of community. Factual information about research and discussing the progress of the studies characterized the second and third parts of the meetings. We gave tailored information about how to find literature, about data collection, data analysis, presenting, and writing. Next we worked in small groups encouraging the participants to think of ways in which they could use this information in their own study. In order to emphasize that the participants were also part of an international community of self-study researchers, an expert from the international self-study community sent the group a message. In one of the later meetings, a Flemish self-study expert was our guest (Flemish, because they speak Dutch) and commented on the participants' self-study drafts. In addition, the participants were introduced to the international self-study literature. Table 1 gives an overview of the meetings.

Table 1 Overviews of the contents and goals of the group meetings

When	What	Goals
April	Introduction	Getting to know each other; creating a safe learning environment; sharpening research questions
May	Data collection	Sharpening research questions; discussing suitable research methods; creating the feeling of belonging to a research community; motivating (message from an international expert)
June	Data analysis	Sharpening research questions and methods of data collection; creating the feeling of belonging to a research community; motivating
September	Presentations	Presentations and discussion of the ongoing studies. Focus on contents. Starting with outlining papers
October	Presentations	Presentations and discussion of the ongoing studies. Focus on recognizing the uniqueness of each study. Exchanging first experiences of writing a paper
November	Writing	Discussing papers in progress. Focus on creating a positive and proud feeling about the progress being made
December	Meeting with an international expert	Meeting with a Flemish critical friend. Focus on both contents of the papers and the feeling of being part of the international self-study community
January	Evaluation and wrapping up	Deepening reflection on the process as a whole and stimulating the final step toward publication

With regard to the learning of the participants, these trajectories contributed to the participants' professional learning, helped them to improve their practices, offered them a – most often – new perspective on research, and enabled them to better understand the pitfalls student teachers meet in their research projects. Reading literature that was related to a self-chosen research question helped the participants to connect their daily experiences to theory, to underpin their findings, or to question a theory. They also experienced a change in their professional identity. According to the participants, conducting research provided a sharper insight into their practice and more self-confidence in teaching teachers. Self-study even proved to result in transformative learning, i.e., a "fundamental change in one's personality involving the resolution of a personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness resulting in greater personality integration" (Boyd 1989, p. 459). A visible external outcome was that the participants presented their experiences and results at conferences of the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators and at the International Conferences on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices. Also several studies of the participants were published, among others in the *Dutch Journal for Teacher Educators*.

We also studied our own roles and learning (Lunenberg et al. 2010, 2011). With regard to Hoban's first point of attention, we discovered that connecting practice and research proved to be complicated for a number of overlapping reasons. An important question that came up at the beginning of the project was whether studying the practice of one person could be taken seriously. This question had a methodological as well as an emotional aspect. With regard to the methodological aspect, questions concerning reliability and generalization arose, questions which could be answered rationally with the aid of the literature on self-study research. However, the participating teacher educators also experienced a tension between studying personal aspects of one's own practice and the idea of going public with the results. In a reflective article, written several years later, one of the participants (Janneke Geursen) remarked:

> I think culture plays a very important role here, and not just research culture. There is a tendency in the Netherlands to be rather critical of others, but also of ourselves. Being open, sharing insecurities, and even showing achievements is not really encouraged. And although the value of critical reflection backed by theory is recognised by many teacher educators, you still feel the fear of being considered "soft". (Berry et al. 2015, p 47)

A tendency we observed was drifting away from the problem to construct a more traditional study instead of a self-study. In other words, the participants felt the challenge of putting and keeping the self in the study. One activity that proved to be helpful in this respect was the guided reflection about the process of self-study research that we incorporated in each group meetings, experienced by the teacher educators as "extraordinary." Our research confirmed Hoban's second and third points of attention for facilitating a self-study group (external goal, availability of literature). With regard to the social aspect, Hoban's fourth point of attention, we found that organizing the meetings was important. The group helped the participants to keep on track and to become conscious of the importance of taking

time for one's own professional development. One of the participants said in the exit interview:

> The group made the meetings more important. The chemistry between us was very pleasant. The openness, everyone struggling, and the fact that you all experience the trajectory in a comparable way. (Lunenberg et al. 2010, p. 1285)

We discovered, however, limitations with regard to taking responsibility for each other's studies. Although they would have liked to have more time for peer feedback and group discussions, the time available was mainly needed for individual study. As a result, their role as critical friends to each other was rather limited. In practice the cooperation was limited to the meetings; time to, for example, comment on each other's work outside the meetings was hard to find. Striking the right balance between working on one's own self-study and allocating time for cooperation proved to be a point for further consideration and research. It became one of the issues studied in the 2015 trajectory (see the next chapter). Hoban's fifth point of attention, being next door, also evoked some thinking and discussion among us as facilitators. We discovered that meeting the criterion of creating a sense of "being next door" involved the danger of creating a pitfall. As Fletcher (2005, 2007) warns, the line between offering solutions, because it is useful or because it is tempting to take over, is thin. Although our analysis shows that most of the time we provided feedback "just enough, just in time," there was one teacher educator who at one time wrote that she sometimes felt dependent. Feeling the time pressure of the one year that was available to us to support the participants in making their self-study a success certainly played a role. What was very helpful in creating a breakthrough in the process was to ask the participants rather early in the program to present an outline of their study to the group. Important for us as facilitators was also that we supported each other when faced with difficulties and concerns in the relationships with the participants and that we sometimes could decide to take turns in supporting individual educators. With regard to Hoban's sixth point, the community of self-study researchers was a follow-up of both trajectories.

The Community

In 2009 eight participants and we, the teachers of both trajectories, decided to continue our collaboration as a community of self-study researchers, supporting each other to reflect on and study our practices. We met regularly, taking turns in organizing our meetings. According to Wenger (1998), communities of practice are groups of practitioners sharing a concern or a passion for something they do and learning how to do it better as they interact regularly. This matched the experiences of our group. We reflected on our work, discussed our research in progress, and explored the boundaries of self-study. We became committed to each other and enjoyed the warmth of our meetings. We also developed a strong "we identity" (Davey et al. 2010, 2011).

During the years that followed, some of us continued to carry out self-studies, some focused on supporting the self-study research projects of their students, and others extended their research focus to using other types of research as well. Our ways diverted. After 5 years carrying out individual self-studies was no longer what connected us. Inspired by the article "Professional Learning Through Collective Self-Study" (Davey et al. 2010), which describes the impact the authors' collaboration had on their practices and individual self-studies, we decided to close up our community with carrying out a collaborative self-study to find out what we had gained in these 5 years from the cooperation in our community of self-study researchers with regard to our roles as teacher educator, researcher, and colleague (Lunenberg et al. 2012).

Collaboration is an important and extensively debated characteristic of self-study (LaBoskey 2004). Self-study requires that personal insights be documented, shared, and critiqued to validate the researcher's interpretations. Davey et al. (2010) and Davey et al. (2011) added a new perspective to the debate on collaboration. They state that in self-study literature many studies advocate collaboration as an important element, but that few have made collaboration itself the focus of the study. They present a group self-study on their collaboration to better understand the effects on each of them as well as on their collectivity. In our collaborative study, we used a matrix based on Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) learning evaluation model. For the roles of teacher educator, researcher, and colleague, each of us answered the questions for the four levels of evaluation. These questions are:

Level 1. Reaction: To what degree do you appreciate participating in the community?
Level 2. Learning: To what degree have you acquired knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment?
Level 3. Behavior: To what degree do you apply what you have learned?
Level 4. Results: To what degree can you point out effects?

It is interesting to notice that for the roles of teacher educator and colleague all the answers were positive. These show that participating in our community made us feel more comfortable as teacher educators, that theory had become more important in our practices, and that we felt more confident when talking about research. The answers also show that connections with colleagues in our own institutes but also in other institutes had strengthened and that we were better able to make our ideas explicit and provide them with a theoretical basis. Moreover, the feeling of being a part of an international professional community had become stronger. The answers for the role of researcher, however, varied. In addition to positive notes, doubts and wishes were articulated. On the one hand, research had become more familiar, but on the other hand, the consciousness of the complexity of research had also grown. This had led to what Tack and Vanderlinde (2014) call different researcherly dispositions. Participating in the self-study community and our collaborative self-study helped all of us to be better able to explain the contribution of research to our practices, and this contribution varied among us. For some of us, the criterion for having become a researcher was not in the first place whether there was concrete research

output but rather the way in which an inquiring attitude had become part of our practice as teacher educators. For others, being a teacher educator/researcher has become an integrated role.

Being part of these developments has stimulated my professional growth, and strengthened my professional identity. I learnt from co-teaching in the two trajectories and from participating in the self-study community that followed. I learnt about myself as a teacher educator/researcher and as a member of a self-study community, about my strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator and, related to this, about the importance of co-teaching a self-study group, and I learnt about critical issues in facilitating self-study research (Berry et al. 2015). *And my learning continues ….*

About This Section[1]

Working together on this Dutch section of the book has been a genuine self-study experience, characterized by shared passion, hard and rigorous work, and indispensable contributions from critical friends.

The next chapter is a self-study of the teachers of a self-study trajectory that started in 2015. Mandi Berry, Paul van den Bos, Janneke Geursen, and Mieke Lunenberg viewed themselves through the metaphoric lens of the "tour guide." They analyzed if and how they supported the participants with regard to five issues that, according to the participants, were crucial for their self-study adventure. Then they discuss what they have learned from this journey.

Jorien Radstake was one of the participants of this 2015 self-study trajectory. Her chapter is a good example of the multilayered learning that self-study research can offer. Jorien learned about conducting self-study research and the importance of getting feedback while researching how she could further improve her feedback on her students' research projects.

In the 2015 trajectory, also school-based teacher educators participated, Els Hagebeuk being one of them. In a vignette she reflects on how her reservations at the very start of the trajectory (i.e., "I am only a school-based teacher educator") subsided, on the insights she gathered, and on what it meant for her to present the results of her study on public fora, including the Castle Conference.

Ari de Heer participated in the first self-study trajectory and the community, both described above, and then involved Martine van Rijswijk and Hanneke Tuithof in self-study research. The three authors collaboratively carried out an ongoing self-study on their development as researchers in a shifting landscape: the increasing

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[1] All chapters of this section were reviewed by critical friends. This introduction was reviewed by Janneke Geursen and Jason Ritter and the next chapter by Jorien Radstake and Anastasia Samaras. The chapter of Jorien Radstake was reviewed by Amanda Berry and Ari de Heer, and Els Hagebeuk's contribution by Janneke Geursen. The chapter of Ari and his colleagues was reviewed by Paul van de Bos and Eline Vanassche, and the final chapter by Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan. *As editor of this section, I am very grateful to all authors and critical friends for their involvement and dedication!*

emphasis on research in their institution, the policy choices that followed, and the consequences of these choices for themselves and their collegial collaboration.

We conclude this section with a collaborative conversation among all authors involved in this section, on teaching, learning, and enacting self-study research. This conversation has generated new insights about what it means to professionally develop as teacher educators through self-study and to construct new professional knowledge. It also deepened our insights in teaching self-study. We hope that our insights inspire readers and stimulate them to start or continue their own self-studies and self-study trajectories.

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Saying "Yes" to the Adventure: Navigating a Collective Journey of Self-Study Research

Amanda Berry, Paul van den Bos, Janneke Geursen, and Mieke Lunenberg

Introduction

In the spring of 2015 we, the four authors of this chapter, prepared a professional learning trajectory for a group of Dutch teacher educators who wanted to study their own educational practice. In the Netherlands, most teacher education institutions are located in colleges where teacher educators have a teaching-only position. However, in the last decade, there has been increasing emphasis on more teacher educators becoming involved in research. This has come about from a push toward more research-based teaching and teacher education and a need for competent supervisors of student-teachers' research projects. However, many Dutch teacher education institutions still lack a strong research culture. A similar situation exists for teacher educators working in schools who are expected to take on increasing responsibilities within teacher education programs, including supervising student-teachers' research activities and using research to inform their own practice.

Self-study of teacher education practices offers an approach to supporting teacher educators in connecting research with practice through a focus on their own particular contexts, needs, and concerns in educating future teachers. Yet, especially taking into account the Dutch context, engaging in self-study is no easy task. Beginning self-study researchers need to find sufficient time, support, and resources for

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continuing their work. That was the reason why in 2007, for the first time in the Netherlands, a trajectory to support teacher educators to carry out self-study research was developed. Since then research into teaching self-study research has been accumulating internationally, and much has been learned about how to support colleagues who want to study their own practice. In this chapter, we present our learning as facilitators, teaching self-study research to a third group of Dutch teacher educators who participated in our self-study trajectory. We analyzed what the participants felt as critical issues for their learning and then asked ourselves how we had supported that learning.

Background and Theoretical Framework

One of the first studies on systematically supporting self-study research was Hoban's (2007) report, *Creating a Self-Study Group*. Hoban's study addressed the question of how to support a group of Australian teacher educators, who were inexperienced researchers, in doing self-study research. Following Hoban's (2007) study, comparable projects were carried out in the Netherlands (Lunenberg et al. 2010, 2011) and in the USA (Samaras et al. 2008, 2014). A comparative study (Lunenberg and Samaras 2011) between the Dutch and the US projects showed remarkable similarities with regard to the development of a set of guidelines that could support self-study research. For example, the facilitators should take care that the starting point of the participants' studies is on the "I" and on the connection with their practices, and the facilitators should be attentive to social aspects and to the organization of meetings in a way that participants' contributions enrich each other's learning. Also important is that facilitators "teach as they preach," i.e., study their own learning about teaching self-study.

A study from New Zealand (Davey et al. 2010, 2011) focused on the importance of collaboration in supporting a self-study group. Davey et al.'s study showed that collaboration contributed not only to the development of the individual professional identities of the participating teacher educators but also to a shared sense of belonging, a "we-identity." Studies such as these have supported the further development of teaching self-study research also in the Netherlands. (For more details about the history of teaching self-study in the Netherlands, see the Introduction to this Section of the book.)

More recently, Butler (2014) reported on his teaching of a group of US doctoral students about self-study as they were beginning their work as teacher educators and researchers. Butler's study confirmed the importance of the group in providing both individual and collective support: "Discourse must be driven by the participants' desire to learn and improve, thus providing each participant with critical friends who help promote and sustain the growth of the individuals and the collective" (2014, p. 264). Butler identified the importance of building and maintaining an environment of openness and constructive honesty within the group. Doing so requires a personal commitment of the participants to their learning and growth,

both individually and collectively. His study also confirmed an outcome from previous studies that that commitment to the group is connected to creating a need for participants to "go public," through sharing the outcomes of their self-study research beyond the group members.

Vanassche and Kelchtermans' (2015) study on teaching self-study research to a group of Flemish teacher educators confirmed that connecting systematic reflection on data collected from teacher educators' actual practices, with relevant theoretical frameworks, helped the teacher educators to improve their practice and to contribute to public knowledge building about a pedagogy of teacher education. An aspect that was less explicit from the studies mentioned above, but that Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2015) emphasized, is that when teacher educators become involved in self-study, this implies that they have to engage simultaneously in two potentially different agendas: their own personal professional developmental needs and institutional priorities around their work – which can create a source of tension. Facilitators need to be sensitive to this issue and actively support teacher educators to find ways to handle this tension.

The work of the Transformative Educational Studies (TES) project, led by ten research supervisors from three South African Universities, also offers new insights into teaching about self-study research. TES aims to enhance the development of self-study research by supervisors and participants through conducting joint meetings, often inviting international experts to contribute, too. TES supervisors meet regularly to study and reflect on their experiences and supervision practices using, among other methods, drawings and poems. One of their studies focuses on their learning about co-reflexivity, i.e., reflexivity about their experiences beyond that of individual experiences and into their shared context of being supervisors (Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2015). This group dialogue focused on what they knew and not knew about supervising their colleagues. Hence, co-reflexivity allowed them to admit "productive unknowing" and offers openness to explore new ways of looking at issues and dilemmas. This approach helped them to deepen their insights on self-study research and supervising self-study research.

Taken together, these studies show that supporting others to learn about self-study is a complex task that requires sensitivity to both individuals and the context, including the social, emotional, and political dimensions.

Designing a Trajectory Together

In our preparation for teaching the group of Dutch teacher educators about self-study, we built on these previous studies as well as drew on our own prior experiences. This meant, among other things, that we were conscious of the need to build a supportive community among ourselves, as a new team working together, as well as among all participants. Two of us, Paul van den Bos and Janneke Geursen, were former participants of the first Dutch trajectory. They were joined by Mieke Lunenberg, a facilitator of the first and second Dutch trajectories and Amanda

Berry, an experienced self-study researcher from Australia, who was living in the Netherlands and who had been a consultant for Hoban's self-study group in Australia.

Our Expectations

Before the formal commencement of the sessions, each of us identified what we expected from the self-study trajectory, ideas about how we could work productively together, as well as any concerns or hesitations about the process. We found that our expectations differed because of our prior experiences in studying, facilitating, and conducting self-study research. At the same time, we expected those differences to be fruitful in becoming a self-study community and – as facilitators – in learning from each other: "I expected that we could work together well as co-facilitators and that we each had different strengths that we could contribute to the planning and conduct of the group" (Mandi). Because of our own experiences as self-study members or facilitators and our enthusiasm for this form of research, we hoped our participants to be similarly motivated: "I expected facilitators and participants to be committed and enthusiastic…." (Janneke); "My most important wish was that I wanted the participants to become enthusiastic about the opportunities self-study research offers and to be successful in conducting their self-study" (Mieke).

Each of us had ideas and expectations about how the sessions could be structured, although we were open to a flexible approach and curious to see how participants would engage with the process. We also anticipated some challenges:

> I was slightly sceptical about how self-study could be taught. My view of self-study is that it is something you 'find' or that 'finds you', rather than something that can be taught in an organized, formal way (Mandi);

> I had hoped that the participants would attend all meetings and would be prepared and on track, but in my heart of hearts I expected that this would be a problem, knowing how pressed for time they all are and how difficult it is to find time to think, read, and write when you do not have research time (Janneke);

> We decided to consider the trajectory as a journey with some fixed parts and all kind of open elements and possibilities to improvise…but (this is) still quite challenging for me as a teacher educator who is used to prepare courses as a whole with carefully planned meetings and assessment tasks (Paul).

We all hoped for a product from each participant: "I expected that most, if not all, group members would complete, in some way, a study of their teacher education practice" (Mandi); "Attending the Castle Conference was a transformative experience for me in 2008. I expected those participants who would join us there in 2016 to go through a similar experience, realizing that the self-study community is an international and very welcoming one" (Janneke).

The Journey Metaphor

In hindsight, two events in the preparation stage shaped the direction of the trajectory, including how we worked together with each other and the ten teacher educator participants who worked with us. Firstly, we decided to use Loughran's (2014) article, "Professionally Developing as a Teacher Educator," as a starter for the trajectory. In his article, Loughran states that an important manner in which teacher educators can learn to traverse their daily work and develop their knowledge is through researching their teacher education practices. Using the metaphor of a journey, Loughran:

> offers landmarks to highlight what needs to be navigated without limiting the journey to one single "true" or correct path. It is a path that carries signposts of what might be encountered through the professional development journey that shapes what it means to become a teacher education scholar. (p.2)

Secondly, the four of us decided to have dinner together to celebrate the start of this new group. Walking to the restaurant, we saw this sign in a window (Fig. 1).

Thinking about the self-study trajectory as an adventure connected well with our ideas about exploring unknown territory together and being willing to work in a

Fig. 1 Window Sign

potentially risky and uncertain environment. We identified the metaphor of a journey in the first group meetings as a way to bring to life our intentions for the group, and after that, this metaphor became a leading concept during the year that followed, for ourselves as well as for the participants (Geursen et al. 2016). As facilitators, we came to think about ourselves as "tour guides," seeking to inspire and motivate participants to come on a self-study adventure with us. Paul, for example, asked himself: "What would be my role as a facilitator during the journey: group member, journey leader, luggage porter?" And Mandi wondered about the responsibilities of a tour guide:

> How much control does a tour guide have in a tour? What are the responsibilities of a tour guide? Is it to point out the interesting parts of the journey, to provide some background information to help participants appreciate a little more what they are encountering? Ultimately the guide needs to ensure the safe return of all participants and that they are happy with the service.

In this chapter, we explore our learning about facilitating self-study through a focus on our roles as tour guides for this collective self-study journey. We do this through the following two questions:

1. *What did the participants perceive to be critical issues for their learning about self-study research?*
2. *How did we think and act with regard to these critical issues?*

After answering these two questions, we will return to the journey metaphor and reflect on the value of this metaphor for our learning.

Methods

Context

Ten teacher educators from five different institutions participated in this trajectory, nine women and one man. Two of them (one women, one man) worked as school-based teacher educators in a school for primary education, two worked in a college-based teacher education institution for lower secondary education, three worked at a university preparing teachers for higher secondary education, and three worked at a university preparing teachers for higher education (see Table 1).

Table 1 Context participants

Teacher education institution	Teacher education	Participants
School	Primary education	2 (Els, Simon)
Colleges	Lower level secondary education	2 (Alice, Jorien)
University	Higher level secondary education	3 (Esther, Nancy, Wendy)
University	Higher education	3 (Christy, Dana, Jean)

We changed the names of the participants, with exception of the names of Jorien and Els, co-authors of this Dutch Section. All participants agreed to be cited anonymously. Jorien and Els gave their permission to use their real names.

The trajectory started in May 2015 and ended in June 2016. We had 11 collective meetings of 3 h. Each participant also was allocated one of us as personal facilitator, who coached her or him between the meetings.

Data Sources

To answer the first research question, we collected the following data:

1. Midway questionnaire and final questionnaire. Midway through the trajectory (January 2016), we emailed participants, asking about their impressions of the group process, about what they had learned, and about what they considered as most helpful in supporting them so far. At the end of the year, we sent all participants a questionnaire evaluating their experiences of the trajectory, including the content of the meetings, the group process, and the progress of their own research project. One of the central questions in this questionnaire was:

   Could you write down two critical/important moments when it comes to learning about self-study research and explain why these moments were important in relation to your development as self-study researcher?

2. Focus groups. We used part of a seventh meeting to work in two focus groups, asking participants to identify what they considered as most helpful interventions to support them in their learning about self-study research generally and in their own research project. Participants were encouraged to use the power points and their notes from the first six sessions (this dataset was used before in another context; see Geursen et al. 2016).
3. Individual intake and exit interviews. Each of us interviewed two or three participants at the beginning and end of the course. In the intake interview, we focused on each person's needs, concerns, and expectations; in the exit interviews, we concentrated on what they had learned, critical moments in their learning process, and what was most supportive for them in the whole trajectory.

   To answer the second research question, we collected the following data:

1. Shared reflective journal. During the whole trajectory, we (facilitators) kept a reflective electronic journal that each of us contributed to after each meeting. Because of the "open" character of the adventure, our reflections were "open" too, each of us referring to our impression of the group processes, about our own role as facilitators, about what was learned by the participants, and about what activities worked out well or not so well.
2. Documents related to the meetings, such as program outlines, power points, handouts, and mails.

Data Analysis

Regarding the first research question, each of us analyzed the three datasets (1, 2, and 3 above), and then we shared and discussed our results until consensus was reached.

Central to our findings for the first research question were participant responses to the question from the evaluative questionnaire about critical learning issues. Five, equally important, issues emerged from participants as critical for their learning about and completing of their self-study:

1. Framing the study
2. The need to deliver a product
3. Getting information about conducting research
4. Meeting each other monthly
5. Individual coaching/feedback from the facilitators

The midway questionnaire, the data from the focus group meetings, the other data from the evaluation, and the exit interviews were then analyzed for sentences or phrases that told something about these five critical issues (Cohen et al. 2000).

To analyze the data related to the second research question, we again focused on the five critical issues that had emerged. We reconstructed our thinking and exchanges about these five issues during the trajectory and analyzed how, and to what extent, the four of us as a team succeeded (or not) in meeting the needs of the participants. To do this, firstly, each of us analyzed her or his own reflections with regard to the five issues, answering the question "Which thoughts and exchanges in our reflections refer to the five issues for the participants' learning?" Next, we made an overview of how each of the issues was apparent in the documents of each meeting.

Using these two datasets, we opened a collaborative dialogue, electronically as well as face-to-face, in order to reach a deeper understanding of our findings. Loughran and Northfield (1998) pointed to dialogue as a methodology in self-study research as a means to "step outside" one's own personal practices in order to notice patterns and trends. Berry and Crowe (2009) confirmed through their collaborative self-study that shared critical reflection deepened their understanding of issues through opportunities to reconsider experiences through alternative perspectives. Pithouse et al. (2015), in learning about co-flexivity, also point to these two aspects: the importance of the individual experience as well as the relational context. Co-reflexivity allowed them to explore different points of view and to accept inconclusivity. In our dialogue, we followed these guidelines. We supported each other to reconsider our individual thinking and to accept what Pithouse et al. call "productive unknowing," i.e., an openness to a new way of looking at our thinking and acting.

Results

In this section, we unpack each of the five issues that participants identified as critical for their learning about and conducting a self-study. As mentioned above, the sequence of presenting the five issues is not hierarchic. Following data from participants, we present a reconstruction of our thinking and acting for each issue, also.

Framing the Study

One important issue for participants was framing their self-study and identifying the concepts that underpinned their study. In the midway questionnaire, we asked the participants what had helped them to shape their research questions. Almost all participants answered that the literature we had offered as well as the literature they themselves had found had led to identify the concepts they were working with and had sharpened their research questions. Also, discussion in the meetings among each other and with us, the facilitators, was identified as important.

For example, in the final questionnaire, Cristy wrote: "I learned most from reading articles about self-studies from other people. The articles showed me examples that made my self-study tangible and feasible. As if it was within my reach" (Final questionnaire, June 2016). In the exit interview (June 2016), Jean explained that reading had helped her build her theoretical framework. While reading, she took notes which then became building blocks for her framework. On the other hand, Jorien discovered that interpretations differ in the literature and that sometimes the researcher must make decisions to create clarity. She described the importance of "The moment I saw that different researchers had different interpretations of what 'feed forward' was and I had to decide which interpretation I would choose" (Jorien, Final questionnaire, June 2016).

Our Thinking and Acting

Our reflections and discussion about helping the participants to frame their self-study and reach conceptual clarity are more concentrated in the first part of the trajectory, which may not be surprising. In this period, participants were more concerned about the focus of their studies, their research questions, and relevant reading about their theme. In the meetings, we presented examples of our own self-studies, and together with the participants, we explored the background and characteristics of self-study research. Our reflections about this issue were most dominant after the fourth meeting. In this meeting, we gathered in small groups, each of us working with two or three participants. Our expectations were that each participant

would bring a draft of a research question that was connected with relevant literature. However, this proved not to be the case for all participants:

> Mandi: "I tried to ask Wendy about [her meaning for] feedback since this is a very broad term. (…) But I still don't think I understand what she wants to investigate. Once she has a concept of feedback …then it might be easier to know how to investigate it."

> Janneke: "I think the suggestion to select two or three central concepts and find references for these enables them to be more concrete. We can ask them to write two paragraphs about this and bring them next time for others to give feedback on?"

Looking back, this meeting was a turning point. Working in small groups and then giving a concrete assignment helped most participants to take this hurdle, to make choices, and to create clarity.

Half way the trajectory Paul states:

> Most of them now seem to be at a point that there is a more or less focused plan and that there is a feeling of I'm halfway and I will make it to the end – it is really going to happen, my self-study.

The Need to Deliver a Product

One aim of the trajectory was that all participants would deliver a product by presenting their self-study at a conference and/or write a self-study research report in the form of an article. We had identified three relevant conferences and took the lead in writing proposals for these conferences. We also took care that the draft of each individual article was reviewed by a member of our group as well as an external reviewer (a self-study colleague outside of the group, chosen by us). In this way, we wished to model the process of developing research for publication, including setting deadlines for all of us.

For some participants, this was the first time that they had written an article. For example, in answering the question what was a crucial issue for her, Jean wrote: "Describing my research in a paper format, because this was new for me" (Jean, Final questionnaire, June 2016). For Wendy, the idea of external deadlines, and managing to meet them, was crucial:

> External deadlines, such as writing a proposal for the Dutch Conference of Teacher Educators, preparing a presentation for the group, and meeting the review deadline, forced me to deliver output. I discovered, that if I allow myself the time to fully get involved in my research, I get results (Wendy, Final questionnaire, June 2016).

The data show that planning the research process and keeping an overview of the research steps were not always easy for the participants. Jorien stated in the exit interview that she would have liked to get information about writing an article, getting it reviewed, and handling the review earlier on (Exit interview Jorien, June 2016). Esther also mentioned that the information about the planning should have been given in one of the first meetings (Exit interview Esther, June 2016).

Els suggested to be more explicit about the time it takes to carry out a self-study and write an article (Exit interview Els, August 2016).

Our Thinking and Acting

In the first meeting, we shared with participants that "going public" by writing a paper or presenting at a conference is an important goal of self-study research. Doing so contributes to the knowledge base on teacher educators and – from a more strategic point of view – it is also a "carrot" (Hoban 2007) or incentive for the teacher education institution that teacher educators are affiliated with, in terms of research publications. Janneke and Paul gave examples of how they had gone publicly with their studies to make this goal concrete. In preparing for this first meeting, we had discussed what it would mean for us to support the participants to reach this goal. Mandi summarized this in her reflection:

> I suspect that one of the issues we will encounter is how much guidance that participants want and need. How do we support participants (…) to travel to a destination they do not know yet? What motivates them most at this stage? Does publishing/presenting inspire or intimidate them?

In the first months of the trajectory, conference deadlines required us to work together on several proposals at once. Mandi observed that this stimulated the group feeling of making progress: "I liked it that we had the Castle papers to talk about with the group. It is a way of becoming concrete and showing we are making progress together." However, Paul was more hesitant: "At first I felt a bit uncomfortable about our persistence about participating in the Dutch Teacher Educators' Conference. Wasn't it a bit early for most of them?" But after the proposals had been accepted and the presentations done, the participants were proud of their presentations and felt that they had become part of a research community. In the following chapters of this Dutch Section, from Jorien and Els, they both mention these feelings.

When we were halfway the trajectory, the focus on finishing the individual studies became more prominent. Until then, we had sometimes worried about the progress, but Janneke analyzed that this could be our role:

> I feel we have to be careful not to be too critical of the process so far. Funnily enough Dana pointed out "we need deadlines" even though we felt that the tasks we set them were not done and deadlines not met. Apparently these are the roles we each have to play in the process; us pushing them, they resisting us slightly until they reach the halfway mark and they feel they can be partners to each other.

For most of the participants, this proved to be true. They started to give presentations at the meetings, about which Paul writes: "Perhaps Jean's presentation helped in two ways: it helped to realize that this is the real thing, that it is also a bit of a struggle, but it also generated the feeling 'I can do this too."

At the ninth meeting, when most of the participants were in the writing phase, we encouraged them to write an outline for their conclusion, which worked out well. Janneke wrote in her reflections: "I think the task to start writing the conclusion was a brilliant one. They were surprised they could do it and it created real focus."

Getting Information About Conducting Research

One of the focus groups we worked in during the seventh meeting (Focus group 1, January 2016) identified what kind of practical information about conducting self-study research they had received until then was important to them:

- Explanation about carrying out self-study research and learning about the I and about tensions
- Information about the approximate time spent on different stages of research (it offers the opportunity to check your progress)
- Information about methods (it shows the many possibilities)
- Offering the proposal format (it helps to give structure)
- Demonstration of small pieces of research (skills)

The importance of getting practical information returned in the final questionnaires. Participants identified that seeing examples of our own work was appreciated. For example, Els wrote in the final evaluation: "Mandi's explanation in one of the first meetings on her perspective on self-study, illustrated by her own work on the 'tensions', was helpful, because it gave a more specific picture on what self-study can be" (Els, Final questionnaire, June 2016). Wendy wrote: "…information about how to deal with data, how to write an article (getting guidelines, which were illustrated by Paul's article), how to react on a review, was useful, because it was related to what I was doing" (Wendy, Final questionnaire, June 2016).

Our Thinking and Acting

In the first meetings, we explored the nature and characteristics of self-study as a genre of research. Our reflections show our belief that discussions in class helped to shift participants from thinking only in terms of teaching to thinking about researching teaching. Paul commented*:* "I liked the discussion that arose during Mandi's presentation (…): about the research process, about feeling like a researcher, finding the time to do some research, what is 'real' research etc."

While in almost all meetings we gave information about practical aspects of conducting research, the focus to these more practical aspects became more prominent after the fifth meeting. At that phase the participants had made the shift to a research mood. In this fifth meeting, the participants gave each other constructive feedback on the research methods they used in their individual papers. We (facilitators) also provided information about writing techniques. Paul, for example, reflected on the session about writing*:*

> It was a nice combination of information about writing techniques, personal writing styles, in which experienced and less experienced writers were at an equal level and which helped to realize that writing smoothly and without frustration is not possible.

Meeting Each Other Monthly

The meetings helped participants to stay connected and motivated with each other and with us – which was important to them in making progress in their self-studies within their already busy lives. In a focus group meeting (Focus group 2, January, 2016), participants identified that "we are becoming a community" and "This is no pre-tailored course; in a journey you need each other."

This was confirmed by the evaluations at the end of the trajectory. Christy wrote: "It worked as some sort of lifeline to the self-study" (Final questionnaire, June 2016). Most participants felt involved. "I never looked what time it was" (Els, Final questionnaire, June 2016). Christy described what the meetings meant to her:

> I remember an exercise with putting post-it's on problem statements from peers and pass the statements through several times. With this teaching technique useful input was generated. The peer feedback also worked as a mirror. By seeing where others work had flaws, directly pointed out the same sort of flaws in my own work. That way it was visible and easy to see and understand. I think that the feeling of taking small steps forward, and being in this together was part of the group magic that worked for me. (Christy, Final questionnaire, June 2016)

Participants also appreciated the safe environment created within the group. Jorien mentioned this aspect: "It was a 'safe' group and [because] others had given presentations, so I thought I will do this also" (Jorien, Final questionnaire, June 2016). The time devoted in the meetings to working in small groups was valued, among others because it helped to overcome feelings of insecurity. Dana: "Being 'seen' by my pal Esther is a confirmation of my expedition" (Dana, Final questionnaire, June 2016). In the small groups, the participants functioned both as peers and critical friends.

Our Thinking and Acting

We believed that we had created a good balance of activities in our session plans. We gave information; spent time working individually, in small groups, or plenary; and carefully created time for reflection at the end of each session. Our reflections, however, also reveal uncertainty and different perceptions among ourselves: for example, Mieke wrote about the third meeting: "I am not quite sure if everyone one is deeply involved at this stage. I miss a feeling of energy/flow," while Paul wrote, "What I liked about last Thursday's meeting was that in my eyes there was a more informal atmosphere than the two meetings before. I had the feeling everyone was feeling more comfortable." After the sixth meeting, Mandi noticed a turning point:

> For me, the meeting represented a good turning point. I had been feeling quite frustrated that things weren't really progressing on the part of the participants and that we were doing most of the work. But actually there was more going on than what was apparent to me - and that is a good reminder to me about not being too hasty in judgment or too impatient for things to happen in a community of beginning researchers.

Janneke points to another important aspect: our own lack of clarity about the function of the meetings with regard to feeling a member of a community:

> I feel that we have not been very clear and honest about the amount of time taking part in the project would take. (…) I also think that we did not make sufficiently clear what it meant to be part of a group. I think lots of our discussions circle around this issue.

We then realized that we had thought it would be obvious that all of us together would be a self-study community, but this proved not to be the case for all participants. Especially in the last 3 months of the trajectory, a few participants did not attend the meetings but focused on their individual studies. This was somewhat disappointing for the other participants and also for us. Janneke wrote, "they do not contribute to the group," but then she continues, "At the same time, I think we can say that at the end nearly everybody will have been involved in a presentation or/and have produced an article."

Individual Coaching/Feedback from the Facilitators

In the group meeting in January 2016, focus group 2 discussed what aspects of the teachers' role were important to them. They mentioned the following aspects:

- Facilitators share their concerns about carrying out research/methodology: creates safety.
- Facilitators create safety by keeping research small.
- Facilitators offer space for growth.
- Facilitators support involvement because they guard the progress.
- Facilitators stimulate cohesion and coziness (coffee and sweets).
- Facilitators guard delineation of time (limited number of meetings).

Wendy emphasized in her exit interview (Exit interview, September 2016) that each teacher offered different things, "because they are different persons." She explained that Mandi and Paul, her individual coaches, helped her to reach the "I" (Mandi) and to write the article (Paul). Mieke, who took the lead in the collaborative proposal for the Dutch Conference of Teacher Educators, supported her in writing her piece for this proposal. And Janneke, being a colleague with whom she shared an office, offered general support.

The data showed that the individual coaching and feedback we gave were not only important for technical reasons but also for becoming and remaining confident. Both Jorien and Wendy mention how important this was, especially in the first stage of writing:

"The first feedback I got when I had written a beginning was very stimulating and motivating, because then I thought: maybe I can really do this. It gave me confidence" (Jorien, Final Questionnaire, June 2016). And "Paul's feedback on my first concept gave me confidence and offered guidelines that helped me to finish my article in a nice way" (Wendy, Final questionnaire, June 2016). Simon also

appreciated getting feedback but also put a question mark by the way this influences his work: "The talks offered me direction about how to format and carry out my research. But I might have also let these talks steer me too much. Maybe I should pursue my own course?" (Simon, Final questionnaire, June 2016).

The importance of the individual coaching was also mentioned in the exit interviews. Christy mentioned the positivity, the concrete suggestions, and the fact that promises to help were carried out (Exit Interview, August 2016). Jean found the individual coaching pleasant, safe, and stimulating (Exit interview, June 2016). Jorien also mentioned that the feedback was pleasant, fast, and to-the-point and motivated her to carry on immediately (Exit interview, June 2016). Els emphasized that she felt that she was taken seriously. That was very important to her because her own school context was so different from the academic context: "I can be myself" (Exit interview, August 2016).

Our Thinking and Acting

From the previous trajectories, we knew that individual coaching of the participants was important to support them in conducting their individual self-studies, also because most Dutch teacher education institutions lack a strong research culture. At the beginning of the trajectory, each of us interviewed the two or three participants who we would support individually. These interviews helped us to get insight in the research ideas, experiences, and expectations of each participant. In most sessions, we briefly worked with these participants, and we also had email contact and sometimes met up with them outside the meetings. Janneke wrote: "I felt the individual feedback was very important; they [participants] felt empowered by it." In our monthly reflective exchanges, we shared (concerns about) the progress of the participants and reported insights from our individual coaching. For example, Mandi wrote:

> When I met with Dana, she had done a lot more work than I thought that she had. We used a metaphor of becoming visible which I think is really helpful to her - as she writes her story of herself as a teacher-researcher - she becomes visible to herself. Like a developing photograph or something. She sees herself more clearly than before and she can show that to others when it becomes visible.

Conclusions and Reflections

This chapter can be seen as a travelogue of a self-study adventure for four guides and ten participants. In the year the four of us facilitated ten colleagues in conducting a self-study, the journey metaphor was a leading concept for us as well as for the participants. Using this concept, we were conscious that embarking on an adventure means uncertainty and that there is a need for the companions to trust each other and a responsibility for the tour guides to guard the participants' safety.

In this study, we report about our thinking and acting as travel guides focusing on five issues that our companions found crucial for reaching their destination.

One issue was *framing the study*. To get on their way, the participants had to make a choice from the broad range of adventurous destinations and interesting sights that could be visited. After a few months, most participants were still exploring their possibilities. Our shared reflective journal shows our concerns about this and our decision to intervene. This intervention proved to be a turning point: the participants took the road.

Another issue was *deliver a product*. Going public is an integrated part of conducting a self-study, but in the beginning of the journey, it can be hard for participants to imagine what this destination will look like. In hindsight, some participants mentioned that at least they would have liked to get more information about the time table in the beginning of the journey.

Until they themselves could see their destination clearly, motivating our travel companions to keep moving proved to be expected from us as tour guides. The participants reported that the deadlines for conference proposals and deadlines we set had helped them to make progress. How to find a balance between giving them space and pushing them, however, was delicate and a returning part of our discussions.

The participants also found it important for their traveling to *get information about conducting research*. In our thinking and acting with regard to this issue, there is a shift midway the trajectory from offering information about and exchanging ideas with the participants about self-study as a research genre to offering practical information about data collection, data analysis, and writing techniques. With a reference to the journey metaphor, one could say that in the beginning, the participants had to get used to being a traveler, because this shift was connected to a mood shift from the participants. Given the Dutch context in which most teacher educators are mainly teachers of teachers, becoming a teacher educator/researcher took some time. When they had got in a research mode, the practical information got all attention.

The meetings were also mentioned by the participants as a crucial issue. They mention the safety and the feeling of becoming a community, and they emphasize that in a journey you need each other. The meetings were also an important theme in our thinking, especially in the final stage of the trajectory and with regard to the idea of being a community. When the participants were focusing on finishing their individual studies, being part of a supportive community proved to be important for most but not all participants. The last ones went their own way. Only then did we realize that we had not given explicit attention to building a community, but had taken for granted that this would happen.

A fifth critical issue was *individual coaching/feedback from the facilitators*, which offered the participants direction, safety, and confidence. With regard to this issue, balancing was also important, because the line between supporting and taking over is thin. Our study shows that we were conscious about these responsibilities as tour guides and supportive toward each other.

Reflections

It is interesting to note that the five issues that the participants named as critical for their journey are in line with and confirm findings from other studies on teaching self-study research. In comparison with previous Dutch studies (Lunenberg et al. 2010, 2011), however, two points are striking. Firstly, the participants seemed to struggle less with focusing on the "I." A reason could be that more than in the previous trajectories, we gave information about and examples of our own and other people's self-studies and took time for exchanges with the participants about this in the first meetings. Secondly, we studied and reflected on the meetings more deeply than in previous studies which brought in view that community building cannot be taken for granted but needs explicit attention. In a future trajectory, we would certainly be more attentive to this second aspect. Moreover, this study made us also more conscious of the importance of constant attention for a careful balance between intervening in and pushing participants' studies and trusting, being patient, and giving space.

Co-guiding a self-study has an added value, for the participants as well as for the teachers. The participants recognized this added value, one of them even described precise what each of the four guides had offered her. For us, as teachers, it motivated us to reflect on our personal impressions and ideas. An example is the different judgment of Paul and Mieke of the third meeting. Paul found this meeting relaxed, while Mieke missed energy and flow. Such differences are related to expectations about the trajectory, and by making these expectations explicit, teaching self-study research will be better thought-out and underpinned.

Finally, as this chapter illustrates, co-guiding offers excellent opportunities to co-reflexivity and to conducting a collaborative self-study on teaching self-study research. Hence, it contributes to the development of new knowledge on "teaching self-study research."

We feel that the use of the journey metaphor has widened our perspectives. It offers a fresh view on how to structure a self-study trajectory, neither like a course nor open ended, but, as Loughran (2014) wrote, by offering landmarks and signposts. The metaphor may also offer a response to the thought that Mandi put forward at the beginning of our adventure, i.e., that self-study is something "you find" rather than something that is being taught formally. Thinking about teaching self-study as guiding a journey implicates helping the participants to find their destination.

The metaphor also emphasized the complexity of teaching self-study and the questions that can be asked before starting an adventure. As Janneke states*:*

> In hindsight I feel that we as tour guides were perhaps underestimating the complexity of the task at hand. Was the end goal attainable for each participant? Did they all want to reach the top of the mountain, or were they happy with a shorter climb?

Moreover, the metaphor was helpful in clarifying our roles and responsibilities as tour guides. Mieke, for example, wrote:

The journey metaphor helped me to stay conscious of my limitations, of the fact that as a tour guide you can show others the benefits of a journey, help them to find their way and to overcome problems, but that in the end the travelers themselves have to decide whether or not the journey has offered what they expected.

We feel, however, that the metaphor of the guide in the group may need further thinking and study. We felt part of our learning community and learned a lot ourselves, but we were also conscious of the fact that our roles were different from the participants' roles: we intervened when needed and set deadlines, and the participants expected us to do so.

To conclude, we are convinced that we have not yet extracted all of the opportunities that the journey metaphor offers us and that further interrogating this metaphor can deepen our thinking about teaching self-study research.

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Stimulating Student Growth Through Written Feedback: A Self-Study on Supporting Students' Research Projects

Jorien Radstake

A few years ago, I attended a conference of the Dutch and Flemish Teacher Educators Association (VELON/VELOV conference). I listened to an interesting presentation of a teacher educator who talked about a self-study on her performance as a teacher educator. She spoke about her subject with passion and confidence, and it was clear that she had really improved her performance. I was impressed by her presentation. Hence, when there was an opportunity to participate in a self-study group in 2015–2016, I was really pleased! In joining this group, I expected that studying my performance as a teacher educator in a responsive group would help me to further develop my performance and my research skills, and in doing so, I expected to also develop my professional self-understanding (Berry 2009). As a teacher educator, I supported groups of students who had to conduct an action research study, while I had never done research myself after finishing my education many years ago. So I really wanted to experience myself what it was to do research and how it felt to receive feedback. I wanted to teach as I preached: to do research myself while I supported my students in their research.

Introduction

As a teacher educator, I have coached many distance learning students in doing their final research task. This feedback task in the different stages of the research is imperative. However, I did not know if the written feedback I gave was effective. As a teacher educator, I try to find the right balance between 'telling' the students what

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they should do and giving them the opportunities to 'grow', for example, by asking questions (Berry 2009). Mostly my students were pleased with the feedback I gave, but I did not use a specific system. I gave my feedback in an intuitive way. To investigate how I gave feedback and how I could improve my feedback, a self-study seemed appropriate, because according to Loughran (2004), it supports the development of a deeper understanding of practice and the enhancement of the quality of students' learning.

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback can be a very powerful tool for learning. In order to optimise the use of this tool, I wanted to give feedback in a more systematic way to support students' growth and help them to achieve 'deeper learning' (Hattie and Timperley 2007).

This experience of wanting to develop a more systematic approach to feedback led to my own research investigation that was guided by the following research question: *How can I improve my written feedback on students' research plans to enhance their growth in doing research?*

Theoretical Framework

I consider feedback as information provided by the teacher (educator) regarding aspects of the task students are accomplishing in order to improve their learning (Hattie and Timperley 2007). In this study, the task of the students I focus on is writing a research plan. Feedback is especially effective in this stage because the students are learning to do a research task, so the feedback is distinctly formative feedback. Hence, the feedback consists of written comments on their written research plans.

Gibbs and Simpson (2004) and Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) provide criteria for effective feedback.

The feedback should:

(a) Be in enough detail and given regularly
(b) Be sufficiently clear so that students can act on this feedback
(c) Encourage learning
(d) Give information about the gap between the students' performance and the goal and criteria of the assignment
(e) Be given early enough for it to be relevant to the students
 (f) Be acted upon by the students
(g) Focus on the students' work and not on the person
(h) Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.

When feedback meets these criteria, it can be very powerful in its effects, as Hattie and Timperley (2007) state. In their study, *The power of feedback* (2007), they explain that feedback is especially effective when it is not given in a 'vacuum' but in a learning context in which the student has already taken some steps. This is clearly the case in this study: students have written a research plan. Furthermore

feedback is highly effective for students when it gives information about how to improve their work. On the other hand, according to Hattie and Timperley, feedback is hardly effective when it consists mostly of praise, reward or punishment.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) developed a model in which feedback can be divided into three categories, and in each category, there were four levels of feedback. The effectiveness of the feedback depends on whether or not the appropriate category and level of feedback have been chosen.

The three categories of feedback are feedback, feed up and feed forward.

– Feedback answers the question: How am I going?
– Feed up answers the question: Where am I going?
– Feed forward answers the question: Where to next?

In each category four levels of feedback can be distinguished:

– Feedback about the *task*. Comments will tell whether the task is well done or not, for example, *You didn't follow the format for this task.*
– Feedback about how the task is *processed* will inform the student about strategies he applied or not, for example, *You could find the answer to this question in your articles.*
– Feedback about *self-regulation* will make the student think about how he is working or learning, for example, *When you read what you wrote until now, what is really the subject of your research?*
– Feedback about the *self* as a person will say something about the student himself, for example, *You are a very intelligent student.*

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback at task level can be very powerful when it moves the student on to the level of processing the task and of self-regulation. Too much feedback at task level can make students focus only on the immediate goal of correcting their work. Feedback on the process level and on the self-regulation level is very powerful for enhancing deeper learning: the students learn strategies, they learn how to assess their own performance, and they know when to ask for help. These are important processes because students can apply these in different circumstances.

Feedback about the self as a person is not effective because it does not give an answer to the three questions above (How am I going? Where am I going? What to do next?). This is confirmed by Dweck (2006), who claims that when you tell students that they are wonderful, they think their success is due to their talent and they will hold on to a fixed mindset which does not allow 'growth'. When you tell students that they have worked hard to achieve what they have done, they will adopt a growth mindset. This mindset allows them to think that they can learn even more. This is what a teacher wants. Voerman et al. (2014) refine this assertion. They affirm that feedback on the level of the self, when this feedback is positive and specific and promotes the student's awareness of his own character strengths, has an enduring beneficial effect.

Glover and Brown (2006) have another interesting view on feedback. They use a model that slightly differs from the model of Hattie and Timperley and add the aspect of the depth in the feedback.

They distinguish three levels of depth:

Level 1: This is an *indication* that a performance gap exists (or not), for example, *Well done!*
Level 2: This is a *correction*, for example, a correction of a spelling error.
Level 3: When the feedback *explains* why the student's performance is inappropriate or why the correction is better, so the student understands the gap. For example, *Well done because you describe exactly what you want to investigate.*

Arts et al. (2016) did a case study based on the theories of the authors above (Hattie and Timperley 2007; Glover and Brown 2006). In their case study, they analysed and categorised the written feedback of different teachers on the work of students in the same course. They first analysed the depth of the comments following Glover and Brown and then, following Hattie and Timperley, the category (feedback, feed up, feed forward) and the level of the feedback (task, process, self-regulation and self). This study led me to think that it would be helpful for me to analyse my own comments in the same way. Looking into my practice from different theoretical perspectives is also in line with one of the characteristics of self-study, i.e. to be interactive with, among others, colleagues and educational literature 'to confirm or challenge our developing understandings' (LaBoskey, 2004, p. 859).

I added one more perspective. Teacher educators experience different tensions in their practice, according to Berry (2009). One of those tensions is that between 'telling' and 'growth'. In giving feedback, I experience that tension: do I tell students exactly what they have to do, or do I ask them questions that will lead them in the right direction? I supposed that analysing comments in telling comments and growth comments could help me to understand better what could be the right balance in 'telling' and 'growth'.

After reading these studies, I was curious about what types of comments I made most frequently on the students' research plans and how I could improve my written feedback comments in order to enhance deeper learning for my students and to stimulate growth.

Methods

I analysed the written feedback that I gave on research plans of final-year bachelor students of a teacher education institution in the Netherlands, Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in Zwolle. In their final year, these students have to conduct an action research study. My students were distance learning students who collaborate as a group in a virtual learning environment (a VLE). In this environment I, as their teacher educator, can also post my instructions and my feedback. The comments I write on the students' work are intended as formative comments

because these comments are designed to help students to plan and conduct their research. Feedback from their teacher educator is meant to help the students further along in the development of their work and not to give a summative assessment of their work so far. I give feedback in different stages of their research. For this study I analysed the comments I gave on the first or, in case the first document was very limited, on the second document the students sent in because the comments I give in that stage are most explicit: I do not always know the students very well, so I am aware of the fact that I should be very clear in my feedback. Also in this stage, the feedback is meant to push the students in the right direction for their research. I gave written comments in the text of their documents, and I gave more general feedback in the accompanying mails or in the workspace in the VLE. I analysed both types of feedback.

I used data from two cohorts of students (2014–2015 and 2015–2016). For both sub-studies I analysed my written feedback the same way. I first used the model of Hattie and Timperley (2007) who distinguish the three categories, feedback, feed up and feed forward, and the four levels: task, process, self-regulation and self. Then, for the depth of the feedback, I used the model of Glover and Brown (2006): level 1 = an indication, level 2 = a correction and level 3 = an indication or a correction with an explication. Finally I also analysed my comments as examples of 'telling' or 'growth' (Berry 2009). In the second sub-study, I also asked my students to fill in a questionnaire about my feedback. You can find this questionnaire in Appendix 1. It consisted of open questions based on the criteria for effective feedback provided by Gibbs and Simpson (2004) and Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006). In this questionnaire I also asked them which comment they believed was most helpful to them and why.

To enhance the trustworthiness (LaBoskey 2004) of my self-study, I involved two critical friends in the two analyses. One critical friend was a member of the same self-study group I participated in, and the second critical friend was a colleague from my university who is involved in a study about feedback. In both sub-studies, I analysed a first research plan, and next, each of them individually analysed my comments, and we discussed possible discrepancies in order to define more specifically the different categories and levels of feedback. The categories 'feed forward' and 'growth' proved to need further specification. In a research plan 'feed forward' is information about what the student has to do next, so what should be the next step in his research plan. Sometimes this category is used for information about what a student has to do when he will do the same type of task in the future. We decided that for this study, 'feed forward' was information about the next steps a student had to take. With the other critical friend, I discussed what type of comments was a growth comment, and we decided that, for example, a comment like 'Interesting!' could be a growth comment because it stimulates a student to think further, and also a question like 'What do you mean by this?' could be a 'growth' comment because it helps a student to formulate better.

After these decisions were taken, the categories were clear. In Appendix 2 I give examples of all types of comments on the work of the first student's research plan (cohort 2014–2015).

The First Sub-study

First, I analysed the comments I made on research plans from a group of students that I coached before I started this self-study. The group consisted of eight distance learning students who carried out their research in 2014–2015. I could easily recover their work with my comments in the VLE. For this study I analysed the feedback I had given on the first or second version of the research plans of these eight students. I only used the second version when the first version was very brief, for example, when it only contained the subject for the research. I did not only categorise the comments I had given in their research plans but also the feedback in accompanying mails in the forum or in their workspaces because in those mails, I mostly gave feedback that regarded the plan in general. I had given a total of 122 comments that I analysed. Based on the results of this analysis, I decided in which way I wanted to improve my feedback.

The Second Sub-study

In the next year (2015–2016), I coached a new group of seven distance learning students in their action research. When they sent in the first versions of their research plans, I tried to give adjusted feedback based on my analysis of the plans of the first group. Then I analysed my feedback in the same way I did for the first group. I analysed the 231 comments I had given. This considerably larger number of comments was caused by the more elaborate research plans of the students of the second group. One week after I had returned their work, I sent them the questionnaire, which all of them returned.

In both sub-studies I analysed my comments on the students' plans in a short lapse of time in order to avoid differences in analyses. For the same reason, I first reexamined the analyses of the comments in the first sub-study before categorising my comments on the work of the students in the second group.

Results of the First Sub-study (2014–2015)

Based on Hattie and Timperley's categories, my analysis of the first sub-study shows that I gave mostly feedback (81%), then feed forward (13%) and finally feed up (5%). Therefore, most of my comments gave information about what the students had done so far and answered the question: 'how am I doing?' Considering the level of the comments, most remarks could be classified as task-related comments (70%), followed by process comments (16%) and self-regulation comments (14%). I did not give any comments on the level of self. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), deep learning is stimulated by comments on the level of process and

self-regulation. When I combine those two levels, my remarks are still less than 50% of the total number of remarks. This did not surprise me because giving feedback on the level of the task is easier to do: wording is not clear, the correct format is not used, the references are not correct, etc. Giving feedback on the level of the process or self-regulation is more complex: how can I make a student think about his work? Mostly this type of comment is phrased as a question. I concluded that I should provide more feed up and feed forward comments on the levels of process and self-regulation to the students of the second group.

I also analysed the depth of my feedback using Glover and Brown's (2006) framework. Mostly, I gave an explanation with an indication or a correction (level 3, 66%), next was a correction (level 2, 29%) and finally an indication (level 1, 6%). Apparently, I explained fairly often why I made a certain comment. The high percentage of level 2 comments did not surprise me: these are mostly corrections of spelling errors or wording errors, which I did not explain. For the second group, I wanted to make more level 3 comments, so I wanted to explain my corrections and indications more often.

Finally, my analysis of telling and growth comments based on the tensions of Berry (2009) showed a balance: 52% telling comments and 48% growth comments. Growth comments help a student not only in the situation in which the comment is given, but they will help him in other situations as well. That is why I tried to make more growth comments in the work of the second group. Because I supposed that growth comments were related to comments on the levels of process and self-regulation, I thought that would not be a problem.

Results of the Second Sub-study (2015–2016)

The analysis of my comments on the research plans of the second group of students showed that I made as many feedback comments (39%) as feed forward comments (38%) and a lower percentage of feed up comments (23%) (see Fig. 1). Most remarks were made on the level of the task (49%), followed by comments on the level of process (28%) and comments on the level of self-regulation (23%). I still did not give comments on the level of self. Considering the depth of the comments, I did not give any comments on level 1. Thirty-seven percent of the comments were on level 2, and 63% of the comments were on level 3. Finally, 53% of my remarks were a telling comment and 48% of my remarks a growth comment.

When I compare the results of the analyses of both groups, the first thing that amazed me was that I made the same number of comments in both groups: about one comment on every 100 words. As you can see in the figure below (Fig. 1), I made more feed up and feed forward comments and fewer feedback comments in the second group, so I paid more attention to the criteria for success and to the next steps in their research than I did in the first group. I also made fewer comments on the level of the task and more comments on the level of process and self-regulation for the second group.
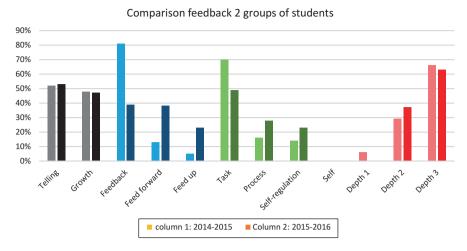
Comparison feedback 2 groups of students

Fig. 1 Comparison of the analyses of the comments of both groups of students

Considering the depth of the comments for the second group, I did not give just an indication like *interesting* anymore. I explained why something is interesting. The percentage of comments on level 2 is still high: these are mostly corrections in spelling of phrasing.

In looking at the telling and growth comments, I was surprised that there was nearly the same number of each type in the first sub-study as the second. I expected that if I made more comments on the level of process and self-regulation, the percentage of growth comments would rise as well.

Overall, I did improve my feedback on the plans of the second group because I gave more feed up and feed forward comments on the levels of process and self-regulation. However, I did not give more 'growth' comments. The balance between 'telling' remarks and 'growth' comments was nearly the same in both groups. This was a surprise for me: it meant that the analysis in categories, levels and depth is apparently not compatible with the analysis in 'growth' and 'telling' comments.

Results of the Questionnaire

All students of the second group filled in the questionnaire based on the criteria for effective feedback from Gibbs and Simpson (2004) and Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006).

All students commented that they considered the feedback was 'sufficient' and 'timely'. Most of them commented that the feedback was clear, although one student said: 'When you say "phrase this in a different way" I don't know what is wrong exactly, so I don't know how to phrase it differently'.[1] This comment made

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[1] I translated this remark in English as I did with all the following remarks my students made in the questionnaire.
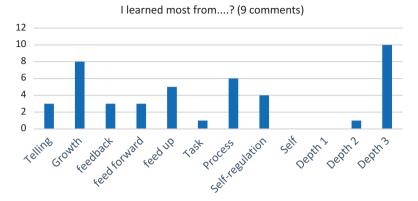
Fig. 2 Students learned most from

me realise again that my written feedback has to be as clear as possible because distance learning students cannot ask me exactly what I mean.

Most students stated that they had now a better idea of what it takes to write a conceptual framework and to formulate a research question because of the comments I gave them. That is in line with what they had to learn at this point of their research plan. In my feedback, I explicitly referred to the task criteria and the goals of their work. From the answers in the questionnaire, I can conclude that the students seemed indeed well-informed now about those aspects. In their responses about how students dealt with the comments, most of them said that they deal with comments one at a time. Only one student said that she would first read all the comments and then deal with each specific comment. I would prefer this latter procedure: students should first think about the big issues of their work before correcting small wording mistakes, for example. To stimulate this procedure, I think I need to give more general feedback first, before the other comments.

All the students thought my feedback was motivating. However, from the following answer, I learn that I might be a bit more encouraging: 'I liked the fact that you said somewhere that my research was interesting and practical. This felt like a compliment, because doing research is not my main strength'. In the final question, I asked from which comment they had learned most. The students could mention more than one comment. In the graph below (Fig. 2), the categories of analysis are shown.

From their responses, it appears that these students learned most from 'feed up' comments on process and on self-regulation, which accords with Hattie and Timperley's research about promoting deeper learning. This is illustrated by the following comments from two students: 'The comment on the reliability of my research helped me most because it made me consider my research in a more critical way' and 'This feedback was important because it helped me to stay focussed'. Also, remarks on level 3 (depth) were important according to the students. Their responses encourage me to continue to explain why I make a certain comment on their work. Finally, the students reported that they learned most from 'growth comments'. However, two of them also mentioned a 'telling comment'. This suggests that both

types of telling and growth comments are important. For example, students may need something to hold on to (telling) as well as questions to think about (growth). For me, as a teacher educator, the tension between telling and growth is illustrated by the following quote from one of the students: 'I also like it that you give examples now and then to send me in the right direction, but at the same time you make me think about what I should do differently'.

Discussion and Conclusion

Feedback is very important when students plan and conduct their action research study. The role of the teacher educator, in deciding what kind of feedback to give to students, when to give it and how, is a crucial element in supporting student learning. In this study, I focused on the nature and type of feedback I give to student-teachers. To do this, I categorised my comments on the research plans of two groups of students in a distance learning programme. Based on the results of the first group, I tried to give the students of the second group more feed up and feed forward comments on the level of process and self-regulation. I also tried to explain more about why I made a certain comment (level 3 of Glover and Brown 2006). In doing so, I thought that would lead to more growth, rather than telling (Berry 2009) comments.

The results of the study show that I did make more feed up and feed forward comments on the level of process and self-regulation, and on level 3, but the balance between growth and telling remarks was nearly the same in both groups. Therefore, there is an inconsistency between the analysis in category, level and depth of feedback and the analysis between telling and growth comments. A possible explanation for this outcome could be that analysis in category, level and depth only considers the cognitive load of the comments, while analysis in 'telling' and 'growth' also considers the emotional load of the comments (compare Voerman et al. 2014). When a comment is encouraging or motivating, it can help a student grow. This may explain the differences in the two forms of analysis. Further research into these findings would be interesting.

The results also suggest to me that I can further improve my feedback by being more encouraging in my feedback comments to enhance further growth in my students. For me, it was remarkable that my students had learned most from 'growth' comments. I would like to develop this research further in the future to find out what a growth comment really is and how a balance between telling and growth can be achieved, not only for written feedback but also for feedback given in the classroom.

This self-study has offered me insights in the way I give written feedback to my students and has developed my professional self-understanding. I understand better how feedback works and how I can give my written comments in a way that stimulates students' growth. The outcomes of this study may also be helpful for other teacher educators who coach students in carrying out research to consider the nature and effects of their own feedback activities and, as a consequence, may contribute to the improvement of teacher education. Finally, I realised that as a consequence of

this study, even in my regular courses as a teacher educator of French and pedagogy, I reflect more on the feedback I provide to my students, whether it is written feedback or oral feedback in the classroom. Therefore, this study has made me a better teacher educator in many ways!

As a 'student' who did research in this self-study project, I experienced again how important a supportive and responsive environment is. I did not struggle alone with literature and with phrasing my research question. We all had problems and hiccups on our journey, but then again I could also experience the enthusiasm and the passion of the other members of the self-study group, which was very encouraging. Most members presented the results of their research in different stages of the process. I saw how the other participants reacted to the presentations and how this helped them and me! These examples led me to feel more confident to present my research as well. We got much help and information from our facilitators. They all offered their help in a very stimulating way. Their experiences in doing research also helped us with the practical issues of our research, for example, how to write an article or how to present research findings at a conference. The activities in the meetings helped us to reflect further on what we were doing. After each meeting, I was more enthusiastic and more motivated to continue.

Furthermore I received feedback on my study of 'feedback'! I felt how important feedback is, how important it is that you receive the feedback in a timely way and how encouraged you are when the feedback is critical but positive. The feedback made me want to continue my study immediately and helped me to think more deeply about my study and to grow in my study. These experiences also helped me to understand the feelings of the students that I coach while they do their research. I experienced that I liked doing this study: it was a challenging task in my day-to-day routine. I had the opportunity to present the results of my study on the International Conference of the Association of Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) in August 2016, which was another challenge. This study helped me to improve my own practice as a teacher educator, not only in my role as a coach for students who plan their research but also in my role as a teacher educator of other subjects because the feedback a teacher educator gives can make a huge difference for a student.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. What did you think of the amount of feedback? Not enough, just right or too much? Explain your answer if relevant.
2. Was the feedback not detailed enough, just right or too detailed? Explain your answer if relevant.
3. Was some feedback not clear for you? If your answer is 'yes', give an example and explain why it was not clear.
4. What is the most important thing you learned about doing research until now?
5. What is the most important thing you learned about yourself in doing research until now?
6. What did you learn about the evaluation criteria for the research plan?
7. How soon after you have sent in your work do you expect the feedback to be returned to you?
8. How did you process the feedback? Be as precise as possible.
9. What did you think of the 'tone' of the feedback? Did it make you feel discouraged or rather enthusiastic?
10. When you read the feedback I have given you on your research plan, which comment(s) helped you most? Cite the comment and explain why. When you choose more than two comments, make a top three.
11. What advice can you give me for giving feedback?

Appendix 2: Examples of All Kinds of Comments Taken from the Research Plan of the First Student of Cohort 2014–2015

Comments	Feedback, feed up, feed forward	Task (T), process (P), self -regulation (R), self (S)	Depth 1,2,3	Telling / growth
Your subject is interesting	FB	T	1	G
It is very common that your research question is not immediately well formulated. Writing a research plan takes at least 30% of the total time	FU	R	3	G
Also write an introduction of yourself and your school	FB	T	2	T
This is interesting: so what do you really want to investigate?	FF	R	2	G
Also try to explain here the relevance of 'drama techniques' in your lessons!	FF	P	2	T

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Experiences of a School-Based Teacher Educator: A Vignette

Els Hagebeuk

> *"Thank you for the tips you gave me". This is a remark that I often come across in the reports that students write about the reflection meetings I have with them. Of course this is nice to read, but it also made me thinking about the reflective talks I have with students who spend their traineeship in my schools. How do I conduct these talks? Do I ask the right questions, do I stimulate reflection, and when I give tips, what characterizes them?*

Context

I am a school-based teacher educator, working for a conglomerate of 23 schools for primary education. Together with my colleagues, I am the linking pin between several teacher education institutions that send their students to our schools for their traineeships, the subject teachers who are the students' mentors, and the students themselves. Our task is to calibrate the curricula of the different teacher education institutions with our schools and to coach mentors and students.

I was already playing with the idea to study the questions I ask during coaching sessions, when I saw the invitation from VU University to participate in a self-study trajectory. Together with my colleague, I decided to sign up. It was a big step. At professional development seminars and conferences for teacher educators, school-based teacher educators are underrepresented. The fact that I knew some of the facilitators of the trajectory from our contacts with the VU University teacher education encouraged me to join in nevertheless. Moreover, I liked the idea of group meetings. These inspire me to share my ideas, experiences, and findings with others.

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In the self-study group, which I call a Community of Inquiry (COI), my colleague and I were the only school-based teacher educators and the only participants working in primary education. In the beginning, this bothered me somewhat: would the other participants take us seriously, and was the gap between their institution-based context and my school context not too wide? These concerns disappeared fast; together we went on a journey (the metaphor of our COI) and embarked on an adventure. And together we shared the questions, dilemmas, and doubts that every researcher experiences.

Motivation

Self-study is research into your own practice, in which your own role is the central focus: the "I" is important. The idea behind self-study research is to get a better understanding of yourself and your role as teacher educator (Kelchtermans et al. 2014). I expected that studying my behavior during coaching sessions would help me understand and improve my practice. Moreover, I wanted to be an example for my colleagues and for the students who also have to carry out a research project as part of their teacher education program. I wanted to show my colleagues and students how you can systematically work on your own professional development.

Research Process

I started with looking for literature related to reflection and discovered Berry's work about tensions (2009). One of these tensions, the tension between "telling" and "growth," is on the one hand about telling students what they need to teach a class and on the other hand about supporting students to grow as a teacher and allowing them a space to find answers themselves. This tension fits with what I experience as a dilemma in my practice and helped me to frame my study.

In the COI we regularly talked about being a teacher educator, a researcher, or both. This was also a dilemma for me, moreover because conducting research is not something school-based teacher educators often do. But I noticed that during the year I studied my own practice, my perspective on my practice changed. I became conscious of things I had taken for granted until then. I discovered, for example, how confronting analyzing your own video can be. Up till then I had filmed my own students and discussed the tape with them without being fully aware of the emotional impact such an activity can have. Showing my video in a COI meeting made me feel both excited and vulnerable. It proved to be productive. Analyzing the video together with the COI members helped me to determine my pitfalls and offered me possibilities for improvement.

My study resulted in a paper and in recommendations for further research. I have been able to answer my research questions. Additionally, my study made me

conscious of a blind spot, which was an eye opener. I discovered that in my coaching sessions, I noticed students' emotions, but I hardly made them explicit. I also learned that taking a small pause before reacting to a student dissuades me from offering a tip straight away.

Cooperation

I have experienced the COI meetings as very pleasant. The facilitators alternated the pedagogical approaches, and, using the journey metaphor, they regularly initiated reflective moments during which we exchanged which paths we had already traveled and what destination we had reached. We were encouraged to contribute to the meetings ourselves. The teachers gave information and examples, among others, about how they had collected data. I learned about different ways to collect data and how you could also use data that were already available. For me this led to analyzing the students' reports about the coaching sessions I had had with them to find out what kind of questions I had asked them. We also encouraged each other, shared suggestions, and gave each other feedback.

In the car to the meetings, my colleague and I often discussed the progress of our studies, our doubts (are we going to finish our study?), the contents of the meetings, and our presentations to the other COI members. We called these discussions our "car conversations", and the topics we discussed and reflected on during this car conversations became part of our studies: a beautiful example of alternative research strategies that self-study stimulates.

I also appreciated that everyone had a personal coach with whom you could discuss specific questions. This helped to focus my study and it stimulated my progress. Meetings with Janneke, my coach, were always positive and stimulated my thinking. After these meetings, I knew what my next step should be, although it was not always easy to put this also into practice.

Going Public

An important phase in self-study research is sharing your findings and insights (Loughran and Northfield 1998). I wrote a paper and presented my research to the trainees in our schools, to the directors of all schools of our conglomerate, and to the school-based and institution-based teacher educators of one of the teacher education institutions our conglomerate is associated with. The COI also organized a symposium at the Annual Conference for Dutch Teacher Educators (March 2017), for which I was one of the presenters.

A highlight was going to the Castle Conference in August 2016 (Geursen et al. 2016). People from all over the world gathered here, often in their vacation time, to exchange experiences, to make new connections, or to foster old ones. It was nice to

see that distance did not hinder collaboration. Researchers from different parts of the world presented together; some had already been working together for a long time. The huge diversity of self-study approaches, of collecting data, and of presenting surprised me and offered me a lot of new information and ideas. Also the informal meetings were valuable. I met, for example, with Israeli colleagues and was impressed by the challenges they meet in their teacher education classes, due to the diversity of Israeli cultures. Mirroring my own practice to the practices of others made me also more conscious of my qualities and my added value as school-based teacher educator.

Our COI presentation consisted of my study, the study of another participant, and the self-study of the teachers. Our original starter, a "car conversation" and a "train conversation," proved to be a memorable one.

Reflection

I feel that my contribution as a school-based teacher educator for primary education was valuable for the COI. To me, being present, committed, and actively involved come naturally. I am proud of my results and of the fact that I succeeded in writing a paper. But what is even more important is that I have become more conscious of my behavior during coaching sessions and more aware of those aspects which need special attention.

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The Researcher Inside Me: A Quest for Meaningful Research in a Shifting Academic Landscape

Ari de Heer, Martine van Rijswijk, and Hanneke Tuithof

Introduction

We are three university-based teacher educators who, in this contribution, reflect on our development as researchers. From 2000 onward, our participation in the world of research has become more intensive. As a result, our images of research and our thoughts about the importance of research to teacher education have changed. *Collaboration* and *self-study* proved to be essential during our journey, as these enabled us to better understand our own incentives for doing and using research in the context of teacher education. Together the three of us formed a small self-study group that supported our journey as it enabled us to collaboratively reflect on our transition from teacher educator to a new identity of teacher educator/researcher. This transition took place in a changing academic landscape, where educational research became an important and new task of teacher educators and where teacher education was reorganized and repositioned within the university. The journey described in this chapter started in 2007, when one of us (Ari de Heer) participated in the first Dutch trajectory for self-study research aimed at teacher educators (Lunenberg et al. 2010). His participation in this trajectory further improved our understanding of self-study research and helped us to become more familiar with the international self-study community.

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Starting Point: The Self-Study Trajectory

At the beginning of our collaborative self-study, we became more familiar with research in the domain of teacher education while exploring our personal incentives in doing so. Key in this process was the self-study trajectory Ari participated in. An analysis of his personal log and a questionnaire completed in the self-study trajectory resulted in a narrative about what doing research meant for him. This narrative constituted our starting point for reflecting collaboratively on our development as researchers:

> I am a senior teacher educator and learned about research procedures and methods during my self-study trajectory. My personal goals in this trajectory were being able to give more effective feedback on the research proposals of my students, improving and elucidating educational practice by doing research and finding a way into a field of educational research that was new to me. The trajectory was strongly driven by rigor (which is typical of research cycles). It meant that I had to sharpen my plans constantly. Taking responsibility and presenting my ideas was important. My audience consisted of the other participants in the trajectory, colleagues, and conference participants (Conference Dutch Association of Teacher Educators, S-STEP Castle Conference). My log[1] contains many remarks and reflections on my own presentations and the presentations of others.
>
> I had to adjust my definition of research. In this process research became more accessible; it did not emerge as something big and unattainable. Far from it, since it is now part and parcel of my own practice. It was a learning process in which I was confronted with a new perspective on my professional behavior and I adjusted my professional identity accordingly. As a consequence of the self-study trajectory, I became determined to deepen my role as a researcher. I participated in a follow-up self-study community, but even more important, I found my fellow travelers (Hanneke and Martine) in my own professional environment.

The Context of Our Collaborative Self-Study Research

In Fig. 1, we present our professional environment, which served as the context for our self-study research.

During our collaborative self-study research journey, we worked at the teacher education program of Utrecht University and were part of a so-called teacher educators team that consisted of teacher educators of subjects related to the domain of social sciences and humanities (history, geography, philosophy, etc.). During the period in which our collaborative self-study research was conducted, we extended our research activities in different ways. Ari began to participate in the *Academic School* (a subsidized professional development school where innovation, practitioners' research, and teacher education are combined). Hanneke started a PhD trajectory at the Graduate School of the Faculty of Humanities (Utrecht University). Martine started a PhD trajectory at the Graduate School of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences (Utrecht University).

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[1] For this part, Ari used an overview of his logs (from 2007) and his answers on a follow-up questionnaire of the 2007 self-study trajectory.
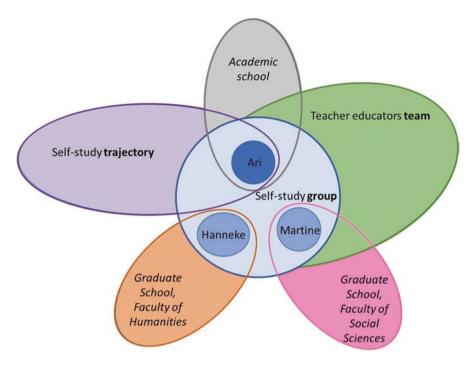
Fig. 1 The professional environment of the authors of this chapter

Stages

Our collaborative self-study consisted of the following stages:

1. Studying an innovation in teacher education: the School Adoption Project
2. Seeking our pathway between the tower and the field
3. Studying boundary crossing between two cultures
4. Home in the tower? Dealing with the field?

We will firstly report on our quest to realize a self-study research project in our team of teacher educators (Stage 1). Subsequently, we will report on a reflective stage that was focused on understanding how to deal with the growing importance of academic research and how to relate this to our world of teacher education. We will discuss the friction that resulted from our efforts to link our research experiences to our participation in a conventional academic setting (Stage 2). Using a boundary crossing framework, we present a second self-study research project, in which we explored our images of the culture of the teacher education world and the culture of the research world in this changing landscape (Stage 3).

At the end of the chapter, we will reflect on where we are now and on the future (Stage 4).

Studying an Innovation in Teacher Education: The School Adoption Project

In this century, research has become more important for Dutch student teachers and teacher educators because of changes in society and in university policy (Bronkhorst et al. 2013). As a self-study group, we tried to respond to this trend by combining the development of a community of practitioners with research on an innovative project, the so-called School Adoption Project (Tuithof et al. 2010). While realizing our project, we were inspired by discussions in the world of self-study about the balance between *self*-reflection and the value of systematically exploring particular experiences (*study*) and making them relevant to a broader community. We were especially interested in the position of the (self-study) researcher as a participant in the field of research (Geursen et al. 2010). Below, we (the members of the self-study group) will explain the process in our teacher educators team in detail.

The teacher educators team met monthly to discuss our teacher education practice. In one of these meetings, we (Ari, Hanneke, and Martine) expressed a desire to the teacher educators team to become a learning community: we wanted to stretch individual learning to a higher, collaborative level of learning. After a positive response from the teacher educators team, we planned four team meetings to set goals and to determine procedures, and we met with the dean, an expert in the field of learning communities. In these meetings, the following building blocks for developing a learning community were discussed:

- Creating a collective learning agenda
- Reflecting on the question whether we are a community of practitioners or a community of learners
- Establishing and creating a common interest
- Determining our collective identity (our "Flag")
- Taking care of safety in our communication
- Trying to make things visible, i.e., to "try to show products" (see also Wenger 1998).

In two subsequent team meetings, we worked with our colleagues on creating a common ground and discussed relevant questions such as "How do we learn as professionals?" The team members firstly shared their ideas in pairs and then made a plenary inventory. The social aspect and the aspect of learning together were most frequently mentioned as the gains of a learning community. In the third meeting, the first objective was to create a common learning agenda. A second objective was to make clear what the common interests of the teacher educators team were. Thoughts about this subject were exchanged in groups of three. Every group was asked to go for a walk and then return with an idea that energized all three members of the group. It was agreed that during this walk neither "no" nor "but" would be uttered, and the possibilities of the ideas that were suggested would always be visible. Three

ideas were reported: (1) school adoption,[2] (2) sharing good practices, and (3) thinking out of the box. The team also agreed to disagree about the differences in our interests. In the fourth meeting, we made an inventory of the desires and the needs of the individual team members. In the discussion about this process, the teacher educators team took one important decision: to take on the challenge of organizing a project called School Adoption. This project comprised the other proposals (sharing good practices and thinking out of the box) as well.

During the preparation of the project, the team discussed the desire to maximize the experiences they would share as teacher educators in this project. It was envisioned that this project would enable the team to function and grow as a community of practitioners (Talbert and McLaughlin 1994). The team members also expressed a desire to become more actively involved in the process of researching their own teaching practice (Lunenberg et al. 2007), which was greatly stimulated by management (following the trend of evidence-based education). All members of the team welcomed the possibility to learn more from their experiences, and they collectively decided to combine the School Adoption with practitioner research (i.e., self-study), hence to stimulate collaborative team learning. The following four characteristics of self-study methodology, listed in the *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*, determined the choice of research methodology (LaBoskey 2004; see also Berry 2008):

1. Self-initiated and focused: the team as a learning community.
2. Improvement as an aim: the School Adoption Project as a focus for research and innovation.
3. Interactive cooperation with colleagues: the School Adoption Project was planned and executed with the whole team.
4. Multiple, primarily qualitative methods: we analyzed interviews, portfolios, mail exchanges, and transcriptions of plenary discussions.

In January 2009, 20 student teachers participated in the School Adoption Project: student teachers took overall teaching and organization of a Dutch secondary school at level 4/5 (pupil age: 16/17 years) for 4 days. The teacher educators were present at the school during these 4 days and collaboratively taught and reflected with the student teachers.

Two Self-Study Layers

To ensure that the School Adoption Project could serve as a learning endeavor for the teacher educators team, the three of us focused on the idea of working with research questions. Because we knew this project would only be successful if the entire teacher educators team was involved (Wenger 1998) – with heart and

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[2] A project in which students adopt part of a school and bear all the responsibilities inherent to this adoption

hand – we carefully planned how we would approach our colleagues. In the next meeting of the teacher educators team, we discussed the details of our research plan. We suggested that all members of the team would not only cooperate in the execution of the project week but that everyone would also formulate a personal research question (the first self-study layer). To ensure ownership and participation, everyone was free in their choice of a research topic of interest and instruments of data collection. In the following meeting, we introduced some theory and research methodology. So, the three of us facilitated and coordinated the research process. We wanted to show the possibilities inherent to carrying out research, and we also wanted to speak about research as a normal way of looking at your own work from a more analytic perspective (Schön 1987).

The three of us subsequently formulated an underlying self-study research question:

What is the effect of working with research questions on the development toward a community of learners?

In the week after the School Adoption Project, we conducted in-depth interviews with all the collaborating teacher educators.[3] The interviews lasted about an hour and revolved around two main themes: (1) working with the personal research questions and its results and (2) personal experiences in the project. Then we organized two team meetings that were dedicated to collaborative reflections on the outcomes. In one of these meetings, we also asked our colleagues to respond in writing to the question: what did you learn personally and what did we learn as a team? The interesting outcomes of our study were among others that the teacher educators and students shared the feeling that they all "took a plunge" (De Heer et al. 2010, p. 74) and that working with an individual research question helped the teacher educators to structure their impressions of the processes that took place, which in turn also structured the discussions with colleagues about the project. The study also proved stimulating to the team discussions about pedagogical approaches, especially with regard to the tension between safety and challenge (Berry 2008). We reported the results of this study at the Castle Conference in 2010 (De Heer et al. 2010).

Reflecting on the School Adoption Project and the professional development of the teacher educators team helped the three of us to reconsider our own professional practice. We noticed that our identities as teacher educators were expanding. Our study on the learning of our colleagues and the teacher educators team added a new layer and made us conscious of the fact that taking some distance makes learning visible (see also above: building block 6). We also became aware that our development as teacher educator-researchers was challenging. This awareness turned out to be a crystallization point for the next step in our learning process as a self-study group. We felt the need to continue our discussion on educational research and decided to turn to theory to understand our own learning process. At the same time, however, the teacher education context in our university changed.

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[3] Thanks to Larike Bronkhorst for being a research partner in this intensive project.

Seeking Our Pathway Between the Tower and the Field

As our journey as a self-study group continued, the shifting academic landscape confronted us with the conventional academic culture, metaphorically referred to by Loughran (2015) as "The Ivory Tower." This is the location of the theory, while practice is considered to be the "swampy lowlands of educational practices" (Loughran 2015). In the Tower, becoming a researcher and being appreciated as an equal mean obtaining a PhD and conforming to traditionally valued research approaches and methodologies. We noticed that self-study research was viewed with skepticism in this conventional academic culture. Because of this, we found ourselves in a problematic phase of our journey as researchers: between two worlds of research, each presenting a different set of norms and methods (Akkerman and Bakker 2011).

Traditionally, at the University of Utrecht, the Department of Teacher Education was a separate interfaculty department. Although there always had been a research group within the department, the connections between teacher education and research activities were not very close. Most teacher educators were former (high) school teachers, who became teacher educators through experience and professionalization on the spot. The department regularly conducted research into the teacher education program, but the preparation, analysis, and writing of research were often done by (groups of) researchers, rather than in collaboration with the teacher educators. In their professional development, researchers followed an official path of "rites de passage" (Turner 1969), starting from a master in the educational or closely related sciences, followed by a PhD trajectory, and postdoctoral projects.

In 2008, a huge reorganization was announced: teacher educators would no longer be housed together, but in different faculties, depending on the school subject in which they had taught. Part of this move toward faculties entailed new future demands for the professionals, including the requirement that researchers should spend 60% of their time on teaching and that teacher educators should have a PhD. Rather than await the reorganization in the years 2008–2011, we decided to play an active role and to discuss and analyze our experiences in the changing context and our future plans for conducting research. We also decided to keep supporting each other in the process of writing a PhD proposal (De Heer 2010).

Studying Boundary Crossing Between Two Cultures

Reflecting on the Process and Our Search for Theory

We turned to literature on collaborative self-studies (e.g., Miller et al. 2002; Schuck and Aubusson 2006) to deepen our understanding of our development as teacher educators/researchers. Literature showed how teacher educators shared their aims and plans for studying their own practice and functioned as each other critical

friends in doing so. Other studies emphasized that, in order to facilitate development of professionals, it is important to connect to their professional identities (Geursen et al. 2010). Akkerman and Meijer (2011) emphasized that this identity is dialogical in nature, meaning that it is both stable, continuous, and individual, as well as multiple, discontinuous, and socially constructed.

We incorporated this concept of dialogical identity in the discussions of our self-study group, and used it to define the meaning of teaching, learning, and enacting self-study in our professional lives. We came to realize that we were crossing the boundaries between the "Educational Field" and "The Research Tower," and we decided to explore the learning potential of the concept of boundary crossing accordingly.

Boundary crossing usually refers to transitions and interactions of one or more persons across different sites (Suchman 1994). It has been argued that boundary crossing can be challenging. It often requires professionals to "enter into territory in which we are unfamiliar and, to some significant extent therefore unqualified" (Suchman 1994, p. 25) and "face the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid situations" (Engeström et al. 1995, p. 319). Yet, the challenging nature of boundary crossing also brings about learning potential, not only for the individuals doing the crossing but also for the communities that are crossed. Wenger (1998) stated that boundary crossing of community members prevents communities of practice from becoming stale (situated learning theory). Roth and Lee (2007) have stressed how collaboration between different activity systems can lead to meaning making and transformation of the intersecting practices. Reviewing the literature on boundary crossing, Akkerman and Bakker (2011) found four learning mechanisms that can take place in situations of boundary crossing. Table 1 provides an overview of these.

Reflecting within our self-study group on the different learning mechanisms identified by Akkerman and Bakker (2011) helped us to understand our own development. For instance:

> Martine made a picture during one of our meetings in which she drew two different worlds, one well known, an old-fashioned building and the new – academic – world pictured as modern architecture where it is difficult to find the door. She commented on this picture: "I am gaining confidence, I feel that I am permitted to throw a stone in the pound of the scientific world."

Strengthened by the confidence we gained from incorporating theory into our self-study group for exploring our own development, we decided to explore our transformation from teacher educators to researchers in more detail. In the next section, we will describe this self-study research and share some outcomes.

Table 1 Overview of different mechanisms and accordingly characteristic processes of boundary crossing

Learning mechanisms	Characteristic processes
Identification	Othering
	Legitimating coexistence
Coordination	Communicative connection
	Efforts of translation
	Increasing boundary permeability
	Routinization
Reflection	Perspective making
	Perspective taking
Transformation	Confrontation
	Recognizing shared problem space
	Hybridization
	Crystallization
	Maintaining uniqueness of intersecting practices
	Continuous joint work at the boundary

Self-Study on Boundary Crossing[4]

We met regularly in the period 2008 up to 2011. In the process of reorganization, we decided to analyze our experiences with conducting research in a changing context. The underlying motive was to find out what was happening in our professional lives while finding our own way. In several sessions, we had discussions, prepared for writing articles, and arranged feedback and reflection meetings, depending on the needs of the moment. The agendas, reports, and materials exchanged in these meetings were collected. Two specific meetings were videotaped as data input. In the first videotaped meeting, we considered what we perceived as our qualities in both the culture of teacher education and the culture of research. We used the onion model (Korthagen 2004) to characterize what was happening regarding the professional identity of each individual member. We indicated to what extent and in what sense there was congruence between our positions of teacher educators and researchers and to what extent and in what sense we experienced a struggle between the two positions. We discussed and reflected upon each other's experiences. The second videotaped meeting focused on how the two cultures and positions of the participants were experienced in relation to each other. In advance of the meeting, we gave each other the following assignment:

Make a drawing/collage in which you visualize the following two questions:

1. What is your current image of the culture of the teacher education world and the culture of the research world?
2. What is your current image of your position in both cultures?

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[4] We would like to thank Joke Rentrop and Sanne Akkerman for their contributions to this study.

During the discussion, elaborative questions were asked regarding the perception of the two cultures through time; we asked each other to look backward and forward in time. In the discussion, everybody took time to explain the drawing, resulting in separate explanations and discussions of each of the drawings, respectively.

For analyzing the data, first a thick description (Guba 1981) was written about the reorganization that took place in the department in which we worked. We considered this important, because the political and strategic developments partly informed the need for us to move across the boundaries of our domain. Then, Ari analyzed the two meetings by watching the videos and summarizing how we experienced the transition in terms of boundary crossing and the impact this had on our professional identity and our learning. A first step entailed writing summaries for each of us based on our remarks about how we experienced the two cultures and the two positions and how these were related. Since the drawings that had been made for the second meeting turned out to be important means for us to describe our experiences, the visualizations in the drawings and the way they represented metaphors were also considered for each of us. As a second step, the learning mechanisms and accompanying characteristics of boundary crossing (see Table 1) were indicated and used to code the specific ways in which each of us described his or her individual transition process. Next, the results of the analyses were discussed in detail within our self-study group, together with another researcher who took the role of critical friend, in order to clarify specific coding and to interpret the results. The outcomes were presented and discussed at the ISATT conference in Braga (de Heer and Akkerman 2011).

About the Two Cultures

The two cultures, the Educational Field and the Research Tower, were experienced as very different and as difficult to synthesize. The world of research was perceived as dominant:

> Hanneke made a drawing of realistic persons, representing the educational field, while the research part of her drawing was almost empty, only a piece of shit and a baby was shown, and she desperately commented; "If I want to fit in that culture, I have to create more commitment with the research world. I threw my stone in the pound, but that is not enough, I have to adapt and that feels a step further then I can take."

The entry into the world of education was experienced as more open and the entry into the world of research as more difficult. Hence, in our perception, it was a puzzle to legitimate the coexistence of the two worlds. It was helpful, however, to realize that writing articles, presenting at a conference, and writing PhD proposals were useful activities for crossing the boundaries toward the Tower.

Starting a PhD trajectory, as Martine and Hanneke decided to do, was perceived as a rite de passage (Turner 1969). It implied aiming to achieve a higher position in the research world and could consequently been seen as a transformation mecha-

nism. However, finding their way in the new culture was not a straightforward, linear process for either of them: in their perception, it contained high mountains and deep valleys, consisting of hesitation and of an inner dialogue about taking or not taking the perceived perspectives that are relevant in the transition processes.

Martine and Hanneke described the following tensions:

1. As teacher educator, you come from a world where positive feedback and personal growth are important pedagogical values and where relations are more informal. The world of research was identified as competitive, full of (unknown) procedures, and focused on scientific output instead of educational improvement.
2. As a teacher educator, you have to find out how to handle the move from your embedded/respected position in the educational world and your apprentice/novice position in the new world of research. You are both a skilled professional in one world and a novice once you have crossed the boundary.
3. As a teacher educator, you want to create a position in which you can create interwoven activities between the worlds of education and research, that is, act as a broker (Akkerman and Bakker 2011). As a newcomer to the world of research, this position is not immediately available; it takes a while to be able to take on such a position.

Ari decided to use his knowledge and experiences of boundary crossing in the context of working with the Academic School. Here, in the field, he was also confronted with a traditional "ivory tower" image of research. He stimulated teachers and student teachers in the school to create new and alternative perspectives on carrying out meaningful practitioner research.

Home in the Tower: Dealing with the Field?

Our Quest Continues

In 2015, the reorganization was completed. The PhD trajectory of Martine is in its final stage, and Hanneke has completed and defended her PhD. All three of us became at home in the Tower, but are we "home alone?" How do we feel about being in the Tower?

Looking back on our journey, we notice that feeling at home in the Tower has different meanings for all of us, and in our discussions, we agreed to disagree about the two worlds. Hanneke experienced a lack of teamwork in the research world, Martine had gained by the teamwork in the academic setting, and Ari mostly tried to find his own pathway. All of us learned a lot from enacting the subsequent self-studies described in this chapter. We had to learn to relate to the traditional world of research, and we did relate to that world in different ways, and we are still in different stages of the transition process.

One thing stayed the same from the perspective of the academic world in Utrecht University; the importance of self-study in that academic setting is still underestimated, despite the stone we have thrown into the pond. However, our quest continues. We made a narrative of our journey in both the worlds of research and teacher education and then organized an open workplace session at the Conference of Dutch Teacher Educators in Brussels in February 2016, where we presented the results of our discussions, together with the comments of a critical friend. This session has led to the start of a new community of Dutch teacher educators-researchers.

Final Words

We started this chapter with the statement that collaboration and self-study proved to be essential during our journey, as these enabled us to better understand our own incentives for doing and using research in the context of teacher education. Moreover, sharing experiences assisted us in understanding and coming to terms with our own boundary crossing processes. It helped us to identify inter- and intra-personal challenges and affordances of our journey into the world of research, and we were able to acquire a better understanding of our personal qualities and to improve our research skills accordingly.

Finally, because of our collaborative self-study, we have come to recognize the value of exploring the strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives on research. This so-called multi-perspective supported us in getting to know different and sometimes seemingly opposing research approaches from an insider perspective. This strengthened us in recognizing that different perspectives on research should not be considered as exclusive but as complementary.

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Signposts, Profits, and Pitfalls in Teaching and Learning Self-Study Research: A Conversation

Mieke Lunenberg, Amanda Berry, Paul van den Bos, Janneke Geursen, Els Hagebeuk, Ari de Heer, Jorien Radstake, Martine van Rijswijk, and Hanneke Tuithof

Introduction

In this final chapter we, the authors of the Dutch part of this book, share our conversation about what we have discovered about teaching, learning, and enacting self-study methodology. In this way, we hope to offer readers inspiration and suggestions for starting their own self-study communities and trajectories.[1] Loughran's (2014) article, "Professional developing as a teacher educator" helped us to frame this chapter. In particular, Loughran's article helped us to understand how

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[1] "Trajectory" refers to one year during self-study groups of teacher educators which are facilitated by experienced self-study researchers.

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the development of teacher educators' knowledge and practice of teaching and learning about teaching is intimately tied to: understanding of identity; the challenges and expectations of the teacher education enterprise; and, the place of scholarship as an important marker of knowledge, skill, and ability in the academy (p.2).

Loughran explains how these various aspects of teacher educators' work, learning, and research are related to each other and emphasizes that while teacher educators need to find their own professional development pathways, there are signposts to look out for that can be helpful in supporting their efforts.

We began work on this final chapter when the first drafts of the other chapters were under review or in revision; hence we were familiar with what was included in the other chapters of this section of the book. The first chapter of this section, by Mieke Lunenberg, summarizes the history of teaching, learning, and enacting self-study research in the Netherlands. The second chapter focuses on teaching a self-study trajectory and is written by Amanda Berry, Paul van den Bos, Janneke Geursen, and Mieke Lunenberg. The third and fourth chapters of this section are from Jorien Radstake and Els Hagebeuk, both participants in a Dutch self-study trajectory. Jorien's self-study focuses on improving her feedback on her students' research projects, while at the same time she herself carried out a study and got feedback. Els's contribution is a reflection on the insights she gathered through her self-study about her work as school-based teacher educator and what it meant for her to present the results of her self-study in national and international public fora. Ari de Heer also participated in a Dutch self-study trajectory. Together with his colleagues Martine van Rijswijk and Hanneke Tuithof, he wrote the fifth chapter of this section: an ongoing self-study on their development as researchers in a shifting professional landscape and on the consequences of these shifts for themselves and their collegial collaboration.

To start our conversation about this final chapter, we all sent each other a "postcard" with a picture that we associated with teaching, learning, and/or enacting self-study research. On our postcard, each of us wrote an idea or suggestion that could help someone who wanted to start a self-study group. Next, we organized a meeting and used these postcards as a starting point for our brainstorm about this chapter. We explained to each other why we had chosen a specific picture and discussed the ideas and suggestions each of us had written on his or her postcard (Photo 1).

Four main issues arose from our brainstorm, which we then elaborated on by continuing our conversation by email and by including studies on previous Dutch self-study experiences and other literature. (For the underpinning framework informing this approach, see Loughran and Northfield 1998; Guilfoyle et al. 2004; Berry and Crowe 2009; Berry et al. 2015).

Interestingly, all four issues emerging from our brainstorm connect with elements in Loughran's above quote about teacher educators' professional development. The first issue is the way that the context in which a self-study is carried out influences the further development of a teacher educator identity. The second issue focuses on the relationship between the sometimes confusing and lonely self-study journey and the importance of travelling that journey together with colleagues in a motivating and safe environment. The third issue explores the multilevel learning opportunities self-study research offers. The fourth issue focuses on the teaching of

Photo 1   Brainstorm meeting about this chapter
In the photo, from left: Paul van den Bos, Els Hagebeuk, Jorien Radstake, Mieke Lunenberg, Ari de Heer, and Hanneke Tuithof

self-study research and more specifically on the pedagogical approaches that teachers of self-study research use to offer signposts to others. After discussing each of these issues and providing suggestions and ideas for others interested in self-study groups, we conclude this chapter with some final remarks.

Self-Study Research and Teacher Educator Identity

In self-study literature, it is often emphasized that self-study research is a productive way to combine teacher educators' dual roles of *teacher of teachers* and *researcher*, because self-study research starts with a challenge or problem related to being a teacher of teachers (Loughran 2014). In the Netherlands, however, most teacher educators only have a role as a teacher of teachers. Hence, for Dutch teacher educators, self-study research is not a way *to combine* the roles of teacher of teacher and researcher but a way *to extend* their teacher educator role as a teacher of teachers and to explore the role of researcher.

In our conversation about this issue, we discovered that for us, because of this (Dutch) situation, being a teacher of teachers has a deeper meaning than only being a source of our research questions. It defines our identity as teacher educator. Self-study research is seen as a bridge being built – but not yet finished – between

Photo 2 Postcards we sent each other to start our conversation about this chapter

our primary identity as teacher of teachers and our emerging identity as researcher. In our meeting, Ari stated it this way:

> Self-study research helps to ground me and to give me wings. It has brought research within my reach and made it possible for me to share my inspiration with others. It is neither a trick nor a specific method. It is about basic things between people. It is deeply grounded. (See also his postcard: Photo 2, top, right side)

A study following up on the participants in previous Dutch self-study trajectories in 2007 and 2008 (Lunenberg et al. 2011) showed that this exploration into the research role led to teacher educators' theoretical growth, greater awareness of their ongoing development, a shift toward being knowledge producers compared with being

"only" knowledge users, and growth in self-confidence. In different ways, carrying out a self-study and participating in a self-study trajectory influenced these teacher educators' identities and researcherly dispositions (Lunenberg et al. 2012; Tack and Van der Linde 2014). Some of the teacher educators from the 2007 and 2008 cohorts continued to conduct self-studies and even included colleagues in their quest (Ari), while others extended their self-study activities by becoming facilitators for a subsequent trajectory (Janneke, Paul). Some used their self-study experiences primarily to better underpin their teaching and to better support their students' research projects while others started a Ph.D. trajectory (Hanneke, Martine). Hence, for some, the roles of teacher educator and researcher became more integrated, while for others doing research became part of their professional identity as a teacher of teachers (Lunenberg et al. 2012).

Suggestion 1: Be conscious of the roles that teacher educators have at the start of a self-study. These roles may influence the meaning that self-study research will have for individual participants and their identity development.

A Personal Struggle and a Supportive Safe Group

Another important issue in our conversation was the reciprocal relationship between, on the one hand, self-study research as a lonely sometimes complicated journey and, on the other hand, the importance of the support and safety that a group offered. Both Mandi and Paul emphasized that self-study research, especially at the start, can sometimes feel confusing. Paul wrote on his postcard (Photo 2, middle, right side): "Sometimes it feels like a chaos and at the start you have to accept that chaos. It can lead to surprising and beautiful outcomes." Mandi's postcard[2] shows a person walking through an open field, creating a pathway as she walks. Mandi wrote on her postcard: "Stay focused and persist. Sometimes you can only see the path you've travelled after you created it." Els's postcard also illustrates that at the beginning of the journey, the destination can be hard to see. The path on her postcard ends in the clouds. The journey metaphor is also represented by the postcards Jorien and Mieke sent (top, left side, and middle, left side).

Martine confirmed that self-study research requires persistence and staying focused and added that it is important to also work in a disciplined and systematic way. She emphasized the importance of involving others in your explorations. Martine's postcard shows six ants, balancing a branch. Working diligently, together they try to bridge a gap in their path by using the branch.

In our conversation, it became clear that working together helped teacher educators to stay on track, even when the path was unclear or the destination uncertain. Ari emphasized that the safety of the group helps to move through chaos and to find your path.

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[2] For copyright reasons, not all pictures can be shown.

Giving and receiving feedback, reporting on progress, and working toward a shared deadline create focus. During our postcard sharing meeting, Paul said: "It keeps your mind on the job, also because you feel obliged to each other."

As authors, each of us has experience with collaborative self-studies as well as participating in and facilitating self-study trajectories. In these setups, besides the abovementioned practical aspects and the – in self-study research essential – need for critical friends, the emotional support of working together proved also important. Hanneke emphasized that working on a collaborative self-study research project with Martine and Ari (see previous chapter) kept her also motivated for continuing her Ph.D. study. Hanneke's postcard (bottom, left side) illustrates the importance of being part of a group.

In 2012, Ari, Janneke, Mieke, Paul, and other colleagues described the feelings of safety that their collaborative self-study research group brought them:

> Our community proved to be a safe meeting place, a place where we could inform each other about the discoveries we had made when studying our practices, discussing not only the how, but also the why of our findings and thus contributing to improving not only our personal practices, but also each other's. By analyzing deeper meanings underlying the outcomes, we have "moved beyond the story" (Lunenberg et al. 2012, p. 189).

From the outset, organizing and working together in a community has been a point of attention in teaching self-study research. In 2007, Hoban already pointed to the importance of social aspects in teaching self-study research, such as organizing face-to-face meetings, because of their support function. The studies on Dutch self-study trajectories confirm this importance. Meetings offer the unique opportunity to gather and work together, also because busy schedules make it hard to support each other outside of the meetings (Lunenberg et al. 2010).

In our conversation, both Jorien and Els stated that the face-to-face meetings had helped them to overcome the vague beginnings of their self-study research and their struggling:

> The meetings are motivating, after the meeting it is sometimes a struggle. But after that you are content that you did it, proud (Jorien).

> Self-study research has offered me surprising insights. It is a journey, a learning process. Initially, the final destination was vague. Travelling together is important and motivating, it keeps you moving (Els).

In line with these quotes from Jorien and Els, the Dutch studies on teaching self-study research also emphasize the emotional support that meetings offer to participants in a self-study trajectory. Participants found the meetings important because of the openness, the struggling together, and the fact that everyone's experiences are comparable (Lunenberg et al. 2010, p. 1285). As also reported in the second chapter of this section of the book, the meetings felt safe, helped participants to stay connected, and motivated them, which was important for making progress with their individual self-studies. As one of the participants wrote, "[the meetings] worked as some sort of lifeline to the self-study."

*Suggestion 2: Foster the relationship between, on the one hand, working on indi-
vidual studies and, on the other hand, organizing meetings that offer conceptual,
methodological, practical,* and *emotional support.*

Multilevel Learning

A third theme that came up in our conversation is multilevel learning. Paul com-
mented that "Self-study research forces us to look into our own learning about
teaching, something we also ask our students to do." Teacher educators often strug-
gle with connecting their roles of teacher of teachers and researcher. Bronkhorst
(2013) states that when teacher educators recognize and accept that there can be an
"in-between position," self-study can be a powerful tool for teacher educators to
combine both research and teaching. Self-study connects teaching and research in a
natural way.

In a self-study trajectory, participants sometimes also experienced the effects of
pedagogical approaches they themselves use with their students. For example, in
her contribution to this book, Els writes:

> I noticed, that during the year I studied my own practice, my perspective on my practice
> changed. I became conscious of things I had taken for granted until then. I discovered, for
> example, how confronting analyzing your own video can be. Up till then I had filmed my
> own students and discussed the tape with them without being fully aware of the emotional
> impact such an activity can have. Showing my video in a meeting of our community made
> me feel both excited and vulnerable.

By studying their own practice, teacher educators act as a role model for their stu-
dents. Teacher educators become more aware of the pitfalls faced by their students
when carrying out research and the support they may need. Especially in the Dutch
context, whereby most teacher educators do not have research tasks as part of their
job, awareness of such issues is of great value to teacher education practices
(Geursen et al. 2010). Jorien's self-study (see also her chapter) offers a beautiful
example:

> Furthermore, I received feedback on my study of 'feedback'! I felt how important feedback
> is, how important it is that you receive feedback in a timely way, and how encouraged you
> are when the feedback is critical but positive. The feedback made me want to continue my
> study immediately and helped me to think more deeply about my study and to grow in my
> study. These experiences also helped me to understand the feelings of the students that I
> coach while they do their research.

Interestingly, experiencing the effects of feedback was felt not only by Jorien but
also Mieke, Jorien's facilitator, and the reviewers of her chapter for this book, men-
tioned that reading Jorien's draft made them more conscious about the way they
formulated their feedback on her chapter.

Suggestion 3: Be aware of the opportunities self-study research offers for multilevel learning. New learning by teacher educators through self-study can shed new light on the learning of their students.

Facilitating a Self-Study Group

In the last decade, several studies about teaching self-study research have been published, and knowledge of teaching self-study research is accumulating (see also the first and second chapters of this section of the book). Guidelines for supporting self-study research have been developed, studied, and reformulated in a range of international contexts (Hoban 2007; Lunenberg and Samaras 2011; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015). In our conversation, we focused on a specific aspect of teaching self-study research that until now did not get much attention: the pedagogical approaches of the facilitators.

In the Dutch self-study trajectories, both facilitators and participants were teacher educators. Also because of the Dutch emphasis on the *teacher of teachers*' role, the facilitators were conscious of the fact that they would be seen as models for teaching self-study research and that the participants were also conscious and curious about this. Els, for example, emphasized in our conversation that the facilitators' choices for pedagogical approaches were important to her: "… because they are teacher educators too." In the second chapter of this section, "Saying yes to the adventure," the way the participants evaluated and valued these approaches was highlighted. For example: "I remember an exercise with putting post-its on problem statements from peers and passing the statements on several times. With this teaching technique useful input was generated."

In our conversation, Els also emphasized that the pedagogical approaches were often focused on the process which for her: "stimulated to sometimes take a step back, to think. Moreover, starting with writing forced me to structure my work."

By discussing their own self-studies with the group, the facilitators also tried to model how the roles of teacher of teachers and researcher can be combined. On her postcard, Janneke suggests to further strengthen this modeling, for example, by also explicitly modeling the writing process (Photo 2, bottom, right side).

Suggestion 4: Facilitators of self-study trajectories are modeling how to be a teacher educator/researcher and have to choose their pedagogical approaches and examples carefully and accordingly.

Final Remarks

In this section, we have shared our Dutch experiences of, and research on, learning together in self-study communities and trajectories over an extended period of time. We have generated new insights about what it means to professionally develop as a

teacher educator and to construct our own personally meaningful professional knowledge of practice.

In this final chapter, we have highlighted some issues that emerged from our conversation about what we have learned while writing this section. Remarkably, attention for meaning, feelings, and emotional aspects seems to be a continuing thread.

Our reflection confirmed Loughran's quote that begins this chapter, i.e., that the development of teacher educators' professional knowledge is intimately tied with understanding of self-identity. We specified this for the Dutch context: for most Dutch teacher educators, self-study research is not a way *to combine* the roles of teacher of teacher and researcher but a way *to extend* their teacher educator role as a teacher of teachers and to explore the role of researcher. We discovered how important it is to take into account that context issues influence the meaning self-study research has on the understanding of teacher educators' identity development.

Our conversations also emphasized the importance of being part of a safe and motivating community while – sometimes struggling with – conducting an individual self-study. We suggest that teaching, learning, and enacting self-study research should always include being part of a community that offers conceptual, methodological, practical, and emotional support.

We also spoke about the rich opportunities that self-study research offers for strengthening what Loughran calls our teaching education "enterprise." Conducting a self-study helped us to experience students' learning and research challenges. In our conversation, not only the cognitive aspects but also the emotional aspects of these experiences became explicit. Examples were shared about the vulnerability that you feel when sharing a video about your teaching and about the importance to receive careful and productive feedback. We feel that these opportunities for multilevel learning deserve explicit attention in teaching and learning self-study research.

The emphasis on the *teacher of teachers*' role in the Netherlands meant that both facilitators and participants in the Dutch trajectories were attentive to the facilitators' modeling and their choice of pedagogical approaches, an aspect that until now did not receive much research attention. But these pedagogical approaches matter. Hence, we recommend that facilitators chose their approaches carefully and also, as Jorien added, 'keep an open mind and heart for the participants.'

We hope that the chapters of this section support the overriding aim of self-study: that by examining our own practice and sharing the outcomes with others, we contribute to the self-study world as a whole.

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Part III
Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology in Flanders (Belgium)

Retelling and Reliving the Story: Teacher Educators Researching Their Own Practice in Flanders

Geert Kelchtermans, Eline Vanassche, and Ann Deketelaere

Introduction

In the next four chapters, we will present the experiences and findings from the first systematic project of self-study of teacher education practices in Flanders (Belgium), entitled "Learning and facilitating learning in the workplace: A project of self-study in teacher education."

This chapter sets the scene and orients the reader to the rest of the section. In the following paragraphs, we first describe the context of this collaborative project (section "Situating the project") and present the protagonists and the script underlying the different acts (section "Participants and process"). In the section "Lessons on self-study facilitation", we present a number of lessons learned from our attempts to support and facilitate a self-study research group. As such, this section aims at contributing to a pedagogy for the facilitation of self-study in teacher education practices. The fifth and final section of the chapter looks ahead and introduces the rationale behind the three following chapters. Each of the chapters reports on the content and outcome of one particular self-study of practice included in the project in the form of a retrospective "tetralogue."

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Situating the Project

Almost 15 years ago, we got inspired by the *Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices* or S-STEP approach (Loughran et al. 2004). Over the years, we had the pleasure to work closely with international colleagues in this growing field (Kelchtermans and Hamilton 2004). We also rigorously reviewed the available research literature on S-STEP (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015). These experiences inspired us to enter this field ourselves. In 2009, we were able to start the first project in Flanders (= Dutch-speaking part of Belgium) in which S-STEP constituted the central conceptual and methodological perspective. More in particular, we used the S-STEP perspective to address an important concern in the pedagogy of teacher education, that is, improving student teachers' workplace learning and internships.

The 2-year collaborative project was funded by a grant (public funding) from the School of Education (a collaborative network of teacher training institutes) and involved participants from five different institutes (i.e., three higher education colleges, one Centre for Adult Education, and one university-based program). As the title of the project "Learning and facilitating learning in the workplace: A project of self-study in teacher education" suggests, its goals were twofold. First, this project aimed to contribute to improving the support for student teachers' learning during their internships. As such, it was part of a larger research line on the pedagogy of workplace learning (Deketelaere et al. 2006; Kelchtermans 2009; Kelchtermans et al. 2010, 2013). We use the notion "workplace learning" in its broadest meaning to refer to all forms of practical training in teacher education. The focus on work-based learning also served to clearly define the purpose of the project. All partners in the project shared an interest in deepening their understanding of the complexity of workplace learning (internships) and the factors mediating it. Second, this project represented the very first attempt in Flanders to use the methodological and conceptual insights from the S-STEP approach. The teacher educators engaged in a systematic study of their own practice aiming to make explicit and question their tacit knowledge of how to facilitate student teachers' learning during internships (Kelchtermans et al. 2010). By systematically reporting on the results of their study and critically validating them in dialogue with colleagues, this work not only contributed to their personal development but also to theory building on the pedagogy of teacher education (Kelchtermans and Hamilton 2004; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015).

Participants and Process

Participants in the project included six experienced teacher educators (i.e., "the teacher educators" in the remainder of this chapter; see also Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, b). They were self-selected and extensively briefed about the

Table 1 Background information for the participating teacher educators (First published in Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 102)

Name	Institute	Affiliation	Research experience	Research topics/research questions
John	HEC	Bachelor's program in elementary teacher education	None	What aspects of student teachers' professional self-understanding are left unexplored in a competence-based approach?
				How does student teachers' self-understanding develop throughout the program?
				How can I actively support the development of their self-understanding?
Gus	HEC	Bachelor's program in elementary teacher education	Participated in several practice-based research programs	How can I describe student teachers' self-image at the end of the teacher education program?
				What values and norms do they adhere to?
Ellen	HEC	Bachelor's program in primary teacher education	Research assistant at the university for 1 year	What implicit and explicit messages do I convey to student teachers and school-based mentors with the assignments during practical training?
Tasha	CAE	Specific teacher education program	None	What is the impact of being unfamiliar with student teachers' area of expertise in post-lesson conversations with student teachers during practical training?
Carter	UBP	Specific teacher education program	Research assistant at the university for 2 years	What are the opportunities and pitfalls of being unfamiliar with student teachers' area of expertise?
Louis	UBP	Specific teacher education program	None	How can I describe my task perception as a teacher educator in post-lesson conversations with student teachers during practical training?

Note. HEC higher education college ("hogeschool"), *CAE* Centre for Adult Education ("Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs"), *UPB* university-based program ("universiteit")

nature, purposes, and structure of the project before they agreed to join. Project funding was used to buy research time from their daily job (i.e., 10% or 4 h of working time a week over a 2-year period). Each of the participants set up an individual self-study research project in his or her own practice, on an issue related to the facilitation of student teachers' workplace learning. Table 1 summarizes some background information of the teacher educators and the topics chosen for their self-studies.

Flanders has a dual system in higher education, with universities offering research-based academic training and different institutes for higher education (i.e., higher education colleges and Centres for Adult Education) providing programs for

professional training (see also Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a). Although the higher education colleges have recently started to develop research expertise, this expertise is mainly in applied forms of research, while their core business remains the education of professionals. Fundamental and theory-oriented research has traditionally occurred primarily within the universities. As such, teaching and research in teacher education has been historically and institutionally separated and conducted by different people with different backgrounds and expertise. Because of the dual system in Flemish teacher education, the research experience of the participants in the project was limited (see Table 1). None of the teacher educators in this project, for example, had been expected to be active as a researcher, aiming to publish their work in academic or professional journals (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a).

To outbalance the limited research expertise and experience of the participating teacher educators, we deliberately included training and supervision in the development of research skills as part of the project agenda. As a professor in education at the University of Leuven, Geert Kelchtermans had initiated the project and was the overall project supervisor. Eline Vanassche joined the project as part of the research for her PhD. Both of them acted throughout the entire project as the academic facilitators, providing methodological and theoretical training, support, and coaching. Ann Deketelaere had a key role in supporting the final but crucial part of the writing up of the different self-study reports.

The project ran over a period of 2 years (2009–2011). The academic facilitators organized monthly meetings with the following agenda: (1) informing the teacher educators on the theory and practice of qualitative research (including case-study and self-study research); (2) coaching them in the design, implementation, and analysis of their self-study project; and (3) providing the conceptual tools for reflection and discussion of their self-study project. The research group met 12 times between September 2009 and September 2011. Figure 1 provides an overview of the research group meetings.

The meetings with the full research group were supplemented with individual support through e-mail, telephone, and one-on-one meetings with the facilitators (both on- and off-site). These individual meetings mirrored the agenda of the research group meetings, but the support was tailored more specifically to each individual's developing support needs during the different stages of the project.

In line with the S-STEP principles, we wanted to ensure that the findings of the studies would be made public. This "going public" on the findings is first important for methodological and epistemological reasons: presenting the research findings to an audience of peers, for critical questioning. Second, we wanted to contribute to the development of a shared professional knowledge base on the pedagogy of facilitating workplace learning in teacher education. As a first initiative to make our experiences public, we organized an "internal symposium." Although "internal" may sound contradictory in relation to "forum", we wanted to take a gradual, step-by-step approach in making the findings public. For several participants, sharing one's experiences beyond the relatively safe environment of the research group meetings
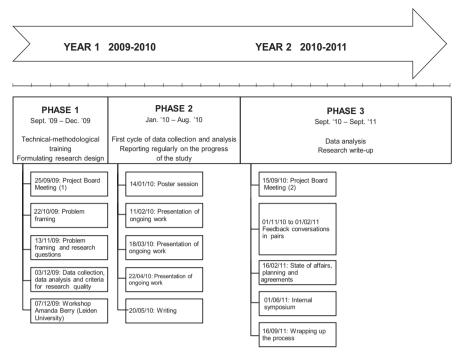
Fig. 1 Overview of the research group meetings (First published in Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 103)

was a threatening prospect as they felt vulnerable and exposed.[1] We therefore allowed them to have control over the participants in the symposium: everybody was given ten "wild cards" to invite colleagues who they thought would be interested in the work and would engage in the conversation with an attitude of respect and appreciation, while also being critical in a constructive way. The second initiative in "going public" was turning the full report of the project into a book entitled "Lessen uit LOEP: Lerarenopleiders Onderzoeken hun Eigen Praktijk" (Kelchtermans et al. 2014) that became the first book-size report of S-STEP published in Dutch.

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[1] This was in particular true for one participant who strongly disagreed with the dominant normative educational discourse in the teacher training college where he was working. This disagreement not only informed his practice but also guided his research interests in his self-study project. Elsewhere we have analyzed and reported in detail how the micropolitical tensions around different normative educational views negatively interfered with and almost jeopardized the quality of self-study research projects (see Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016b).

Lessons on Self-Study Facilitation

Before introducing the other chapters in this section, we first want to zoom in on the complex but interesting question of how teacher educators' self-study research can be meaningfully facilitated. Although it is obvious that the teacher educators whose practice is the focus of the self-study are the key actors in this process, we found that the chances for in-depth, methodologically sound and relevant self-study research could be (and because of the limited research experience of the teacher educators needed to be) enhanced by creating an appropriate supportive environment (the context of the overall project) as well as by providing particular forms of support. An additional agenda of the overall project, therefore, was a critical and in-depth analysis of the particular pedagogical setup and positioning of the participants and the facilitators enacted in the research group facilitation. The facilitation started from a clear pedagogical rationale which was grounded in relevant research (on teacher and teacher educator professional development) and evaluated throughout the project.[2]

An essential condition for this facilitation and for the project as a whole, however, was the need to build and work from common conceptual lenses in order to establish a shared language. Or, to phrase it somewhat paradoxically, as an essential principle in the design and enactment of the project, we contended that doing justice to the *diversity* of the participants' working contexts, professional histories, and research questions also implied the need to develop a certain level of *commonality* in the ways of looking at and talking about the pedagogical issue of workplace learning on the one hand and one's own professional development as a teacher educator on the other.

In earlier work (Deketelaere et al. 2006; Kelchtermans et al. 2010), we had elaborated a model of workplace learning. Professional development as a result of workplace learning was conceived of as resulting from the reflective, meaningful interplay of three constitutive parts: the student teacher (intern), the cooperating teacher (mentor in the school), and the teacher educator. The interactions of those three actors were also interpreted as situated in their biographical and organizational context. This model operated as a map, helping to situate particular experiences or practices that were included in the individual self-study projects. Furthermore, it provided a common language to present and discuss practices related to workplace learning among the different participants in the project. Further elements of the common language were borrowed from the literature on reflection and the reflective practitioner (a.o. Schön 1983; Korthagen et al. 2001; Lyons 2010) and our work on professional development (a.o. Kelchtermans 2004, 2009), including broad and deep reflection, professional self-understanding and subjective educational theory, professional development as resulting from the meaningful interaction between individual and context, etc.

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[2] For a more systematic overview and theoretical and empirical justification of this validation process, please see Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2016a).

This common language (conceptual framework) on professional development and workplace learning created a discursive setting in which the facilitation and support interventions for the self-studies of the participants could evolve. Table 2 provides an overview of the rationale behind the interventions.

Through systematic data collection on the design and the enactment of our facilitation during the project, we were able to test (i.e., empirically validate and analytically refine) the rationale behind it. The analysis of the data confirmed the validity of the rationale (propositions) we started from but also resulted in a number of refinements and modifications (amendments) to its original phrasing. The extensive presentation of the methodology, analysis, and findings of this study can be found elsewhere (see Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a). Below, we confine ourselves to

Table 2 Pedagogical rationale (propositions): facilitator interventions, triggered learning processes, and desired outcomes (First published in Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 106)

Proposition	Facilitator interventions	Triggered learning processes	Desired outcomes
If we want professional development to result in qualitative changes in both teacher educators' actions and thinking, then we need to support them during the process in making their normative views on teaching and teacher education explicit, as well as in critically evaluating them (through discussion with peers and others)	Challenging teacher educators' normative assumptions about good teacher education	Creating an awareness and problematization of implicit, taken-for-granted, normative assumptions about teacher education	Validating and possibly rethinking these assumptions as the basis for optimizing and changing practice
If professional development results from the meaningful interaction between the individual teacher educator and his/her professional working context, then the individual experiences, issues, or questions of the teacher educators need to be interpreted and understood against the background of the structural and cultural working conditions in the teacher training institute	Contextualizing teacher educators' practice and their understandings of that practice	Broadening the attention from the "self" to the "self as situated in the teacher training institute." Creating an awareness of cultural values and norms in the organization and their impact on the actual practices	Becoming aware of the multiple influences in their practice. Enabling transfer of the knowledge gained in the process to the working context of their teacher training institute

Table 2 (continued)

Proposition	Facilitator interventions	Triggered learning processes	Desired outcomes
If professional development is set up through peer group meetings, then the meetings should exemplify the concept of a professional learning community, characterized by making explicit, publicly sharing, and critically interrogating one's actual teacher education practices in order to improve them	Striving for and acting from the guiding principle of the professional learning community	Creating an awareness of other perspectives on and approaches to educating teachers	Inviting teacher educators to consider multiple perspectives on educating teachers
If teacher educators and academic researchers collaborate in a research project aiming at professional development, then this collaboration should happen from a perspective of complementary competence in which the different expertise of both parties is mutually acknowledged and positively valued	Acknowledging and valuing the different but complementary competences of both parties Engaging in actions that explicitly elicit and draw on both types of expertise in striving for the research goals.	Suspending the tendency to immediately look for and enact practical solutions to a specific situation and taking time to interrogate, analyze, and understand the questions or challenges in that situation	Supporting and encouraging teacher educators to become the self-directing agents (as well as the ones responsible) for their research project

an abbreviated overview of the modifications to the original propositions, reflecting our contribution to a grounded pedagogy for the support and facilitation of self-study projects.

Amendments to the First Proposition

Based on our data analysis, we put forward three amendments to the first proposition.

4.1.1 "Systematically reflecting on mirror data from teacher educators' practices, as well as thoughtfully introducing relevant theoretical frameworks, facilitates the public sharing and critical discussion of normative beliefs" (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 107).

In line with our conceptualization of professional development as resulting in qualitative changes in both teacher educators' thinking and acting, it was necessary to make participants' normative beliefs about teacher education explicit and critically discuss them throughout the group process, starting from data on their actual practices. Bronkhorst (2013) defines "mirror data" as the practice-based evidence that "holds up the mirror." Because mirror data are grounded in actual teacher educator behavior in practice and its outcomes, the feedback from the data has more authority and legitimacy and makes the participants' reflections more compelling and difficult to ignore. One example of the mirror data are the video recordings in Louis' self-study project, which clearly demonstrated that his actual behavior in post-lesson debriefings did not align with his highly valued constructivist beliefs about student teachers' learning (see below in chapter 19). Louis tended to act in a rather directive way, "telling" student teachers about the work of teaching and "directing" them towards ways to improve it rather than coaching them to reflectively explore and find alternative pedagogical solutions themselves:

> It was absolutely shocking to see myself on the video: 'what are you doing?'; 'look at those poor students'. I really wanted to understand the impact of this behavior and learn how I could control the tendency to be so directive. (Louis, group meeting, Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 108)

However, the mirror data did not automatically contribute to the participants' professional development. For this to happen, it was necessary to make them the object of explicit discussion by all participants in the project, as well as introduce theoretical frameworks and concepts to problematize, rephrase, and capture their actual meaning and relevance:

4.1.2 "Systematically reflecting on one's practice in order to make explicit one's normative beliefs implies that teacher educators have to engage simultaneously in two very different agendas. This can be a source of tension" (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 108)

Explicitly having and taking the time to engage in a reflective, systematic study of one's own practice was a new and exceptional experience for the participants in the project. It clearly differed from their usual day-to-day hectics:

> [i]n-depth discussions amongst colleagues are very rare. Questions like: 'how should we handle this as a team?', 'what is our vision?', are rarely asked. We always squabble about the small things and whoever screams the loudest seals the deal. That is one of the reasons why this was such an inspiring and motivating experience. (Ellen, focus group, Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 109)

Although the participants appreciated these reflective, learning opportunities, it meant that they had to engage in an agenda which forced them to leave their comfort zone and, more in particular, to suppress their tendency to start looking for quick, practical fixes for a situation or problem. Enacting the research-based attitude and going through a more systematic, reflective approach sometimes felt like too slow or too time-consuming, triggering impatience and sometimes even frustration:

> There's a big difference between spending the day pragmatically putting out fires and reflective learning. It's really a different mode of being present in practice. It's about taking a step back and that really doesn't come naturally to me. Even if one is partly released from one's job, it's really difficult. It feels like stepping off the carousel to watch how the carousel is turning, but at the same time the carousel cannot but keep on turning. (Louis, focus group, Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 109)

4.1.3 "These tensions need to be made explicit, since they may result in acts of resistance on the part of the teacher educators. For facilitators, it is important to be able to 'read' and interpret that behavior properly in order to avoid it jeopardizing the process of professional development" (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 109)

Amendments to the Second Proposition

The analysis confirmed the validity of the second proposition but also added two important amendments.

4.2.1 "Teacher educators' professional development in terms of their practices and normative beliefs is affected by and will in turn affect the collective practices and normative beliefs of the organization (organizational culture). This can facilitate as well as inhibit individual teacher educators' professional development. Facilitators need to be aware that supporting teacher educators' development might bring them into conflict with their colleagues or teacher training institute" (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p.110)

Teacher educators engaging in self-study research may be driven by normative views on their job that do not always match the views of the teacher training institute. When the findings of the self-study project provide additional evidence for their personal views and beliefs, they automatically also create a political tension for the self-study researcher to deal with. This is a very different type of task or concern than one's individual professional development, as it concerns one's position in the organization, the network of social relationships with colleagues, etc. Facing this challenge can be very threatening, even up to the point that the researcher renounces his/her own findings. This way, he/she not only loses an important opportunity for professional development for himself/herself but eventually may even jeopardize the potential of the entire research endeavor. Elsewhere we have discussed and documented this issue in greater detail (see Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016b).

Facilitators need to be aware of the possible political conflicts self-study researchers may find themselves in and make those the object of explicit, collective reflection. Acknowledging the potential conflict and collectively looking for ways to deal with it not only takes the burden of the threat it causes off the shoulders of the individual but is in many ways an essential condition to safeguard the professional

learning of the individual and avoid that it is simply given up as "not feasible in my institute."

4.2.2 "Because of the possible conflicting relationship between the individual's professional development and the practices and normative beliefs of the teacher training institute, it is often difficult for the teacher educators to leave the safe environment of the peer group and go public on the findings of their self-study (and their professional development). This is a sensitive issue that carefully needs to be dealt with in a step-by-step process." (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 111)

As already indicated in the former amendment, engaging in self-study research and the collaborative process of professional development embedded in the research group might create a safe, rewarding and stimulating "niche" for the participants. They can find recognition and encouragement, but at the same time, it might heighten the threshold to go back to their normal working environment and act upon their new understandings. Facilitators need to be aware of this possibility, acknowledge the issue, and act on it. Our choice of working with an "internal symposium," for which the self-study participants were given control over the invitations, was one creative solution to deal with this tension, without, however, giving up the important dimension in self-study research of bringing one's findings to the public forum for discussion and validation.

Amendments to the Third Proposition

The idea of a professional learning community operated as the guiding principle in the design and enactment of our facilitation and support practices. However, we found that positive, constructive collegial relationships might paradoxically also become a hindrance for the honest, critical debate and discussion that are essential for professional development to occur based on self-study. This made us revise and amend the third proposition as follows:

> The quality of the collegial relationships amongst the peers in the research group needs to be actively guarded and stimulated because they constitute a crucial supporting factor in the risky process of self-study and professional development (…). Paradoxically, collegial relationships based on trust and acceptance that are too positive or too supportive might be counterproductive and hinder professional development, as they make it difficult to challenge and critically question normative beliefs and practices. The latter remains an essential condition for professional development (…).

> As the 'relative outsiders,' facilitators can and should problematize the development of counterproductive collegial relationships and their normalizing impact. This is a difficult task in a sensitive area, but is essential in order to safeguard the research group's potential for the participants' professional development. (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, pp. 112-214)

Amendment to the Fourth Proposition

Collaborative self-study projects such as the one reported here clearly involve the coming together of different sets of expertise, that is, the teacher educators' "lived" experiences of practice on the one hand and the facilitators' methodological and theoretical research expertise on the other. Creating a collaborative environment in which these different but complementary sets of expertise are used, enacted, and appreciated is an essential guiding principle in setting up an effective support for self-study projects. But apart from the confirmatory evidence, we also had to conclude that "[e]ven when working from the idea of complementary competence and equally valuing the diversity in expertise, the group process may still install relationships of hierarchy and dependence. When this happens, these relationships are very hard to discuss and overcome" (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2016a, p. 115). In many cases, it is quite convenient – and even comfortable – for participants in collaborative self-study research to reinstall relationships of hierarchy as a convenient strategy to diminish the pressure to take on responsibility themselves for the project processes. In our case, we found that it was very hard to engage all the participants in a collective responsibility for the development of the project as a whole, as we found ourselves being framed as the "experts from university." Participants acknowledged and were grateful for the (methodological and theoretical) expertise we brought to the project but – while doing so – at the same time kept putting the responsibility for leading and steering the project in our hands. This was not motivated by a lack of commitment or laziness but rather because they felt being "sucked back" into the urgency, immediacy, and complexity of their day-to-day duties, of which the participation in the self-study project was only a minor part. Establishing shared responsibility, collaborative work, and complementary competence remains valid and necessary as a principle for facilitating self-study projects, yet is not easy to achieve. This conclusion, however, should not be read as a defeat or dismissal of the principle but rather as an honest testimony and a refusal to suggest that facilitating self-study is an easy thing to do, even in very positive conditions.

Retelling and Reliving the Project: A Narrative Tetralogue

So far in this chapter, we have tried to provide the necessary context information to situate and understand the accounts of the different self-study projects as well as our analysis of the facilitation process. In the next three chapters, we invite the readers to a "narrative tetralogue," presenting both an account of and a looking back on three different self-studies included in the project. The methodology was inspired by experiences in another international collaborative project (Kelchtermans et al. 2013). Our analytic conversation exemplifies a practice-based approach to the professional development of teacher educators: by analyzing actual teacher education

practices (and not just one's ideals, hopes, or aspirations for practice), we aim to deepen our understanding of why that practice works out the way it does.

Participants in the tetralogue are first of all the teacher educator who performed the self-study in his or her practice and next the facilitators of the overall project. Based on the reports that were published in Dutch (Kelchtermans et al. 2014), we engaged in an analytical conversation looking back on the particular experiences, findings, as well as the development of one's practice as a teacher educator since the moment the project ended.

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The Role of the Teacher Educator During Supervisory Conferences

Eline Vanassche, Ludovicus Beck, Ann Deketelaere, and Geert Kelchtermans

The "Problem" of Supervisory Conferences

Before his retirement, Ludo worked as a teacher educator in the teacher education program of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Leuven for over 10 years. A central component of the program is the student teaching internship. Students run their internship in two different schools. In each school, interns are expected to take responsibility for planning and teaching 20 hours of classes; what and how they teach are determined in close collaboration with the cooperating teacher in the school. Roughly halfway into the internship, Ludo visits his student teachers in schools and observes a lesson. After this lesson, his observations are debriefed in the supervisory conference with the student teacher.

Such supervisory post-observation conferences have been recognized as a cornerstone of the student teaching experience and a distinctive aspect of teacher educators' work, yet it remains one of the most difficult experiences to understand (a.o., Dangel and Tanguay 2014; Valencia et al. 2009). The supervisory conference represents a coming together of two worlds, that is, the goals and ideas of teaching and learning espoused in the teacher education program and those encountered in the field. Research shows that the views of teaching promoted by both worlds and its "representatives" (i.e., the mentor and the teacher educator) often do not align (a.o., Fairbanks et al. 2000; Bullough and Draper 2004). In many ways, the person caught

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in the middle between both worlds is the student teacher, already in a difficult position as both a student and a colleague ("really" teaching "real" students). Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) referred to this situation as the two-world pitfall or the tension between the practices and discourses of the teacher education program and the world of practice.

The two-world pitfall suggests to teacher educators that connecting campus courses and field experiences is not straightforward for student teachers. Overcoming the pitfall requires careful supervision from teacher educators, creating the conditions for student teachers to reflectively confront theory and practice (Zeichner 2010). Yet, past research on supervisory conferences has painted a rather troubled picture of supervision as "directive" and "monologic" on the teacher educator side (e.g., Zeichner and Liston 1985; Dunn and Taylor 1993; Franke and Dahlgren 1996; Ball and Cohen 1999; Zeichner 2005). Franke and Dahlgren (1996), for example, described how teacher educators believed their function was primarily to "serve as a model" and "be a master who corrects" student teachers (p. 631). In a similar vein, Ball and Cohen (1999) argued that the didactic "fault-finding" nature of supervisory conferences does not really help students in identifying for themselves the problems of teaching. They are referring to the often prescriptive and directive discourse in supervisory conferences "dominated mostly by the supervisor showing and telling student teachers about the work of teaching" (Cuenca 2012, p. 21). As a result, the supervision fails to develop the capacity for self-awareness and self-direction of student teachers and thereby fails to promote their full professional development (Zeichner 2005). If one were to judge by current writing on the topic (e.g., Cuenca 2012; Hoffman et al. 2015), supervision is still largely of this type in spite of the good intentions of supervisors.

Ludo's self-study project closely related to these observations from the literature. He has a very clear understanding of what his role should be during post-observation supervisory conferences: facilitating student teachers' self-reflective analysis of their teaching experiences. As a teacher educator, he aims to support this reflective process by asking questions, hopefully resulting in deep learning and professional growth of student teachers (a.o., Stevens et al. 1998; Engelen 2002; Kelchtermans 2009). Yet, in his actual practice, Ludo felt he did not always live up to that ideal and his unease with his enactment of supervisory conferences grew over the years. He noticed how he often switched from his deeply valued reflective approach to a more directive approach or a problem-solving, result-driven, technical debriefing of the lesson. He was taken aback by the "master" in him, who very skillfully and diligently tells the student teacher how to (better) deal with a particular situation. Ludo felt that he lost track of the students' own concerns in his supervision and failed to stay close to their sense-making of their experiences. In his practice, he felt that the "master" often took over control from the supervisor. This unease and his self-critical reflections formed the starting points for Ludo's self-study project.

Conversation: Process, Pitfalls, and Promises

Understanding and Framing the Issue

Ludo: The first thing I did in the project was trying to pin down where exactly that unease or frustration with the "master" came from. I engaged in an autobiographical writing project which deepened my understanding of my frustration (Kelchtermans 2014). The autobiography developed into some sort of a reconstruction of my personal interpretative framework as a teacher educator (Kelchtermans 2009); mapping how my personal beliefs about my task and responsibilities as a teacher educator influenced the ways in which I conducted – or wanted to conduct – supervisory conferences with my student teachers. I learned about the goals, norms, and values that form the basis of my task perception.

   In hindsight I believe the frustration with the master is in part related to my initial training as an educationalist at the University of Leuven several decades ago. The program was grounded in a very person-centered approach to teaching and education. The early 70s, May 68 still simmering, everything which even remotely looked like control or the "old master" was suspicious. What's more is that I participated in an intensive supervision training program in the 90s which firmly anchored a more experiential approach to teaching and learning in my personal interpretative framework. My goal to stimulate student teachers' reflective analysis of their internship experiences – or a more constructivist view of learning – fits all these biographical experiences like a glove. To me, it looked self-evident to conduct supervisory conferences from a more person-centered and constructivist approach. Hence my unpleasant surprise when I was confronted with the master in me.

Geert: At that point, you got a fairly good understanding of where the unease with the master came from, but looking back at the project, we actually spent most of our time discussing the extent to which the role of the master is indeed inferior to that of the coach. Or, put differently, whether your frustration – and the strong feeling of guilt associated with it – was indeed necessary or legitimate.

Ludo: Yes, I remember an intense discussion about this during one of our first research group meetings. I presented to the group what would be the focus of my self-study project. In doing so, I voiced my old sore: my tendency to tell student teachers what to do. Interpreting their experiences for them, rather than helping them to reflectively discover teaching alternatives for themselves. Others joined the discussion and actively started questioning my idea that the master is necessarily detrimental to students' learning. I remember them arguing that I held myself accountable to very high standards and that – depending on student teachers' needs – my more directive approach might actually be very conducive to student learning. I really felt supported by the group.

Eline: To be honest, however, Geert and I also struggled with these interaction patterns from our position as facilitators of the research group. In that meeting, the group communicated feelings of empathy, compassion, and support. Yet, in doing so, they also actually normalized the problem. This notion from the work of Little and Horn (2007) helped us to notice exchanges in the group in which the expressed problem was defined as normal, an "expected" part of supervisory work. That clearly supplied reassurance ("don't be so hard on yourself; it happens to all of us") and very effectively released you from any feeling of guilt. Yet, what was absent from the conversation was critical reflection. In limiting the conversation to expressions of reassurance or sympathy, the conversation turned away from a more in-depth exploration of the problem and any relationship between that specific problem of practice and more general dilemmas or principles of teaching. This turning away also tended to position you as relatively helpless in the face of the problem or a rather passive recipient of advice from others. I'm not arguing that you need self-blame in order to grow and develop professionally, but you do need to critically confront and question your practice as a teacher educator and its intended and unintended effects. In a sense, a tension developed between the safe, collegial format of the research group on the one hand and the critical reflective attitude necessary in self-study research on the other. This pattern is amply documented in the research literature on collegial relations and professional learning communities. One example is Darling's (2001) work on a community of compassion with a focus on support and acceptance at the expense of inquiry and critically challenging one another.

Geert: And while we had already also experienced it in earlier professional development work with teachers and principals, it still struck us to see the phenomenon of normalizing at work in this research group, as well as the fact that it turned out so difficult to overcome without damaging the safe learning climate.

Ludo: I see what you mean. We've discussed this in the focus group interview after the project had ended as well. We had been "kind" to one another. At times, even a bit too kind, I think. And perhaps the real goal of my participation in the project was not so much getting rid of my feelings of guilt or frustration. I really wanted to understand what was actually going on during supervisory conferences and to what extent it was determined by my ways of operating. What's the nature of the interaction and relationship with one's students and its impact on students' learning? What's the role of the supervisor and the master during supervisory conferences?

Eline: That was also the point where you started exploring the research literature on this topic.

Ludo: I did. The research literature helped me even more to put between brackets my frustration but also gave me a language to articulate what actually happens if you conduct supervisory conferences in a specific way and why. It helped me to make explicit the nature of the interaction between the

teacher educator and student teacher and its impact on student learning. The literature allowed me to more precisely identify and describe my personal goals and commitment in facilitating student teacher learning.

I remember, for example, being puzzled by Simons' (2008) plea for the masterful teacher. The mastery of the teacher – he argues – shows in his pursuit of perfection. It's the teacher educator's perfectionism which demands respect and flawless teaching. It's about passion, acceptance, presence, and engagement. The old-fashioned master is enthused by his subject or profession. He uses old-fashioned methods. He explains, tells, gives instructions, corrects, demonstrates activities which are central to my approach in supervisory conferences. Simons' (2008) work truly is an appreciating view of the master.

During the project I also learned about the work of Amanda Berry who actually joined us during one of the research group meetings. Her book *Tensions in Teaching about Teaching* (2007) reports on a number of tensions teacher educators experience in the professional preparation of teachers. One tension she describes is the tension between "telling" and "growth" which is embedded within teacher educators' desire to tell student teachers about teaching hence limiting their opportunities to learn about teaching themselves. Not only was her work pinpointing exactly my struggles in supervisory conferences; what was particularly revealing was her plea for a balance between telling and growth. She doesn't make an a priori judgment on the adequacy of one side of the tension over the other, but one side persistently overruling the other gives you an indication of the need to further explore the tension in your practice. That's exactly the journey I embarked on in this project.

A third important piece of the puzzle was literature focusing specifically on how to facilitate student teachers' learning during internships. I remember, for example, the work of Deketelaere et al. (2004) on "broad and deep" reflection with students, the importance of coaching described by Engelen (2002), and the supervision model developed by Van Looy et al. (2000). I summarized my understanding of this strand of research in three general roles for teacher educators in supervisory conferences: the supervisor, the coach, and the master. In a broad sense, these three roles characterize the nature of the interaction between the teacher educator and student teacher in supervisory conferences. They fall along a continuum of responsiveness of the teacher educator to the expressed and perceived needs of student teachers. At its extreme, the responsive supervisor looks entirely to the student teacher for guidance. The student teacher sets the agenda; the teacher educator merely encourages further reflection through asking questions. At the other side of the continuum, the directive master takes full charge. He sets the agenda and decides how to work on it. The coach sits somewhere in between and seeks to establish a joint ownership for the conversation. The coach connects both ends of the continuum in his learner-centered task perception and his result-driven interventions. This framework not only allowed me to analytically distinguish between different supervisory roles but also again to understand the importance of role alternation as a teacher educator.

This whole process made me refine my normative belief that my directive style was to be avoided at all cost, jeopardizing my constructivist beliefs. Rather,

depending on the goals of the supervisory conference, the characteristics of the situation, and students' learning needs, different supervisory roles – including a more directive one – might actually be more appropriate or effective. The masterful teacher educator says and does the right thing at the right moment.

Eline: That nicely links back to the image of tensions in the work of Berry (2007) you've just referred to. The tension between telling and growth – or any of the other tensions she identifies in her self-study of practice – cannot be solved. Rather, they need to be managed in every single situation. That image of tensions captures the ever-present ambiguity of teacher educators' work. There are no easy, straightforward, clear-cut guidelines in teacher education. Berry's work shows how teaching student teachers means that you manage, often conflicting demands, in a single situation. It's about continuously positioning yourself or taking a stance toward these tensions in your own practice and deciding how to act in it.

Ludo: Exactly. In mapping the different roles for teacher educators in supervisory conferences from the literature and putting together the theoretical framework for my self-study project, I was able to somehow reframe my understanding of my task as a teacher educator and my ideals. Reading about the masterful teacher in the work of Simons (2008) and the tension between telling and growth in Berry's (2007) self-study tempered my aversion toward the master. As a result, I was no longer irritated but got really interested. If one is aware of the different roles a teacher educator can take during supervisory conferences and understand one's own preferences or bias, this could prevent one from freezing into a specific role. As a teacher educator, one needs to be able to easily switch between different roles.

   This insight truly was a milestone in my self-study project. At that point, I also rephrased my research interest. I moved away from wanting to understand the detrimental effects of the master during supervisory conferences to learning about how the supervisor and the master actually outbalance each other during my supervisory work and what impact it had on the nature of the interaction unfolding with student teachers. It was about the extent to which I actually "mastered" the conversation and could easily switch between different roles, depending on the needs of the student and the situation.

Geert: No sign of a theory-practice gap here! Fascinating to see how indeed a careful exploration of the theoretical literature helped you to be more precise and focused in your phrasing of your research interest, making explicit the lens through which you framed your study of practice.

Methodological Choices

Ludo: The next hurdle on the road was operationalizing my research interest and mapping the actual roles I fulfilled during supervisory conferences. Therefore, I decided to video-record supervisory conferences. I checked for permission with my students and recorded eight conferences, which generally lasted about half an hour to an hour max. I had some technical difficulties which resulted in only five recordings being of sufficient quality to be analyzed further. I transcribed each of the five recordings verbatim. This was a very time-consuming yet a deeply humbling and valuable experience from a learning perspective. It literally gave me a mirror into my actions and behaviors in supervisory conferences.

Eline: In that sense, video-recording your supervisory work with students helped to move the discussion away from your ideals or aspirations for practice to actual practice or a move from what you thought you were doing to a better understanding of what is actually happening in supervisory conferences, opening up the tacit, and making sense of the interaction and relationship that develops. This highlights the importance of using data from your actual practices as the starting point for critical and systematic reflection in self-study. Bronkhorst (2013) nicely captures this in her use of the term "mirror data," that is, data that literally "hold up the mirror."

Ludo: In order to prepare the data for further analysis, I divided each transcript of supervisory conferences into different "conversational turns." Each conversational turn constituted one coherent, meaningful message or stance expressed by either the student or me. Then I coded each conversational turn using the key activities of teacher educators during supervisory conferences which I distilled from the research literature (a.o., Engelen 2002; Zuylen 1999; Deketelaere et al. 2004). I coded among other things for giving negative and positive feedback, for analyzing positive and negative feedback (or explaining why something went well or not), for referring back to concrete observed behavior, for active listening, for offering solutions or alternatives, and even for not listening at all. One conversational turn could contain different key activities. Over the five conferences, this process resulted in a total of 302 coded key activities with an average of about 60 key activities per conversation.

Understanding What Happens in Supervisory Conferences and Why

Ludo: To get a first glimpse of the data, I looked at the "hard numbers." I counted the different key activities in each supervisory conference and manually calculated the percentage of the time during which either the student or I

were talking. I considered the speaking time and the distribution of key activities to give a first indication of the different roles I took on during the conversation. I assumed that the more I was speaking, the more the master was present, and the more questions I asked, the more the supervisor was active. As it turned out, I spook for roughly two thirds of the time, but much of my speaking was actually asking questions. So this more quantitative analysis left me still rather clueless about what was actually happening in the conferences. Looking across all five recorded supervisory conferences, it seemed that the key activity "asking questions" was performed most frequently, whereas the key activity "giving positive feedback and encouragement" was performed the least. In going through the numbers, I was also struck by the fact that I found myself having to use the code for non-listening behavior. That was quite confronting at first. Yet, again, I quickly discovered that this in itself isn't very telling. It's not about the percentage of time I speak but about the meaning of what I say, and it's not that much about the number of questions I ask but about understanding the exact nature of those questions and what they did to the student teacher.

Eline: Next, you adopted a more qualitative approach to the data analysis?

Ludo: Yes, I started looking at the exact nature of the questions, the moment in time I asked them and how this either opened up or restricted students' possibilities to analyze their practical experiences themselves. This made me much more aware of the importance of asking the right questions at the right time, inviting students into a rich conversation about alternatives for practice. One specific example that comes to mind is a supervisory conference with a student who held her lesson plan firmly in her hands during class. I told her that I could understand the ways in which the lesson plan offered support but also urged her not to hold onto it in the future because the predetermined plan stands in the way of being present in the situation and responding to any opportunities for interactive engagement with the students that may arise. I didn't just problematize her practice, but also included a suggestion to solve the problem by making the lesson plan more concise but also using a bigger font, so it was easier for her to check it by simply glancing over. Re-listening to that conversation on tape made me understand how the conversation could have unfolded very differently if I would have had started with a simple open question. Why did she hold the paper or felt the need to do so?

I also started looking for patterns within and across the conversations, focusing much more on the nature of the interaction with students. The transcripts showed that I indeed began the conversation from a supervisory role in which I carefully explored student teachers' experiences through asking mostly open-ended questions. Yet, in a matter of minutes, I slipped into a more directive perspective and stayed there for the rest of the conversation. The master clearly showed in the general pattern of key activities in the conversation: from "referring back to concrete

observations" and "giving positive feedback" to "suggesting solutions and alternatives." A supervisory conference typically contained more than five of those suggestions for improving practice. And even when performing the key activity "giving positive feedback," I would usually end my argument with suggestions to make that same behavior even better. I felt compelled to offer my analysis of the situation as well as solutions for improvement. In order to complete that within a short time frame, I had no alternative but to use a "telling" approach: explaining and giving instructions to the student who listens. This pattern also explains the high frequency of "non-listening" behavior on my side.

Eline: There's an interesting paradox showing here. The master with his generous suggestions for improvement communicates a powerful message of involvement and commitment – that you do care about how students perform in classrooms and think about their performance. Yet at the same time, the phrasing also very effectively closes down the reflective process of students. There is a delicate balance between setting the bar too high, stifling rather than supporting learning, or not high enough, communicating disinterest or disengagement from the teacher educator.

Ludo: Exactly, it's again about finding the right balance. It is my responsibility – based on my expertise as a teacher educator – to make a meaningful selection from major and minor areas for improvement.

Geert: So overall, the patterned key activities showing from the data revealed with much more detail the moments when and the effects with which an imbalance between the supervisor and the master developed during the supervisory conferences.

Ludo: Yes. And perhaps most importantly – because I now understood the pattern – the analysis also offered specific clues and suggestions for change and improvement. One example is my decision to limit myself to a maximum of three suggestions for improvement in one supervisory conference. My eagerness to help students by offering them concrete tips and tricks for improvement gradually builds over the conversation to the point that I get so immersed in my argumentation ("telling") that I hardly react on the student's input. The analysis revealed the need to more consciously and sparingly put the master at work in the conversation. Therefore, I decided to limit myself to a maximum of three key points opening up time to jointly analyze the experience with the student and consider alternatives. The key activities "giving feedback," "analyzing feedback" (or explaining why something went well or not), "referring back to concrete, observed behavior," and "suggesting alternatives" should be very tightly connected.

I tried to capture most of my learning points in a conversation guide for supervisory conferences, an instrument to support and control my interventions. Building on my own experiences and the model of Zuylen (1999), I came up with what looked like a check sheet forcing me to think more consciously about what I was doing in the supervisory conferences and why. Recordings of the final supervisory conferences in which I actually started to use the check sheet showed a different interaction

pattern especially during the first part of the conference, yet I still kept slipping into my master modus in the second part.

Eline: Interesting what you describe there. It shows how the actual results in self-study or the knowledge resulting from it cannot be separated from the process of doing the research. You can't hold your practice still while studying it. Engaging in a process of systematic reflection on a problem in practice already changes the very nature of that problem. This is I believe one of the vital strengths of the self-study methodology. The person involved in a self-study of practice gains more understanding throughout the process – although this understanding initially often comes down to a greater awareness of the fact that he/she actually doesn't know the solution or how to explain a situation. Yet, this understanding offers the basis from which to make other choices in practice and change, renew, or improve it.

Promises and Perspectives

Geert: That's quite a turn from the intense frustrations you've started from. How do you look back on the process?

Ludo: I really started my self-study project from a deep unease that I experienced with my practice in supervisory conferences. At a certain point, apparently, I simply cannot contain myself anymore and "whoops," off I go: "I will tell you what that lesson should have looked like." I lost myself in giving tips and tricks. I really didn't feel comfortable in that role anymore.

Eline: And I was amazed by the intensity of those feelings, even now, looking back on your self-study project 7 years later. We've started the project with a double goal: it's about improving practice on the one hand and a better grounded professional knowhow of the work of educating teachers on the other hand. That's also how self-study generally is discussed in the research literature (a.o. Loughran et al. 2004; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015). Yet, your experience in the project shows at least one additional key outcome in self-study, that is, finding some peace of mind thanks to a close analysis of one's practice. Gaining a better understanding of the pitfalls in your supervisory work, realizing that a specific negative judgment of your own expertise is not justified, understanding the unintended side-effects of your approach, etc., it all strengthened your verve and commitment. Exactly the deepened understanding of "the why" of a certain practice – and hence also its shortcomings and imperfections – brought along feelings of recognition and peace. Not the peace of self-righteousness but of inspiration, of the "long haul" and perseverance, starting from the realization that educating teachers how to teach is a complex and risky business that resists full transparency. Not the peace of complacency or the formal

> recognition but the emotional peace resulting from a deeper understanding of the complexity of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher.

That is why self-study research needs to be about "real" questions, issues that do matter and get to you because they go to the heart of the profession: one's personal commitment to providing good – or better – education to student teachers. From such a perspective, self-study research is "organized discomfort" because it involves critically questioning one's practice and one's deeply engrained personal beliefs about teaching.

Geert: By the way, that very nicely illustrates how emotions play their part in self-study (Kelchtermans and Deketelaere 2016). Their intensity and persistence indicated that the questions really mattered to you and to your professional self-understanding as it emerges in your practice. "Reading" and unpacking the frustration and guilt brought you to nailing down what was at stake in this project for you, helping you to phrase your specific research questions and interest.

Ludo: In the final pages of my research report, I quoted one of my favorite children's book, *Ronja the Robber's Daughter*, by Astrid Lindgren (1981), who writes that there's basically no point in walking in a forest if one's learning goal is being mindful of the river. If you want to learn how to deal with the river, you need to explore it and practice close to the most dangerous waterfalls. I guess it's the same with self-study research.

Self-study dissolves the distinction between the research object (the teacher educator and his practice) and the research subject (that same teacher educator who designs and conducts the research). That means it's self-evident that the researcher stumbles over practice – and oneself. That was at times a confronting and disenchanting experience but overall definitely also a very enriching one.

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Teaching as a General Educationist in Physical Education

Eline Vanassche, Koen Kelchtermans, Ann Deketelaere, and Geert Kelchtermans

Introduction

"If you're good at something, if you really master the content, teaching seems to work much better. Students give you the feeling that you have something valuable to offer because you exude expertise. They show interest. It seems like you can only really be a teacher if you're holding expertise in a particular area." These words are taken from the opening paragraph of Koen's self-study research report. Koen is an experienced teacher educator with a background in general education. His students in the teacher education program of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Leuven generally gave him the feeling of "being a teacher" described above, as he used to readily illustrate his courses with "real-life" examples from his own career as a teacher or his experiences as a father. With his students in the bachelor program of physical education at Odisee University College, however, Koen had to come a long way in developing content knowledge. For a few years, he helped his colleagues with the basic motoric skills test during the introductory days for first-year students of the physical education program. The first glimpse students get from him is that of a teacher in sportswear holding a stopwatch. Koen

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enjoys the anticipation with which students look at him, wondering about the quality of their physical performance. When students later ask him curiously about his sports discipline, he notices a sense of disenchantment. "No, I don't have a sports background, I'm an educationist." That very moment, it feels like a myth is being dispelled. It makes Koen wonder about the extent to which he can still be of interest to his students. Does he display enough expertise or *mastery* to be able to teach them?

On a general level, these reflections point to the historically grown tension between general education and subject-specific education in Flemish teacher education (and beyond). Both are included in programs of teacher education but lead relatively separate lives and the experts working within both domains often draw on very different backgrounds and training. Many teacher education programs separate the teaching of subject content from the teaching of pedagogy, with content being delivered by subject specialists and pedagogy by lecturers with a general qualification in education. More than half a century ago, Goodwin (1957), in discussing the need for a department of general education in addition to specialized studies departments, clearly grasped the assumptions underlying this practice. "The [physics] instructor is interested in the student only to the extent that the student is competent in physics. … [S]pecialists reach the student only in terms of their respective fields of study and not in terms of the student as a human being who must cope with adult living" (pp. 251–252). Koen's reflections mirror and extend Goodwin's argument in his hypothesis that student teachers in the physical education program are interested in the teacher educator only to the extent that she/he is competent in sports.

Underlying Koen's reflections about the importance of subject-specific expertise is, however, a more profound concern about his *credibility* as a general educationist teaching in a physical education program. Credibility is a term coming from rhetoric referring to one's authority or rapport with the audience and strategies to strengthen it. McCrosky (1998) defined credibility as "the attitude of a receiver which references the degree to which a source is seen to be believable" (p. 80). Teacher credibility, then, refers to the degree of "believability" of a teacher (Gray et al. 2011). Gray et al. (2011) argue that "a credible teacher is one who is able to explain complex material to students in a way they can understand; who can actually work in (or has worked in) the subject area which he or she is teaching; and who is able to effectively respond to students' questions" (p. 186). What is at stake in Koen's story, from this perspective, is perhaps not that much the relation between general education and physical education, but his credibility as a teacher educator with a general educationist background teaching in physical teacher education. It is about the degree to which physical education students perceive him as someone who knows what he is talking about, someone they are willing to learn from. His concern seems legitimate given Pogue and Ahyun's (2006) argument that "if students perceive their teacher as credible, then the teacher has more influence on them in the creation of understanding" (p. 332). These reflections served as the starting point for Koen's self-study project.

Conversation: Process, Pitfalls, and Promises

Understanding and Framing the Issue

Koen: The goal with my participation in this project was to uncover and enquire the relationship between my beliefs on the one hand and central aspects of my actions as a teacher educator on the other. My beliefs, in short, came down to considering "expertise" in a specific "domain" as a technical precondition to support student teachers' learning in that domain. This revealed itself in my actions as I emphasized my "affinity" with physical education; I hid my background (as a general educationist and not a physical education teacher) and felt disappointed when I was "unmasked"; and I questioned my "mastery" in comparison to the program's subject specialists in physical education. I wanted to learn about the pitfalls and promises of the fact that I'm not as closely related to the domain which incites students' interest as I perhaps would like to be.

Geert: The way you formulate your research interest now symbols your start on a more abstract, contemplative level which has proven to be quite difficult. I remember us persistently insisting on the need to clarify key terms in both the research group meetings and the individual meetings we had the first months into the project. You needed to be much more precise on the exact meaning of terms like "affinity," "student interest," or "domain."

Koen: For that reason, I started looking for concrete situations in which I experienced a meaningful tension around these terms. The tension related to "affinity," for example, showed the moment when students asked about my specialty, the nonverbal gaze of "expectation" accompanying the question, and my interpretation of them somehow being disappointed with my answer. The same tension showed if the cooperating teacher asked about my sports specialty or wondered whether I happened to be a general educationist instead, again a nonverbal gaze suggesting that neither the student nor he himself can learn something from me, the cooperating teacher's distant memories of his own unhappy experiences with the general educationist in his program, his belief that the student teacher in the end – just like he did – will mostly learn from trial-and-error in everyday classroom life, and not from general pedagogical principles or theory. I recognized a tension related to "student interest" in my feeling that student teachers were mostly interested in the domain and not the person of the teacher educator. My assumption that students could only be interested in the teacher educator to the extent that he represents a domain. But also my experience that student teachers toward the end of the program often spontaneously expressed their appreciation for the way I supported them. This led me to believe that I perhaps cannot expect students to be interested in a domain that is "unknown" to them or looks rather "irrelevant" prior to entering teaching practice. Finally, the area of tension related to the

"domain" emerged from my experience that I could only mean something to students of the physical education program as a person and not as a representative of a clearly defined and well-structured domain (like physical education); and the reflection that "being in relation with one's students" could be thought of as a domain in and of itself for which students and cooperating teachers can gradually build interest over time.

The search for conceptual clarification and a clear definition of the focus for my self-study project generated a host of additional questions: to what extent does all of this reflect my own need for control over what interests students or should interest hem? How about my own appreciation of the sports specialist as the representative of a clearly defined domain that I'd like to belong to myself? Does my hypothesis about the importance of sharing a domain with student teachers fit with their experiences?

I continued along these lines until a meeting of the research group in early February – almost half a year into the project – when a colleague presented his work on his self-study project. His presentation left me with rather mixed feelings. On the one hand, it encouraged me in my journey and highlighted the need to systematically map my beliefs and practices. On the other hand, I realized that this project did come with more strings attached than I thought it would. There is an explicit expectation in self-study that you go public with your struggles. There is always someone looking over your shoulder.

Eline: Your feelings show that making public one's self-study of practice is not self-evident, even not in the safe, fairly enclosed environment of the research group meetings. The reason is that those who are responsible for what happens in practice are also those closely studying it, laying bare the basic structures of practice and judging whether or not that practice aligns with what is deemed appropriate or desirable. Self-study concerns practice as *you* envision and enact it. As a teacher educator, one keeps the ownership of the self-study process and hence also the responsibility for one's practice – including its inadequacies, messiness, and challenges. There is a paradox here in that making public one's knowledge and understandings so that others can start to build on, refine, and question it is absolutely vital for the development of the teacher education profession. Yet, this also induces vulnerability on the individual members of that profession who can always be held accountable for their personal and public actions and beliefs (Kelchtermans 2009). Self-study is a long way from the dominant craftsmanship culture in teacher education in which knowledge and reflected experiences are held with the individual teacher educator and transferred locally from one generation to another. Yet, it inevitably involves personal risk, public exposure, and with that also the possibility of public critique (see also Dadds 1993; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015).

Koen: I tried to clarify the focus of my self-study by clearly distinguishing my beliefs about what matters in student teacher learning from what they themselves express is important. I wanted to understand to what or whom

students attribute their learning. I wanted to learn about the qualities of the facilitator they deem critical to open up to and learn from this person. Underlying these questions was the goal to clarify the wonderings I started this project from: is it really impossible to teach and learn about teaching if I'm not an expert in student teachers' domain of interest?

Eline: In trying to reach beyond that rather abstract, contemplative level, we've decided not to explore the research literature as we did in the other self-study projects, but to focus on concrete instances of practice instead.

Koen: Yes. I decided to focus on the supervisory conferences I had with my third-year students in the physical education program during their internship. This was, in part, a pragmatic decision as I had supervisory work planned in the following months anyway, but it was also a deliberate decision as this aspect of my practice revealed with great intensity the tensions I identified – "affinity" with a "domain" that incites students' "interest." I generally held two supervisory conferences with each student teacher over the course of the program year: one after each extended internship. These conferences followed a fixed pattern: students prepare a self-evaluation, starting from an evaluation form that addresses what I consider to be the more technical dimensions of teaching. The same form was used by the teacher educator and the school-based mentor. Furthermore, the student teacher self-selects two concrete situations from practice which she/he reflectively analyzes using Kolb's (1984) reflective learning cycle. Supervisory conferences generally took one and a half up to 2 hours. I recorded a total of 14 supervisory conferences, two for each of the seven students in my group.

Geert: The decision to focus on actual practices was pivotal in that it helped to steer the discussion away from what I would call "abstract wonderment." Not what you hope, plan, expect, or aim to happen was taken as the starting point, but what is actually happening in practice. Carefully mapping what is happening in practice then serves as the basis for answering the questions *why* that might be the case and what you think of that and why. It's not until the third question – what you think of that and why – that your particular normative stances are made explicit, including the goals you strive for, the rationale for your actions, and the deliberations underlying it, as well as the tenability of that rationale.

Eline: There was, I believe, at least one additional reason why I consider the shift toward actual practice to be decisive in your self-study: it forced you to look at the student teacher. Studying teacher education practice is first and foremost studying the relationship and interactions between the teacher educator and student teacher (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2014). While teacher educator professionalism obviously involves knowing one's subject, it also implies particular "working" relationships. Teacher education always occurs under complex relational conditions with students who have their own perceptions of what is happening. More often than not these perceptions do not align with teacher educators' perceptions about what is

happening, but by critically reflecting on it one can work in order to better understand tensions between both and, in the end, better calibrate them. In a similar way, a close and careful analysis of actual practice in self-study opens up a powerful perspective to grow and develop professionally as a teacher educator.

Methodological Choices

Koen: I included students' perspectives not only by focusing on the supervisory conferences but also by planning a series of short, semi-structured interviews with students immediately after the supervisory conferences. I started from the broad question "did you learn something from your internship?" and then explored very concrete *learning moments* with students – those moments when something turns the light on and students genuinely have the feeling of learning. I was interested in finding out what exactly happened in these learning moments and what factors contribute to or are necessary for learning moments to occur. Given the wonderings I started my self-study from, I also asked specifically about the role of the teacher educator in creating these learning moments in the interviews. I asked what students expected to learn from a teacher educator and if they would be able to learn from, for instance, a colleague specialist in English language teaching visiting them during their internships. Yet, the latter question, in hindsight, inadvertently let students to confirm the importance of a background in physical education.

   After checking for permission with my students, I audio-recorded each interview and then transcribed it word by word. I roughly organized the data in three main categories: (a) defining characteristics of a learning moment, (b) aspects that turn a context into a learning context, and (c) aspects that turn a teacher educator into someone student teachers can – and are willing to – learn from. Then within each category, I would summarize the primary content of a specific interview fragment with a code.

Eline: In technical terms, you engaged in a process of descriptive coding because it essentially involved summarizing what was in the transcripts (Saldaña 2012). This descriptive approach can easily be explained by the decision to start collecting data from your practice early on in the process to get a clearer understanding of your research focus, rather than exploring the research literature. Yet, you quickly discovered the need to integrate the data rather than summarizing it and finding an analytical framework that has the explanatory power to do so.

Koen: Yes, a comment made during one of the research group meetings inspired me to recode the data for signs of the technical, emotional, moral, and political dimensions of teacher development (Hargreaves 1995; Kelchtermans 2009). From there, I built my argument.

Understanding Student Teacher Learning

Koen: Contrary to my initial belief, student teachers not only referred to knowledge or skills specific to the domain of physical education when asked what they learned from their internships. They also emphasized learning about, for example, differences in pupils' level of understanding and the need to adjust, accommodate, and differentiate accordingly; the tension between sticking to the plan and being responsive to opportunities that arise in the classroom; the importance of a good relationship with the pupils that have been entrusted to one's care; and the understanding of the "pedagogue" inherent in any teacher or learning about their own need to control what happens in the classroom and the high demands they make of themselves. Student teachers' concrete examples showed that they did not describe their learning and development in mere *technical* terms.

Geert: This finding nicely links back to your second round of coding for the technical, moral, political, and emotional dimensions of teaching. My work (e.g., Kelchtermans 2009) on teacher development indeed suggests that good teaching is not only a matter of mastering the technical skills of teaching or knowing what to teach and how to teach it. Teacher development also involves issues of moral purposes, political awareness and acuity, and emotional engagement with the work. It touches upon the teacher as a person, influences one's long-term commitment to the profession, and impacts on the contexts in which teachers teach. These moral, political, and emotional dimensions in teacher development are less well understood and perhaps also less widely practiced in teacher education, making it a highly interesting frame for analyzing your data.

Koen: The importance of the moral, political, and emotional dimensions of teaching showed even more after students' second internship. Explanations are manifold, including my hypotheses that the students perhaps already had mastered those more technical aspects of teaching by the time I interviewed them the second time well into the final months of the program, the fact that their second internship related more closely to the grade level these students would work in upon graduation, or perhaps a slightly different phrasing of questions in the second interview.

Eline: I think, for the most part, it shows that student teachers do not passively receive or experience learning, but actively make sense of the experiences they encounter in their internships and the meaningfulness of these experiences to their development as a teacher.

Koen: The same holds for student teachers' perceptions of conditions deemed vital for learning during internships. Again, I all too easily assumed that students would mainly refer to domain-specific factors and conditions, such as the need for adequate equipment in the gym or the availability of a swimming pool with sufficient depth to practice diving. Yet, not all elements that students brought up during the interviews could be placed under

the domain-specific header. Student teachers again referred to more general characteristics, including being granted opportunities to explore and experiment with new things, to take initiative themselves, or the importance of adequate support in the school environment. Interestingly, they also spontaneously referred to the presence of a facilitator, a cooperating teacher or teacher educator who demonstrates, shows, directs, explains, and gives feedback, someone who serves as a model for practice – be it best or worst practice.

Eline: That brings us to the core of your self-study project: trying to uncover teacher educator qualities that student teachers deem critical for their learning, including the relevance of being closely related to the domain which incites students' interest.

Koen: That was my core research question: is domain-specific expertise necessary in order to be or become a legitimate facilitator of student teachers' learning and development? Surprisingly enough, student teachers spontaneously referred to characteristics that were both domain-specific and domain-general. They highlighted the importance of someone with clear and convincing expertise in a specific domain, but also someone they feel "connected" with, who takes into account their position as an "intern," who positively reinforces them but also critically challenges them, someone who is present and approachable and gives them the feeling of "being seen and heard." When I asked them specifically about the necessary background and training of this person, they would confirm my hypothesis in that they put most trust in a cooperating teacher or teacher educator who is or has been a physical educator himself. After pushing them a bit further and asking if they could learn something from someone who doesn't have a background in physical education, they indicated they could surely learn relational and communication matters from this person, yet they would also look at that person's feedback with a critical eye. I remember an interview with one student teacher saying that he of course would learn a lot about how to relate to children, yet he would put aside any sport-specific comments if he knows this person lacked a sports background. It looks like asking the question explicitly pushed students to confirm the importance of a background in physical education.

Eline: I think the interviews mainly showed that a strict distinction between facilitating what to teach (subject) and how to teach it (pedagogy) is neither possible nor desirable in teacher education. Being actively involved and present in the situation with one's student teachers is essential to facilitating their learning.

Geert: It also very much shows that learning moments for student teachers are not confined to being offered "tips and tricks" that are directly applicable to their practice – again representing a move away from a mere technical focus on learning to teach.

Promises and Perspectives

Eline: Mapping the dissonance between what you thought was important on the one hand and what the interviews and recorded supervisory conferences revealed about what was actually important on the other, acted as an important stimulus for reflection, thereby also opening up alternative possibilities for your actions and practice. Yet, that was exactly the point where your thoughts again shifted toward a more contemplative level.

Koen: Yes, I went back to the literature, resulting in a number of new connections and understandings. In his work on the *masterful* teacher, for example, Simons (2008) distinguishes between the "contemporary" and the "uncontemporary" master. The main trust of the contemporary master is knowledge. He is someone who possesses knowledge in a specific subject or discipline and is also equipped with all the necessary pedagogical knowledge to impart that knowledge on students or support them in developing that knowledge themselves. It is knowledge which lends the contemporary teacher his authority. Simons (2008), however, also describes the teacher in different – "uncontemporary" – terms, inviting us to look at ourselves in different ways and somehow reinvent ourselves. The uncontemporary master is not just knowledgeable about something, but actually cares about it and is actively engaged in it. Simons uses yet another uncontemporary term to explain this relationship with the subject: devotion or "love." The masterful teacher gives himself over to physical education in a particular way, or to pedagogy, or to any other subject. He is inspired by his subject, is devoted to it, and admires it. He does not lend his authority from knowledge of the subject, but by his particular engagement with the subject and the way in which he is present in what he does and says. It is precisely this interested, committed, caring engagement on the part of the masterful teacher that enables him to relate to and inspire his students. In this sense, the masterful teacher knows very well that "love for the subject" cannot be forced. He can tell, correct, give instructions, require perseverance from students, and ask them to practice, but this is nothing more than an offer to students, inviting them to get engaged themselves. It's about nurturing the conditions to lose track of time, being present in what you do. This is exactly the meaning of what Simons called the teacher's *mastery*.

Eline: Simons' (2008) argument casts a very different light on the importance of knowledge of the physical education domain for your practice as a teacher educator.

Koen: Yes, his plea for the masterful teacher renewed my understanding of "expertise" and "competence" of a teacher educator. It's not sheer knowledge or competence that guarantees expertise or mastery, but presence, care, devotion, and commitment. Showing this commitment to students is exactly what lends the teacher educator his authority, not the amount of knowledge he possesses. This approach really helped to put into perspec-

tive my preoccupation with "being a physical educator" myself and, in a sense, also mirrors the findings from the interviews with students.

Eline: Simons' (2008) work also reminds me of a blog post from Weimer (2014) discussing a short essay of Reinsmith (2003) on the "quiet wonders" of learning moments and what nurtures them. Learning moments cannot be summoned – even not by the most outstanding educator. At the very best, teachers can create a context conducive for these learning moments to occur. It's about letting go what we thought was important, avoiding rigidity, being present, and surrendering to what Reinsmith called the "serendipitous" nature of learning moments. It's about "living on the balls of one's feet" as a teacher or expecting the unexpected. Reinsmith's choice of words resembles closely Simons' (2008) plea for letting go of control and being present in what one says and does, but also his argument for authenticity in the relationship with students where one responds with care and commitment to students and their learning.

Koen: A second eye-opener was the way Cornelissen (2008) speaks about equality. When questioning the extent to which I – a general educationist teaching in physical education – am equal to my colleagues specialized in physical education, I think of equality as a "state." This stimulates me to reduce this apparent state of inequality as far as possible, aiming to become my colleagues' equal. In a similar way, the student teacher is put in a state of inequality for as long as he lacks the same qualities or characteristics as my colleagues. From this perspective, when asked about my sports discipline, I used to feel frustrated as my main goal was to be equal to the physical education specialist. Something I am obviously not. As long as I question student teachers' willingness to learn from someone who doesn't have a background in physical education, I urge them to think and act in terms of equality as a state.

Cornelissen (2008), however, puts forward an alternative interpretation of the term equality. It concerns equality not as a state, but as an assumption which we can act upon. If I apply this interpretation of equality to my own practice, it refers to creating a safe, inviting sports context for young children. It's about a commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle among children. This concern I share with my student teachers, the cooperating teachers in schools, and my colleagues with a physical education training in the program. In that respect we are all equals. From such an assumption of equality we can act together and meet one another in the workplace, during internships, where this joint commitment unfolds itself.

Again, there's no need for me to be a specialist in physical education, nor should I want to be. Rather, it's about my willingness to be present in the context to which the student teacher is exposed and about communicating commitment through my actions in this context. It's not that much a concern about the student as a person, but a concern about delivering good physical education which I share with my students and in which we are equal to one another.

Geert: In the closing section of your research report, you also drew very convincing parallels between teaching in teacher education and handling horses.

Koen: As I work with horses in my leisure time a lot, it looks like horses provided me with understanding as well. Numerous books have been written about the interaction between horses and men. One particularly revealing theory is that of Klaus Hempfling (2002) who posits that the nature of the relationship between a horse and a man is key if you want to interact safely with that horse and teach it something. The right kind of relationship, according to Hempfling, relies on dominance and trust. Those who dominate the horse are those who are loved by the horse and granted trust by it. Dominating is not about using force. Hempfling doesn't even pull the rein. He stands still in a particular place with the horse and shows the horse what he would like it to look at. Clear, unambiguous, and dominant behavior, showing one's personality and relinquishing any sight of anger or irritation, these are the qualities that leave the horse in awe. My own experiences with horses confirm Hempfling's (2002) theory and cut across the lines of thought in my self-study project. Student teachers are willing to learn from someone who looks worthwhile to them. Let me just read a short fragment from the journal I kept during my self-study in which I gave meaning to this experience.

"A horse won't get used to traffic by leading him out to the meadow and let him stand there by himself along the side of the busy road. He might get used to the noise of cars passing by, but will not be able to trust cars. By looking together with the horse at cars passing by, the horse learns to trust cars from the way in which I remain calm while being surrounded by the noise. This requires that I'm present with the horse in the very context to which the horse is exposed. I don't need to look like a horse or pretend to be one that very moment. As long as I'm 'worthwhile' in the horse's eyes, dominate the horse, and hence give him trust, he will learn from me. It's not 'being a horse' that we share, but the willingness to be in a safe environment in which we can both grow and develop. It reminds me of the student teacher during his internship who doesn't want to learn from a teacher educator or cooperating teacher who doesn't even look when the student is teaching, just a priori assumes 'it's okay', or is mainly looking for improvement in areas where the student teacher doesn't look like himself yet."

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Internship Assignments as a Bridge Between Theory and Practice?

Eline Vanassche, Elien Peeters, Ann Deketelaere, and Geert Kelchtermans

Introduction

Elien holds a master's degree in educational sciences and works as a teacher educator in the bachelor program of early childhood education at Thomas More University College since 2006. She is responsible for the supervision of student teachers during their internships in the second year of the program. She also delivers several campus-taught courses on pedagogy in which students get the theoretical and practical-educational tools they "need" during their internship. Elien's self-study project is rooted in some frustrating experiences in her role as the internship coordinator. Year after year, she noticed that student teachers did not make use of the conceptual frameworks and tools from the theoretical courses in the program during their internship practice. "You go to great lengths to tell student teachers how to teach and yet they are not able or willing to translate those insights into their practice." Elien's despair clearly refers to the old and persisting problem of the gap between theory and practice in teacher education.

The theory-practice gap has been ever-present in the literature on teaching and teacher education (e.g., Shulman 1998; Kelchtermans 2003; Korthagen 2007). Student teachers experience a disconnection between the campus-taught courses and the practice in schools. This disconnection stems in part from incongruence

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between student teachers' concern to learn the technical skills required for teaching while efficiently managing their students' classroom behavior on the one hand and teacher educators' focus on understanding foundational theory and pedagogy on the other hand (McDonough 2012). As a result, student teachers are biased toward learning about theory that is directly applicable to their own classroom practice, with "applicability" referring to theory that can be readily used as a classroom intervention. As Virginia Richardson (1996) observed, student teachers' interest is mainly in "the recipe" for how to teach or acquiring and practicing the technical, managerial skills of (student) teaching rather than theoretical depth and reflection.

What's more is that the disconnection between theory and practice is not limited to the student teaching experience, but extends into the early years of teaching. This is well documented by the strand of research studies demonstrating the phenomenon of the *praxis shock* faced by beginning teachers. Not only do graduates of teacher education appear to struggle during their first years in the profession (Veenman 1984), but insights gained during teacher education are also largely "washed out" (Zeichner and Tabachnick 1981) by the demanding reality of everyday classroom life, again raising questions about the transfer from theory presented in teacher education to actual practice in schools (Cole and Knowles 1993; Korthagen et al. 2006). Beginning teachers seem to revert back to their initial, often less refined, ways of teaching (e.g., Wideen et al. 1998) and reject reflection and theoretical depth (e.g., Cole 1997).

One measure to "bridge" the theory-practice gap adopted in many teacher education programs is creating structured assignments that student teachers are expected to implement and analyze during internships. Assignments are designed to encourage students to study their teaching practice and reflectively connect the frameworks from theoretical courses with what happens in schools (Kelchtermans 2003). This approach is also adopted in the Thomas More teacher education program. Based on the content of his/her course, every teacher educator teaching in the second year of the program develops an assignment in order to support the transfer from theory to practice by integrating both. However, more often than not, student teachers execute these assignments as routinized tasks, reducing the value of reflection on practice to the need to complete the assignment and "move on" with "what really matters," that is, doing the practice of the internship. This observation connects to Gore and Zeichner's (1991) comment that "(student) teachers see all 'assignments' as peripheral to the central task of learning to teach through practical classroom experience" (p. 126). As a result, it "is just another task to be completed" (Loughran 2017, p. 77). Student teachers do not seem to get the purpose of the assignments to actually contribute to the improvement of their own practice or situation. These observations formed the starting point for Elien's self-study project.

Conversation: Process, Pitfalls, and Promises

Understanding and Framing the Issue

Elien: How often does one get the opportunity to work on a project that allows for scrutinizing one's own practice, goals, and beliefs? It was such a great opportunity to actually get the time to do this as – like most teacher educators – some frustration had built up inside over the years. Year after year, my observation was that students do not make use of the frameworks and tools from the theoretical courses during their internship. As a result of this frustration, we began to direct students more explicitly in making the transfer between theory and practice, by sending them off to do their internships with a pile of compulsory assignments. Students would enter their internship with roughly 20 different assignments, ranging from observation exercises to designing and executing active interventions in their classroom practice. Despite our continuous efforts to refine these assignments, to control their actual implementation, and to insist that the collaborating teachers (school-based mentors) would give feedback on the assignments, I had this gnawing feeling that the assignments completely missed their purpose. Student teachers did not understand how the assignments were designed to actually contribute to the improvement of their own practice or situation. We failed to encourage them to reflectively connect theory with what happens in their classroom and school practice. This resulted in a number of critical questions at the start of my self-study project: Why do I think it's better to have students complete assignments during their internship? Does it support their development into expert professionals? Or do I turn them into executors instead? Is this what I aim for?

Geert: Looking back, it seems like your goals with this self-study project were twofold. On the one hand, you wanted to deepen your knowledge of the transfer process of theory to practice, based on a review of the research literature. On the other hand, you had that very real practical concern of how to better support student teachers in actually making the transfer.

Elien: That second more practice-focused question was my priority from the very start of the project. That was the question I wanted to tackle. I just wanted to get on with it, doing and changing stuff… Yet, during our research group meetings I was reminded about the importance of having well-articulated research questions. I learned about the criteria for "good" research questions: choose something that's not too big but make it small and concrete so that it is actually possible to study it; make sure the question is a real one – one that doesn't already contain the answer; make it feasible to accomplish within the half day a week I've received for participating in this project.

Eline: We did spend quite a bit of time working on the research questions during the group meetings. From the very first meeting in September 2009 until the meeting in early January 2010, the emphasis was on clarifying the

research interest for the individual self-study projects. In order to see the forest for the trees in self-study, one needs to have a clear understanding of its focus and to be able to translate it into precise, workable research questions. Research questions help to distinguish between relevant and less relevant research literature, but also to decide on what data to collect and how to analyze them. As facilitators, we became much more aware of the high demands this implies for self-study researchers. We had somewhat underestimated how difficult it was to be patient and to control that urge to act and to improve. As you said, you had a hard time holding your horses; you just wanted to get started.

Geert: Yes, we noticed a tension was building between the two agendas in the project with neither these agendas nor the tension always being made explicit enough. The need for problem-solving and action was at odds with our emphasis on the particularities of the context and the systematic reflection as the basis for the process as well as becoming aware of and making explicit the deeply held beliefs and assumptions of the personal interpretative framework (Kelchtermans 2009) that guided teacher educators' thinking and practice. The reflective attitude necessary for this type of research and its slow, technical, and time-consuming character often did not align with what you're used to in your practice, nor in the culture of the program which focused less on research but much more on teaching practice. On top of that, there were your pressing concerns about daily practice.

Elien: Yes, that sounds familiar. My interest in participating in this project was first and foremost practical: I wanted to optimize students' learning processes and tackle the problems in my own practice – and beyond that, those of my colleagues in the program. These things were begging for a solution. From this motivation I had chosen to enter the project. Still I managed to clearly define the research questions for my self-study of practice. First, I wanted to know if the goal with these assignments – strengthening students' learning in practice by integrating it with theory – was actually realized in practice. Second, I wanted to learn about students', mentors', and teacher educators' perceptions about the assignments. Finally, I also wanted to understand the different factors influencing the impact of assignments on students' internships or the perceived lack thereof.

Geert: So you did start with exploring the research literature?

Elien: Yes. I had some useful theoretical building blocks from my own training as an educationalist and I had worked on several educational research projects at university before. I also started searching on Google Scholar. This was an extremely informative step in my self-study. As a teacher educator, I generally do not take the time to explore literature which is not immediately practice-related. Since my graduation from university, I had spent very little time reading what researchers had found out and published about practical issues I was struggling with. I simply did not think of international research publications as relevant sources to solve – or better understand – my daily concerns. Having the time and being stimulated to

do so was definitely a beneficial experience in this project. Also more general, if one wants to do self-study and to be professional as a teacher educator, one just needs to allow enough time to engage with relevant theoretical frameworks and research results.

Eline: Could you give an indication of the sort of literature you drew upon in your self-study research?

Elien: Korthagen's (1998) description of the deductive paradigm in teacher education was very insightful. Teacher educators working from a deductive paradigm are convinced that their campus-taught courses offer the theory that students then will apply in practice. The "theory-into-practice" principle seems clear-cut: urging students to integrate the curriculum content from teacher education with internship practice and using assignments to accomplish this transfer. Korthagen, however, questions the tenability of this paradigm. He argues that research extensively shows that what we – teacher educators – consider useful theory is hardly used by student teachers or graduates from teacher education. One reason is that students can only learn something – or *want* to learn something – if they experience a real need to do so. That closely mirrored my observations in practice: students need to work on assignments that they feel are not explicitly tied to their learning when they are practicing as a teacher. Furthermore, the pile of assignments is just too big. The sheer workload it requires, turns it into just another series of tasks to be completed for the program. As a consequence, we are actually achieving the opposite of what we are striving for. We create students that are mainly focused on "getting the job done," rather than feeling engaged in complex processes of professional learning and development. The paradox here is that we stimulate dependence rather than professionalism. This is not to say that theory is redundant in teacher education, nor that we should facilitate students' learning building only from the "real" problems they experience in practice. Having theoretical knowledge from which to read, interpret, and make sense of a situation before deciding on the most appropriate way to act in it is indeed essential for good teaching (Kelchtermans 2009). Theory without practice is useless, but the reverse is at least equally disastrous. The challenge here is to make sure that theory and practice continuously interact, strengthen, and challenge one another and that the student teacher actively realizes that interaction.

A second important building block was literature on the (in)significance of directing learning through assignments. Ten Dam and his colleagues (2004) emphasize the importance of finding a balance: the more superfluous direction from our part, the less chance for deep learning by students. We come up with thoughtfully designed, detailed assignments to direct the learning process of students, wanting to make sure that they use the right set of "glasses" to look at practice. We want to ensure that their internship learning environment is sufficiently rich. Yet, Geldens' (2007) book on *Learning to teach in a work-based learning environment* made it very clear that learning environments are only sufficiently rich if they align with the needs

and capabilities of the individual learner, allowing for a variation in learning strategies and inviting active behavior. While reading Geldens' work, I found myself questioning the extent to which our assignments actually aligned with students' learning needs. In the way students completed the assignments it became apparent that, to them, it was not about the envisaged learning, but rather about meeting the formal requirements of the program, without understanding the purpose of the assignments or their relation with their own practice situations. I realized that the assignments tended to prioritize curriculum content *over* students' learning needs.

Eline: But the conclusion did not have to be that we should abolish assignments all together?

Elien: Not really. De Bie and De Kleijn (2001), for example, convincingly argue that the content of assignments is crucial: poor assignments result in poor direction of learning. The content of the assignment should mirror authentic professional practice and also appeal to students' independence and motivation. Student teachers need to be able to regulate and to plan their own work. I've found an additional piece of the puzzle in Ten Dam et al.'s (2004) handbook for teachers and teacher educators. They make a classification of different sorts of self-directedness: result-driven, approach-driven, problem-driven, responsibility-driven, and criterion-driven self-directedness. From their work I understood how the assignments I developed from my methods course can be seen as encouraging result-driven self-directedness. I not only set and formalized the task goals, but also prescribed how to work on them. Thinking of assignments in a different way could allow us to address different sorts of self-directedness with student teachers. If one wants to support their development toward professionalism, we could ask student teachers to specify the criteria that their assignment should meet, have them self-assess the necessary qualities of the execution, and decide when the result meets the standards and how they want to be held accountable for that. So, what we are actually aiming for in the program is much more the criterion-driven self-directedness Ten Dam referred to.

Geert: That's a valuable finding in itself already. Drawing on research-based concepts, you managed to critically reread your practice and rephrase much more precisely what you were aiming at. Actually, it is a nice illustration of theory-practice integration on your part!

Eline: In the final report of your self-study, you intertwined the research literature with excerpts from the reflective journal you kept during the project. It seemed that the literature resonated strongly with your own experiences and allowed you to more precisely understand what was happening with these assignments in practice and why.

Elien: The theory came alive in my journal reflections. In the end, I also decided to use the reflective journal writing as an important source of data for my study while being really hesitant about its "objectivity" and usefulness at first.

Methodological Choices

Eline: Perhaps we could explore the methodology of your self-study project further. What was the nature of the data you drew on in your study?

Elien: I combined several sources of data trying to capture the perspectives of the different stakeholders involved in the process. My reflective journal writing – containing my own perspective – was complemented by interviews with student teachers, school-based mentors, and my colleagues in the second year of the program. I also included the finalized assignments student teachers had handed in after their internships. Finally, I videotaped the internship meetings we had with the teacher educator team and the pre-internship sessions in which I explained the purpose of the assignments to student teachers as part of my role as the internship coordinator.

    The interviews and video observations were converted to textual data by transcribing them word by word which forced me to be precise. Staying close to the words of respondents was extremely valuable in that it helped me to bracket my own preliminary interpretations, yet it was also a very time-consuming process. Once I had all the data in place, I started coding with codes derived from the theoretical framework. Having organized my data this way, I spent most of my time during the second project year analyzing the data. The time earmarked for my participation in this project was limited to half a day a week. That clearly wasn't enough, and it also turned out to be difficult to claim and to protect this time as my work was often interrupted by last-minute issues interfering with this project on the long run. Nevertheless, that half a day a week remained my point of reference, and I regularly blocked a few days in my calendar to catch up if I hadn't been able to work on this for some time. I also felt supported by the fact that this was a formal and recognized part of my appointment as a teacher educator – however limited it was – making me feel responsible for actually delivering a decent study.

Eline: Project funding was used to buy out 10% research time from your daily job, allowing you to legitimately make time – or if necessary to demand time – for your study. That formal exemption from your job turned out to be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to actually preserve enough time to work on your self-study project. In a sense this relates back to the urgency of daily practice which seems to push the research agenda into the background.

Geert: Having enough time in longer consecutive periods to design and analyze a self-study project is not only an important practical condition for the quality of that research, but also has a strong *symbolic* meaning. Self-study research demands a lot of time and energy from the researcher as well as the need to put yourself and your own practice at risk. If these efforts are met from the institute – for instance, by making sure you have enough time to work on this – this also reads as an explicit recognition and appreciation for all the hard work. This appreciation is extremely important for sustaining the motivation necessary to continue and complete such a project.

Understanding the (Unintended) Effects of Internship Assignments

Elien: Exactly. Analyzing the data involved a lot of hard work behind the scenes, making the support from my institute and colleagues all the more important. Luckily, even with the need for reflection and refraining from making immediate changes to practice, my self-study project had large face validity with and an immediate link to not only my own practice, but also that of our program as a whole. Eventually, this study provided us with solid ground to understand how our internship assignments were actually operating in practice and why that might be the case.

   The interviews with my colleagues and the video observations of our team meetings, for instance, showed that not everyone is so convinced of the value of these structured assignments in helping student teachers transfer theory into practice. To put it simply, we realized that our motivation to come up with assignments actually reflected a mistrust of their ability or willingness to connect theory and practice on their own. The very detailed instructions telling student teachers what they should do stem from our task perception that we need to direct their learning. We aim to deliver graduates who know how to deal with practice, yet paradoxically emphasize "executing" and "showing" over "thinking" and "reflecting." In doing so, very limited attention is paid to student teachers' learning processes. I remember one colleague who very honestly revealed her concerns to me in one of the interviews. She indicated how she not only set the goals of the assignment but also prescribed how student teachers should work on it. This inadvertently pushes them toward seeking recognition, asking questions such as "is this enough?". Analyzing our own teacher education practices made it very clear how we unknowingly situated ourselves in Korthagen's (1998) deductive program as the providers of theory. Looking at the curriculum, we invested quite a lot of time doing exactly this: providing theory; that's our key task. Not?

Geert: That's one way to look at it. I think your analysis also shows something else: the hidden curriculum in the content and form of training artifacts. Your analytic description of the messages that were conveyed through the content and form of the assignments, as well as them contradicting the explicit goals and mission of the program, is very powerful. It illustrates a critical reflection that is too often missing in our educational practices. We design particular artifacts – tools, instruments, forms, assignments, and procedures – for which we can give good reasons and provide a rational account. Yet, we fail to follow up and monitor what the implicit messages are in them, how those messages are being read, and – eventually – determine the actual outcomes of the artifacts. A critical analysis and monitoring of the implicit messages in form and content is essential if we want to understand how they work out in practice. Interesting lessons can be

learned here from the research on the implementation of educational reforms. The innovative ideas are often transformed into instruments to be used in practice, but their actual use is almost never in line with the design. In a recent study on the documents used for information transfer about pupils when they moved from one school to another (Vermeir et al. 2017), we identified different configurations in the artifact's use. Some users did more; others did less than what was envisaged. The message shouldn't be that we can't use the tools anymore, but rather that we always need to monitor and evaluate how they are being used and why.

Elien: Good point. That also became apparent in the data from student teachers that tended to confirm my analysis of the unintended side effects of our rather directive approach. They indicated how their commitment focused on "ticking off" the assignments rather than their content or relevance. Not reflecting on and learning from experience was important, but "making sure we get it right from the first time." The time pressure associated with the enormous amount of assignments also clearly didn't help here.

Eline: Student teachers' language indicates that they tend to make a sharp distinction between "learning to teach" and "doing the assignments." The connection between assignments and practical experiences seemed completely lost. They fail to see the purpose of these assignments as facilitating their learning from experience. Because of that, they do not integrate the frameworks from the theoretical courses – the rationale underlying the assignments – with their practical experiences. It's just another thing to submit for approval. In terms of positioning theory, this way, they are positioned or position themselves as executors of administrative assignments, rather than as reflective practitioners, although the latter was the purpose (Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2014).

Elien: I also learned from the interviews with student teachers that the strict operationalization of the assignments seemed to be a crucial factor in this. They indicated that the excessive formalization of the assignments meant that a lot of learning opportunities were missed or simply not offered to them. We pretty much predefined and structured the assignments and how to work on it, leaving student teachers little room for a more personal approach, while they thought it might be a lot more meaningful and also motivating if they could propose themselves meaningful learning activities or modify the work. Illustrating yet another of the hidden curriculum messages included in the assignments…

Geert: How did the experiences in the team and student teachers' experiences match those of school-based mentors?

Elien: Mentors weren't necessarily opposed to mandatory assignments during school placements, but they had some concerns about the ways in which student teachers dealt with them. In their view, students didn't really understand the purpose or relevance of the assignments which meant that they worked on the assignments fairly isolated from their internship. They did not integrate the assignments with classroom practice: they copied the

examples they got from mentors or in teacher education without thinking critically about what's important or how they could meaningfully combine multiple assignments in one activity.

Eline: So talking with colleagues, mentors, and student teachers seemed to support your hypothesis that the impact of internship assignments – that is, a real reflective integration of curriculum content and experiences in practice – was rather limited. The agenda dominating the process was one of "How can I make sure to finish all assignments as efficiently and quickly as possible?" without being conscious of the learning processes that could result from it. Your analysis also opened up a number of factors influencing – or in part explaining – the impact of assignments or relative lack thereof. The analysis made c+lear that a lot depends on the content of the assignments, adequate support, and the workload experienced by student teachers and teacher educators. The real question then is perhaps not if we should have assignments or not, but rather what kind of assignments, how they should be supported, and how contextual constraints like time pressure add to an already complex picture?

Elien: In that sense, the interview analysis very much confirmed what I'd learned from the literature. It's essential to monitor the number of assignments, but perhaps more importantly to make sure the content of the assignments isn't too concrete or too directive. In overly defining what, where, and how student teachers should complete an assignment, we stimulate what Ten Dam et al. (2004) labeled as a technical, result-driven self-directedness from students, actually jeopardizing their creative and professional development.

The importance of adequate support you've mentioned is again something that was underscored in the theoretical framework, but the program clearly fell short here at the time of the research, both from student teachers' and mentors' perspective. The limited support could be explained by practical-organizational issues, but also by circumstances and practices which had grown in our program historically. For instance, the internships in the second year are scheduled directly before the exams, usually leaving us no time to really reflect back on the experience with student teachers. In the rare cases we had the time, the priority focus was not really on the theory-practice transfer. We basically spent one hour discussing in the larger group which haunting experiences they brought from their internship. Most often, this had something to do with problems in classroom management, rarely with theory. If we don't make an explicit effort to connect theory and practice in the program after the internships ourselves, we shouldn't be surprised that – if confronted with a friction between theory and practice – student teachers will all too easily conclude that the theory is wrong and doesn't work. Engaging in a thorough reflection on why that might be the case is something they need to learn. One element for that would be us modeling it in the way we set up debriefing meetings.

Another finding that really made me fall quiet is that we ourselves, as teacher educators, contribute to the appearance and the persistence of the

problems we were trying to solve. First of all, like my colleagues, I struggled with the high workload limiting my opportunities to deeply reflect on what I am doing and why. In a sense, I ran into the same problem as my student teachers: critical reflection is difficult under time pressure. A second intriguing factor is one's confidence in the work from the past. It would be certainly not true to say that we critically reexamined the assignments each year. We do things because we have been doing it for years, yet a thorough reflection on *why* we do things the way we do it is absent. Having student teachers complete the assignments seemed more important than reflecting on experience. As a result of this project, I had the impression that I was not the only one starting to realize that the guidance through and control over the assignments was too extensive and that the organization of the course schedule simply didn't leave enough time to reflect on what was learned.

Promises and Perspectives

Eline: In that sense, your self-study reads as a powerful example of how individual professional development can also serve as a catalyst for organizational development. One of our starting principles in designing the facilitation trajectory for this project was that sustainable professional development of the individual teacher educator needs to go hand in hand with the development of the working conditions in his/her institute as an organization. So although professional development is largely an individual process, it always occurs in the local context of a specific institute (with its own emphasis, priorities, mission statement, a curriculum through which to implement it, administrators involved in enforcing it, student teacher population, etc.). Hence the goal of this self-study project was not only contributing to the improvement of the practices of the participating teacher educators (building on the findings from their research), but eventually also that of the teacher education institute as a whole. A major element in strengthening the connection between individual and organizational development was trying to raise awareness of the fact that the working conditions in the organization have a major impact on what one does – or can do – as a teacher educator in one's practice. In doing so, we also avoided the pitfall of individual guilt ("things are not going well because I personally fall short or fail"). In the end, we wanted this project to also contribute to the professional development of colleagues who didn't participate and develop a basis for the actual implementation of the findings of the research in the participating institutes.

Elien: We were very much aware of the need for collaboration and dialogue in the program. We had plenty of formal meetings, including staff meetings with everyone who takes on a role during internships. Each year we would have the same discussion about how we could make sure student teachers

do "better" at their internships. Yet, it struck me that no one during this meeting – myself included – seemed to raise the question what the exact meaning of "better" was in this context. As a result, the internship assignments got more and more formalized and operationalized year after year, but none of this seemed to deliver what we hoped for and, as such, leaving us clueless about why that might be the case. This self-study project made me and my colleagues slowly realize that creating transfer is one of the hardest challenges facing teacher education!

Eline: This not only touches upon the relationship between individual and organizational development in or through self-study research, but makes me think of yet another issue: the fact that self-study is never simply about trying to achieve more effective teaching and learning results. On the contrary, it's about opening up one's normative beliefs and aspirations about teaching and learning, what came to shape these beliefs, and how they are enacted in practice.

Elien: Yes, and if I would do this again, I would surely give more thought to the balance between my own assumptions about teaching and those embedded in the teacher education program. What are my beliefs about good teaching and how do they relate to – or perhaps were influenced by – working in this particular organizational context? I would also start to question my own assumptions from the very beginning of the process. It took me all the way to the end until my personal interpretative framework became more clear and explicit to myself. Perhaps I needed that time, yet, for a long time I pretended to study a practice which wasn't mine, removing myself from the research, while self-study methodology always deals with one's personal beliefs.

Eline: That's an interesting issue as self-study has often been critiqued for an exclusive focus on the self, on the person, on who you are, with an emphasis on introspection and personal change of a quasi-therapeutic nature. Your study gives an interesting example of tipping the scale too far to the other side: studying "practice" in self-study while ignoring "the self" enacted in it. Teacher education practice is the result of consciously made choices toward achieving educationally valuable goals with one's students for which one feels personally responsible. Since the decision about which goals to work on in teacher education is never simply a technical matter of equipping student teachers with the instrumental know-how to teach, but always reflects value-laden choices for a particular set of goals (and not others), a teacher educator cannot but be present in his or her practice.

Geert: That's why we have argued that improving teacher education as well as teacher educators' professionalism needs to come from a practice-based approach, rather than some external normative blueprint (e.g., standards or lists of competencies) (Kelchtermans 2013a, b; Vanassche et al. 2015). The object of investigation in self-study is practice as you shape it. That practice, in turn, shapes your understanding of your "self" as a teacher educator. It is in this sense that the "self" comes into play in self-study

research. The goal of self-study is not discovering one's authentic self or to transcend inner constraints, but optimizing practice which you, based on your personal commitment and responsibility as a teacher educator, enact in a specific way.

Elien: Initiatives such as these allow you the time to give serious thought to issues you care about deeply. In doing so, I increased my understanding of why things happen the way they do and actively started to question the taken-for-granted. This project made me more conscious of the control I experience myself as a teacher educator and its impact on my personal learning process. The common theme running through my story is the feeling of doing a lot of things because I thought I had to: competency-based education, separate courses which clearly distinguish theory, practice, and reflection from each other. I hushed myself. "That's simply how it is"; "that's what is expected of me." As a result, I never actively questioned my practice (including internship assignments). I slowly started to realize that I sometimes tended to act as an "executor" myself, just following the orders, making sure I formally met the requirements, rather than being a "professional" constantly questioning the purpose and adequacy of what we do. The balance between "being a professional" and "being an executor" is shaky. Perhaps there's room for another self-study project?

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Interlude: Towards a Better Understanding of Teacher Educators' Professional Development: Teacher Educators' Researcherly Disposition as a Promising Concept

Hanne Tack and Ruben Vanderlinde

Introduction

Teacher educators have been rarely prepared for their vital role as educators of (future) teachers or 'teachers of teachers'. Moreover, teacher educators' induction into teacher education and their further professional development are seldom supported by in-service formal professional development activities (European Commission 2013; Loughran 2014; Lunenberg et al. 2014; Tack et al. 2018). In this respect, and rather paradoxically, limited attention has been paid to those responsible for the support of our next generation of teachers: the teacher educators (Lunenberg et al. 2014). As Zeichner (2005, p.118) explains, this paradox is further nourished by the assumption that 'if one is a good teacher of primary or secondary school teachers, this expertise will automatically carry over to one's work with novice teachers'. In line with this argumentation, teacher educators have been perceived as 'expert' teachers who are 'upgraded' to teaching their subject in a teacher education programme instead of teaching in primary, secondary or higher education (Berry 2007; Zeichner 2005). As will be further argued, this assumption needs to be nuanced. However, in keeping up with assumptions like these, worldwide, the specific nature of teacher educators' work and their professional development have been rather neglected in the research literature and policy documents (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005; Lunenberg et al. 2014). Similarly, in practice, there has been limited attention to teacher educators' induction and further professional development (see, for instance, Cochran-Smith 2003; Hadar and Brody 2016; Loughran 2014; Lunenberg et al. 2014; Smith 2015).

Over the past decade, researchers increasingly started to study the specific nature of teacher educators' work and, correspondingly, started to develop thoughts on

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teacher educators' professional development (e.g. Berry 2016; Cochran-Smith 2005; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; Hadar and Brody 2016; Kelchtermans 2013; Kelchtermans et al. 2017; Loughran 2014, 2016; Lunenberg et al. 2014; Smith 2015; Tack and Vanderlinde 2014; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2014; Vanassche et al. 2015). In common, these authors share the idea that teacher educators' engagement in 'research' is a fundamental aspect to professionally develop as a 'teacher of teachers' and thus as a teacher educator.

Building on this emerging field of research, this chapter introduces the concept 'researcherly disposition' (Tack 2017) to further develop theoretical and empirical understanding on teacher educators' professional development. In so doing, we first explore two important questions related to the wider debate on teacher educators' engagement in research (1): what teacher educators' engagement in research entails (1.1) and why teacher educators should engage in research (1.2). Afterwards, the concept 'researcherly disposition' is introduced and discussed as a means to better understand teacher educators' professional development (2). Next, some reflections are formulated relevant for the larger S-STEP community (3). This chapter ends with a general conclusion (4).

Teacher Educators' Engagement in Research

Teacher Educators' Engagement in Research: What's in a Name?

The concept 'research' is broad and complex (Smith 2015) and refers to a conceptual and linguistic umbrella of research modes, forms and purposes. Therefore, in defining 'research', it is important to consider its purposes and its value in contributing to the development of new knowledge (Smith 2015). For teacher educators – and teacher education in general – research always (should) serve a twofold goal: (1) improving one's practice and knowledge about teacher education and (2) contributing to the broader knowledge base on teacher education (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009). The first goal refers to the development and improvement of local knowledge and practice. The second goal refers to the generation of public knowledge and its dissemination to the research community in teacher education (i.e. through research reports, articles in professional or academic journals, conference presentations). To put differently, next to knowledge generation, 'research' in teacher education always focuses on changing/developing practice (Loughran 2014; Smith 2015). In line with other researchers (Lunenberg et al. 2014; Loughran 2014; Smith 2015), we agree that research in teacher education should be mainly practice-oriented research, which refers to 'research that is relevant to the practice field, whether the practice is situated in schools or in higher education institutions' (p.44). Practice-oriented research is research that targets the development of new knowledge to solve a practical problem or research that supports decisions in practice (Smith 2015).

Similarly, in discussions on teacher educators' role as a 'researcher', it is apparent that there are different interpretations among researchers, policy-makers and teacher educators themselves of what such a researcher role exactly entails (Loughran 2014; Lunenberg et al. 2014). These interpretations range from occasionally engaging in self-reflection and sporadically exploring published research literature to conducting and publishing research in research journals (e.g. Loughran 2014; Lunenberg et al. 2014; Murray et al. 2009; Smith 2015). However, if teacher educators' professional development needs to be taken seriously, it is also important to be clear about what it means to take on a 'researcher' role as a teacher educator. The existing literature on teacher educators' professional development (for a more detailed overview, see Lunenberg et al. 2014) indicates that teacher educators' role as a 'researcher' involves at least being a 'smart' consumer of research, which means that teacher educators are expected to critically read and use the existing research literature on teacher education to inform their own practice (Loughran 2014). Moreover, teacher educators have to be producers of research, which means they have to conduct research to inform their own practice and the broader knowledge base on teacher education (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009). In this respect, practitioner research or the 'systematic and intentional study into one's own practice' (Dinkelman 2003, p. 8) and other related forms of practitioner research (e.g. self-study research, action research, teacher research) are often described as beneficial and promising strategies (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; Heikkinen et al. 2016). Finally, it is also important that teacher educators value the importance of a research identity (Lunenberg et al. 2014).

Why Should Teacher Educators' Engage in Research?

The need for teacher educators to engage in research is inherently related to the (further) development of teacher educators' core practice as 'teachers of teachers' (Loughran 2006, 2014; Vanassche et al. 2015). In this respect, several researchers share the idea that the distinct nature of teacher educators' work as 'teachers of teachers' should be the starting point in conceptualising teacher educators' professional development (e.g. Kelchtermans et al. 2017; Loughran 2014; Vanassche et al. 2015). Explaining the distinct nature of teacher educators' work, Murray and Male (2005) introduced the concept of teacher educators as 'second-order practitioners' or 'teachers of teachers', to distinguish between the work of teachers as 'first-order' practitioners and the work of teacher educators as 'second-order' practitioners. Teachers teach in a first-order situation: they teach their subject to their students. Teacher educators distinguish themselves from teachers as they are 'second-order' teachers or 'teachers of teachers' (Murray and Male 2005). This fundamental identity shift (Berry 2016) requires teacher educators to generate a second level of thought about teaching, one that focuses not (only) on content but also on how to teach (Loughran 2011). Or, to use Russell's (1997) words: 'How I teach IS the message!'. As Russell (1997, p.55) explains, a fundamental aspect of teacher educators'

teaching is the need to focus on the 'pedagogical turn' in teacher education or 'realizing that how we teach teachers may send much more influential messages than what we teach them'. This 'pedagogical turn' requires teacher educators to function simultaneously on two levels: (1) the level of what is being taught (the subject matter of teaching) and (2) the level of how it is being taught (the pedagogical approach) (Berry 2016). In this process, the teacher educator becomes 'an embodied amalgam of theory and practice' (Davey 2013, p.170) who 'practices what s/he preaches through modeling and making these tacit aspects of practice explicit for student teachers' (Berry 2007, p.12).

Teacher educators' identity as 'teachers of teachers' not only challenges them to model 'good' teaching in their practice but also requires them to articulate the underlying principles of that practice (Loughran 2011). Explaining the particular and distinct challenges of teacher educators' work, which 'hinges around recognizing, responding, and managing the dual roles of teaching and teaching about teaching concurrently', Loughran (2006, p. 11) emphasises the need for teacher educators to develop a specific pedagogy of teacher education. In developing this pedagogy, teacher educators must conceptualise their teaching in ways that go beyond content delivery (Loughran 2006). Specifically, teacher educators have to move beyond 'teaching as telling', sharing 'tips and tricks' and 'successful' teaching experiences with their student teachers. Similarly, Appleton (2002, p. 393) argues that even though student teachers often seek to gather lists of 'activities that work' to organise their future teaching practice, teacher educators must go further. In this respect, Loughran (2016, p. 257) emphasises that if student teachers need to understand teaching as more than simple delivery of 'what works' teacher educators will need to:

> Embrace what it means to genuinely model teaching for understanding in order to consistently reinforce the development of pedagogical relationships that result in quality learning. Creating opportunities for students of teaching to see into their teacher educators' pedagogical reasoning is crucial in order to illustrate that good practice is not innate, but thoughtfully structured and conducted. To challenge the 'we already do this' view of teaching, teacher education must primarily be a site in which practice is opened up for scrutiny, exploration and research. Teacher educators must be able to illustrate that teaching is more than telling, and learning is more than listening. They must consistently model not just good teaching, but illustrate how that teaching is conceptualised, structured, implemented and reviewed. In that way, the complex and sophisticated nature of teaching can be made clear to students of teaching as they experience it. (Loughran 2016, pp. 257–258)

To put differently, teacher educators' work comprises a unique body of knowledge that requires them to move beyond seeing teaching as solely 'doing' and what has been learned in previous work experiences or study (Berry 2007; Loughran 2011). It is about being able to see beyond the tacit dimension of one's knowledge of practice and being able to explain the fundamental pedagogical underpinnings inherent in supporting meaningful learning (Berry and Russell 2013; Loughran 2011, 2016).

A much-advocated way to develop knowledge of their practice, and thus to professionally develop as a teacher educator, is to become a 'researcher' of that practice (see, for instance, Berry 2016; Cochran-Smith 2005; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; Loughran 2016; Murray and Male 2005; Smith 2015). As Berry (2016)

explains, her engagement in research as a teacher educator was important to 'formalize the experience of being a teacher educator, and in the process has provided a language for articulating personally meaningful knowledge of teaching about teaching that can be shared and renegotiated with others' (p. 51). Research, as such, is perceived as an inherent aspect of professionally developing as a teacher educator (Cochran-Smith 2005). In particular, it suggests that we should think about teacher educators' role as 'working the dialectic' (Cochran-Smith 2005, p. 221). This means that teacher educators' role is neither an exclusive researcher role nor an exclusive practitioner role but an intertwining and a complementary combination of both: '… It privileges neither research nor practice but instead depends upon a rich dialectic of the two wherein the lines between professional practice in teacher education and research related to teacher education are increasingly blurred' (Cochran-Smith 2005, p. 221). As such, teacher educators have to engage in research to improve their knowledge about teaching, increase their understanding about their students' learning, learn about their own teaching and advance insight into teacher education in general (Loughran 2014).

To be clear, conceptualising teacher educators' professional development in such a way does not mean that teacher educators should occasionally engage in self-reflection or sporadically explore published research literature (Loughran 2014). Instead, it requires teacher educators to systematically investigate their own practice to maintain and nurture an 'inquiry as stance' on their practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009).

Towards a Meaningful Conceptualisation of Teacher Educators' Professional Development

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) coined in the late 1990s the term 'inquiry as stance' to refer to 'the process of continual and systematic inquiry wherein professionals question their own and other assumptions and construct local as well as public knowledge appropriate to the changing contexts in which they work' (Cochran-Smith 2003, p. 24). Following Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), several authors have emphasised the importance of developing an 'inquiry as stance'. For instance, in her dissertation on teacher educators' professionalism, Vanassche (2014) concludes with a call for a 'researcher's attitude' (Vanassche 2014). Similarly, in discussions on teacher educators' professional development, terms such as 'pedagogies of investigation' (Grossman et al. 2009), 'a research-oriented attitude' (Lunenberg et al. 2014) and a 'research journey' (Loughran 2014) are used interchangeably in the appeal for teacher educators' ongoing engagement in research to improve their practice. These terms broadly refer to 'teacher educators' habit of mind to engage in research' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009) and suggest a meaningful conceptualisation to think about teacher educators' professional development.

However, up until now, a clear and comprehensive understanding on these strongly related concepts was rather lacking, and empirical work on this topic was rather scarce (see Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005; Grossman and McDonald 2008; Lunenberg et al. 2014). As a consequence, these promising concepts hold the potential danger to become 'hollow buzz words' used frequently in the plea for a stronger focus on teacher educators' role as a researcher in both the research literature (e.g. Grossman and McDonald 2008) and policy debates (e.g. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005; European Commission 2013).

In attempting more conceptual clarity in these concepts and inspired by the cognitive theory on dispositions (Perkins et al. 1993) and the existing research literature on teacher educators' professional development (Tack and Vanderlinde 2014), Tack and Vanderlinde (2014) have introduced the concept 'researcherly disposition'. In so doing, Tack and Vanderlinde (2014) deconstructed teacher educators' habit of mind into three individually necessary, but only jointly sufficient dimensions: (1) an 'affective dimension' or 'an inclination towards research', (2) a 'behavioural dimension' or 'a sensitivity for research opportunities' and (3) a 'cognitive dimension' or 'an ability to engage in research'. Combining the concept of 'triad disposition' as developed in the cognitive theory on dispositions (Perkins et al. 1993) with the central ideas on the teacher educator's role as a 'researcher', teacher educators' researcherly disposition is broadly defined as:

> Teacher educators' habit of mind to engage with research – as both consumers and producers – to improve their own practice and contribute to the knowledge base on teacher education. (Tack and Vanderlinde 2014, p. 301)

The affective dimension refers to the extent to which a teacher educator values a research-oriented approach towards his/her daily practice and, as such, recognises his/her role as both a consumer and producer of knowledge. The cognitive dimension refers to the extent to which a teacher educator is able to engage in research in his/her daily practice, as both a consumer and a producer of knowledge. The behavioural dimension refers to the extent to which a teacher educator is sensitive for research opportunities in his/her daily practice, as both a consumer and a producer of knowledge (Tack and Vanderlinde 2014). Building on their theoretical conceptualisation, Tack and Vanderlinde (2016a) attempted to operationalise teacher educators' researcherly disposition and developed TERDS (Teacher Educators' Researcherly Disposition Scale). Their 20-item questionnaire provides one of the first measurement instruments to assess teacher educators' self-reported researcherly disposition.

As has become clear, having a researcherly disposition is more than using the research of others to inform one's teaching. Similar to what has been described as 'teaching as telling', there is a potential danger that teacher educators – as mainly consumers of research – use 'outsider' existing research and theories to unwittingly reinforce the prevalent mode of their practice, rather than challenging it (Cochran-Smith 2005; Loughran 2016). Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005, p. 260) observed that they 'see many instances where the same research is interpreted to justify dramatically different practices and policy decisions'. Underlying such

observations is the idea that teacher educators as simply users of knowledge and implementers of curricula worked out by others (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009).

Apart from being consumers of research, teacher educators are also expected to become producers of researchers. A growing number of teacher educators are involved in various forms of practitioner research to develop knowledge of their practice and share their knowledge with the broader community of teacher education (Cochran-Smith 2003). Forms of practitioner research include 'teacher research' (Clarke and Erickson 2003; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999; Mitchell 2002), 'self-study' (Bullough 1994; Loughran et al. 2004) and 'practitioner research' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; Zeichner and Noffke 2001). All these closely aligned forms of practitioner research refer to studies conducted by practitioners themselves to develop knowledge of their own practice and to inform the broader knowledge base in teacher education (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; Loughran 2016; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015). An interesting example in this regard is the *Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices* (S-STEP) community (Cochran-Smith 2005). This community represents a group of teacher educators who are engaged in the systematic study of their work as teacher educators, in order to develop (knowledge of) practice (Cochran-Smith 2005; Loughran 2014; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015). Similarly, this book publication *Teaching, learning and enacting a self-study methodology: Unraveling a complex interplay* (editors: Jason K. Ritter, Mieke Lunenberg, Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan, Anastasia P. Samaras and Eline Vanassche) presents new examples and contexts in which teacher educators engage in self-study research to better understand their teaching practice. Framed and approached this way – and as is also clear in the different chapters of this book – self-study research and other forms of practitioner research can be promising methodological strategies to ground one's researcherly disposition.

Summarised, rather than making teacher educators better consumers of research, our multidimensional concept of 'researcherly disposition' puts central attention on teacher educators' knowledge of practice (Tack and Vanderlinde 2014). It recognises teacher educators as knowledge generators conducting research to inform and improve their practice and as smart consumers of research, who use, but also challenge and critically discuss existing research. Moreover, having a 'researcherly disposition' is not a temporary activity, but (should be) a fundamental aspect of teacher educator's day-to-day practice, as well as a central element in their professional identity as a teacher educator (Tack and Vanderlinde 2014, 2016a). In this respect, it is also important to note that although the need to develop one's researcherly disposition is a fundamental aspect in the discussion about the relevance of self-study research; these terms are not interchangeable, but complementary. In this respect, self-study research (among other forms of practitioner research) should be seen as a promising methodological strategy to ground one's researcherly disposition. By conducting practitioner research, teacher educators' decisions in their day-to-day practice are supported by rigorously collected and analysed data. Framed and approached this way, practitioner research can have the power to be transformative at the individual, interpersonal, communal and institutional level.

Moving Forward

When formulating reflections for the wider S-STEP community, it is first important to consider the contextualised character of developing or supporting teacher educators' researcherly disposition. As has been argued in the first section of this chapter, most European teacher educators enter teacher education with a background in teaching (see, Lunenberg et al. 2014) *(cf. Section 2 & Section 3 of this book reporting on research conducted by teacher educators from Flanders and The Netherlands).* For these teacher educators, their first-order expertise (Murray and Male 2005) is often teaching. This also means that, for many, developing their researcher role, and thus a researcherly disposition, will be a second-order expertise (Murray and Male 2005; Smith 2015; Tack et al. 2018). However, in other contexts, as, for instance, the United States (Hamilton and Clandinin 2011), the Pacific Rim systems (Snoek and Zogla 2009) and Norway (Smith 2015) – especially in university-based teacher education programmes – teacher educators often have a doctoral degree and are expected to be active as researchers, publishing their work in academic and professional journals *(cf. Section 1 & Section 4 of this book reporting on research conducted by teacher educators from the United States & South-Africa).* For these teacher educators, research will often be their first-order expertise (see also, Smith 2015). Despite these differences across the globe in teacher educators' work contexts and background, some common challenges should be noted.

A first challenge is related to the need for a common shared language on teacher educators' professional development. In this respect, there is an increased need for teacher educators to become aware about the distinct and complex nature of their work as a 'teacher of teachers'. In line with Cochran-Smith (2003) and Murray and Male (2005), we agree that many teacher educators principally identify themselves with their previous role as a teacher or subject expert (see Tack 2017). For example, a Flemish higher education-based teacher educator that participated in a 1-year intervention on practitioner research studied the difference between her previous identity as a PK-12 teacher and her new identity as a teacher educator (Tack and Vanderlinde 2016b, c; Vyncke 2016). The relevance of Vyncke (2016) her practitioner research is clear; however, it illustrates the wider problem that teacher educators are often not aware of their significant role. Similarly, Cochran-Smith (2005) argues in a study on university-based teacher educators that these subject-matter specialists (often with a doctoral degree) generally did not think of themselves as teacher educators. Interestingly, however, she further argues that an identity change occurred after their commitment as a teacher education department to engage in collaborative practitioner research on social justice in teacher education (Cochran-Smith 2003). Accordingly, Burn (2007) argues that the development of a 'research attitude' was needed for school-based teacher educators to shift their identity from 'experts in teaching' to 'professionals who question their own teaching'. All these examples show that there is first and foremost a pressing need for teacher educators to become aware that a unique body of knowledge comprises their work and that this knowledge has to be developed while working as a teacher educator (Berry 2016). To put differently, these

examples show that teacher educators' identity as a 'teacher of teachers' is intimately tied to teacher educators' engagement in research and the development of their researcherly disposition. Teacher education institutions can raise teacher educators' awareness about the specific and unique nature of their work, for instance, by providing systematic induction programmes to support beginning teacher educators in exploring their role and their institutional contexts. There are some successful examples of such programmes, but more systematic research is needed to better underpin the development of such programmes (Lunenberg et al. 2014).

A second challenge is related to the current climate in which teacher educators are expected to conduct research that tends to be underestimated (especially in the European context), and it needs to be changed. The European Commission (2013, p. 13) observes that research conducted by teacher educators 'tends to be of inferior value, if compared with more traditional types of research, such as theoretical, subject-specific studies'. Research conducted by teacher educators tends to be ignored because it does not meet the standards of generalisation and rigour of large-scale quantitative research (Cochran-Smith 2005; Lunenberg et al. 2007). In this respect, the interpretation of the value of research also affects the debate of 'quality' of research conducted by teacher educators. In line with Murray et al. (2009, p. 949), we agree that:

> The time may also be right for a reframing of what "counts" as research activity for teacher educators whose busy day job is practice in teacher education. Any such reframing of research and scholarship activities in teacher education could be part of a long-term and intra-professional challenge for teacher educators, one that establishes a new language of learning and scholarship.

Put differently, it should be recognised that research conducted by teacher educators is a fundamental professional development strategy, not only to develop a deeper understanding of their practice as a 'teacher of teachers' but also to develop knowledge about teacher education. Teacher educators should be recognised as legitimate consumers and producers of research. However, at the same time, such recognition demands systematic efforts to support teacher educators in the process of developing their role as researcher. Without such systematic support, the danger exists that teacher educators' engagement in research will continue to be criticised for lacking quality (Lunenberg et al. 2007; Vanassche and Kelchtermans 2015). In this regard, we believe the projects presented in this book, as well as our own positive experiences with interventions to support teacher educators' researcherly disposition by means of practitioner research, are inspiring (Tack and Vanderlinde 2016b, c). These projects (e.g. Lunenberg et al. 2010; Tack and Vanderlinde 2016c; Vanassche 2014) focus on both the context level and the individual level, by furnishing a research infrastructure and building research culture, on one hand, while requiring teacher educators' agency in their own learning, on the other.

Third, we believe that leaders of teacher education institutions have an important responsibility in creating research facilities and in providing time and resources that encourage teacher educators' engagement in research. Possible actions include, for instance, informing teacher educators about access to journals, existing professional

development initiatives, courses and the existence of structural and financial resources (Lunenberg et al. 2014). In addition, they are recommended to focus on building research communities in their department or institution. For instance, less experienced teacher educator-researchers can start participating in research activities with more experienced teacher educators, which may help them to gradually become part of a research culture (Lunenberg et al. 2014; Smith 2015). Moreover, we believe that teacher educators who are already involved in practitioner research – as many authors of chapters in this book are – can function as important role models to less experienced teacher educator-researchers. Finally, institutional expectations and requirements related to teacher educators' engagement in research have to be clearly communicated (Borg and Alshumaimeri 2012; Griffiths et al. 2010). Currently, institutional expectations often remain implicit or are only clear to the happy few who are engaged in research.

Finally, on an international level, policy-makers also have pivotal role in providing resources to support systematic efforts focusing on teacher educators' professional development. In this respect, considerable differences between political priorities concerning teacher educators' professional development are noted (Kelchtermans et al. 2017; Lunenberg et al. 2016; Vanassche et al. 2015). For instance, the Norwegian government has provided funding for numerous research and development projects, as well as the establishment of a Norwegian National Research School in Teacher Education (NAFOL) (Smith 2015). Similarly, the Ministry of Education in Israel provided funding for the establishment of the MOFET institute, a national intercollegiate centre for research and professional development in teacher education (Golan and Reichenberg 2015). Both initiatives are promising examples of how to create a solid research infrastructure. In other regions, such as the Netherlands, Flanders and England, teacher educators' opportunities to engage in research (and other professional development) largely rely on 'ad hoc' and 'local' initiatives. In line with the recently established InFo-TED, whose main aim is to bring together people across the world to exchange research and practice related to teacher educators' professional development (Kelchtermans et al. 2017), we believe that opportunities should be created to support teacher educators at institutional, national and international levels. The potential to interconnect all these actions and establish an international network needs to be recognised.

Conclusion

With this chapter, we aimed to contribute to the ongoing debate on teacher educators' professional development. In an attempt to 'move beyond the rhetoric' (Loughran 2016), the concept 'researcherly disposition' was introduced as a means to better understand teacher educators' professional development. In so doing, we did not only suggest a perspective to actively work on teacher educators' professional development, but also provided a much needed common language. Our approach to teacher educators' professional development does not only demand

that teacher educators become active agents in developing knowledge of their practice, it also highlights the need to (further) develop a culture and infrastructure for research in teacher education. These cultural and infrastructural conditions are not limited to the institutional level. In this respect, we believe that (inter)national policy-makers should play a pivotal role. If teacher education needs to move beyond a technical or 'sharing-tips-and-tricks' approach to teaching (Loughran 2016), both policy-makers, leaders of teacher education institutions and teacher educators need to become aware of the value of research to generate knowledge of practice. We hope this chapter offers a source of inspiration, action, critical discussion and reflection.

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Part IV
**Teaching, Learning, and Enacting
of Self-Study Methodology in Polyvocal
Professional Communities**

Self-Study Research in a Polyvocal Professional Community Design

Anastasia P. Samaras and Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan

Introduction

In 1992, at an American Educational Research Association (AERA) symposium, a group of teacher educators initiated the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group (SIG). As Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) reflected, "teacher educators studying their own practice seemed quite unique, and yet timely, as they generated practical inquiry to substantiate their formal theorizing" (p. 235). Emerging rapidly and "quickly becoming one of the largest special interest groups of the [AERA] Association" (Korthagen 1995, p. 99), S-STEP grew into a welcoming academic and professional community (Taylor and Coia 2014).

In explaining the methodology and theoretical underpinnings of self-study, LaBoskey (2004) stressed the multidimensional aims of self-study research, arguing that its proponents "wish to transform [themselves] first so that [they] might be better situated to help transform [others], and the institutional and social contexts that surround and constrain [them]" (pp. 820–821). With these challenging aims in mind, LaBoskey (2004) characterized self-study research as an "intensely interpersonal, highly complex, always changing, moral and political act [which] requires continual monitoring and dedication" (p. 820). From this perspective, enacting self-study as methodology has come to be understood as having multiple requirements including openness, reflection and reflexivity, peer review for validation with critical friends, transparent data analysis and process, and improvement-aimed exemplars that contribute to professional learning, ways of knowing, and knowledge

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generation (Barnes 1998; LaBoskey 2004; Loughran 2004; Samaras 2011; Samaras and Freese 2009). As LaBoskey (2004) noted, meeting these multiple requirements necessitates bringing multiple viewpoints into dialogue.

The field of self-study research has continued to evolve, and, now in its third decade, the self-study research methodology has extended to offer a broader inclusiveness of practitioners inside and outside of teacher education, as well as across continents. Individuals working in transdisciplinary self-study research groups are extending their particular ways of knowing and validating the usage of the methodology in diverse contexts and disciplines (Harrison et al. 2012; Samaras et al. 2014b). The self-study research community as a whole is growing and benefitting from dialogue between multiple fields of professional expertise and diverse disciplinary and sociocultural settings (Pithouse et al. 2009; Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015a; Samaras et al. 2015). As Sleeter (2014), noting the value of bringing together multiple viewpoints and expertise in teacher education research, highlighted:

> Cross-cultural research teams bring more insights relevant to education of diverse student populations than culturally homogeneous teams or individual researchers. Interdisciplinary teams bring areas of expertise that enable a more complex rendering of teaching and learning than those from one discipline. (p. 152)

Building on the foundational work of self-study of teacher education practices, we have conceptualized and studied transdisciplinary and transcultural interaction and reciprocal learning in self-study research as *polyvocal professional learning* (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015b). In basic terms, polyvocality can simply mean many voices, but it also has more expansive connotations of the potential generativity of bringing into dialogue multiple points of view and voices. As Bakhtin (1984) explained, through polyvocality (which he referred to as polyphony), "what unfolds … is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousness … combine but are not merged" (p. 6). We are interested in the generative potential of this kind of plurality, with the understanding that generativity involves reimagining our own practice to contribute to the well-being and growth of others (Erikson 1950/1963).

This chapter frames the fourth section in the edited book, *Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology: Unraveling a Complex Interplay*. The book section explores and illustrates how self-study by teacher educators (Samaras 2002) has been extended to teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study methodology in polyvocal professional learning communities (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015a). Collectively, the section adds to the body of knowledge of transdisciplinary and polyvocal self-study research. It further contributes to an evolving understanding of how and why self-study research can bring about the interaction of multiple ways of seeing and knowing as an integral part of professional learning.

To begin the chapter, we offer a description and background and contexts of transdisciplinary self-study learning communities in the USA (George Mason University self-study of teaching projects) and South Africa (the trans-university

Transformative Education/al Studies [TES] project). Next, building on our conceptualization of polyvocal professional learning—which makes visible how dialogic encounters with diverse ways of seeing and knowing can deepen and extend professional learning—we introduce a paradigm of how self-study can grow from a grassroots level inside and across universities using a *polyvocal professional community design.* In so doing, we share what we each have come to understand and practice through collaborating with others as design elements for self-study research in polyvocal professional learning communities. To follow, we offer brief descriptions of the coauthored exemplars in this book section to demonstrate and validate the authenticity and generative professional applications of self-study research for and beyond teacher education. We highlight how the chapters demonstrate the power of "we" in learning encounters by self-study scholars who experienced diverse ways of seeing and knowing in transdisciplinary settings—what can be called polyvocal professional communities. Our hope is that the chapters in this book section will encourage readers to consider the applications of the self-studies to their research so that we might collectively generate knowledge for the field of self-study methodology.

Putting Self-Study Research in Polyvocal Professional Communities into Context

We are teacher educators involved in facilitating transdisciplinary professional learning communities with university faculty and students who are interested in learning self-study methodology, regardless of their practice. These individuals come together not to work their disciplines but beyond them in transdisciplinary communities with learning and enacting self-study research as their shared task. The plurality of these varied perspectives has resulted in innovative ways of conceptualizing and undertaking self-study research (Harrison et al. 2012; Samaras et al. 2008a, 2014b). Over the last decade, our work has centered on the polyvocal extension and enactment of self-study methodology within and across universities in our respective home countries of the USA and South Africa, where we have taught others about self-study research. We have worked to conceptualize and capture the teaching, learning, and enactment of self-study methodology in various contexts to document its value and impact for others who work toward promoting transformative learning experiences in higher education. We have also each worked with colleagues outside our disciplines to study our practice in facilitating transdisciplinary self-study, which we share in the final chapter of this book section.

The chapters in this book section build on work done within and across transdisciplinary self-study learning communities in the USA (George Mason University self-study of teaching projects) and South Africa (the trans-university Transformative Education/al Studies [TES] project). Anastasia's initiative to introduce self-study research in a transdisciplinary model at George Mason University (GMU) began in

2006 where she offered it as a special topics doctoral level course for students within her college but from any program. She researched her role in teaching self-study research to students and included students' experiences in learning the methodology (Samaras 2010; Samaras et al. 2007; Samaras and Roberts 2011; Samaras and Sell 2013). Since then, Anastasia has taught the course eight times and as an advanced research methodology course. Since 2009, Anastasia has also been teaching a capstone self-study teacher research course to practicing secondary education teachers completing their master's degree and utilized their research projects in a text for teachers learning self-study (Samaras 2011).

In 2010, Anastasia launched Scholars of Studying Teaching Collaborative (SoSTC), a three-semester research project where 11 faculty from 11 specializations and 4 different colleges conducted individual studies and a 2-year-long meta-study of the community (Samaras 2013; Samaras et al. 2014a, b). Subsequent to this group, in 2012 Anastasia cofacilitated Studying Teaching Collaborative on e-Learning (SoSTCe-L), a year-long transdisciplinary faculty self-study group where 12 faculty from different colleges and specializations conducted a self-study of a facet of their distant teaching. In 2014–2016, Anastasia cofacilitated Self-Study Scholars' Collaborative (S^3C) on the Visually Rich Digital Learning, including 14 faculty devoted to the self-study of teaching and learning in and with visually rich digital learning environments (see the third chapter in this section). A key element to success in each of these faculty self-study groups was the creation of transdisciplinary critical friend subgroups within which pedagogies were exchanged and individual projects were debated, analyzed, and shaped an appetite for intellectual risk and renewed idealism and activism within academia.

In 2015–2016, Anastasia was a team member and Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) of Designing Teaching: Scaling up the SIMPLE Design Framework for Interactive Teaching Development, NSF Widening Implementation, and Demonstration of Evidence-based Reforms, where she facilitated teacher inquiry groups focused on STEM faculty at GMU but outside of her college, conducting self-study research projects (Hjalmarson et al. 2016). Beginning in 2016, she has been facilitating as Co-PI in self-study action research with Rebecca Fox (PI) for building research capacity with faculty from the University of Management and Technology in Lahore, Pakistan, as a part of the US–Pakistan Collaboration for Faculty Excellence in Teaching and Research (CFETR).

Since 2011, Kathleen has been working in South Africa with colleagues from a university of technology (Durban University of Technology), a research-intensive university (University of KwaZulu-Natal) and a rural comprehensive university (Walter Sisulu University) to lead a transdisciplinary self-study project, known as the Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) project (see Harrison et al. 2012; Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2015). The TES project aims to support and study the collaborative development of self-study research methodology among university educators who wish to respond to the wide-ranging needs and interests of students and to contribute to a collective, socially just reimagining of South African higher education. The TES project participants are university educators engaged in graduate self-study research (staff-students) and their research advisors (termed, research

supervisors, in South Africa). All TES participants are researching their own educational practice through self-study methodology. The principal TES project research question of "How do I transform my education/al practice?" is enacted within participants' particular contexts and across the transdisciplinary, trans-institutional learning community, becoming, "How do *we* transform our education/al practice?"

The TES project participants teach in varied academic and professional disciplines including accounting education, communication, clothing, business studies education, fashion design, drama, English education, and jewelry design. The participants are also diverse in terms of age, gender, language, and race and in terms of levels of experience and expertise in teaching, research, and publication. The diversity of the TES community is particularly significant in the light of South Africa's divided and discriminatory apartheid and colonial history. TES forums have come to be regarded by participants as safe spaces for generative and healing dialogue and interaction (Harrison et al. 2012).

Through the work of the TES project, 30–40 university educators have been meeting several times a year since 2011 for trans-institutional self-study research workshops. The TES participants also have regular virtual contact via an online social learning platform. In addition, smaller TES project groups meet regularly at each of the three host universities: Durban University of Technology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, and Walter Sisulu University.

A vital characteristic of TES workshops, besides the online and face-to-face meetings, has been the collective discovery and sharing of arts-informed self-study research methods that make use of visual and literary art forms "to represent and reinterpret, construct and deconstruct meaning, and communicate" (Samaras 2011, p. 100). These arts-informed research practices have been enhanced by the participation of professional artists and designers in the TES project. Through collective, arts-informed self-study, TES participants have expressed, heard, seen, and responded to multiple perspectives. And in so doing they have found resonances with each other and re-encountered their practice in imaginative and transformative ways (Harrison et al. 2012; Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2015).

Our related and complementary experiences in the USA and South Africa brought us (Anastasia and Kathleen) together with the goal of learning from each other's experiences in facilitating self-study (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2014) and now in this book to present, with colleagues, their portrayals of teaching, learning, and enacting self-study methodology in polyvocal professional learning communities. We have experienced self-study research as paradoxically multiple—the multiplicity of our contexts and the multiplicity of our work as practitioners researching together beyond our home countries, beyond our home disciplines, and beyond our home places in our universities with multiple colleagues. We have been working independently, and then together, as we have crafted the polyvocal professional learning approach. In this chapter, we work to give ample evidence of the "beyond," not just across disciplines but trans-disciplines.

Design Elements for Self-Study Research in Polyvocal Professional Learning Communities

Building on conceptualizations of polyvocal professional learning (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015a), as well as earlier work related to methodological components of self-study (Samaras 2011) and guidelines for developing a pedagogy of teaching self-study (Lunenberg and Samaras 2011), we communicate what we have come to understand and practice about teaching self-study and in partnership with others. We crafted our framework as Paidiá: Design Elements for Self-Study Research in Polyvocal Professional Communities. Paidiá, which means children in Greek, reminds us of our responsibility as self-study scholars and teachers to work to contribute to the learning, well-being, and growth of others. Paidiá also has associations with play (Ifenthaler et al. 2012), and this is reminiscent of how we enjoy the process of learning together in polyvocal professional communities through trying out and sharing our ideas and work in progress with supportive colleagues (Samaras 2011).

In making these design elements public, we offer what we have learned from facilitating self-study and encourage further studies to build a fuller knowledge base on this topic. Our elements of design were composed through collaborative inquiry into our recurring teachings of self-study in polyvocal professional communities and informed by a strong theoretical and conceptual base.

From the work of the George Mason University self-study of teaching projects, our design elements are informed by neo-Vygotskian-based transdisciplinary learning communities in practice (Samaras et al. 2008b; Vygotsky 1978, 1981). Key conceptual underpinnings in this framework, which we have enacted and tested, entail:

(a) The encouragement and nurturing of collaborative conversations across disciplinary, programmatic, status, and spatial divides
(b) Multiple expertise in a shared leadership and reciprocal learning model
(c) Exploring new symbols for mediating written language using visually rich digital tools which cut across any individual expertise in teaching, learning, and research

From the work of the South African TES project, our design elements are informed by a conceptual stance of "reflexive ubuntu" (Harrison et al. 2012, pp. 16–18). This reflexive ubuntu stance brings into dialogue conceptions of:

(a) Southern African *ubuntu* philosophy. This can be explained as "understanding the value of locating oneself in the experiences of others as a form of demonstrating an ethics of care and trust" (Harrison et al. 2012, p. 17).
(b) Co-flexivity (collective reflexivity). Reflexivity requires critical attention to ways in which researchers' positionings, understandings, and beliefs affect research processes and representations (Kirk 2005). Co-flexivity can be explained as "being reflexive together through thinking deeply about and

questioning our professional practice and selves in dialogue with significant others" (Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2015, p. 148).

(c) Co-creativity (collective creativity). This can be described as connecting in arts-informed ways with critical friends to allow us to see in imaginative and responsive ways that can transform our educational and research practice (Harrison et al. 2012; Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2015).

The "inter-animation" (Holquist 1981, pp. 429–430) of these conceptual perspectives gave us a shared platform for thinking about how we might synthesize our work in teaching self-study research, regardless of context and culture of participants. We present our collective learning as six design elements below.

Paidiá: Design Elements for Self-Study Research in Polyvocal Professional Communities (Fig. 1)

Personal Situated Chosen Inquiry

Participants choose to join in and choose their inquiries situated in their immediate personal–professional contexts and also in relation and response to wider sociocultural–historical–political contexts. It is important to support participants' development of choosing and refining a research focus or question that intrigues them and is worthwhile and manageable to study. Their passion for the topic is essential.

Accountability

Accountability begins with each participant reconsidering her or his professional practice with input and support from critical friends to build self-regulated, authentic professional learning. Participants are encouraged knowing that notwithstanding larger sociopolitical tensions and any outside accountability, one thing they can change about their practice begins with themselves. This gives them agency and develops self-efficacy.

Integrated Co-flexivity and Co-creativity

Central to polyvocality are ongoing, intellectually safe, dialogic collaborative structures for reciprocal mentoring to recognize and value co-flexivity (collective reflexivity) and co-creativity (collective creativity). The community extends and transforms individuals' understanding while the individual internalizes cognition, that is, from intersubjectivity to intrasubjectivity (Vygotsky 1960/1981). The very nature of dialogue in collective inquiry raises new thought and innovation triggering new ideas by deep and active listening to others which, in turn, influences the community itself (Vygotsky 1978).

Fig. 1 Paidiá: Design elements for self-study research in Polyvocal Professional Communities (Extended from Five Foci in Samaras 2011)

Design ↔ Dissemination

Participants share phases of their research as work in progress and make it public through presentation, writing, and other forms of dissemination, noting a transparent research design that clearly and accurately documents the unfolding research process and incorporates ongoing peer dialogue and critique. Individuals openly share their ongoing drafts and invite critically constructive feedback and diverse perspectives from others. Individuals are encouraged and supported in their efforts to disseminate their studies to generate knowledge and make it public.

Improved Learning for Self and Others

A polyvocal learning process entails critical and collaborative deep questioning of practice and the status quo in order to improve and impact learning for participants, critical friends, and significant others, as well as for contributing knowledge to professional scholarly communities. Participants are continuously reminded that self-study research is more than self-improvement in professional practice and extends out to others with a multiplier effect.

Authenticated and Invited Polyvocal Leadership

Facilitators authenticate self-study research by practicing it in transdisciplinary learning communities while also inviting polyvocal leadership by encouraging participants to contribute their diverse expertise and experiences. Engagement and modeling of self-study practice by facilitators are vital for participants to witness facilitators invested in the individual and collaborative nature of transformation.

Exemplars from Self-Study Scholars Working in Polyvocal Professional Communities

We close the chapter with introductions to coauthored exemplars from self-study scholars working in polyvocal professional communities. Kuhn (1962) explained exemplars as "concrete models of research practice" (p. 415). Building on Kuhn's work, LaBoskey (2004) noted: "Self-study achieves validation through the construction, testing, sharing, and re-testing of exemplars of teaching practice" (p. 860). Exemplars in this book section demonstrate and validate the authenticity and generative professional applications of self-study research for and beyond teacher education. Authors have purposely written their chapters in a readable, transparent, and demonstrative manner to show rather than just tell about the power of we in teaching, learning, and enacting self-study research and how their work intersects with the design elements.

After introducing the context of our teaching and facilitating self-study research and the design elements we crafted in this chapter, we invite the reader to consider how each of the subsequent chapters encompasses those elements in very diverse contexts in action—not only in theory but in practice.

In the second chapter in the book section, "Standing in a Messy Sandpit: The Learning Side of Self-Study Research," a teacher–researcher interested in teaching self-study methodology invites seven doctoral candidates to share the self-studies they designed and enacted in a doctoral level research methods course and the insights they gained about learning self-study research with the support of critical friends. Contributors note the linkages they formulated from their self-study to their

dissertation topic. Each author maps her or his journey from discovering self-study to enacting it using various self-study methods and creative ways to reimagine data resulting in innovative and practical research applications for students. The exemplars are presented as portraits of self-study of professional practice by teachers and other practitioners to build upon and extend the existing body of self-study research. Contributors share the "how," "why," and "so what and for whom" of their professional learning situated context and professional practitioner-led inquiry. This chapter concludes with valuable lessons learned by the teacher educator, which will be useful to others interested in gaining insights about teaching self-study methodology.

In the third chapter, "Dwelling in the Question: Professional Empowerment Through Complex Self-Study," 14 faculty members of the Self-Study Scholars' Collaborative on the Visually Rich Digital Learning Environment shed their professional practices to build new teaching and research capacity via three lenses: the methodology of self-study of teaching; collaborative research and learning across colleges, disciplines, and statuses; and the medium of visually rich digital environments. This deliberate conjunction of diverse foci equalized status and forced each participant to reinhabit the beginner's mind and rediscover the creative potential of risk and productive failure. Through data drawn from individual and reciprocal interviews, audio and video recordings, and transcripts of meetings, memos, design sketches, digital images, and multimedia visual data, the collaborative's research confirms conclusions from earlier iterations of collaborative self-study research. But it also suggests, in four powerful ways, the potential of self-study for transformative empowerment in professional practice, whether within the academy or beyond. The holistic mutual support thus generated in this community of inquiry supported intellectual risk and a Rilkean "dwelling in the question," in ways more professionally conventional disciplinary or field collaborations could not (Rilke 1934).

The fourth chapter, "Learning Through Enacting Arts-Informed Self-Study Research with Critical Friends," offers an exemplar of self-study of teacher education practices in the context of the Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) project in South Africa. The chapter communicates the voices and perspectives of two teacher educators, Anita Hiralaal and Refilwe Matebane, and their doctoral research supervisor, Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan. The chapter demonstrates how Anita and Refilwe are both using collage portraiture (Gerstenblatt 2013) as an arts-informed self-study method. The literary device of vignettes (brief written scenes) is used to open a window into how sharing their collage portraits as work-in-progress with critical friends enriched Anita's and Refilwe's unique self-study research. This chapter shows the promise of polyvocal learning communities for strengthening the work of novice self-study researchers and their research supervisors or mentors—within and beyond teacher education. It also offers insights into how the participation of colleagues with multiple forms of expertise and ways of knowing can promote integrated critical creative collaboration in self-study research.

The fifth chapter for this book section is titled, "'Many Stories Matter': Taking a Polyvocal Stance in Learning About Teaching of Self-Study." This chapter

consolidates the section's focus on the potential impact of the polyvocal in self-study. By means of reflections, dialogue, and visual images, the chapter brings together multiple voices and stories from the global self-study research community to illustrate how conversations across specializations, institutions, and continents can contribute to university educators and leaders reimagining pedagogies and collaboration in transformative, pluralistic ways that intensify improved learning for self and others. The chapter also exemplifies how collaboration and exchanges among self-study research facilitators can enhance understandings of and opportunities for learning, teaching, and enacting of self-study methodology in a complex, pluralistic way.

Collectively, the chapters add to the body of knowledge about teaching and learning self-study methodology within a carefully crafted framework of design elements generated and tested from their application in practice. There are possibilities, extensions, and refinement of our elements, and they are not finite. We are continuing to build these guidelines as a community and in dialogue with others who have done this work. We see a need for further work in this area of teaching self-study methodology. Along with our self-study colleagues, we will continue to consider how we might most effectively teach self-study methodology so that the field can continue to grow and be sustained and its impact multiplied.

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"Standing in a Messy Sandpit": The Learning Side of Self-Study Research

Megan Madigan Peercy, Dalal Alkandil, Rebecca Caufman, Seth Hudson, Shante Lane, Alice E. Petillo, Eric Reeves, and Andrea Sonnier

This chapter examines how seven doctoral students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines came to understand the value and the process of self-study as a methodology for examining their professional practice. It also illuminates how a self-study researcher and teacher educator, Megan Madigan Peercy, gleaned insights from their learning for the teaching of self-study methodology.

The chapter shares how each doctoral student author made sense of self-study research over time. Engaging in a relatively untapped area in self-study, this chapter examines the perspectives of learners of self-study to inform our understanding of how to teach self-study. The doctoral student authors in the chapter map their journeys from discovering self-study to enacting it, using various self-study methods

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and creative ways to reimagine data, resulting in innovative and practical research applications for engaging students in self-study work. As we demonstrate below, data from the doctoral students highlight the importance of critical friendship in the process of learning about and doing self-study, as well as other dimensions of what it means to learn to engage in self-study. After the doctoral students' experiences are presented, Megan examines how their learning to *do* self-study can inform teacher educators about what it means to learn to *teach* self-study methodology to others. Questions about how to teach self-study represent a new and under-researched strand of inquiry in the self-study scholarship (Butler 2014; Butler et al. 2014; Lunenberg and Samaras 2011; Ritter 2017).

Our chapter draws upon the doctoral students' post-course reflection prompts as a way to explore how their encounters with one another, the self-study literature, and the experiences of engaging in self-study work supported them in becoming emerging self-study scholars. Furthermore, we draw upon Megan's reflections from the perspective of a teacher educator who was not part of this course, as she worked to explore this community of learners' insights about learning and enacting self-study. She conducted an analysis using the reflection prompts and other learning artifacts as a way to gain a foothold on how she might later teach a self-study research methods course herself. We argue that the data from this group of self-study scholars helps to illustrate the promise of using self-study research within communities of inquiry that are diverse in experience and disciplinary knowledge (see also Hawley and Hostetler 2017), as well as illustrating some implications regarding the teaching and learning of self-study as a methodology.

Methods and Data Sources

Research Context

The context for the doctoral students' engagement in this study was through their participation in a course entitled, Advanced Research Methods in Self-Study of Professional Practice (EDRS 825), taught by Anastasia Samaras. Anastasia introduced self-study research in a transdisciplinary model at George Mason University (GMU) in 2006, where she offered the course as a special topics doctoral level course for students within her college of education and from any discipline, including students who were studying topics not related to teacher education (see, e.g., Samaras et al. 2007, 2008). Despite a plethora of self-study teacher research, there are few examples available that demonstrate its usefulness to practitioners outside of the teaching profession (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015). Lighthall (2004) suggests we might consider practice as "the activity professionals rely on to exercise their professional knowledge and judgment and take action designed to improve a client's condition and functioning" (p. 232). The premise for this course was to provide doctoral students with a strong foundation in self-study research methods through their design of a project that engaged in self-study research of their professional practice.

When Anastasia taught the course in 2015, it was her seventh time teaching the course, and the course enrolled ten students. Of that group, Dalal, Seth, Shante, Alice, Eric, and Andrea indicated interest in contributing their self-study to this chapter. Rebecca, who took the course with Anastasia in 2011, was exploring an outlet for her earlier self-study research and joined the writing team.

At the time of the analysis for this study, Megan was a teacher educator with more than a decade of experience. She had used self-study methodology in her own work (e.g., Peercy 2014; Peercy and Troyan 2017). Nonetheless, she had limited experience introducing doctoral students to the tenets and foundations of self-study literature as it related to questions of developing a pedagogy of teacher education. She wanted to begin to work with students in more sustained ways, using self-study methodology, and had begun conversations with Anastasia and other self-study scholars about doing such work. Here, she examines how the learning side of self-study, based upon the experiences of the seven doctoral students from Anastasia's course, can illuminate our understanding of how to teach self-study methodology to others—both for her personally, and the wider community of professionals engaged in self-study work.

Data Sources

The primary data sources for this chapter included retrospective analyses from each of the seven doctoral students regarding what they studied and learned about self-study from enacting self-study through their projects in EDRS 825. The retrospective analyses were written after students completed the course and were based upon their responses to two sets of prompts. We describe data related to each set of prompts below.

The first set of prompts focused on the doctoral students' self-study research projects, asking the following questions:

1. What was your self-study research question?
2. What was the context of your study, as situated within the literature and within your professional and practitioner context?
3. Why was this study important to you?
4. How did you design and enact the study?
5. What did you discover?

We use responses from the first set of prompts, which we summarize here, to briefly describe each student's self-study research and to situate the context of their reflections.

- Dalal examined her teaching experiences by developing an electronic portfolio to improve her instruction in promoting reflective capacity with holistic assessments (Kabilan and Khan 2011) for other Saudi women who teach English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.

- Rebecca's project offered detailed documentation of her work as a literacy researcher and former teacher of Reading Recovery, a reading program with a clinical approach that provides daily one-on-one tutoring to first graders struggling to obtain beginning literacy skills (Clay 2001; Hattie 2009). Her self-study inquiry was prompted by her strong desire to help improve the discontinue rates of students who receive these services.
- Seth, a games story design instructor, investigated the way his instructor identity and practice were affected by moving a traditionally face-to-face course into an online format. He explored this tension in terms of his own emotional need for student approval, which he considered a weakness.
- Shante, a special education administrator, examined her beliefs in supporting the social development of students in a self-contained school for individuals with special needs and the need for colleague input. Her self-study question emerged from her teaching and observations of special needs students not having access to normalized conversations and of their limited exposure to social experiences with typically developing peers.
- Alice is a mathematics teacher educator who works at private undergraduate liberal arts university. She inquired, "How can I use connections between the visual arts and mathematics to promote positive dispositions and connections to mathematical content knowledge in undergraduate mathematics classes?" Collaborating with the art and fashion design departments and the library, she created a mathematical art gallery and a math art lecture to explore the use of informal spaces to promote a change of attitude about mathematics for preservice teachers in her classes.
- Eric is an executive coach who wanted to explore coach–client dyads in developmental coaching and was guided by the recurring question, "How do I improve what I am doing?" within the coaching framework of the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching (iPEC), which includes the span of an individual's emotions across seven levels of emotional energy.
- Andrea is a teacher of deaf education who studied how the development of a critical consciousness contributed to her practice among deaf and hard of hearing (D/HOH) students with intersectional identities.

The second set of prompts was designed to examine the process of students' learning self-study research and is the focus of this chapter. Students offered their insights and reflections about learning and enacting self-study research based upon their responses to these prompts:

1. When and how did you get self-study research?
2. What role did critical friends play in the process of your learning self-study research?
3. How has your thinking changed from enacting the self-study research?
4. How has your practice changed?

Additional data sources came from Megan's practice and included her syllabus from a doctoral course she had recently taught that included very brief introduction

to self-study, her notes about the course, discussion board postings from her students in the course, and conversations and e-mails between Megan and Anastasia about the EDRS 825 course. Secondary data sources included EDRS students' multimodal artifacts and a reflective paper that the doctoral students created for the EDRS 825 course, as well as the 825 syllabus. These sources all provided a deeper understanding of context and background for the course and their learning as situated within the course.

Data Analysis

To explore the research question, "What is it like to learn self-study research?", Megan utilized the constant comparative method (Corbin and Strauss 2015) to examine the students' responses to the second set of question prompts and the data from Megan's doctoral course, identifying codes, categories, and then themes about their learning of self-study. Megan also used memoing and analysis of secondary sources such as the EDRS 825 course syllabus and course assignments to situate students' learning within the context of the course foci and requirements. Findings were organized around the following themes: the processes of getting self-study research, the role of critical friends in learning self-study research, how students' thinking changed from enacting self-study research, and how students' practice changed from enacting self-study research.

The Processes of Getting Self-Study Research

Students noted a number of ways that their understanding of self-study work emerged, including their engagement with critical friends, observing others discuss self-study data, and coming to better understand the role of others in self-study. They frequently noted that understanding and engaging in self-study required reflection and a different relationship to research. Rebecca talked about how self-study demands that researchers "leave behind our old ways of thinking about research" and put the researcher back in the story. Similarly, Shante noted the power of self-study research in helping her to recognize her own expertise:

> Prior to experiencing the process of completing a self-study, I seldom interjected myself in my research. I would gather a litany of articles and I became removed. As I started to understand the complexities, I began to realize that my experience made me an expert on a topic I was very passionate about for many years. The study changed my perception of my role and how I define myself as a researcher.

In contrast, however, Dalal noted that rather than changing her relationship to the ways in which she thought about doing research, self-study was representative of her previously held beliefs and practices. She stated that learning about self-

study gave her a way to name and understand something she had always thought was important, which was teacher development through self-reflection. For Dalal, her self-study work supported her previously held ideas about "the importance of conducting such research on myself to better facilitate and support the development of others."

Alice spoke for many of the doctoral students about her understanding of self-study as an ongoing process, as well as the important role of self-study in supporting her to be more reflective: "I'm still getting self-study. It has helped me to start noticing myself…. It has enhanced my ability and enlarged the place of reflection in my teaching and life." Students also frequently noted that an important part of getting self-study was in realizing that a better understanding of their own practice helped them to engage others more meaningfully. Andrea noted that, by seeking a "systematic and rigorous understanding of [her] practice," she was better able to work with her students and colleagues in ways that were "aligned with the goals of social justice."

Students noted that engaging in self-study was not only fulfilling but it was also emotionally demanding. For instance, Seth noted that, while his reflective development was important, it was also a challenging work. He stated that one of the times he got self-study was when he was struggling to understand his practice and was pushed by his critical friends in the course:

> I got self-study standing in a messy sandpit, challenging my own identity and at a loss for answers—thankfully prodded to the edge of discomfort by critical friends. I was hesitant to go deeper in terms of emotional engagement—ready to quit… . I finally realized, though, that this discomfort was the point of my self-study, and where lasting change in my practice and identity came from.

For Seth, this "messy sandpit" was an important turning point (Bullock and Ritter 2011) in understanding that while self-study can take us to uncomfortable places; it also helped him to realize his goal of understanding the shift in his professional identity when moving from teaching face-to-face to online. For Bullock and Ritter (2011), a turning point includes the following characteristics: an affective (emotional or motivational) element to the data, the data frame a problem of practice, and the author asking for help from a critical friend. These characteristics were indeed an important facet of Seth's experience with self-study and his getting the value of self-study work.

The Role of Critical Friends in the Process of Learning Self-Study Research

In response to this prompt, Eric stated that his critical friends "challenged [him] to think outside of [his preexisting] frameworks and reexamine previous assumptions and interpretations." Many students, like Eric, spoke of the capacity of critical friends to push them to consider other dimensions and interpretations of their

practice. They also noted the important give-and-take of critical friendships, stating that they sought to support their critical friends in ways that were reciprocal to what they received and that their critical friends moved their thinking in important ways. For instance, Seth noted that through his critical friendships, he "honed skills of emotional intelligence in trying to aid my critical friends find their answers." Similarly, Andrea noted that it was through written conversation with a critical friend that she "realized that … the opportunity to learn to think differently and teach differently in ways that were aligned with our goal to improve student learning was what self-study was all about." Indeed, such experiences of shifting one's understanding is a central element of critical friendships (Breslin et al. 2008; Costa and Kallick 1993; Ragoonaden and Bullock 2016; Samaras and Sell 2013; Schuck and Russell 2005).

Not all experiences with critical friends were positive, however. Rebecca stated that it was important for everyone in the relationship to have similar expectations and to choose one's critical friends with care:

> I took this role seriously and provided [my critical friends] with praise, questions, and challenges to their thinking. I felt my critical friends did not spend as much time providing feedback to my work as I did to their work. This was a little disappointing to me and taught me the importance of setting clear expectations prior to embarking in a critical friend relationship—and also choosing your friends wisely!

Rebecca also sought a critical friend from outside of her class experience and found this to be a more in-depth and meaningful experience for her growth as a teacher:

> We e-mailed each other once a week during data collection and her responses were encouraging, thought provoking, and challenging. She helped me to extend my personal views and highlighted my biases. It was through this critical friendship that I feel I grew the most as a research and a teacher. It helped me to clearly see the value and need for friends in research. This value is something I will always hold onto and have continued to search out and foster beyond the class.

Rebecca's experience highlights the importance of interacting with others who are able to engage with us in a serious and sustained way, and for Rebecca finding this more meaningful critical friendship illustrated the importance of continuing to seek out friends to support her inquiry. Rebecca's comments highlight another important dimension of critical friendship, which is that such work can be uncomfortable and uncertain and critical friends may not always share the same expectations nor understanding of their purpose (e.g., Schuck and Russell 2005). It further illustrates the importance of reciprocity in working with critical friends, or, as Schuck and Russell have noted, "a critical friendship works in two directions" (p. 119).

How Students' Thinking Changed from Enacting Self-Study Research

Realizing the importance of situating oneself in one's research inquiry was of key importance for students' discovery from enacting self-study work. For instance, Andrea noted that her self-study encouraged her to examine more deeply how her positioning and experiences played a role in her work with students and distinguished what it meant to use self-study rather than traditional research-based means to arrive at this understanding:

> My teaching practice has become more research-based. By this, I don't mean that every decision I make as a teacher in a classroom is based on published, empirical evidence. I mean that I have become more reflective about, and reflexive during, my practice now that I have a better understanding of how my assumptions and values, based on my personal history and the cultural context of the classroom, undergirds my interactions with students.

Alice illustrated how her reflection, as a result of her self-study work, resulted in leveraging students' experiences in informal learning environments to spark interest in learning. She spoke of creating "a relationship with mathematics" for students and modeling for them "the kind of intellectual curiosity" she wanted to encourage in them through the use and engagement of nontraditional learning spaces and experiences. She felt that much of her own interest in mathematics had arisen this way and attributed her self-study project to helping her to discover this.

Furthermore, students noted that these reflective discoveries need to be made public so that others can learn and benefit from self-study findings. For instance, Rebecca stated:

> I continue to be challenged by Samaras' (2011) command to "believe in the important story you have to tell" (p. 232). It would be far easier to turn my computer off at the end of the semester and let the story live hidden away in my files. If I am to be a true self-study scholar though, I must not shy away from this last challenge. Samaras (2011) encouragingly wrote in her book "Yes, you can tell your research story. Believe in its impact for others. You add knowledge to the field of teaching by telling and writing your story" (p. 233).

Similarly, Seth noted the importance of sharing one's self-study findings for the growth of others:

> Publication or presentation of my self-study findings brings a certain vulnerability that is uncomfortable to a certain extent, but adding my voice to the conversation can help others grow just as I have… . My teaching and that of others is part of a larger conversation that shapes our craft, collectively. With no reflection on practice, we lose a chance to improve. With no record of our efforts to improve, we lose a chance to push the field of teaching forward.

Dalal's comments remind us, however, that engaging in such work requires courage: "I learned that it takes courage to seriously think about one's character, actions, and motives with the intention to better yourself for others." Dalal's statement was illustrative of the goal for self-study work that others had also learned: that of using self-discovery to apply to one's practice in order to "better yourself *for others*

[emphasis added]." Thus, one of the key goals of self-study—that it not only improve one's practice but also inform the learning of others and the larger field (LaBoskey 2004)—seemed to be met by the students' experiences in EDRS 825.

How Students' Practice Changed from Enacting Self-Study Research

A common thread in student responses to this prompt was an increased openness to oneself, as well as to colleagues and to students. For instance, Seth stated that his self-study work encouraged him not only to be more accepting of his practice but also to share his findings with colleagues:

> I now view my curiosity and semester-to-semester revisions of courses as a strength rather than a lack of certainty. I am experimenting to make my teaching the best it can be for a particular set of students in a particular context; self-study allows me to capture data and potentially share with colleagues. Doing so has the potential to impact my field rather than *just* my practice.

Shante, too, noted an increased self-confidence in how her practice could inform others in her field: "I know my unique lens offers meaningful insight that only I can articulate." Alice's comments demonstrated that she was more open with students about her approach to teaching:

> I am more open and honest with students about myself and my thinking as I facilitate my classes. I look to connect the learning with the student's goals and aspirations. I take great joy in guiding students to a deeper and richer appreciation of mathematics and changing the way they see themselves and the world… . I really want to change the way students perceive the world around them and to open their "math eyes."

Furthermore, students noted that their engagement with self-study had an ongoing, dynamic impact on changing their practices. Noting the value of working with critical friends for his professional practice, Eric stated that he was still engaging with three different critical friend teams in his work as a professional coach:

> I have continued to engage a professional practice critical friend team in the form of three coaches with whom I continue to do peer coaching. With one, I focus on improving my coaching practice, the second I use for business development, and the third serves as a sounding board and coach for personal and work issues.

Thus, students noted significant transformation of their practice through their experiences of self-study, which have important considerations for our work in teacher education and other professional communities. In what follows, we synthesize important themes from the doctoral students' experiences of learning to do self-study and explore how these might inform others interested in engaging students in self-study work.

Implications

Based on Megan's analysis of the themes in data from the doctoral student community in the self-study research course, we offer the following implications for practice to inform the teaching of self-study methodology to others.

What Is Research and What Is It for?

Many of the students in Anastasia's course noted that their perspectives on research had shifted as a result of engaging in self-study work. This raises important questions about where we each begin regarding our understanding of the purpose and nature of research.

- Begin by investigating students' existing ideas about research. What do they think research is for? What is the role of the researcher? Is the researcher in the story? Where do these ideas about research come from?
- What do students know or think are ways in which teacher educators and other researchers–practitioners examine, improve, and question their practice? Have they had their own experiences of examining their practice? How have they examined, or resolved, or responded to those questions about their practice in the past? Is it important to do this? Why or why not?

This line of conversation could be linked to research that has noted a gap in our understanding about teacher education: that of the work of teacher educators (e.g., Conklin 2015; Goodwin et al. 2014; Knight et al. 2014; Lanier and Little 1986). Such inquiry could be followed by examining empirical examples of self-study work to demonstrate how such scholarship is being undertaken (e.g., Bullock 2014; Fletcher et al. 2016). What sorts of questions does self-study methodology help to illuminate that the research base is calling for? How is the researcher in or out of the story? What are the affordances and limitations of each?

What Is the Role of Critical Friends in Self-Study Work?

Critical friendships played an important role for learning in this self-study course community, and the ways in which they did and did not support students can also inform the teaching and learning of self-study methodology.

- Help novices see that they need to engage deeply and reciprocally in their critical friendships (e.g., Schuck and Russell 2005). Think with them about ways to engage as critical friends. Make them aware that this work is not all going to be easy or comfortable nor all feel positive.

- What kinds of shared experiences or sharing of self at the outset might help critical friends to be willing to engage in being vulnerable and emotional with one another? What kinds of shared ground rules and expectations will support them in feeling safe to do this kind of work and engage in a deep way?

An important question remains regarding work with critical friends in the context of coursework, specifically how can they go "to the edge of their discomfort" (Samaras and Sell 2013, p. 106) in constructive ways? Can this be done in a course where there are limited options for who students can work with and these choices are somewhat forced? Should we encourage students, as Rebecca and Eric did, to seek critical friends outside of class in addition to, or instead of, working with classmates as critical friends?

How Does My Investigation Connect to Larger Questions in the Field?

It is important for new practitioners of self-study to realize that self-study is not only for understanding and improving one's own practice but that it can and should also inform the field in important new ways (LaBoskey 2004). This approach allows self-study work to move beyond individual stories of practice (Loughran 2010) and also begins to build the chains of inquiry (Zeichner 2007) in areas of research that need further illumination. This might be accomplished by reading self-study work that investigates a particular set of questions about one's individual practice and then tracing how that thread can be or has been taken up into further investigation.

What Does Learning About Self-Study Mean for My Practice?

Students in Anastasia's course frequently noted how their experiences had fundamentally changed the ways in which they saw and engaged in their practice. They also noted that such work requires courage and a willingness to be vulnerable.

- Help students to see the long-term value in self-study and how it can change their approach to practice in extended ways. This is a commitment that we can't unsee once we have come to realize the transformative impact it can have.
- Discuss the courage required of us when we do self-study work. How can we help others be courageous about this? By illustrating vulnerability ourselves? By showing other examples of self-study work that show vulnerability and courage?

Megan's Reflections About Planning to Teach Self-Study

After a few years of thinking and talking with other scholars about how to teach self-study to others, I was trying to find a clear sense of direction about how to engage students in such personal, challenging, vulnerable work, which—as the data from Anastasia's students so beautifully illustrated—also has a responsibility to inform others in meaningful ways. I had recently taught a doctoral course in which we spent a week examining examples of work from self-study scholarship that primarily addressed conceptual and methodological issues in self-study but had not included much in the way of examples of empirical work in self-study. Students were interested in knowing more about how to *do* self-study and encouraged me to spend more time on this topic when I taught the course in the future. This conversation was in my mind as I looked at the data from the students in Anastasia's course.

The significance of what Anastasia's students had learned and how powerful they found the course to be encouraged me to return to notes I had written on my syllabus for teaching my doctoral course next time, based on my students' verbal feedback about course readings and assignments. I also returned to their discussion board postings from the week in which we had read some self-study work. Data from both groups of students encouraged me to think about my future work with doctoral students. For instance, Colleen, one of the doctoral students in my course, commented in a posting reflecting on that week's self-study readings:

> In the doctoral program, I have found that experiences fall into three buckets: methodological preparation, theoretical and conceptual preparation, and assistantship experiences that often include practice (both research and teacher education). Yet, these three buckets often seem disconnected. As many students enter doctoral programs with the explicit intention of becoming teacher educators, I think course work in self-study could be a great way to interconnect all three of these buckets…. I think it would be beneficial if graduate students who were teaching undergraduate teaching classes had to take a concurrent doctoral level class that focused on self-study.

Colleen's suggestion sparked a significant side conversation, in which other students also noted their interest in such a focus, as indicated in Christina's comment:

> [Colleen,] I think your idea of preparing doc students for their future role as TEs by including self-study coursework would be quite valuable. Dr. Peercy, I wonder if this is something that might work as an assignment for this course in the future?

Students also inquired about the how-to of self-study work, as well as its general reception in the field, as evidenced by the following questions from Christina and from Andrés:

> **Christina:** Do all self-studies follow a similar methodology? If so, are there general or accepted criteria for judging the quality of a self-study? How often are self-studies selected for publication in top peer-reviewed journals?

> **Andrés:** Despite how sound the arguments for self-study are, I also often found myself wondering how likely the broader research community would be to accept the methodology.

   Data from Anastasia's students, this discussion board conversation from my students, as well as my students' enthusiasm in class about the readings we did in self-study, inspired me to request to teach a doctoral course that I had recently learned was on my department's list of approved doctoral courses but had not been taught in a decade: Pedagogy of Teacher Education. With the approval of this course for next year, the pressure is on to create the kind of course that will support students in their understanding and enactment of self-study.

Conclusion

The findings from this study build upon and extend the existing body of self-study research by using the perspectives of those learning to do self-study to inform our understanding of how to teach self-study. Collectively, the learning of the doctoral students in Anastasia's course, as well as Megan's learning from examining their post-course reflections and course artifacts, serves to advance the field of self-study research by documenting the enactment and impact of self-study methodology for practitioners. The results strengthen the argument that self-study is an appropriate methodology to use more broadly for improving professional practice and is worthy of further exploration.

   Additional exploration of what and how novices learn about how to engage in and foster self-study, as supported by more experienced others, could serve to further illuminate the field's approach to the newly emerging literature on the teaching and learning of self-study. One such window into this work is to explore the experiences of other teacher educators and their students as they engage on this important path together.

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Dwelling in the Question: Professional Empowerment Through Complex Visual Self-Study

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> *… have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves …*
>
> —*Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet, (1934, p. 35).*

Introduction

We live immersed in an image-based world, where digital devices and visual media inform our daily lives. Yet most university faculty still ground their instructional styles, their scholarly pursuits, and their curriculum development in the print-based model in which they were formed and trained. The emerging environment for innovative teaching demands that faculty engage with this visually rich digital environment, not merely as a toolbox from which to replace traditional teaching tools with new ones but as a pathway to develop new models of engagement with teaching, learning, and scholarship. Self-study of teaching provides an apt pathway for this

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kind of holistic change because it is a method for teachers to re-engage in their profession and requires "willingness to publicly problematize teaching and learning … be open to, and act upon, the curiosities, surprises, and challenges of everyday teaching practice; and to actively seek out alternative perspectives on practice" (Berry 2014, p. 964).

Over the last 8 years, the results from three consecutive transdisciplinary self-study of teaching collaboratives at George Mason University suggest that the distinctive components of self-study methodology (LaBoskey 2004; Samaras 2011) offer a democratic and accessible means for discovering, exploring, and enacting complex, evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning. Self-study is characterized by a personal, situated, and systematic inquiry that requires critical collaboration in order to improve learning for self and others and to generate knowledge for the field (Samaras 2011). Given that self-study focuses on the teaching and learning self in action, it is discipline agnostic, accommodates research perspectives from the arts through to the hard sciences, and thus permits fluid exchanges of knowledge between peers. When self-study methodology is skillfully shared and assiduously pursued within a collective of peers, participants' old habit paths and perspectives give way to branching possibilities (Bodone et al. 2004; Davey and Ham 2009; Pithouse-Morgan and van Laren 2012; Samaras et al. 2014). In self-study, faculty have opportunities to contextually appropriate strategies for reinventing curricula, for revitalizing their instructional practices, and, above all, for reinvigorating their sense of teaching and their students' learning (e.g., Cundra et al. in press; Hjalmarson 2017; Scott 2014). In addition, immersion in such structured self-study supports teacher-scholars (with positions focused on teaching) in recovering individual autonomy and agency within higher education (Swanson 2014).

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Background

Anastasia Samaras, professor of education at George Mason University and an acknowledged expert in self-study methodology, has long worked with colleagues to make self-study practical for teachers (Samaras and Freese 2006) and teacher educators (Samaras 2002, 2011; Samaras et al. 2006). Based on her research and teaching of the methodology to doctoral students (Samaras et al. 2007), she recognized that self-study could also be beneficial to other professional practitioners to help them push the status quo of teaching and learning. To explore the possibilities, in August 2010, she inaugurated George Mason's first multi-semester, transdisciplinary faculty self-study research and learning community, with sponsorship from the university's Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence. Through a competitive process, 11 participants from 11 specializations and 4 colleges were selected to participate in the Scholars of Studying Teaching Collaborative (SoSTC). Each participant, including Anastasia, developed a self-study project grounded in her or his own teaching practice while also engaging in a meta-study of SoSTC using the collective self-study method (Samaras et al. 2014). The meta-study asked, "What is the nature of our progress and development as a faculty self-study of teaching collaborative invested in studying professional practice?" Bridging the individual studies and the meta-study were the meetings of critical friend teams, a vital element of the self-study methodology in which small groups of participants provide deep attention, critical response, and supportive listening to one another as each person's study progresses.

The combination of individual and collaborative research responsibilities nurtured both individual autonomy and a shared bond that, over the course of the collaboration, extended from the professional and pedagogical to "notations of connection, emotion, and revelations of self-assessment and what could be learned through interdisciplinary group perspectives" (Samaras et al. 2012, p. 253). Like a Catherine wheel, the products generated from individual and collective inquiries spun out into multiple and diverse venues including conferences, publications, and blog posts and fed back into the university through presentations in departments and at Innovations in Teaching and Learning, an annual conference sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence (e.g., Constantine 2011; Swanson 2014). SoSTC also engaged graduate research assistants, demonstrating that this methodology, unlike the more traditional methodologies deployed both in educational research and in the wider field of the scholarship of teaching and learning, transcends discipline and status uniting graduate students, adjunct and full-time contingent faculty, tenure-track, tenured, and senior faculty in a single endeavor.

A second research and learning community, Scholars of Studying Teaching Collaborative on e-Learning (SoSTCe-L), was launched in 2012. Unlike groups that gather to learn how to use technology tools, SoSTCe-L focused on the instructor's role in facilitating the *quality* of students' learning experiences in using and applying technologies. The fundamental question for individual self-study research by the participants was whether and how incorporating technology improved their pedagogies.

As SoSTCe-L drew to a close, Anastasia and Lesley, a cofacilitator of SoSTCe-L, began meeting with SoSTC participant, Lynne Scott Constantine, an artist and scholar who teaches in the School of Art, to consider new questions: "How might self-study help faculty reorient themselves to teaching in the visually rich digital environment that their students embrace?" "How might a self-study collaborative support and influence that work?" "In what ways might using visually rich digital tools inform participants' self-study of professional practice?" To explore these questions, in 2014, Lynne, Lesley, and Anastasia launched a third transdisciplinary faculty self-study group of 14 participants: the Self-Study Scholars' Collaborative on the Visually Rich Digital Learning Environment (S^3C). Reporting results from S^3C is the context and purpose of the present chapter.

Cosponsored by Mason's Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence and 4-VA (a research consortium of Virginia's public research universities), S^3C had three goals: to support faculty development, to expand the scholarship of professional practice across and within disciplines, and to build research capacity using the self-study research methodology and the tools of visually rich digital environments. Although self-study scholars have employed visuals to represent self-study (Weber and Mitchell 2004), S^3C was an opportunity to use the visual to advance faculty self-study; as with SoSTCe-L, the group's meetings and activities focused not on learning to use these tools but on helping participants envision the visually rich digital learning environment to explore their professional practice and ground pedagogical risk taking.

Analysis of the results of SoSTC and SoSTCe-L argued that a key to the success of transdisciplinary self-study is its enactment within a community of fellow seekers and critical friends (e.g., Hernández Gil de Lamadrid and Román Mendoza 2015; Smith 2012). Collaborative self-study brings the traditional virtues of immersion in a community of scholars to individual pedagogical practices that might seem too idiosyncratic or too discipline specific to be brought together into meaningful archives. On the contrary, within the structured environment of self-study methodology, the sharing of individual and disciplinary pedagogies heightened the potential for a transformative reimagining of learning, teaching, and curriculum and suggested how such change could be scalable to department, program, college, and institutional needs. Building on the results from SoSTC and SoSTCe-L, Lynne, Lesley, and Anastasia structured the third transdisciplinary collaborative to maximize the potential for transdisciplinary transformative learning as a route to transformative action.

S^3C: Design and Structure

Three parallel endeavors anchored the 2014 S^3C learning community: individual self-study research, meta-study research, and a collective investigation of the teaching potential of visually rich digital active learning environments. Individual self-study research in S^3C focused on a pedagogical or curricular challenge selected by

each individual participant. The collaborative meta-study focused on structured research into the nature of self-study as a tool for reimagining teaching practices. The collective investigation of using visually rich digital tools focused on adding to each participant's knowledge base of options and opportunities within visually rich digital learning environments. Anastasia's and Lesley's experience of SoSTCe-L, which did not employ a meta-study design, drove the decision to reintroduce the meta-study, which would provide a shared ground from which to foster collaboration.

The third anchor for S³C, the visually rich digital environment, introduced a new factor that intrigued the three S³C cofacilitators: "Would the participants move from experiencing the environment as primarily requiring instrumental change (acquiring and learning suitable tools for the classroom), or would they experience it—through the use of visually rich tools—as an opportunity to re-envision their practice as scholars, teachers, and curriculum developers?"

Applicants were recruited both through open announcements and through one-to-one outreach to individuals whose interests fit the participant profile and whose experiences could enrich the community. In addition, preference was given to faculty who demonstrated interest in teaching or designing curricula for interactive, inquiry-based, digitally rich active learning environments. Perhaps most importantly, both the invitation to participate in S³C and the process of selection stressed potential collaborators' capacity to embrace the disposition of a *beginner's mind*. Beginner's mind, a Zen Buddhist concept, stresses openness and the ability to explore without preconceptions. In the S³C proposal, Anastasia, Lesley, and Lynne described beginner's mind in the context of S³C as willingness to:

- Explore pedagogy and curriculum in studios of collaborative inquiry and exchange
- Embrace mistakes as part of the process of growth
- Cultivate openness to continuous learning and divergent thinking
- Experiment courageously
- Learn from others outside their disciplines and instructional units
- Be vulnerable within the learning community
- Share knowledge generated by the study through presentation and publication, both individual and collaborative

The 14 Mason faculty members in the final group included 11 women and 3 men, drawn from 6 of the university's constituent colleges as well as from the Office of the Provost. The mix thus reproduced one of the key preconditions for maximal learning identified in the research on faculty learning communities and confirmed in our research results from SoSTC and SoSTCe-L: "the encouragement and nurturing of collaborative conversations and action across disciplinary, programmatic, status and spatial divides."

The atmosphere of the monthly S³C meetings and the more frequent meetings of the smaller critical friend teams confirmed what the facilitators had hoped: the explicit focus on visually rich digital environments cut across any individual expertise in teaching, learning, research, self-study, visual analysis, and digital tools that

participants (including the facilitators) brought to the table. The mild disorientation nurtured beginner's mind for all participants, including the facilitators, creating a communal ground zero from which innovation might begin. Autum Casey, for example, a scholar who teaches in the very visual field of theatrical design and technical production, embraced the possibilities: "What has been really nice is that … yes, we're all experts in our [content] field, but none of us [is] expert at the thing we're trying to do [in our teaching] necessarily."

Star Muir, a professor of communication and an expert in technology, found the embrace of beginner's mind an exercise in humility but one that offered unexpected opportunities for change:

> The beginner's eye is a particularly special place… . we reach an area of greater density, we reach conceptual difficulties, we begin to learn new ways of perceiving and expressing, and learning is hard but it also offers new growth.

Even cofacilitator Lesley found herself reevaluating herself in terms of beginner's mind. Asking one's self to trust the visual in one's own work, she noted, was much more difficult than asking one's students to do the same:

> It made me realize how hard what I ask my students to do really is, when I had to execute it myself … I went from "oh, I've done visually rich all my life" to "Oh no, I'm just like everybody else. I'm in the beginner's mind here."

Similarly, E. Shelley Reid, director of the Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence and a writing teacher who educates teaching assistants in her field, recalled a pair of beginner's mind emails she sent to cofacilitator Anastasia. In the first, she combined six "Am I doing the assignment right?" questions into an anxious wail. In the follow-up, "Ignore that email" message, she announced that she had regained her willingness to experiment courageously. S³C cofacilitator Lynne noted that participants like Shelley were willing to productively stew in their disorientation if they were strongly motivated by the hope of reorienting their research and teaching:

> These are people who know how to learn. What they need is the specific motivation to put their subject matter, their teaching practice into the context of self-study as a mode of improvement and into the context of visual thinking as a mode of breaking up the logjam.

To support participants' desires and motivation, the facilitators met and communicated regularly to create activities that balanced structure with the flexibility necessary to nurture emergent ideas.

The Meta-study: Gauging Participants' Perceived Outcomes of Their Work in S³C

The collaborative meta-study, as an inquiry into the efficacy of self-study as a tool for reimagining teaching practices, was conducted over the three northern hemisphere semesters (fall 2014 to fall 2015). A blackboard space served as data

repository where all members could post material and access the data collected. This flexible archive reinforced the idea of equal, collective ownership of S³C data and of its availability for analysis by any member of the collaborative. The data included:

1. Audio and transcriptions of exit interviews with each of the 14 participants, conducted by graduate research assistant, Allison Sauveur
2. Visual research artifacts
3. Visual commentaries, such as visual memos, drawings, and sketches in response to exploratory prompts, images shared with the collaborative and with public audiences, photos and video of meetings
4. Reciprocal self-interviews within critical friends groups
5. Participants' postings and comments on our community Blackboard space
6. Audio and transcription of final meeting
7. Audios of group meetings
8. Audio and transcription of dialogues between facilitators on facilitating self-study

The present chapter draws primarily on analysis of the exit interviews and on self-reported experiences from commentary accompanying the visual research artifact, other visual commentaries, and reciprocal self-interviews. We addressed two questions:

1. How might self-study aid faculty in reorienting themselves to teaching in the visually rich digital environment that their students take for granted?
2. How might the faculty community created within S³C inform and influence those individual efforts?

The exit interviews used the exit interview questions from the SoSTC meta-study to facilitate comparison of the outcomes from SoSTC and S³C. Each of the 14 in-person interviews was manually transcribed from the audio recordings. Then, the data were examined using pattern coding with keywords and phrases that were common among interviewees (Saldaña 2009). Next, a second round of coding was used to recognize similarly coded data and further summarize it into subcategories or consolidate it. Keywords and phrases were then analyzed, paying attention to how they connected or vibrated toward each other and encoded with suitable category labels. The data, drawn from the multiple sources, were then check coded for inter-rater reliability by Emily Christopher, a graduate research assistant, to determine if anything was absent from the categories, to further analyze results from the first two stages, and to discover how any new categories and subcategories interrelated with one another. Throughout each coding method, commonalities developed. Patterns and then themes occurring in the data were noted for later reference. The analytical memos kept during the analysis process documenting ongoing preliminary interpretations were again reviewed.

Several themes stood out in the exit interviews: first, participants' self-reflection and strong motivation to improve as teachers helped them persist in the S³C collaborative, even when the complexities of self-study methodology produced discom-

fort and uncertainty; second, the visual component of the S³C design sparked changes in pedagogy and a greater sense of professional efficacy among participants; and third, the critical friends groups played a key role in participants' self-study projects and self-transformation.

Motivation, Self-Reflection, and Change

Although self-study is a collaborative method, it relies upon each individual's motivation, willingness to be reflective, and tolerance for uncertainty to build the group's collective capacity for change. The S³C data suggested that these capabilities are important resources directly tied to the success of the self-study endeavor. For example, participants who expressed a shift in their role in the classroom all noted that they felt a moral responsibility to view their identity as a teacher in a critical light. As S³C facilitator Lynne put it, "It's not just important to stop thinking of yourself as the 'sage on the stage'; you really have to make a commitment to the transparency of the learning process."

Participants consistently noted that they spent time reflecting not just on their teaching practices but on their processes of change and reflection. They spoke of seeking an answer to what self-study truly means to them and how it can enrich instruction for the students. Although most participants initially expressed a high level of uncertainty about directly relating the outcomes of self-study to their classrooms, the majority saw that uncertainty as part of the process. The journey became just as important as the goal they were trying to achieve through employing self-study in their classrooms. Seth Hudson recalled that Anastasia had told him not to be afraid to "get your hands dirty" and hang out in the "messy sand pit" because he was trying something new: "It helped me realize, try it, and assess it, as best you can, knowing … it might fail."

Interestingly, even those participants who had previous exposure to self-study learned new ways to focus on the self, often prompted by the challenges they or their students faced in working with new digital tools. For example, it was the second experience with self-study for Anya S. Evmenova, an expert in educational technology; like Lesley, she found that the group's conversations about modeling visual pedagogies prompted new insight into students' experiences.

While teaching a course in the assistive technology/special program on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for current and future teachers, Anya wanted to use the visually rich digital learning environment to introduce UDL principles in an asynchronous online environment. Through her self-study, she realized that she did not fully model UDL principles in her own teaching. She then revised her online modules to "walk the talk" of UDL, modeling multiple ways of representing content and providing diverse pathways for students to engage with content and demonstrate what they learned.

As Seth's and Anya's experiences demonstrate, not only were participants' attitudes about incorporating visual and digital resources overwhelmingly positive, but

their attention to visual or digital elements also helped them discover or refocus on key self-study elements.

Impact on Pedagogy and Sense of Professional Efficacy

It also became clear that the expanded role of the visual within the environment of self-study had a meaningful impact on participants' pedagogies and on their sense of professional efficacy. For example, near the end of the third semester of S³C activity, Autum engaged in reciprocal self-interviews with her critical friend, Seth Hudson, using the Meskin et al. (2014) protocol. While listening to the audio of the interviews, Autum had an aha moment through which she came to embrace a less idealized image of what good teaching looks like:

> I like beautiful, aesthetically pleasing images. That being said, they are of no use to me for the self-study. The imagery I need to collect for my self-study is the chaos of 25 students in groups taping out a set on the floor for the first time (see Fig. 1), or the torched fabric created from doing a burn test to demonstrate that different fiber contents can be determined by burning the fabric (See Fig. 2)… . What has been most useful to me is documenting the transition from my idea of organized learning to actual learning.

Like Autum, Seungwon "Shawn" Lee, who teaches meeting and event management and technology in the School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, rethought his assumptions about pedagogy when he introduced visual metaphor, a technique

Fig. 1 Autum's "When the Learning Is Really Happening"

Fig. 2 Autum's "Learning that Is Not Aesthetically Pleasing"

he learned about during an S³C meeting, into his teaching of convention programming:

> Previously I used a traditional teaching method of verbally explaining "Dos and Do-Nots" in program development. However, sometimes I felt it was too complex to explain it, and students were challenged to engage in the discussion due to their inexperience. Then I decided to adopt the visual image metaphor method to discuss Do-Nots. The cargo ship image with collapsing cargos due to an overload of same size and pattern of cargos was used to start the discussion, and it instantly helped students relate to the concept (see Fig. 3). Then students were asked to share their own metaphor image of best and worst convention programs. I was pleasantly surprised by their holistic and out-of-box ideas on the once challenging task.

Nearly all the participants in S³C offered evidence that the inclusion of the visual in their self-study changed the classroom experience for both students and teacher. Early in the S³C collaborative, for example, each participant was asked to share an artifact to represent that individual's research question. Rebecca Ericson, an S³C participant who teaches physics and astronomy, inverted the usual faculty development question: instead of asking how the inclusion of the visual could build student engagement, she asked how students' use of visuals in their work might expand classroom possibilities and faculty engagement. Her artifact was a student's photo of eggs, taken in response to an assignment exploring the superstition that eggs could only be made to balance on end on the spring equinox. Armed with visual evidence from students who succeeded in balancing the egg on a day other than the spring equinox, Rebecca said, she could better help her students explore possible reasons for the myth and what makes it so hard to balance the egg (see Fig. 4).

Fig. 3 Shawn's image to explain Convention Program Planning "Dos and Do-Nots"
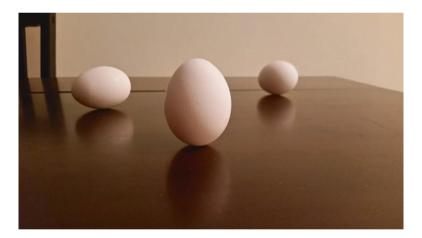
Fig. 4 Rebecca Ericson's myth destroying eggs

As the S^3C participants became more deeply engaged in their individual studies, many expressed the conviction that not just their pedagogies but their concept of their role as teacher began to change. During an exchange of visual memos in response to the prompt "Coming From … Going To," Laura Poms, who teaches epidemiology, used a photo of a 2001 crop circle designed on the model of a Fibonacci spiral to visualize the middle step in her transition between sage on the stage and guide on the side (see Fig. 5). In this middle step, she noted, she was still the main provider of information, but students now worked in groups and engaged in active learning instead of simply taking notes on her lectures.

Fig. 5 Laura's in between two modes of teaching epidemiology

The possibility of such fundamental change revived participants' sense of purpose in their teaching. For nearly all participants, seeing positive results from their individual studies kept them moving even through the murkiest waters of self-study. More than one participant noted that incorporating self-study research allowed them to fulfill their professional responsibility to research teaching and learning and share it, despite competing pressures in their overcommitted lives. In addition, participants welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with S³C colleagues and combine insights, broadening the segment of the academic community to which the results would be productive and increasing the potential for creative impact on the quality of college and university instruction across disciplines.

Critical Friends in Transdisciplinary Community

Exit interviews also confirmed that, for all S³C participants, as for those in the prior Mason self-study collaboratives, the cultivation of critical friends groups contributed significantly to the collaborative's success and formed an important outcome of the group's work and structure. Participants praised the cultivation of transdisciplinarity; critical friends who approached research and teaching from different disciplinary perspectives, and who shared expertise in different content areas, stimulated participants to create projects they might otherwise never imagined.

Fig. 6 Anastasia's figure-eight knot

For Seth Hudson, who teaches creative writing for computer game design, the support of critical friends encouraged him to try an audacious experiment in arts-based research for his self-study. He collected audio recordings of his class sessions and, instead of transcribing and coding them, produced a visual analysis of the data as waveforms generated in the recording software. Mapping course activities to the waveforms, he developed a sense of the students' "being there" and a renewed concept of his identity as an instructor. The purely visual data affected him profoundly:

> It was a shock to the system; I was forced to think without words. Questions like, "What am I writing, and for whom?" "Why do I think this?" and "Who cares?" dance around a fire in the back of my mind. The visual component stripped that away … the visual component forced me to look at the data and shut up. That was a breakthrough.

The three S³C cofacilitators also worked as critical friends to conduct a collective self-study about facilitating faculty self-study. Anastasia represented the nature of that critical friend relationship in her explanation of her "visual knot" image (Fig. 6). "I have a rich and wonderful history of working with Lynne and Lesley," she wrote. "Our work is iterative in nature and thus a figure eight."

Through the varied mindsets of critical friends and the leveling effect of exploring new visual approaches to teaching, learning, and thinking among peers experiencing beginner's mind, S³C participants drew a renewed sense of their own expertise. However, they defined that expertise differently than at the beginning of the S³C experience. This expanded vision of expertise included the patience to sit with others in their uncertainties, to stew productively in their own, and to share knowledge whose relevance may not be obvious but will unfold.

Discussion: In Pursuit of Transformational Experience

At the outset of S³C, we surmised that individual autonomy and initiative, self-sustaining reciprocal faculty development, an appetite for intellectual risk, and renewed idealism and activism within academia all might be nurtured through self-study framed within visually rich digital environments. Although exploration of the visual did itself trigger revelations for participants, the greater insights across the S³C collaborative as a whole related more comprehensively to the practice of self-study within that visually rich digital context. Based on the outcomes of S³C, one might speculate that engaging in self-study in the specific context of the visually rich digital environment triggers the "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow 1990, 1991) that precedes individual and collaborative transformation. In SoSTC, the first self-study collaborative, grappling with the methodology multiplied notations of personal and professional transformation (Samaras et al. 2012) centered around what Patricia Cranton speculates might be "the crux of the transformational experience—entering into another's frame of mind with empathy rather than critically questioning or challenging points of view" (2016, p. 98).

One key element prefiguring transformation emerged as participants relaxed into "not knowing" and developed a higher tolerance for uncertainty, traits long associated in the literature on creativity with enhanced capacity for innovation. Another shift involved a revised understanding of self as scholar and teacher, accompanied by a reinvigorated ability to recover an individual authenticity resistant to the dominant narratives of faculty roles, scholarly work, and institutional cultures. Both themes emerged once more in our current study.

Participants' struggle to understand the complexities of self-study methodology slowed down the rush to certainty and conclusion. When combined with the challenge to focus on digital environments, without the typical how-to perspective conventionally offered to faculty, the result was to broaden the nature of the study by opening existential questions critical to the future of higher education.

Dwelling in the Question

In his 2007 article "The Questions of Liberal Education" René Arcilla quotes Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*:

> … have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given now, because you would not be able to live them. (pg. 16)

Although Arcilla is targeting undergraduate students and their teachers with his advice to dwell in the question, his urging is pertinent to faculty in the twenty-first century university. Given academics' need to internalize institutional, disciplinary, and professional rules in order to succeed, participants registered discomfort at beginning again with the new lens of self-study, just as the participants in the meta-

study of our first collaborative self-study community did. In the SoSTC meta-study, participants had predominantly couched their uncertainties in terms of the "I"—the traditional academic focus. In S³C, perhaps given its vertiginous dual challenge, with the integration of the visually rich digital environment as an equal focus, the solidarity of the "we" was striking in comparison to the first meta-study. As Autum noted, "We were all, in the very beginning, very off balance because we didn't understand what self-study was, or how to do it."

Laura Lukes, assistant director of the Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence who also teaches geosciences, stressed how academic behavior changes in the face of uncertainty, where expertise does not equal control:

> The nature of self-study [is that] you have to be open to the process and not necessarily understanding the process initially, and you have to be OK with that. I think that creates a different collaborative dynamic among the faculty, because there's no expert in the group. So I think it kind of levels the playing field a little bit, where people have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Anya Evmenova, who had also participated in SoSTCe-L, the second self-study collaborative where she had worked with critical friends from her own College of Education and Human Development, initially approached the academic diversity of the S³C group with trepidation:

> … the first time we met, it was kind of awkward at the beginning… . And then when we started sharing our projects and suddenly people started to … actually provide suggestions and share something that can apply to your project from their field … that's where I said, "oh my God, we *can* learn from multidisciplinary collaboration."

This focus on process, as distinct from product, characterized participants' experience of dwelling in the question. Jill Nelson, a member of the Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty who initially found it difficult to heed self-study's injunction to study "my own changes in my own experience," as opposed to defining a question or identifying data sources when working out what was happening with students, eventually came to respect the power of the question:

> I got decent feedback … just by asking my questions. What are you learning from this? When you read it, what are you taking away? And that helped me to put into perspective this idea that, oh, I'm not just changing my teaching because of what they learned, I'm changing my teaching because of my experience with the process.

Arcilla argues that for undergraduates and their teachers, the halting of the "dash to decision" deepens the nature of questioning undertaken, pushing individuals to return to the more fundamental inquiry into who they are and how they might inhabit that identity with integrity. Our participants lived that process through the S³C collaborative.

Border Crossing

Gustarsen (2001, quoted in Kahn et al. 2013, p. 902) argues that the capacity for new forms of action is affected most directly by the extent to which a rich and diverse network of professional relationships is present. The successful crossings of

boundaries perceived as impermeable jolted participants into a more adaptive, organic, and subversive vision of their identities as teacher and scholar. Two significant boundaries were status and discipline, as one might expect. For example, Seth reflected on conversations with a senior professor in the group:

> She's at a point in her career where she's very established and I am at a point in my career where I'm very much just starting … I think the aha moment was realizing that she still had questions, even although she had been doing this for so long, and that they weren't so different from my questions.

Status crossings were equally potent for senior scholars like Shelley:

> When you've got 15 fabulous teachers in a room pushing together … it's fabulously fun and turns my brain on… . I see my own teaching better and more clearly, and I see my own thinking about teaching better and more clearly.

Star, a long-term tenured faculty member who had also served in administrative roles, echoed Shelley's perception of how the S³C collaborative foregrounded a common identity as teachers facing a shared set of opportunities for understanding:

> It's not just, "Well, how have your classes gone?" … It's really more, "how do I go about studying what I do … to create a little bit more understanding of how things are working."

Crossing disciplinary boundaries bolstered participants' perceptions of a shared teaching identity—an experience that went beyond the joy of finding, for example, that an insight from the teaching of physics might transform the teaching of theatrical production. Over and over, participants expressed surprise at the lack of judgment across disciplinary, field, and college boundaries. Autum, for example, noted:

> Part of it is just having that really nurturing environment; [when] you sit in a room with people who have identified as wanting to do better … there's no chance you are going to say something and they're going to be like, "Whhhat is she doing?"

Laura Poms, Laura Lukes, and Rebecca Ericson noted the nonjudgmental approach in critical friends groups. Laura Lukes speculated that it allowed participants to avoid the "imposter syndrome" that seems to play out in other faculty development contexts:

> I think people feel more comfortable to share some of those anxieties … those vulnerabilities … people aren't looking for the right answer, they're looking for the right process.

For Laura Poms, added value sprang from the absence of what faculty often perceive as the deficit model of faculty development—the idea that "something" needs to be "fixed":

> This group is really is really good about focusing on things that do work. And about taking a risk and taking a chance and not worrying about whether you fail or not, but what you learned from the process.

Through such meditations, participants articulated a reconfigured professional and personal identity, hinged not on an expertise honed in competition but on a shared openness and vulnerability. Shawn captured his sense of the transition:

> … the key point is, it's not about finding new information, it's how to implement, apply it to my discipline … so in the self-study and the interdisciplinary nature of this group, it's helped me to understand different disciplines and what it means in my area and how I can get help from other areas and also educate myself.

For Shelley, the commitment to transition stimulated further explorations:

> I don't often get to be in a room where everybody else is … talking about their being out on the edge, and being risk taking in that way … [it] made it easier for me then to think about the work that I'm doing, all of which has entirely not gone according to plan.

As S³C cofacilitator Lynne noted:

> … you've got to be willing to be vulnerable and let it all hang out. You can't really learn, and you certainly can't find a path to self-improvement without being willing to just let the mess spill out there. Because then you can really see what it is.

The vulnerability within the S³C collective let participants connect with their original motivation to teach while also honoring the complexities of teaching. As Mary Ewell, who teaches in the STEM accelerator program, said, "I think we all, as educators, many of us not educated to be educators, need to take this time to sit back and reflect and remember why we're here."

Finally, as Autum noted, the most critical transformation lies in the recuperation of an individual authenticity primed for action. In S³C, she found her identity not in "role-playing a professor," as she termed it, but in actually inhabiting that identity: "It's the opportunity to take off your professor hat, and sit down as Autum."

Conclusion: The Regenerative Power of Transformative Learning

Boose and Hutchings, in their analysis of a scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)-centered faculty learning community initiative at Gonzaga University, argue for our recognition of the subversive potential inherent in SoTL. They cogently summarize the pressures that militate against faculty's sustaining of a common "academic culture—a declining sense that faculty form a community whose members reflect, deliberate, and make decisions together in the name of a shared educational vision" (Boose and Hutchings 2016).

Yet both the history of the scholarship of teaching and learning movement and our 8-year investigation through self-study of teaching collaboratives suggest that more than a willingness to undertake transdisciplinary scholarship of teaching and

learning might be required to realize that subversive potential. Methodology matters. Studying about teaching using self-study methodology improves learning beyond the self and for others. As Ham and Kane (2004) explain about the self-study of teaching, "Teaching is by definition a socio-ethical act—it is to try to do good for an other" (p. 127). Sharing the research with others moves the study beyond the self to raise issues of moral, ethical, and/or political reform (LaBoskey 2004).

Both Caroline Kreber (2013) and Patricia Cranton (2011, 2016) locate the radical, transformative potential of SoTL within cross-disciplinary work that critically encounters the institutional and cultural contexts to teaching and learning. Faculty learning communities, such as that analyzed by Boose and Hutchings, along with other intentional alternative academic communities such as those Peter Felten and his colleagues discussed in their recent book, *Transformative Conversations* (2013), can spark such subversion. However, both the results of our initial self-study of teaching collaborative SoSTC and our current research on its third generation, S³C, argue that the fluidity in the methodology of self-study, combined with the location of inquiry in the self and with the ability to change aspects of that self in collaboration with others, can subvert a status quo that threatens or denies the authenticity of teaching scholars and can empower scholars to set the terms of the debate about higher education, rather than react to terms set by others. Anastasia envisions this potential thus:

> … methodology centers all of us in a set of very diverse contexts that we bring to the table, and that way of being collaborative is something I've never experienced before … we're all SO different and the main thing that centers us is the methodology. The fact that it can is enlightening… . If this methodology makes so much sense to a group of 12 very different professions, and is not limited to teaching, but theater directing or lab work or whatever … it validates the methodology.

Within the small scale and limited time frame of the S³C research collaborative, the experience of grassroots-originated and -led self-study helped participants transcend eroding faculty status and recover professional autonomy and individual initiative. The collaboration triggered self-sustaining reciprocal faculty development focused on support, discovery, openness, and reproducibility. Moreover, the holistic mutual support thus generated in this community of inquiry supported intellectual risk and a Rilkean dwelling in the question, in ways more conventional collaborations could not. Finally, participants both rediscovered and renewed the idealism and activism that first drew them to the academy, confirming the regenerative potential of transformative learning as well as its accessibility to all.

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Learning Through Enacting Arts-Informed Self-Study Research with Critical Friends

Anita Hiralaal, Refilwe Matebane, and Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan

Placing the Chapter into Context

Self-study researchers generally use qualitative research approaches to generate, represent, and interpret data related to their own professional practice (LaBoskey 2004; Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009; Samaras 2011). Even though self-study research does often include more conventional qualitative research methods such as interviews, journal writing, and observation (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009), many self-study researchers are enthused by the "unfolding and expanding orientation to qualitative social science research that draws inspiration from the arts, broadly defined" (Knowles and Cole 2008, p. xv). Indeed, self-study scholars such as Weber (2014) have argued that art-informed approaches can "enable [self-study] researchers to cast a wider net during data collection and offer a panoply of valuable lenses for analysing experience in meaningful ways that relate back to ethical practice" (p. 10).

This chapter brings into dialogue the voices and perspectives of two South African teacher educators who are engaging in arts-informed self-study research.

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The chapter is coauthored by Anita Hiralaal, Refilwe Matebane, and their doctoral research supervisor,[1] Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan. Anita, Refilwe, and Kathleen are South African women with diverse cultural heritages, educational backgrounds, and personal histories. Anita and Refilwe are both teaching in universities of technology and are registered for doctoral studies at the research-intensive university where Kathleen is located.

Anita's study is focused on understanding and improving her pedagogic role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting. Anita wants to model social constructivist teaching approaches in accounting pedagogy where she would act as a facilitator who provides students with guided opportunities to interact and learn from each other (Richardson 1997). She aims to increase students' involvement in, and their responsibility for, shaping and guiding the learning experience instead of adopting a traditional lecture-based approach in which students have little control over the nature and pace of their learning experience. She believes that this would enable her to develop as a more productive role model for students. Anita's research questions are: (a) What am I implicitly role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy? (b) Why am I implicitly role modelling this way? (c) How can I develop as a more productive role model?

Refilwe is seeking a deeper understanding of the living relationship between pedagogic values and pedagogy in her practice as a business teacher educator. Her interest in examining the living relationship between pedagogic values and pedagogy dates back to when she was still a high school teacher. The positive relationships that formed and still form between her and students left her wondering about the value dimension of education. She was always aware that it was not only the actual work (from the prescribed curriculum) that contributed to her students' success in their studies. Through informal discussions with her former students, she started to see a pattern that required thorough examination. The reason she engaged in those informal conversations with her former students was for her to put into words what she originally felt intuitively. When she began her self-study research, she did not hold a particular vision of specific values that she would like to reinforce in her practice, but instead she aimed to adopt a process that would allow the values to emerge from the study. Refilwe's research questions are: (a) How does my awareness of what I value pedagogically emerge through my personal history? (b) How does my awareness of what I value pedagogically evolve through interaction with my students? (c) How does my awareness of what I value pedagogically evolve through interaction with critical friends?

Kathleen, who teaches graduate classes and supervises students' research in teacher development studies, is working with Anita and Refilwe to guide them in their self-directed professional learning. Kathleen has a particular interest in creative and participatory modes of professional learning, which can heighten engagement and deep thinking, dialogue and sharing, enjoyment, taking action, and

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[1] In South Africa, *research supervisor* is the term used to indicate someone who advises and mentors a graduate student during her or his research project. Typically, South African graduate students have only one supervisor.

emotional growth (Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2013, pp. 85–87). She has explored this interest with colleagues and students by bringing the literary and visual arts into her research and teaching.

Anita and Refilwe are undertaking their self-study research with support from colleagues in the Transformative Education/Educational Studies (TES) project, which aims to grow self-study research capacity within a transdisciplinary professional learning community located across diverse university contexts in South Africa (Harrison et al. 2012). TES project participants comprise university educators engaged in graduate self-study research and their research supervisors. Taken as a whole, the TES participants' self-study research responds to a collective question of "How do we transform our education/al practice?"

TES participants teach and research in a range of academic and professional disciplines. The TES community is diverse with respect to age, gender, language, and race and includes both senior and early career academics. By means of frequent in-person and virtual meetings, TES participants serve as critical friends who have a mutual commitment to offering constructive advice and fresh viewpoints on each other's self-study research as work in progress (Schuck and Russell 2005). One of the significant features of self-study research and practice is collaboration with others (LaBoskey 2004). By intentionally searching for and hearing the voices of significant others, including colleagues who can be called critical friends, self-study researchers strive to "step outside" themselves (Loughran and Northfield 1998, p. 14).

The diverse and transdisciplinary nature of the TES community has offered "multiple perspectives and ways of conceptualising and undertaking research" (Harrison et al. 2012, p. 27). In particular, owing to the presence of professional artists, and those who are not professional artists but are interested in learning from and with artists, TES project activities have provided opportunities and mentoring for the collaborative discovery and exploration of art-informed self-study research methods that are infused with "processes and representational forms of the arts" (Cole and Knowles 2008, p. 58).

Anita and Refilwe have both chosen to use collage portraiture (drawing from Gerstenblatt 2013) as an art-informed self-study research method to make meaning from arts-informed data in the form of visual images and accompanying written texts created by their preservice teacher students. This choice was informed by Anita and Refilwe's conversations with Kathleen about how they might draw on the arts not only as a mode of data generation but also as a mode of analysis in self-study research. The next section of this chapter offers a discussion of collage as an arts-informed self-study method. Then, the literary device of vignettes (brief written scenes) is used to represent how sharing and discussing their collage portraits within the TES community contributed to Anita's and Refilwe's individual self-study research—offering a window into the polyvocality generated by multiple views and voices of critical friends (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015). This is followed by a consideration of implications of this work for the self-study research community.

Using Collage as an Arts-Informed Mode in Self-Study Research

Collage is one of many art forms used in qualitative research (Butler-Kisber 2008). It can be broadly defined as "a juxtaposition or co-location of found objects/images on a surface" (Allnutt 2013 p. 156). A published example of collage in self-study is the collective research of Hamilton and Pinnegar (2009), who described how collage "with its juxtaposition of image and word, [provided] a visual presentation of [their] interior representation of [their] experience and [made] visible [their] interrogation of the research question [they were] exploring and the understandings [they had] come to" (p. 161).

Anita's and Refilwe's use of collage in self-study was inspired by their reading of the work of Gerstenblatt (2013), who combined "the artistic genres of collage and portraiture as a method of analyzing qualitative interview data and creating a representation of the experiences of a family producing an art installation in rural Texas" (p. 295). Gerstenblatt's intention was "to create a visual portrait of each informant to represent the meaning of their experience working on the installation piece as they described it" (p. 12). Although Gerstenblatt's research was not self-study, in discussions with Kathleen, Anita and Refilwe came to see how they might adapt Gerstenblatt's collage portraiture design to represent and interpret data generated with preservice teachers in their self-study of teaching accounting pedagogy and business management classes. Kathleen did not give Anita and Refilwe any particular assignment or guidelines for collage portraiture. Rather, she suggested that each of them could use Gerstenblatt's example as a point of departure for developing unique visual portraits of themselves as teacher educators, using data in the form of visual images and written texts created by their preservice teacher students.

Anita's and Refilwe's Learning from the Collage Portrait Presentations

Anita and Refilwe presented their collage portraits on the same day in November 2015 to a group of critical friends in the TES project. The presentations were audio recorded and later transcribed by Anita and Refilwe at Kathleen's request. Kathleen also asked them to write down thoughts, feelings, and wonderings that arose while listening and transcribing. The collage portrait presentation transcriptions and written reflections then became additional sources of data for Anita's and Refilwe's self-study research. The transcriptions and presentations also served as the data sources for this chapter.

In this section of the chapter, excerpts from Anita's and Refilwe's presentation transcriptions and written reflections have been arranged together by Kathleen in the form of "embedded present-tense vignettes that are designed to enhance the

authenticity of the account" and "construct a window" (Humphreys 2005, pp. 842, 844) into lived experiences of sharing work in progress with critical friends. Kathleen began the data analysis process by reading Anita's and Refilwe's collage presentation transcriptions and written reflections to look for signs of what Graham (1989), in considering the contributions of the literary genre of autobiography to educational research, described as a "nodal moment" (p. 98). Graham explained that at such a nodal moment "the course of a life is seen to have connecting lines that were previously hidden, a new direction becomes clear where only wandering existed before" (p. 98). The word nodal has roots in the Latin *nodus* [knot], originally referring to a lump in the flesh. It later came to designate a "point of intersection" (Node n.d.). For Kathleen, the physical connotations of nodal as relating to a knot or lump in the flesh were a useful reminder of collective self-study research that she had done with close colleagues (Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2012). They had shown her how an embodied response of tension and physical pain, such as a knot in the neck or shoulder, could indicate an emotionally significant experience that necessitates deeper exploration. In working with the transcriptions and written reflections, Kathleen was therefore paying attention to her own embodied responses as Anita and Refilwe's self-study research supervisor. She was also looking for points of intersection where questions and ideas posed by critical friends seemed to make visible connecting lines and new directions—for herself as well as for Anita and Refilwe.

Kathleen chose two nodal moments each from Anita's and Refilwe's work and then drew on the transcriptions and written reflections to compose a vignette for each nodal moment. The vignettes take the form of brief, evocative scenes to portray instances of Anita's and Refilwe's learning through sharing and discussing their collage portraits. Anita's and Refilwe's written reflections are placed in text boxes to show that these realisations were layered onto the presentations and transcriptions at a later stage (de Beer 2016). The comments from, and names of, particular critical friends have been included with the explicit consent of all involved for the purpose of acknowledging their contributions. Kathleen shared the first drafts of the vignettes with Anita and Refilwe for their revision, clarification, and elaboration. Kathleen then used the reworked vignettes as material for developing a rough draft of the chapter, which she shared with Anita and Refilwe for further input. The chapter was finalised through a process of back-and-forth revision and meetings by the three authors, with advice from a critical reader and peer reviewer.

Anita's Collage Portrait Presentation (Fig. 1)

Anita's Description of Her Collage Portrait

Although I chose to use an arts-informed approach in my self-study, I was initially insecure about my ability to use various art forms. I always claimed that I was not an artistic person and possessed no artistic abilities. However, reading the article by
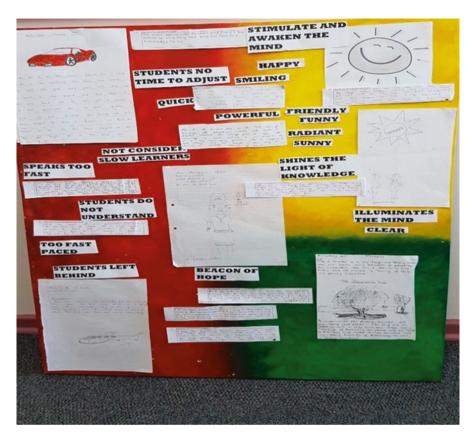
Fig. 1 Anita's collage portrait

Gerstenblatt (2013) on collage portraiture reassured me that as a novice I was capable of creating a suitable collage portrait.

I created my collage portrait on an artist's white canvas board. I divided the canvas into three sections and painted each section a different colour—red, yellow, and green. Red is a warm and positive colour, and it exudes a strong and powerful energy. I believed that I exuded a strong and powerful energy in my teaching. Students described me as a fast-moving, fast-talking teacher educator who was as vibrant, enthusiastic, and powerful as a bright red Ferrari. Students had also said I was encouraging, helpful, thoughtful, and generous. I chose green to represent these comments because green is the colour of nature and signifies life, harmony, and growth. Students told me I have a sunny, friendly, and happy face and I was always giving them hope. Yellow is the colour of sunshine, hope, and happiness. I selected the colour yellow to represent my positivity, optimism, and happy smiling face.

I made photocopies of selected data sources and pasted these photocopies onto the different coloured areas. Data sources that described me as a passionate, fast, and powerful teacher educator, I pasted onto the red section of the canvas. Data
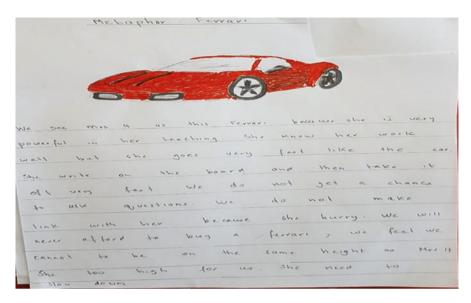
Fig. 2 Students' metaphor drawing and written description of Anita as a Ferrari (in Fig. 2, students wrote an explanation of why they chose a Ferrari to describe Anita: "We see Mrs. H as this Ferrari because she is very powerful in her teaching. She know her work well but she go very fast like the car. She write on the board and then take it off very fast. We do not get a chance to ask questions. We do not make link with her because she hurry. We will never afford to buy a Ferrari, we feel we cannot to be on the same height as Mrs. H. She too high for us. She need to slow down")

sources that portrayed me as encouraging, helpful, and approachable, I pasted onto the green area. On the yellow section of the canvas, I pasted copies of data sources that highlighted my sunny disposition, my happy smiling face, and warm attitude.

Vignette 1: Starting with the Red Ferrari

In this vignette, Anita responds to, and reflects on, questions and comments from two of the TES self-study research supervisors: Inbanathan (who teaches and researches in educational leadership and management) and Lungile (who is located in curriculum studies). The discussion centres on a drawing and written description of a red Ferrari that Anita had pasted on the top, left hand corner of her collage portrait (see Fig. 2). A small group of Anita's students had produced the drawing and description. She had asked her students to work in groups to create metaphor drawings as visual representations (Tidwell and Manke 2009) to show her what she was implicitly role modelling for them as future teachers of accounting.

Vignette 1 Inbanathan points to the Ferrari drawing and asks, "The way you have arranged things on the collage, there seems to be some hierarchy. Why is it that when you started you went first for the Ferrari?" Anita hesitantly replies, "No, I did not see it as a hierarchy". Then, with growing confidence, she goes on to explain,

"This is the metaphor drawing students did of me where they described me as a Ferrari. When I asked how they related my teaching to the Ferrari they informed me that when you start up a Ferrari, immediately you can hear that the engine has power and it will be fast. They told me that, likewise, when I begin teaching, they know that at the end of the lecture I will have given them a lot of useful information. On the other hand, they also told me that I am so fast when I begin writing on the whiteboard. Before they have taken down the information, I have gone to the other side of the whiteboard, returned to what I first wrote, and erased it before they have had a chance to absorb much of the content!"

> **Anita's Reflection**
> When I answered Inbanathan's question at that point in time, I really could not see a hierarchy. But later, when I looked at my collage portrait and reflected on the question, I realised that I had arranged the data by putting first what was important to me. Students used the metaphor of the Ferrari as a vehicle to express their honest feelings, and in speaking to them after the metaphor drawing activity, they said that they were not afraid to be honest because to them this activity was like a playful game, although I think they did realise the seriousness of what they were saying about me.

Vignette 1 Continued Later on in the discussion of Anita's collage portrait, Lungile brings the conversation back to the Ferrari metaphor. She cautions, "It sounds like a good thing to be like a Ferrari, but if you are really that powerful then the students should also be saying that, no matter how fast you are, they can understand what you are teaching them. It is not only the positive power of the Ferrari that you could be focusing on. You could be getting to understand the kind of teacher you can be if you really understand what drives you to be powerful and passionate".

> **Anita's Reflection**
> This observation from Lungile got me thinking long and hard. She reminded me of what the students said that revealed the negative aspects of being a powerful and passionate teacher. They told me that I was too fast and sometimes they did not have time to grasp all that I was saying. Furthermore, they pointed out that I answered my own questions because I had no patience to wait for their answers. Lungile's comment made me realise that if I did not recognise the negative aspects as well as the positive, then no learning would have taken place for me.

Fig. 3 The Murky Brown colour where red and green paint had mixed on the background of Anita's collage portrait

Vignette 2: The Brown Spot

In this second vignette, Chris, a TES graduate student, points out a visual aspect of Anita's collage portrait that is surprising and initially disturbing for her. The speakers in this scene are Chris (who is a jewellery design educator and professional artist); Daisy, who is one of the TES supervisors (with a background in art education); and Kathleen (Anita's research supervisor). The conversation focuses on a small brown section in the painted background of the collage portrait (see Fig. 3). Earlier on in her presentation, Anita had explained how she had created her collage portrait by arranging visual images and written texts on a large artist's canvas that she had first painted by blending with a sponge, shades of yellow, green, and red. Anita had explained that she had chosen these three colours because of largely positive associations they had for her.

Vignette 2 Chris muses, "I don't know if I should point out to you that brown spot there. Earlier on, you said that brown is your least favourite colour, but the way you mixed green and red, it is brown". Kathleen tries to reassure Anita by saying something positive about the brown spot, "Yes, maybe that is intuitive; there may be something there". But Chris reiterates, "I am afraid it's brown". And Daisy indicates: "That murky bit".

> **Anita's Reflection**
> Initially I was convinced that I did not include a brown colour on my collage portrait. However, Chris, a professional artist, pointed out this brown area to me. I honestly did not realise that when the green and red paint mixed, it would create brown. I did not want brown on my collage as brown is my most disliked colour. Daisy called it a murky bit. This really got me thinking, and later I interpreted murky bit as being an area that I was unclear about since murky refers to something that is not clear.

Vignette 2 Continued Daisy adds, "I think that's what art does. You do things as a spontaneous response". Anita, feeling comforted and encouraged by Daisy's comment, admits "It was such a sense of freedom to take that sponge and paint and then see what came out in the end because I am petrified of art". And then Chris offers another perspective: "You know what art does to it? It gives it a beautiful name. It is called burnt umber. That area is not brown and dirty. It is a nice colour". Finally, Kathleen suggests, "Also, when you look at the blending of colours there, it is like growth personified—growth of self-awareness".

> **Anita's Reflection**
> Kathleen said it was growth personified, as in my collage she could see the growth of self-awareness. Earlier on in the presentation, I spoke of how creating the collage portrait made me more aware of myself as a person, a parent, a colleague, and a teacher. I can also reiterate Lungile's earlier comment of learning taking place, and I see the growth of self-awareness acting as a catalyst for my learning.

Anita's Learning from Her Collage Portrait Presentation

Reflecting on the interactions and the dialogue with my critical friends from diverse professional backgrounds really made me step outside of myself and see things in my collage portrait that were not immediately apparent to me. My critical friends contributed such imaginative and stimulating ideas and suggestions to my research process that, even though I felt vulnerable, I learnt to value the many voices of others. Presenting my work to my critical friends who are both inside and outside of teacher education allowed me to move away from my linear and constricted mindset to a more imaginative and open way of thinking. Thinking along these lines affects my self-study research process and brings in vibrant and multihued ways of representing and making meaning of my work. What is emerging is a richer, deeper, and clearer understanding of my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. I had always assumed that I was the perfect accounting pedagogy teacher educator, but evidence generated with my students about my instructional activities (such as the Ferrari metaphor) indicated otherwise.

The vignettes depict my venture into the world of the unknown—the world of art—which was frightening but also exhilarating and filled with expectant possibilities. For a novice like me, painting a canvas and cutting and pasting text and images to recreate my lived experiences initially challenged my nonexistent artistic abilities. This challenge probed and penetrated deep into my mind and brought to the surface my negative self-concept regarding the arts. This helped me to confront my insecurities. I have realised that I feel very insecure about my lack of artistic abilities, but my artist critical friends always reassure me that although I feel that I cannot paint or draw well, I am creative and talented in other areas. This reassures me, and when I feel self-assured, it inspires and enlightens me.

Like so many other researchers using collage as a qualitative analytical tool or as data itself, I found the collage allowed me to see my work from perspectives that were not apparent to me when I presented my work as a written narrative (Butler-Kisber 2008). My critical friends added colour, substance, and depth to the interpretation of the data, which enhanced the meanings I gave to my work, thus giving added credibility to my self-study.

Refilwe's Collage Portrait Presentation (Fig. 4)

Refilwe's Description of Her Collage Portrait

This collage portrait was made of cut-up pieces of my student teachers' responses from a self-study classroom exercise that was aimed at generating data for my doctoral research. I photocopied and pasted the actual handwritten responses and drawings of my student teachers to give them a voice in my self-study research. As a business management teacher educator, my first instinct was to make the collage by recycling material that I already had in the office. I found my old desk calendars and used them as my art boards. When I thought of developing collage portraits, I did not want to buy materials; instead, I wanted to be resourceful. I asked myself, "What
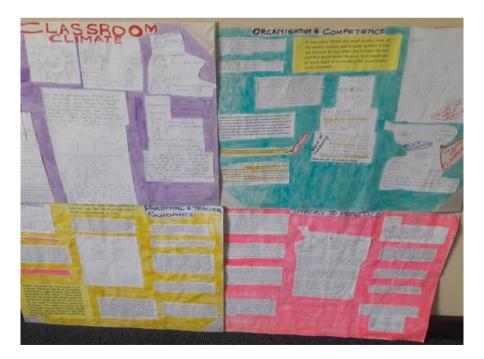
Fig. 4 Refilwe's collage portrait

do I have in my office that I can readily use to accomplish this task?" I always keep my desk calendars from previous years and so I utilised them as my art boards. To give the boards colour, I used inexpensive highlighter pens because I wanted the process to be something that my own student teachers could adopt when working in schools that have low budgets.

The collage was designed and created in three stages. Stage 1 was for searching and grouping themes from the written work of the student teachers. Stage 2 was to clarify student teachers' values, and Stage 3 was to juxtapose the students' values and learning experiences with mine and clarify my own values as well as recognise implicit phenomena in my practice. I grouped different aspects of my collage portrait on four boards that I coloured blue, pink, purple, and yellow. The colours on the art boards were symbolic of themes that emerged from analysing the participant student teachers' past learning experiences, which I then juxtaposed with my own learning experiences. The first theme is "Organisational Skills and Competence", represented by the colour blue. Cerrato (2012) explained that "blue is the colour of the sky and sea, which is often associated with depth, stability, trust, confidence and intelligence" (p. 11). I am of the opinion that organisational skills and competence are important values in business education for teachers to encourage student teachers to remain relevant in the ever-changing business environment that they will teach about. The second theme is "Classroom Climate", represented by the colour purple. According to Cerrato (2012), purple "enhances spiritual pursuits and enlightenment" and "heightens people's … reaction to more creative ideas" (p. 13). So this colour draws special attention to the importance of students' freedom in my classroom. The third theme is "Parental and Teacher Guidance", represented by the colour yellow. Yellow is the colour of sunshine, and it is associated with joy, happiness, intellect, and energy (Cerrato 2012). With this theme, I wanted to focus attention on how parental and teacher guidance influenced the joy and intellectual potential of my participant student teachers. The fourth theme is "Theory into Practice", represented by the colour pink. Pink relates to "hope" and "intuitive energy" (Cerrato 2012, p. 18). This theme summarised the practical activities I engaged my participant student teachers in, with an aim to close the gap between the theory and practice within the subject of business management.

Vignette 1: The Roots Are Strong

In this vignette, Refilwe engages with observations from Chris and Kathleen. The discussion is prompted by Chris drawing attention to a student's drawing and written description of a tree with deep roots (see Fig. 5). A student had produced the drawing and description when Refilwe asked students to work individually to create a drawing of a metaphor or object to describe their experience of being in the business management class.
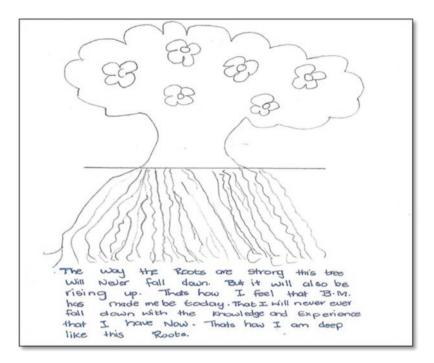
Fig. 5 A student's metaphor drawing and written description of a tree with deep roots (the student teacher who produced the drawing depicted in Fig. 5 above was describing her experience in Refilwe's business management class. The student wrote: "The way the roots are strong the tree will never fall down but it will also be rising up. That's how I feel that B.M [Business Management] has made me feel today. That I will never fall down with the knowledge and experience that I have now. That's how I am deep like this roots")

Vignette 1 Chris, holding up the purple section of Refilwe's collage portrait, points out: "In this purple portrait, there is a drawing of a tree with roots. In the description, this student explained, 'The way the roots are strong this tree will never fall down, it will also be rising up and that's how I feel Business Management has made me today. I will never fall down. I am deep like these roots.' So it seems that there is something that you are doing that makes your students feel certain; they feel comfortable, not in a resting way, but in a way that is strong and rooted. I am not sure if you can put a finger on what you are actually doing to make them feel this way". Then, Kathleen reminisces, "I am thinking about how when my grandmother would ask me to water the garden she would say, 'You have to stand there and water each plant until the water goes down right to the bottom and then the roots will grow down right to the bottom.' That must be what Refilwe does. She stands over her students with the watering can". Refilwe, who is feeling motivated, replies, "Analysing this metaphor will be helpful to me, especially when I answer the 'so-

what?' part of my inquiry. Because if the students show the things that they consider valuable to them about our classroom interactions, I then must start answering for myself what is valuable to me as their lecturer and then link the two discussions".

> **Refilwe's Reflection**
>
> My objective in giving this metaphor drawing exercise to my students was to offer them an opportunity to look back upon their learning journey. I wanted them to reflect on the support and influences they received to enable them to become student teachers. In thinking about the metaphor of the tree with deep roots, I realised recently that I felt the same about the support I received from some of my teachers. Probably that is why I am so interested in this phenomenon of deep rootedness. I now want to ask myself more questions about feelings and emotions I felt as a learner.

Vignette 2: It's About Seeing the Bigger Picture

In this vignette, Refilwe struggles to remain open to a question that she finds disconcerting. The discussion is prompted by Lungile pointing out that Refilwe's self-study research focus does not seem to be obviously improvement-aimed (which is a key characteristic of self-study research as identified by LaBoskey (2004) and other scholars).

Vignette 2 Lungile ponders, "The more you talk, the more I realise that you are not looking for a negative in your practice, am I correct to say so? Is there is no additional growth you are looking for in terms of what you can improve on?" Refilwe, who is feeling vulnerable and misunderstood, tries to explain, "I actually wanted my study to enable me to gain a deeper understanding of my pedagogic values". And then Chris deliberates, "Maybe it's more than just understanding. It's about seeing the bigger picture, about understanding it in terms of other things and where it's heading".

> **Refilwe's Reflection**
>
> After reading this part of the transcript again, I am getting the idea that another big question that I should ask is: "What influenced me to be the teacher educator that I am?" I attempted to explain who I am as a teacher educator, but I did not talk about my learning environment, the role of my Christian faith in structuring my life and career, the people who were influential for me, and life incidents that could have left an impression on me, especially because I come from a family of teachers. I notice that in all my discussions on the collage portrait, I was more interested to talk about the activities that I did with my students, but I did not elaborate on why I want to take such approaches to teaching.

Refilwe's Learning from Her Collage Portrait Presentation

In reflecting on my presentation, I thought back to my years as a student teacher at the university. My memories are mainly positive, but the more negative memories are of the times when I felt nervous because I had to present in front of a large audience in our micro teaching lessons or when I went to school for my practice teaching and had to be evaluated by our teaching science lecturers. I managed to overcome my nervousness through thorough preparation. When I knew that I had worked hard to anticipate the questions the lecturer or audience would ask me, I felt confident, and then my fear became a tool for me. In my presentation to the group of critical friends, I saw myself begin to employ my old ally (fear) to prepare and to evaluate if I had covered the most important aspects of my learning from my collage portrait.

After this presentation, I had time to mull over the questions that my critical friends had asked, and I began to analyse their inputs so that I could address all their concerns and then assess if I was telling the story that has always burned in my heart to be told. I wanted to tell a story about how I examined my pedagogy in order to see if the process of my inquiry had yielded any tangible and visible outcomes (in this case I wanted my pedagogic values to emerge and become tangible and visible). When my critical friends asked questions, I paid attention because I knew that the issues they were raising were not covered in my presentation very well. I saw my self-study begin to evolve after every presentation I gave to my critical friends because I was now in conversation with others about the things that were most important to me as a teacher educator.

Implications for the Self-Study Research Community

From Anita's and Refilwe's perspectives as doctoral students, this chapter sends an important message to other novice self-study researchers who are interested in exploring art-informed methods. The chapter demonstrates how researchers who might describe themselves as nonartistic, noncreative, conventional, and used to written rather than visual expression can tap into the art world to produce relatively simple visual representations such as collage portraits. Even though these representations might not have innate artistic merit, they can give depth and meaning to the work and allow novice self-study researchers to reimagine their lived experiences and look at themselves and their practice from multiple angles. Many researchers, both novice and more experienced, might share this experience of feeling challenged when it comes to using arts-informed methods and might, therefore, be afraid of taking the risk of trying to use them in their research. Through addressing this trepidation explicitly in the chapter, others might be encouraged to follow Anita and Refilwe's lead.

Anita and Refilwe consider that this chapter validates the claim that a key component of self-study research is making work-in-progress public and soliciting

divergent viewpoints to assist in reconsidering this work (Laboskey 2004; Samaras 2011). In this way, novice self-study researchers can learn to value the suggestions and perspectives of significant others. Furthermore, the polyvocality of different voices infused into this chapter draws attention to the contributions of transdisciplinary groups such as the TES community. Anita and Refilwe have found that these contributions encourage them to be open to new possibilities and alter the way they see their research and themselves. The chapter offers evidence of how teacher educators' self-study research can develop in purpose and significance in relation to others within and beyond teacher education.

Moreover, Anita and Refilwe have found that engaging in doctoral research can sometimes lead to them feeling professionally isolated, especially when studying their own practice in contexts where colleagues are not necessarily familiar with self-study or arts-informed research. Belonging to a supportive learning community has created a haven for sharing ideas, questions, and fears. As Samaras et al. (2014) emphasised, "a safe environment is essential to enable individuals to share their beliefs and accept feedback and perspectives from others" (p. 4). Anita and Refilwe feel fortunate to belong to a group of critical friends who are always constructive and responsive and who offer valuable feedback that encourages them to keep on going with their self-study research even when they meet with hard times.

For Kathleen, the chapter also makes visible the vital support that she as a self-study research supervisor receives from the TES community. As Anita's and Refilwe's sole research supervisor, she is conscious of a weighty professional and personal responsibility for their wellbeing and growth. Regular, helpful contributions from TES supervisors and graduate students enable her to look more critically at her practice of guiding Anita and Refilwe and give her more confidence and proficiency in encouraging them to explore less conventional modes of research.

Closing

Taken as a whole, this chapter calls attention to how working in a polyvocal fashion holds great promise for supporting novice self-study researchers and their research supervisors or mentors, within and beyond teacher education. It also offers insights into the ways in which the involvement of colleagues with multiple forms of expertise and ways of knowing can inspire and enhance art-informed modes of self-study research.

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"Many Stories Matter": Taking a Polyvocal Stance in Learning About Teaching of Self-Study

Check for updates

Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan and Anastasia P. Samaras

With contributions from Lynne Scott Constantine, Chris de Beer, Lee Scott, and Lesley Smith

Introduction

This chapter concludes the fourth and final section in the edited book *Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology: Unraveling a Complex Interplay*. The book section has examined how self-study of teaching and teacher education practices have been extended to teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study methodology in *polyvocal professional learning communities*. In thinking about polyvocality, we (Kathleen and Anastasia) are drawing on philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) exploration of polyvocality (which he referred to as polyphony) as a narrative mode in the novels of Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky. Bakhtin described this polyvocality as follows:

> A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices … with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. (p. 6)

In musical terms, polyphony designates compositions in which two or more distinctive sounds or voices weave in and out of, and harmonise with, each other and yet remain independent (Devoto 2007). For Bakhtin, polyphony as a defining characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels was indicative of a significant development in human

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capacity for artistic expression and perception, with wider sociocultural ramifications:

> We consider the creation of the polyphonic novel a huge step forward not only in the development of novelistic prose, that is, of all genres developing within the orbit of the novel, but also in the development of the *artistic thinking* of humankind. It seems to us that one could speak directly of a special *polyphonic artistic thinking* extending beyond the bounds of the novel as a genre. This mode of thinking makes available those sides of a human being, and above all the *thinking human consciousness and the dialogic sphere of its existence,* which are not subject to *artistic* assimilation from *monologic positions*. (Bakhtin 1984, p. 270)

Such polyphonic artistic thinking is evident in the work of contemporary writers such as American novelist Toni Morrison (1992) and Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2006), who interplay different voices and perspectives in their novels. For example, in Adichie's novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006):

> The novel's narrative arrangement represents a bold attempt at enabling a wide spectrum of perspectives including, but not limited to, that of the younger generation (Ugwu), the expatriate (Richard), the intellectual (Odenigbo) and the middle class. These multiple voices are unified into a coherent narrative thread by an inventive narrative architecture in which the focalising characters are bonded in a nexus of passionate and close-knit interpersonal relationships transcending racial, class, gender and generational divides. (Akpome 2013, p. 34)

Through our focus on polyvocality in our scholarly work, we are exploring the potential contribution and impact of the interplay of plurality and commonality in teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study methodology (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2015). That is to say, we see ourselves as "complementary colleagues … who have different concerns, expertise … and frames of reference" but who share a common purpose (Eckert and Stacey 2000, p. 535).

The common purpose that bonds us as self-study researchers and teacher educators involves reimagining our own professional practice to contribute to the wellbeing and growth of others, within and beyond teacher education. To this end, we have each worked with colleagues outside our disciplines and across continents to study our practice in facilitating and enacting transdisciplinary self-study. This transcontinental, transcultural research collaboration has generated multiple stories and new insights that might not have been readily generated by culturally homogeneous research teams or individual researchers (Sleeter 2014). Here, we are reminded of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's powerful words on "the danger of a single story":

> Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize… . When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise. (Adichie 2009)

Our transcontinental dialogue is enhanced by understandings of the intersections of individual and collective cognition in professional learning and within a community of engaged scholarship (Lave and Wenger 1991). Vygotsky (1960/1981) asserted that learning arises through collaboration and reappropriating feedback from others. Our work is premised on understanding that professional learning is extended through dialogue (Wegerif 2006) and openness to others' points of view. Actions and thinking are culturally mediated, "indirectly shaped by forces that originate in the dynamics of communication" (Wertsch 1985, p. 81).

Hence, in this book section, we have aimed to present a plurality of stories about the growth of teaching, learning, and enacting of self-study methodology in polyvocal professional learning communities. Collectively, the book section on *Teaching, Learning, and Enacting of Self-Study Methodology in Polyvocal Professional Communities* complements the growing body of knowledge of transdisciplinary and polyvocal self-study research. In addition, it contributes to understandings of how and why self-study research can bring into dialogue multiple ways of seeing and knowing as a vital part of authentic and generative professional learning. As illustrations, we have included exemplars and voices from transdisciplinary self-study learning communities in the USA (George Mason University self-study of teaching projects) and South Africa (the trans-university Transformative Education/al Studies [TES] project).

In this chapter, we highlight how and what we are learning from co-facilitating self-study groups at our universities and from dialoguing with each other. We bring in the voices of our co-facilitators and other colleagues in the self-study research community as we consider our ongoing learning about teaching self-study. Including these multiple voices validates and extends our argument of how the polyvocal informs each of us and our work. Overall, the chapter shows how we learned from each other and the impact of our work together and with our colleagues and participants: the multiplier effect of self-study in action.

What's It *Really* Like to Teach Self-Study? Multiple Voices, Many Stories

We have been examining our work in leading and learning through co-facilitating transdisciplinary self-study research since 2012 when Kathleen invited Anastasia to facilitate a Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) project workshop in South Africa. During that period, we have worked to bring together multiple stories in the voices of others who have taught self-study research. Earlier work included audio-taped conversations with co-facilitators in South Africa and the USA, as well as conference participants at the 10th International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) in England in 2014 (see Samaras et al. 2015, 2016).

Voices from the International Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Community

Anastasia has been working with engineers and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) faculty as a coprincipal investigator on two grants funded by the US National Science Foundation, both with a focus on interactive teaching and

self-study research. As she shared at the 11th International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices:

> At an engineering conference, I walked into the book exhibit and found this question posted on a large board, "What's it really like to be an engineer?" And I thought, "What is it really like to be a self-study scholar and teach self-study research?" I've just been continually enriched by my experiences in moving out of my lens. For example, when I say *reflect*, maybe for an engineer I need to say *design*. And so they'll say, "Oh, I get it! I'm the data!" So, our language, we just assume everybody is from our world, don't we? And it really limits our understanding. So that's been where I've been able to really grow and be inspired by transdisciplinary polyvocal experiences. (Anastasia, audio transcription, August 2, 2016)

We went on to ask this very question as part of our collaborative research, "What's it *really* like to teach self-study?" with 21 conference participants during our presentation in August 2016 at the 11th International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP). Participants noted their individual thinking on sticky notes and then worked in one of three groups in a collaborative process of collectively arranging the randomly distributed sticky notes thematically on the three group posters that served as mood boards (visual canvases that designers use to develop, demonstrate, and discuss their design concepts [Eckert and Stacey 2000]). This was followed by a 25-minute audio recorded plenary conversation in which we asked participants to reflect and share their responses. We gave a series of possible conversation prompts: "What did you discover from this process?" "What did you talk about?" "Was there anything that surprised you?" "What were the tensions that came up?" "What was challenging about this?" and "What are the larger issues it raises for us as a self-study community?"

Participants drew our attention to the plurality of perspectives and experiences expressed within each group, as well as to how such heterogeneity can contribute to the complexity and adventure of teaching self-study. To illustrate:

> Our group pointed to the diversity of understandings of self-study and research (Marie Huxtable, United Kingdom).

> Self-study of teacher education practices is so complicated to explain because it's about everything at once. It's about the content, it's about the practice, it's about the self, it's about understanding your students. It's difficult even when we practise it. So, it's very hard to pin down. Which is one of the things that make it wonderful. (Julian Kitchen, Canada)

> It's never the same. You always have a new group of people and it's a process of getting to know people in the very beginning and what they are doing. (Karen Rut Gísladóttir, Iceland)

> It's complex, isn't it? It is more than messy. Not that it has to have any definitiveness. But it does raise some important questions for us because the diversity of just three posters here show that we're all thinking about it in some similar ways, but also in some very different ways. We probably wouldn't have even had this conversation ten years ago because we weren't really teaching it, we were trying to figure it out for ourselves. So, we're growing I think. (Anastasia)

There was also enthusiasm for continuing the dialogues that had begun in the groups and extended into the plenary conversation, conceivably through the use of digital technologies such as Internet telephony services and video:

> It's not only transdisciplinary, but it's also cross culturally. This idea that we could dialogue about our co-facilitation—that sense of Skype and the visual. The people here were all very excited about what we were doing. In that sense you could be helping to stimulate these dialogues. (Jack Whitehead, UK)

Carrying with us insights offered by the conference participants, we returned to our home countries and posed the same question of "What's it *really* like to teach self-study?" to our colleagues who had co-facilitated self-study research groups. Below are cameos of this work from our home institutions with background of the projects in South Africa and the USA—again highlighting how the self-study methodology is validated across disciplines, nations, and cultures (also see the introductory chapter of this book section).

Stories from the Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) Project in South Africa

Since 2011, the Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) project team has worked across diverse South African universities to explore and cultivate the collaborative development of self-study research methodology among university educators who have chosen self-study as a means to transform their practice. This transformation has a dual focus on being responsive to the diverse needs and interests of students and to the pressing need for a socially just reimagining of South African higher education (Harrison et al. 2012; Meyiwa et al. 2014). TES project participants are university educators engaged in graduate self-study research and their research advisors (termed research supervisors, in South Africa). These participants teach and research across a wide variety of academic and professional disciplines, including fashion design, English language studies, gender studies, jewellery design, mathematics education, teacher development, and theatre and performance studies. The TES community is also diverse with regard to age, gender, language, and race and comprises both senior and early career academics. The diverse, trans-institutional and transdisciplinary makeup of the TES community has exposed participants to multiple possibilities for enacting their common purpose of education/al transformation through self-study methodology (Harrison et al. 2012). Because of the contributions of participants who are professional artists, and others who are fascinated by learning from and through the arts, TES activities have been characterised by co-creativity (Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2015; Samaras et al. 2008). This co-creativity has developed through collective exploration and development of arts-informed self-study research methods that are infused with "the languages, processes, and forms of literary, visual, and performing arts" (Cole and Knowles 2008, p. 59).

Lee Scott and Chris de Beer are two of the participating artists who have assisted the TES project leaders with facilitating arts-informed self-study methodology workshops and outputs. Chris de Beer is a practising jewellery designer and artist who teaches in the Department of Fine Art and Jewellery Design at a university of technology. Lee Scott is a creative artist who teaches in the Department of Fashion and Textiles at the same university. In this section, through the medium of drawing, Lee and Chris offer two visual stories of teaching self-study methodology. These drawings were done very quickly and spontaneously at a TES workshop held in December 2016, when Kathleen asked workshop participants to individually create drawings in response to the prompt: "What's it *really* like to teach self-study?" Kathleen explained that teaching in this case could include both formal and informal teaching, as well as incidental teaching that might occur, for example, when explaining a self-study research project to a colleague. After the drawings were done, each participant was asked to write on a sticky note a short artist's statement about their drawing (Figs. 1 and 2).

Fig. 1 Teaching the self (Not Just a Pretty Face). Pen sketch by Lee Scott
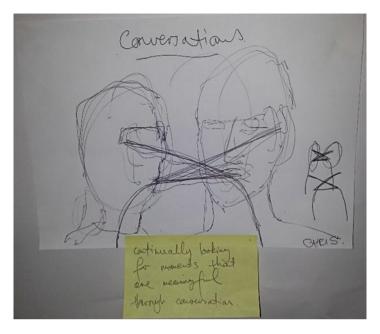
Fig. 2 *Wat die Hart van Vol Is Loop die Mond oor* [What Fills the Heart Spills out the Mouth]. Pen sketch by Chris de Beer

Artist's Statement by Lee Scott

> Teaching self-study is about making another person aware of the richness of their lived experiences and how it impacts on their everyday (practices).

Lee Later Went on to Reflect Further on Her Drawing Self-study allows my students at BTech (graduate) level to feel what they are producing as artefact and research in their written reports is something beyond meaning, beyond research, beyond *just* improving their practice as young designers. I believe their voice is allowed to come through, and they feel they have something to contribute to the world that has relevance. They can link their research to the development of their product. So teaching self-study from a creative arts-based/informed perspective allows me to say "Hey, you have the power. You are not just a fashion designer" (which sometimes can be perceived as a frivolous industry). Teaching self-study permits me to make it known that, as social beings, the students have much to contribute and that they can draw on their experiences and learn how to unpack their lived experiences. They are enabled to find ways to channel their new awareness and explorations through to a finished product. The students' research becomes a form of social activism where a dress is not just a dress, but a symbol of their values and a metaphor for personal growth.

Artist's Statement by Chris de Beer

> Continually looking for moments that are meaningful through conversation.

Chris Subsequently Commented Further on His Drawing In looking at the drawing, it dawns on me that self-study results in increased communication with others. In trying to tell your own story, you open up and want to make sure that the other person gets you. So you enter into a dialogue, which has at its centre a search for connections. In searching for these connections, I take little feelings deep inside and present them to the (critical) friend who I am sharing with. They, in turn, scrutinise what I present and give something—their perspective—in return, which is then reacted to by me. The drawing tries to capture this dialogue, which starts deep inside (the thin line from the bottom), then exits via the mouth and is perceived by the eye and/or ear, and then returns via the mouth. The richest connection is between the mouths, but the link to the inside, though delicate, is crucial. I wonder whether this drawing does not confirm my exaggerated emphasis on the talking part, as I am now increasingly aware of the gentle flowing curve from the eye/ear to the heart. This implies that I should pay more attention to the link to the inside of what is being said—that the loud, more obvious, talking part of the conversation actually has a gentle line directly to my heart and the heart of the other person.

In Thinking About Her Own Learning with and from Artists Such As Lee and Chris and Their Contributions to the TES Project, Kathleen Mused In the TES group, Chris is one of my doctoral students, who is studying his own practice as a jewellery designer and a jewellery design educator. I know nothing about jewellery design, and so, as his research supervisor, I cannot help him in that way. The only thing I can do is pose questions and try to help him articulate his jewellery design making and teaching in words and language. But I have learnt so much from him that I now bring into my work as a teacher educator. If I were not working beyond teacher education in the TES self-study community, my teacher education practice would be much poorer, much less interesting. For me, that has been one of the greatest gifts of working within this transdisciplinary project (Audiotape transcription, August 2, 2016).

Stories from the George Mason University Self-Study of Teaching Projects in the USA

Anastasia was inspired by the goal of first introducing self-study research to faculty at George Mason University, inside and outside of teacher education, who could work within a community to reimagine and make public their new pedagogies in multiple faculty self-study groups. From 2010 to 2012, 11 participants from 11 specialisations and 4 colleges were competitively selected to participate monthly in Scholars of Studying Teaching Collaborative (SoSTC), a transdisciplinary faculty self-study learning community sponsored by George Mason University's Centre for

Teaching and Faculty Excellence (see Samaras et al. 2014 for details). Subsequent to the first learning community, in 2012, Scholars of Studying Teaching Collaborative on e-Learning was launched. This year-long transdisciplinary project was co-facilitated by three participants from the first group and with a new group of participants. Unlike faculty development groups who gather to learn how to use technology tools, the focus of the project was on the instructor's role in facilitating the *quality* of students' learning experiences in using and applying technologies.

In 2014–2016, Anastasia, with co-facilitators Lynne Scott Constantine from the School of Art and Lesley Smith from Higher Education and Digital Literacy, launched Self-Study Scholars' Collaborative (S³C) on the Visually Rich Digital Learning Environment, a third transdisciplinary faculty self-study learning community. Anastasia reflected on this at the 11th International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP):

> I have been working with two other women, co-facilitating self-study at George Mason. They're not from teacher education. One is from the School of Art and one is from Digital Literacies and Higher Education. They were both members of the first cohort that I started in 2010. And each time I teach it some of the participants then become the facilitators along with me and I am slowly moving towards the rear, which is great for sustainability. I continued to work with people outside of teacher education, as Kathleen says so beautifully, because they actually teach us to be better teacher educators. (Anastasia, audiotape transcription, August 2, 2016)

The goal of this initiative was to support and build research capacity using self-study research methodology in a visually rich digital learning community. This focus on art as symbol aligns with the Vygotsky (1978), Vygotsky (1981) tenet of symbolic mediators (Kozulin 2003) and underpins the design of each of the faculty self-study groups. Lynne captured this connection in her reflection to the community at an S³C gathering:

> Our interest was in getting ourselves and other academics outside of the predominant ways of thinking, learning, and communicating that academics are trained in: the word, the book, and cerebration. We wanted to see whether the visual could be a means not just to collect or represent data, but also to force ourselves into unaccustomed ways of experiencing our questions, unaccustomed ways of deciding what constitutes data, and unaccustomed ways of relating to our teaching and our research. What good might come, we thought, when we develop our questions and look for evidence through sensuous experience and through attentiveness to metaphoric and metonymic processes and to abstraction, not just through collection, classification, and inference? (Lynne, audiotape transcription, December 5, 2015)

During Anastasia's second invited visit to South Africa in 2014, she had the opportunity to learn from TES participants who are theatre instructors and directors about the self-study method of reciprocal self-interviewing (RSI; Meskin et al. 2014). Returning to George Mason University, she excitedly shared the RSI exercise with Lynne and Lesley, co-facilitators of S³C, to ask the question again: "What is it like to teach self-study and with a focus on using visually rich tools to do so?" They asked 14 participants to complete the RSI about their individual self-study projects but first modelled it in a fishbowl fashion at one of the monthly meetings of S³C. Lesley and Anastasia sat in the middle of gathered participants, and Lynne

asked them about what it was like to teach and learn self-study in a visual and digital environment. Lynne served as the observer of the RSI and shared her reflections on the process with the entire community.

Anastasia first explained RSI at the gathering and shared the article (Meskin et al. 2014) with participants:

> Because it's spontaneous and not planned, it allows other things to emerge that you might not have scripted in your mind because you knew these were the questions that somebody was going to ask you. One person becomes an observer and the other two take turns interviewing each other. The observer, and that will be Lynne today, will offer feedback to Lesley and I—what she thought was going on and what emerged in terms of the data that came out of the interview.

Below are a few excerpts from the RSI:

Lesley (Interviewing Anastasia) The first thing I want to ask you is, could you give me kind of a sense of how the visual has really influenced your self-study of teaching?

Anastasia Responded I am a novice but one who seems to gravitate towards understanding the world in different mediums. Indeed, some people say I'm all over the place but I like to say that I'm multiversed (See Fig. 3), which was actually my artefact. I think that for me the visual allows me to turn the lens of the camera in ways that I wouldn't be able to necessarily understand because I always would see it from my own place … it's really pushed me to see my teaching of self-study through the visual medium in ways that I would have never gotten to had I not

Fig. 3 Anastasia's visual: learning in *Multiverse* with unanticipated "Elements of Chance" in a transdisciplinary faculty self-study group from exhibit http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/exhibitions/permanent/multiverse.html

opened that door … in each of my courses, it sparks new ways of presenting the pedagogy to my students and the fact that they see me struggling and figuring out and being open is good. It feels like there is a bridge for me to the arts to feel like I'm with my students. I like that.

Anastasia (Interviewing Lesley) How have the visuals impacted you or helped you to understand your teaching?

Lesley Answered I am putting myself in the place that I put my students into, and therefore I'm building a greater understanding of why they sometimes look at me with that strange look in their eyes as if to say "this lady is crazy". And you know I'm really getting a sense of what it is to be completely destabilised from what I've been trained to think is the correct form in a particular context. And then I realised that's what I ask my students to do a lot. Not to do what they've done in high school or not to do what they've done in the first year in class and so it's given me a greater appreciation for what Robert Hughes (Hughes and Richardson 1980) used to call "the shock of the new"—what kind of emotional impact it has on you when you have to do something that you don't normally do. This was a big surprise for me because I spend much of my time with visuals. I review movies and TV; I've made documentaries; I've done a lot of like website design, back in other lives; and so I suddenly began to realise—it really brought back to me—how dependent the visual is on things beyond the visual and it's really difficult to push and actually communicate simply with the visual, to trust the visual, or to trust that my intention with the visual may not actually be what's received and just relax a bit more with that; so in a sense, it sort of complicated the sense of the visual but also pushed me to realise how often I put the visual with the verbal just in case people don't quite get me (see Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Lesley's visual: learning through persistence

Lynne Offered Her Observations and Insights As the Observer of Lesley's and Anastasia's RSI

That power of the visual to lessen distance may be part of what Anastasia meant when she talked about the way that the arts serve as a bridge for her in the classroom, "allowing me to feel like I'm with my students". When the students see her struggling with her own visual expression, the distance between the "teacher" and "real person" becomes smaller and profoundly influences the classroom experience for all.

Thinking about this aspect of visual communication, Lesley said, has taught her a great deal about how the visual can be a catalyst for interaction. In particular, she said, the visual research projects she assigns to her students have brought her back to thinking about the ethical responsibilities of the visual—the ways in which the visual can be used to disempower or to empower. In her visual research projects, she wants students to discover these ethical issues and the potential for the visual as a means of activism, social engagement, and redressing relationships of power. Above all, she said, she wants to communicate that enthusiasm to the students, so that they can truly think visually, not just take refuge in theory or in reductionist notions that all images are equal. "There is", she said, "a sense of building cohesion in the self".

Reflecting on what both Lesley and Anastasia said—the power of the visual to multiply vantages, to communicate across disciplinary boundaries, to facilitate authentic encounters with the "real self" in the classroom, to teach about the ethical dimensions of knowledge-making—I feel that we have validated our original idea for what might happen by marrying the visual as a lens with the rich possibilities of self-study methodology in this multidisciplinary, risk-taking research community…. The data we are collecting, and the studies we are producing in S^3C and other self-study research communities, are like images in a photomosaic, where individual images are fitted together to create a larger image that only emerges from the proper arrangement of the small originals.

Our Voices Weave In and Out of, and Harmonise with, Each Other and Yet Remain Independent

In this final part of our presentation of multiple voices and stories on leading and learning through co-facilitating transdisciplinary self-study research, we (Anastasia and Kathleen) offer a dialogue piece that tenders insights into our learning across our diverse polyvocal professional communities. We composed this piece from a lightly edited transcription of a spontaneous duologue (a play or part of a play with speaking parts for two actors) that emerged during the plenary conversation in our presentation at the 11th International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP). In listening to the audio recording of the plenary conversation, we were struck by the polyvocality of our impromptu duologue. We noted how our voices flowed in and out of each other quite seamlessly, showing at once the plurality and commonality of our stories, as well as the close connection that has developed through what we have called "thinking in space" (Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras 2014, 2017) in our, mostly online, transcontinental conversations.

Anastasia Kathleen and I wanted to share, because she's also been co-facilitating with a group of colleagues. So, we came together and figured, "Well, we're just going to sit down and talk and record this". And there it is.

Kathleen When we got together with our co-facilitators to talk about our experiences in South Africa and America, we were very interested to see what would come out, what would be similar, and what would be different. We wanted to see what we would learn from this exchange.

Anastasia We started with thinking about "How do we go about it?" And then we ended up also talking more about why we do it. And, for me, as from the USA, I was so surprised that facilitating self-study in the TES project didn't look like what I do; it wasn't for the same purposes. In South Africa, there is largely the theme of healing and having a safe place. After apartheid, there's a lot of anger and hurt and pain and those words came out. They were not the same kind of words that came up in the USA and so I thought, "Wow! I never thought of self-study research being used in ways that were out of my own context". So, in terms of thinking about teaching self-study in different geographic locations, that was really a good experience for me. I thought, "We should all go to South Africa to learn about self-study!"

Kathleen I think for us in the TES project, self-study methodology really resonated, and it met a need in our South African higher education context. And one of our biggest problems now, which is a very fortunate problem, is that we constantly have people who are interested and want to join us. So, we're constantly thinking of new ways in which we can reach more people and be more inclusive. And also I think that one of the connections that has been very strong between the work in South Africa and the work at George Mason University has been our focus on creativity and the arts. For me, that has been one of my strongest areas of learning, which has been enriched by working with the colleagues from George Mason. For example, with poetry, one of Anastasia's colleagues, Lesley Smith, e-mailed recently to share information on renga poetry, which is a Japanese kind of collaborative poetry making. So, immediately, I said to my TES project colleagues, "We've got a workshop coming up. Let's do renga poetry!" And we did renga poetry. It was fantastic and now we've written renga poems as part of an arts-informed, participatory analysis of the TES project. So, it's because of that dynamic collaboration that we keep learning.

There Are Gifts in Giving

This chapter has illustrated how self-study research conversations across specialisations, institutions, and continents can generate transformative possibilities for university educators and leaders imagining pedagogies and collaboration in new ways. It has also demonstrated how collaboration and conversations among self-study

research facilitators can advance understandings of and possibilities for learning, teaching, and enacting of self-study methodology in a complex, pluralistic way.

As we have experienced, there are gifts in giving self-study research to other practitioners. There is a collaborative recognition by co-facilitators and participants that our work helps self-study research grow beyond our wall and perspectives. Like the castle wall that encapsulates our intimate community of self-study scholars at the biennial International Conference on the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (Barnes 1998), our work parachutes self-study research beyond the beautiful castle grounds to inform educators' practice.

We have watched self-study research grow over many years and in many ways—noting how academics around the globe are finding it useful in their specific contexts and disciplines. We share it with the world because we have witnessed its validity as a methodology in a global context as we have worked and learned from and with various professionals. The global self-study research community is thriving as it benefits from the new learning and innovations that occur through collaboration across multiple fields of professional expertise and multiple disciplinary and sociocultural contexts. And all the while, we hold dear and central that self-study research was founded and grows because of teacher educators, like us, willing to share this very special research we have experienced and which now helps us and others to grow professionally and especially in our teaching. We celebrate self-study methodology and its multiplier effect.

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