

Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators

Cynthia A. Lassonde, Sally Galman
and Clare Kosnik (Eds.)

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Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators

Professional Learning

Volume 7

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Rationale:

This series purposely sets out to illustrate a range of approaches to Professional Learning and to highlight the importance of teachers and teacher educators taking the lead in reframing and responding to their practice, not just to illuminate the field but to foster genuine educational change.

Audience:

The series will be of interest to teachers, teacher educators and others in fields of professional practice as the context and practice of the pedagogue is the prime focus of such work. Professional Learning is closely aligned to much of the ideas associated with reflective practice, action research, practitioner inquiry and teacher as researcher.

Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators

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SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-90-8790-688-7 (paperback)

ISBN 978-90-8790-689-4 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-8790-690-0 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858, 3001 AW
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
<http://www.sensepublishers.com>

Printed on acid-free paper

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We dedicate this book to the self-study community and all teacher educators seeking to improve their practice through self-study.

Cindy, Sally, and Clare

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SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The editors have assembled a strong list of authors in order to bring together a fine project through this book *Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators*. This book offers a wonderful way of introducing the work of Self-study to the world of Professional Learning. The book offers explicit examples of self-study methodologies by leaders in the field and in so doing, Professional Learning is now given easy and immediate access to interesting and exciting ways of documenting, researching and analysing practice.

As the editors note themselves, the last two decades have “witnessed a dramatic increase in research on teacher education.” As this research has grown, so too has the realisation that Professional Learning is a distinct and different way of thinking about learning about teaching and learning from that of more traditional models of Professional Development. The research in teacher education over the last two decades has helped to make clear that simply telling prospective teachers what to do and how to do it, is not the same as creating real and meaningful learning experiences. Hence, it is no surprise that just as teacher education has begun to explicitly respond to this realisation, so too Education systems have begun to recognise the importance of creating opportunities for teachers to learn more about practice in ways that better embrace the essence of the notion of Professional Learning.

Self-study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP, Hamilton, 1998) emerged in the early 1990s as teacher educators began to take control of their profession by placing greater emphasis on the knowledge and learning derived from researching their own practice. The allure of self-study has been strong for many teacher educators and so it is only natural that eventually the ideas that created such a strong and now flourishing community would eventually flow over to other fields. This has been recognized by the fact the many members of the S-STEP community now explicitly incorporate teaching (beyond teacher education alone) as signified by the title of the *International Handbook of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004). Now this book by Lassonde, Galman and Kosnik extends that view by situating the methodologies of self-study within this series of Professional Learning.

One clear and strong aspect of this book is its concern to create new ways of strengthening the field of self-study by further making ways of researching practice open to public scrutiny and debate. However, as the editors make clear, one of their intentions in so doing has grown out of their concern “that the term self-study is being applied to a variety of practices, some of which bear little resemblance to the quality and systematic methodology [that the] S-STEP community values.” Therefore, as you read the chapters that so nicely combine to make up this very good book, it is important to recognize that the methodological descriptions are designed to make clear not only what self-study is but also how it might be pursued in a scholarly manner.

SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This book builds on the work of many in the S-STEP community that have been (and continue to be) concerned to see the field develop in ways that demonstrate rigorous and systematic approaches to examining practice. And, as you will soon discover, it does that very well indeed.

The editors have assembled this book in the hope that it will not only offer insights into a variety of self-study methods but so that it might also help make clear some of the important methodological imperatives associated with conducting a self-study. They have brought together authors who have a great deal to offer those interested in Professional Learning as a consequence of their vast experience as teachers and researchers.

The book is organised in a thoughtful way. It brings together an array of very well regarded authors who outline a diversity of approaches to self-study. The structure works very well for the reader as the ideas and approaches of each chapter are grouped in complementary and informing ways. This book makes very clear how self-study can be characterised, understood and conducted. It is a wonderful addition to this series on Professional Learning as it invites the reader to seriously consider not only the value of researching practice, but also offers concrete, useable ways of doing so in a scholarly manner.

The editors are to be congratulated on a fine project that has been well conceptualised and carefully completed through a text that is easy to access, helpful and informing. I trust you find this to be an engaging and challenging book; it has certainly done that for me.

J. John Loughran
Series Editor

INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have witnessed a dramatic increase in research on teacher education: Ohio Project (Lasely et al., 2006), New York City Pathways Project (Boyd et al., 2006), Teachers for a New Era (<http://www.teachersforanewera.org/>), Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence Louisiana (Noell & Burns, 2006), and The National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction (Hoffman et al., 2005). Accompanying this research has been a steady stream of publications on teacher education: *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (2005) edited by Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and be Able to Do* (2005) edited by Darling-Hammond and Bransford, *Innovations in Preservice Teacher Education: A Social Constructivist Approach* (2006) by Beck and Kosnik, *Developing a Pedagogy of Teacher Education: Understanding Teaching and Learning about Teaching* (2006) by Loughran, and *Current Issues in Teacher Education: History, Perspectives, and Implications* (2008) edited by Lassonde, Michael, and Rivera-Wilson. These texts have greatly contributed to our understanding of the challenges of preparing teachers, provided models of exemplary programs, underscored the need for induction programs, outlined the type of professional development new teachers need, examined the role of teacher educators, and so on.

During this period, a complementary strand of research emerged that further enhanced our understanding of teacher education – self-study research. Historically validated forms of research often do not allow researchers opportunities to closely examine their own work thus limiting its value for improving practice. Many teacher educators believe that studying their own practice is essential. As Samaras and Freese note, “Improving one’s practice benefits the larger broader purpose of the advancement of knowledge about teaching and the educational system” (2006, p. 14). From this interest in studying their own work was born the self-study movement. The “official” home of self-study is widely considered to be the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. The group has become a flourishing community. Since its “birth” in 1992 there has been a steady increase in membership. The members have been highly active publishing a plethora of texts: *Enacting a Pedagogy of Teacher Education: Values, Relationships and Practices* (2007) edited by Russell and Loughran; *The Missing Links in Teacher Education: Innovative Approaches to Designing Teacher Education Programs* (2005) edited by Hoban; and *Making a Difference in Teacher Education through Self-study: Personal, Professional, and Program Renewal* (2005) edited by Kosnik, Freese, Samaras, and Beck. Discussion of the place of self-study research has extended beyond S-STEP. For example, key articles have been published in the *Journal of Teacher Education* (Loughran, 2007; Zeichner, 2007) and the establishment of local communities of self-study practitioners (e.g. Canadian Society for Studies in

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Education, Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices, Special Interest Group). These varied activities have strengthened and extended the scholarship of self-study.

With any organization, movement, or community, there is an evolution. In the early days of S-STEP there was concern about the place of the individual within the research; this inward focus gave way to a broader range of topics. For example, at the 2008 Castle Conference topics such as the impact on identity when running for local school board (Muchmore, 2008) and the impact of external accreditation reviews on a faculty member (Craig, 2008) arose. From our perspective, the self-study field is maturing and diversifying. The publication of the *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (2004) brought together many aspects of self-study research into one scholarly text. The publication of the handbook in a way formalized self-study research as an accepted form of research and S-STEP into a recognized community of scholars.

Not wanting to be naïve, we believe that we must be realistic about the field of educational research. Although we are proud that self-study research has become more accepted, we are concerned that the term self-study is being applied to a variety of practices, some of which bear little resemblance to the quality and systematic methodology our S-STEP community values. Each of us has overheard a colleague proudly declare, “Oh, I am doing a self-study” when we know that the work being done is only tangentially related to true self-study research. This use of the term self-study to describe dubious practices concerns us. A more troubling development has been the shift in the rhetoric on research that has elevated research that is “scientifically-based” to the pinnacle (Slavin, 2002). These two trends have influenced the development of the work of the S-STEP members. As a research community, S-STEP could not ignore the push in the United States to pay more attention to methodology. One of the turning points for the S-STEP was a keynote address given by Vicki LaBoskey at the 2004 Castle Conference where she argued that self-study research must be systematic. In her chapter in the *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (2004) she expands her position saying that for self-study work to be accepted by the education community it needed to be less idiosyncratic and more rigorous.

The members of the self-study community responded to LaBoskey’s challenge. For example, the conference proposals for the *International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices* (also known as the Castle Conference) are now reviewed more rigorously (e.g., double blind reviews) than previously with great attention to the methodology used. This increased focus on methodology has led to more systematic studies but it has also revealed a gap in the literature on self-study – examination of the various methods that can be used for self-study research. The self-study community has begun to address this gap in the literature. Samaras and Freese recently published *Self-Study of Teaching Practices* (2006). Fitzgerald, Heston, and Tidwell are editing a text, *Research Methods for the Self-Study of Practice* (2009); and Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) have co-authored the text, *Self-Study of Practice as a Genre of Qualitative Research: Theory,*

Methodology, and Practice. Each of these texts in its own way is expanding the discussion on methodologies for self-study. Yet, we felt there was the need for another text, one that systematically addressed many of the methodologies that could be used for self-study research. Hence, the publication of *Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators*.

Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators is a comprehensive text that delineates a range of research methodologies. This edited volume, with many chapters written by self-study scholars who are noted in the field for particular methodological and epistemological perspectives, helps fill the gap in the literature on self-study research methods. It provides readers with an opportunity to examine various methodologies that not only helps them deepen their understanding of research but also allows them to select one that best suits their needs. Both new and experienced researchers will find this text valuable.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

In Part One, the general *Overview*, the reader is introduced to self-study. Chapter One by Samaras and Freese provides an historical perspective on self-study while showing its position in relation to other research paradigms; Craig in Chapter Two considers standards of quality in self-study research; Feldman's views on data analysis and interpretation in self-study research follow in Chapter Three.

Part Two, *Specific Methodologies*, affords the reader a chance to explore detailed accounts of specific methodologies that have been used successfully in self-study research. Chapter Four by Kosnik, Cleovoulou, and Fletcher discusses interviewing; Chapter Five by Russell is on personal-experience methods, such as re-experiencing K-12 teaching; Chapter Six by Paugh and Robinson considers participatory research methods; Chapter Seven by Kitchen and Ciuffetelli Parker presents issues around the formation of critical communities of practice; Chapter Eight by Galman addresses arts-based inquiry; Chapter Nine by Pinnegar and Erickson shows how to embed self-study practices in teacher education credentialing processes; Chapter Ten by Taylor and Coia examines co/autoethnography; and Chapter Eleven by Davey and Ham deals with self-study across sites.

To assist readers, all of the chapters in Part Two are organized in parallel fashion. Each chapter includes

- a description of the methodology with a working definition, basic concepts and distinctive features, and its relevance to self-study in teacher education;
- procedures connected to the methodology, including designs, data collection, and analysis;
- dissemination of findings;
- the standards for quality (i.e., validity, reliability, rigor);
- the analytic strength and limitation of the methodology; plus
- examples of each authors' experiences with the methodology, describing its advantages and challenges.

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Each chapter concludes with the authors describing how their practices changed in light of their research. This inclusion of personal experiences is a hallmark of self-study work.

This consistent chapter format, we believe, will guide readers; however, it is not so rigid that the unique flavor of each methodology is lost. Each chapter provides sufficient information for educational researchers to select and use a particular and appropriate method thus allowing them to align their research questions with a particular and appropriate methodology.

In the final section of the book, Part Three, *Moving Forward*, the authors take a step back to reflect upon and consider what these self-study methodologies mean to teacher educators and teacher education. In Chapter Twelve, Lassonde and Strub reflect on the importance of promoting preservice teachers' use of self-study and present their work in this area. Finally, in Chapter Thirteen, the co-editors close with a brief discussion of possible personal and institutional meaning(s) of self-study work in teacher education and list several valuable resources.

Written in an inviting yet scholarly style, *Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators* is readily accessible to teacher educators and administrators. Readers with varying levels of knowledge and experience with self-study research will find the book easy to follow and full of practical advice for rigorous application. Teacher educators and administrators at the university level could use the text in numerous ways: to study individual practice, to study work at an institutional level, or as a text in courses. The book will be of use to

- University faculty who are interested in studying their own practice on their own or with a group of colleagues
- University faculty who teach courses in general research methodologies or in self-study research specifically
- University faculty involved in either formal recertification processes (e.g., the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) or in a self-study of their institution (e.g., following graduates to see the effectiveness of their programs)
- Graduate students who want to include a self-study component in their thesis work
- Teachers or groups of teachers who want to study their practice (e.g., ways to improve the effectiveness of their literacy programs)
- School-district personnel who want to study the impact of a curriculum development initiative on their teachers, pupils, or schools.

We consider *Self-Study Research Methodologies for Teacher Educators* a valuable contribution to the field of teacher education. We believe it will strengthen research both on teacher education and teacher education programs. Through self-study it is possible to extend the dialogue around effective, high-quality teacher education to include a wide array of personal and professional experiences, cultures, contexts, and practices. Samaras and Freese note in the first chapter of this text that self-study research is developing, and we believe this text will contribute to its evolution.

Like any new field of research, self-study has gone through growing pains and stages of development marked by a need for a shared understanding and shared language around the field of self-study. Self-study scholars have thought deeply about the nature of self-study, what it involves, and what distinguishes it from other types of research. (p. 5)

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PART ONE: OVERVIEW

1. LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

An Historical Overview of the Self-Study School

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles.

“Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?” he asked.

“Begin at the beginning” the King said, very gravely,

“and go on till you come to the end: then stop.”

(Carroll, 1998, p. 105)

As educational researchers and reformers, in our ongoing search for ways to improve teaching and learning, it is important to look backward to take stock of our beginnings, where we have been, what we have accomplished, and what we have learned. This chapter provides a retrospective look at the field of self-study by tracing its roots, including how and when it started, as well as discussing how it has developed and grown into a large field of research. We discuss the nature of self-study, definitions of self-study and its purposes, as well as the role the community of self-study researchers has played in its development. In addition, we offer suggestions for the future of self-study and the possibilities ahead.

ROOTS OF SELF-STUDY

To gain a deeper understanding of the background and development of self-study, it is helpful to trace its roots from its inception to the formal field of study. In the following section we will give a brief overview of how self-study has evolved over time. We begin with a discussion of the key research paradigms that have directly influenced the outgrowth, process, and focus of self-study of teaching. These areas are teacher inquiry, reflective practice, and action research.

Teacher Inquiry

Prior to the late 1980s, teachers’ practical and everyday theories of how to improve teaching and learning were not considered particularly important, nor were they considered as areas of research (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Classroom teachers viewed educational research as academic-oriented, something generally conducted by university researchers from various disciplines (Dana & Yendal-Silva, 2003). Teachers primarily saw their responsibility as implementing what researchers told them was valid in their classrooms. They did not think about problematizing their experiences or classroom observations to learn more about their students, their

context, and their teaching practices. However, in the late 1980s, teachers began to inquire into and explore their teaching and their students' learning. Questioning one's practice became an integral aspect of teacher research (Duckworth, 1987; Richardson, 1989). Prior to the formalization of self-study research, a number of teacher educators began to question their teaching and conducted systematic research of their practice (LaBoskey, 1994; Russell & Munby, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Reflective Practice

Research in the area of reflection and reflective practice has had a strong influence on self-study. The movement towards developing reflective practitioners led to a body of research that focused on the teacher as researcher of his or her own practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Researchers found that teachers could examine and problematize their teaching by reflecting on their practice and by becoming reflective practitioners (Schön, 1987; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Teachers studying their teaching spurred research that used a number of qualitative research approaches. By the late 1980s, university researchers began to use biographical forms of inquiry as well as personal histories, life history approach, and narrative inquiry to better understand their practice (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). These research approaches provided a foundation for teachers and teacher educators to incorporate similar methods to systematically study their practice. As teachers critically reflect on their practice, they strive to make sense of their teaching and participate consciously and creatively in their growth and development (Zeichner, 1999). Many self-study researchers were influenced by the area of reflective practice, particularly Schön's (1983, 1987) and Dewey's (1933) work in reflection.

Action Research

Action research has also had a strong influence on self-study research and has been referred to as a "useful tool for self-study" because it provides a method to conduct systematic inquiry into one's teaching practices (Feldman, Paugh, & Mills, 2004, p. 970). Introduced by Carr and Kemmis (1986), action research involves a systematic approach to problem solving. Teachers and teacher educators engage in action research (McNiff, 1988; Mills, 2000) to examine their teaching and their students' learning as a basis for making changes.

Although teacher educators had written about, discussed, and promoted the use of reflection and action research in their education courses in the 1980s, it wasn't until the early 1990s that teacher educators began doing what they encouraged preservice and inservice teachers to do: that is, reflect on, inquire into, and study their practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Loughran, 2004a; Mills, 2000). The shift in the focus of educational research was characterized by research questions that delved into the complexities of teaching and learning. An important result of this shift in research focus was that the role of teachers and teacher educators

changed as they began to investigate and question their practice. Teaching was viewed as highly contextualized, and the research began to focus on the complex and dynamic interactions between the teacher and the students. Research on teaching and schooling became more inclusive, and the knowledge generated about teaching came from the teachers' questions and wonderings.

DISTINGUISHING SELF-STUDY FROM ACTION RESEARCH

Like many self-study researchers before us, we moved into the area of self-study through our involvement in action research. Although we found self-study to be familiar because of its close relationship to action research, we also found ourselves asking one another "How does self-study differ from action research?" In both methodologies, the researcher inquires into problems situated in practice, engages in cycles of research, and systematically collects and analyzes data to improve practice. Nonetheless, self-study may incorporate other methods, such as personal history, narrative inquiry, reflective portfolios, memory work, or arts-based methods (LaBoskey, 2004a; Samaras & Freese, 2006).

Feldman, Paugh, and Mills (2004) argue that a critical way to differentiate the two research genres is to focus on the relationship between *action* and *research*, and *self* and *study*. When the accent is on action, there is an assumption that the primary purpose of conducting action research is

to modify or transform one's practice or situation, or those of the community or institution. This means that the collection and analysis of data are used to guide the development of a plan of action or to articulate a critical analysis of the individual and institutional barriers that are shaping their lives (p. 953).

However, when the accent is on the word *self*, then the self becomes the focus of the study and this is a "distinguishing characteristic of self-study as a variety of practitioner research" (p. 953).

Feldman, Paugh, and Mills further explain "action research provides the methods for the self-studies, but what made these *self-studies* (italics in original) were the methodological features" (p. 974). Self-study researchers use their experiences as a resource for their research and "problematize their selves in their practice situations" with the goal of reframing their beliefs and/or practice (Feldman, 2002, p. 971). Action research is more about what the teacher does, and not so much about who the teacher is.

Another important difference is that self-study focuses on improvement on both the personal and professional levels. Self-study builds on the personal processes of reflection and inquiry, and takes these processes and makes them open to public critique. Self-study is not done in isolation, but rather requires collaboration for building new understandings through dialogue and validation of findings. Self-study research requires openness and vulnerability since the focus is on the self. And finally, self-study is designed to lead to the reframing and reconceptualizing of the role of the teacher.

FORMALIZATION OF SELF-STUDY

Self-study emerged as a recognizable area of research in the early 1990s (Loughran, 2004a). The first step in the development of self-study research occurred in a 1992 American Educational Research Association (AERA) session on self-study that included the collaborative work of some of the self-study leaders, such as the Arizona Group (Guilfoyle, 1992; Hamilton, 1992; Pinnegar, 1992; Placier, 1992). It was also at this session that Russell (1992) presented his work entitled "Holding up the mirror: Teacher educators reflect on their own teaching." The presenters raised issues and questions about teacher education, such as the personal and professional struggles of teachers, the unspoken rules of tenure in the academy, aligning one's beliefs with one's teaching practices, and the nature of learning to teach about teaching (Loughran, 2004b). This 1992 AERA session attracted researchers from related areas such as teacher inquiry, reflective practice, and action research. In 1993, the AERA Special Interest Group (SIG), called the Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP), was created. This was a critical step towards formalizing the area of self-study (Hamilton et al., 1998). The establishment of S-STEP proved to be a significant turning point in creating a community of self-study researchers. Valuable opportunities for professional networking and collaboration among researchers resulted from the SIG's creation, thus contributing to the further development of self-study (Loughran, 2004a).

Another significant influence on the development of self-study was the First Castle Conference held in East Sussex, England in 1996. The four-day conference, sponsored by Queen's University in Canada and the S-STEP SIG, drew eighty participants from four continents (Australia, Europe, North America, and South America). The Castle Conference served as a valuable forum for bringing researchers together to dialogue, to ask probing questions, to make their knowledge public and open for critique, and to contribute to the evolving nature of the field. The educational researchers in attendance presented papers, created and displayed alternative representations, and explored the philosophy, methodology, and practice of self-study (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. viii). The Castle Conference was significant in terms of the emerging understandings of self-study that grew out of the discussions and debate, culminating in the publication of *Reconceptualizing Teaching Practice: Self-Study in Teacher Education* (Hamilton et al., 1998).

EVOLUTION OF SELF-STUDY AS SCHOLARSHIP

Looking back we can see that the First Castle Conference held in 1996 (Richards & Russell, 1996) was fundamental in establishing a forum for exploring and expanding the conversations about self-study. The first conference was followed by six subsequent biannual conferences: Cole & Finley, 1998; Loughran & Russell, 2000; Kosnik, Freese, & Samaras, 2002; Tidwell, Fitzgerald, & Heston, 2004; Fitzgerald, Heston, & Tidwell, 2006; and Heston, Tidwell, East, & Fitzgerald, 2008, respectively. The conferences have provided a safe space for creating a learning community of self-study researchers who are willing to ask questions,

clarify terms, take risks experimenting with innovative approaches, and examine and reframe their views about teaching and teacher education practices.

The Castle Conferences, the extensive contributions to the literature over the last 15 years, and *The International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004) have shaped the field and document how self-study has evolved and grown since the early 1990s. The Handbook is the most definitive and comprehensive collection of self-study research written to date. In 2005, *Studying Teacher Education*, a peer-reviewed, international journal of self-study of teacher education practices, was launched and contributed to the formalization of the self-study of teaching research. The publication of this journal and the Handbook has brought much attention and interest to the increasingly popular movement of the self-study of teaching, and marked turning points in the coming of age of what we call the *Self-Study School* (Samaras & Freese, 2006). The self-study movement came out of a desire to “combine the best of both worlds: the world of scientific research on education and the world of practice” (Korthagen, 1995, p. 100). Although self-study is a relatively new field of research, it has been growing quickly and, at the same time, evolving. As the self-study field has matured, it has made great strides in gaining legitimacy in academia and among educational researchers due to the extensive amount and quality of research conducted by self-study researchers. Only seven years after the AERA session where self-study began, Zeichner asserted that “the birth of the self-study in teacher education movement around 1990 has been probably the single most significant development ever in the field of teacher education research” (Zeichner, 1999, p. 8).

THE NATURE OF SELF-STUDY

Like any new field of research, self-study has gone through growing pains and stages of development marked by a need for a shared understanding and shared language around the field of self-study. Self-study scholars have thought deeply about the nature of self-study, what it involves, and what distinguishes it from other types of research. In this section we chronologically present the development of the language and terms used in the literature to describe the nature or characteristics as noted by self-study scholars.

Open, Collaborative, and Reframed Practice

Beginning in the mid 1990s, and particularly at the First Castle Conference, questions were raised about the nature of self-study. Participants asked, “What is self-study and what constitutes self-study research?” An important step towards clarifying these questions took place after the First Castle Conference. Barnes (1998) conducted a content analysis of the conference papers and the results of the analysis were helpful in moving the field towards a shared understanding of how self-study scholars were characterizing self-study. He identified three characteristics based on his analysis. These characteristics include: 1) openness; 2)

collaboration; and 3) reframing. Barnes explained how self-study researchers must have a disposition that is open to ideas from others, and how collaboration plays a critical role in self-study. Through dialogue and collaboration with other teacher educators and students, the researcher can frame and reframe a problem or situation from different perspectives. Reframing is important in self-study because it provides an opportunity for the researcher to think about things differently, change how he/she looks at what's going on in classrooms, and ultimately change one's practice (Hamilton et al., 1998, p. xii). As we continued to review the self-study literature, we identified additional characteristics that distinguish self-study from other forms of research, i.e., its nature is paradoxical, postmodern, and multiple and multifaceted.

Paradoxical

An intriguing characteristic that we discovered in our research was that self-study seems paradoxical. For example, the term *self-study* suggests that the study is about the individual, and yet self-study researchers assert that it must involve collaboration and "critical friends" or trusted colleagues who provide alternative perspectives for reframing, support, and validation (LaBoskey, 2004a; Loughran, 2007). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) have worked to emphasize the need for critical friends and validation groups. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) and Whitehead (2004) argue that self-study scholars must have a deep commitment to checking data and interpretations with colleagues to broaden possibilities and challenge perspectives to increase the credibility and self-study validity. Whereas validity in conventional research involves empirical evidence, generalizability, and professional critique, self-study is validated through collaboration including testing, sharing, and challenging exemplars of teaching practices (LaBoskey, 2006, p. 252). Multiple perspectives provide ways of validating the findings (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). We found that although self-study involves an intrapersonal quest to understand one's practice, it is the interpersonal mediation that allows individuals to work within "learning zones" or "communities of expertise where learners co-mediate, negotiate, and socially construct an understanding of a shared task" (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p. 51). This revealed yet another paradox: although self-study involves a private and personal exploration, it is also public.

Postmodern

Self-study is often noted as having a postmodern nature because of its non-linear and unpredictable outcomes (Wilcox, Watson, & Paterson, 2004). According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004), self-study scholars have demonstrated that "self-study works from the postmodernist assumption that it is never possible to divorce the 'self' from either the research process or from education practice" (p. 607). Self-study doesn't claim to know a truth but rather seeks to understand what is. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2007) explore using an ontological, rather than an

epistemological, lens for analysis and state that by comparing opposing views, one's analysis is open to alternative views. Postmodern researchers understand that knowledge production has a cultural component and, therefore, they contend that researchers should take a reflective and analytical stance and seek to identify the cultural, interpretive, and ideological basis built into their conceptions of knowledge. Accordingly, Pinnegar (1998) explained that "self-study is methodologically unique" (p. 31) and that in self-study, researchers operate from and embrace the premise of subjectivity and "present evidence of meaning and relationships among phenomenon from the authority of their own experience" (p. 32). Self-study serves a common purpose of "finding power in practice" (Allender & Allender, 2008, p. 145) because its inclusive nature encourages practitioners to be researchers and constructors of knowledge.

Multiple and Multifaceted

Another characteristic of self-study research that we discovered is that it is multiple and multifaceted (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Self-study scholars come from various theoretical orientations and conceptually frame their studies accordingly. Also, self-study scholars conduct their research with multiple and diverse qualitative methods (LaBoskey, 2004b). Some choose to employ autobiographical and personal history self-study, narratives, memory work, and multiple artistic modes such as visual representations, theater, drama, and poetry (LaBoskey, 2004a; Lighthall, 2004). Loughran (2007) explains "there is no one way, or correct way, of doing self-study. Rather, how a self-study might be done depends on what is sought to be better understood" (p. 15). LaBoskey emphasizes the multiple characteristics of self-study as follows: "it is self-initiated and focused; it is improvement-aimed; it is interactive; it includes multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; and it defines validity as a validation process based in trustworthiness" (LaBoskey, 2004a, p. 817). A variety of methods that self-study scholars have incorporated into their work are included in our *Invitations to Practice* (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Self-study scholars continue to discuss the nature of self-study while also working to clarify its definition.

DEFINING SELF-STUDY

Looking back, we recall that we first met in 1998 where we found ourselves both intrigued and yet somewhat confused by the notion of self-study as we listened to conference presentations. At that time, we were both sharing our work (Freese, 1999; Samaras, 1998) and openly discussed some of our questions and concerns about a lack of a clear definition. We later discovered that many self-study members raised their own questions about how to define self-study according to their role, practice, and/or purpose.

Self-Study Defined by Role

Self-study involves a strong personal reference in that it involves study *of* the self and study *by* the self although there are variations of that theme. Baird (2004) brought attention to the possible interpretations of self in self-study when he analyzed types of studies and distinguished the foci of self-study research, i.e., a focus on “the self in teaching”; “the self as teacher”; “the self as researcher of my teaching”; “the self as researcher of teacher education”; and “the self as researcher of self-study” (p. 1445). Hamilton and colleagues (1998) define self-study as “the study of one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas, as well as the ‘not self’... Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known, and ideas considered” (p. 236). Hamilton and colleagues conclude “a critical examination of the self’s involvement both in aspects of the study and in the phenomenon under study” is central to self-study (p. 240).

Self-Study Defined by Situated Practice

We also found that self-study scholars have presented definitions that were situated within their personal and professional experiences. For example, Pinnegar (1998) defined self-study as “a methodology for studying professional practice settings” (p. 33). Clarke and Erickson (2004) claim that “For teaching to occur, there must be a *some how* (bold and italics in original), a way for an educator to know, recognize, explore, and act upon his or her practice” (p. 59). After studying her integration of Vygotskian (1981) theory in her teaching, Samaras (2002) designed a self-study model for teacher educators and wrote “I use the words self-study to mean 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, or impulse” (p. xiii). Similarly, describing self-study from their teacher education program contexts, Beck, Freese, and Kosnik (2004), described self-study as “a personal-constructivist-collaborative approach” to emphasize important components of self-study. Self-study is constructivist because it includes elements of ongoing inquiry, respects personal experience, and emphasizes the role of knowledge construction. The collaborative component of self-study acknowledges the important role of the social construction of knowledge.

Self-Study Defined by Purpose

Cole and Knowles (1998) argue that there are multiple reasons why people practice self-study and those purposes are typically integrated and not mutually exclusive. Although the purposes may be layered and multifaceted, researchers often focus on one aspect of professional practice. At the same time, the purpose may extend beyond the self towards educational reform. Kosnik, Beck, Freese, and Samaras (2006) identified three purposes for practicing self-study: 1) personal renewal, 2) professional renewal, and 3) program renewal.

Furthermore, there are a number of different methods of self-study that can serve to focus one’s lens on a particular issue. An example of this is personal history

self-study where teachers explore and begin to identify who they are as teachers for self-knowing, forming, and reforming a professional identity (Samaras, Hicks, & Garvey Berger, 2004). Another example is self-study action research whereby classroom teachers conduct a manageable professional inquiry that enables them to study their classroom strategies and actions for change, and also who they are as teacher professionals (Samaras, Beck, Freese, & Kosnik, 2005). Regardless of purpose or method, the self-study scholar questions practice with the support of colleagues, and frames, assesses, and reframes his/her practice within the context of broader educational aims.

LaBoskey's work (2004a) emphasizes the important moral, ethical, and political purposes of self-study when she defines self-study work as moral and value-laden. In addition, teacher educators have employed self-study to question the status quo of education programs and their role within teacher education pedagogy (Samaras, 2002; Loughran, 2006). They have questioned the assertions of their practice (Loughran & Northfield, 1996), the tensions in their practice (Berry, 2007), and the taken for granted assumptions of their practice (Brandenburg, 2008). Whitehead (1988) also calls upon teachers to consider the possible alignment or disparities between what they say, and what they believe, and what they actually do in practice. He referred to this gap between one's teaching philosophy and actual practice as a "living contradiction," although LaBoskey (2004b) notes that our inquiries do not have to derive from problematic situations.

As we strive to clarify and provide a shared understanding of what self-study includes, it is wise to keep in mind the following caveat.

Despite the development, refinement and clarification that has occurred...it is clear that the 'one true way,' the template for a self-study method, has not emerged. Rather self-study tends to be methodologically framed through the question/issue/concern under consideration so that it invokes the use of a method(s) that is most appropriate for uncovering the evidence in accord with the purpose/intent of the study (Loughran, 2004a, p. 17).

Perhaps it isn't possible to come up with a fixed definition, and perhaps it isn't desirable. Bullough and Pinnegar (2004) assert that the inclusive nature of self-study and its multiple definitions provoke a continuous and communal conversation about its characteristics.

THE SELF-STUDY COMMUNITY

Self-study scholars include a dynamic group of teachers, teacher educators, and administrators committed to studying their practice through self-study in an effort to make their teaching and programs more effective for students' learning. Many hold membership in the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Allender and Allender (2008) recall, "A small notice in the *Educational Researcher*, ... with the help of some word of mouth brought together a group of over 200 members at the 1993 [AERA] annual meeting—to explore the value of

studying their own practices as teacher educators” (p. 129). The S-STEP SIG, now with nearly 300 members, has fostered a sense of intellectual safety in a collaborative and highly supportive culture, much like what we encourage teachers to do in their classrooms.

The S-STEP membership is diverse and unified by its use of the self-study methodology rather than by a discipline, theory, or educational issue. Although self-study grew out of the work of teacher educators, it has expanded to include practitioners such as administrators, librarians, occupational therapists, psychotherapists, counselors, and community educators working for social justice and educational reform (e.g., Allender, 2004; Manke, 2004; Wilcox, Watson, & Paterson, 2004). We refer to this extension from self-study of teaching practices to other fields as self-studyship (Samaras & Freese, 2006).

The Castle Conferences have proven to be an important forum in the development of the self-study community, attracting self-study teacher practitioners from a wide range of countries from both research-intensive and teaching-focused universities. People from many different disciplines gather to gain feedback and insights from colleagues as they share their applications of doing self-study in their contexts.

THE *DOING* OF SELF-STUDY

As we looked back, we recognized that it was in the *doing* of self-study that we were better able to understand it. Applying the methodology of self-study research, actually immersing ourselves in doing self-study, helped us understand its nature and purposes. We initially had a fear of sharing our work and making ourselves vulnerable—but as we moved to a feeling of openness and learning together, we found ourselves framing and reframing our understandings of self-study through our teaching and our application of self-study to our practice. We recall that when we engaged in action research, the focus was on our students and what they learned. However, through our dialoguing we realized that by focusing on the students we left out a very important aspect of the study—the self, the role we played in the research, and what we learned and how we subsequently changed. Self-study and our work with students reinforced our belief that teaching needs to be purposeful. And we found that by studying and systematically examining our teaching, we became more focused on our purposes and whether we were aligning our beliefs with our practice.

Engaging in conducting self-studies, serving as co-editors of the *Castle Proceedings* (Kosnik, Freese, & Samaras, 2002), developing the primer (Samaras & Freese, 2006), and working with our doctoral students (Freese & Strong, 2008; Mittapalli & Samaras, 2008; Samaras et al., 2007), helped us come to a rich understanding of its multiplicity. Our understandings of self-study deepened through our ongoing discussions and collaboration with our self-study colleagues and students. Just as we tried to pin down self-study definitions and the research methodology, we have seen how our graduate students wrestle with the multiple definitions and methods of conducting self-study. We realized that our students

learned about self-study best through doing it. By initiating a research question they were passionate about, they were able to move to a better understanding of the process of self-study research. Like us, they gained an enhanced understanding and appreciation for the impact self-study had on their practice and to the field at large. We have found there is a self-discovery aspect of self-study that necessitates inquiring and engaging with others. The result is that we socially construct our understandings and gain new insights through others' perspectives.

Looking back, we realize that we were drawn to self-study because it was a way for us to ask the deep questions about our practice that we dared not ask alone. Together we were able to negotiate our beliefs, understandings, and misunderstandings through reading texts and articles, e-mails, conversations, and through joint writing. We value the supportive self-study community and the way the Castle Conferences have enhanced inquiry and scholarship. Although we had different questions and we worked in different contexts, we became part of a community in which teacher educators could and were asking the taken-for-granted questions about their practice and the impact of their work. We still have many questions, but we are constantly intrigued at the possibilities that only self-study research provides.

LOOKING FORWARD

As important as it is to look backward, we also see the value in looking forward. Like Alice, looking back can be useful in providing direction to guide us to where we want to go. In this final section, we offer suggestions informed by our work and that of our colleagues. They are not meant to be inclusive or definitive because the road ahead is uncertain, and at the same time full of new possibilities.

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

(Carroll, 1998, p. 56)

The Need for Brighter Guideposts

As we gained more experience engaging in self-study, we have come to understand that there is not one road, not one direct path to conducting self-study. The purpose of this book is to explore some of the many paths with which self-study scholars have been experimenting. However, at the same time, we argue that for our fellow self-study travelers there needs to be better research guideposts. We see the value of having a shared understanding about how studying our practice can lead us “to where we want to get to” and can help in guiding our decision making. We see the need for some agreed upon methodological components. We encourage continued efforts to provide some standardization for applying the self-study methods with exemplars of practitioners conducting their self-studies such as those shared in this book. We offered some beginning work in providing a structure for informal and formal self-study research as a starting point (Samaras & Freese, 2006). But the self-study community needs to go further.

Clearer Connections with Validation of the Impact of Our Work

LaBoskey (2006) argues that self-studies need to be validated over time with continued work that helps us understand and contribute to a body of knowledge and a specific domain. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) offer guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. Self-study scholars are continuing to address issues of validity and quality in self-study (Feldman, 2003; LaBoskey, 2006; Loughran, 2007). Although much progress has been made in this area, AERA program chairs, editors of the *Castle Proceedings*, and those teaching about self-study research need to continue to provide clearer requirements for quality papers that include descriptions of the research process, how colleagues contributed to the validity of the research, and what knowledge has been generated from the study.

Accumulating Knowledge across Self-Study

Zeichner (2007) suggests that self-study could be strengthened by “situating individual studies within coherent research programs on particular substantive issues” (p. 36). He says this is “a logical next step for this movement, one that would begin to infuse the insights of practicing teacher educators into the broader knowledge-base of the field and to affect the policy-making process” (p. 40). As the field continues to grow and develop, a number of recent publications have emerged in a variety of topic areas, such as self-study and diversity (Tidwell & Fitzgerald, 2006), teacher education reform (Loughran & Russell, 2002), and self-study and the arts (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). Samaras and Freese (2006) offered a collection of self-study publications organized by topic (pp. 132–53). Zeichner (2007) now recommends that a discussion is needed on “how a study builds on the work of others” (p. 39). Zeichner, who has conducted his own self-study research with a focus on social change (Zeichner, 1995), suggests a next step for self-study scholars is a focus on analyzing connections across issues such as fostering social justice, science education reform, leadership, preservice teacher preparation, and technology.

Loughran (2004b) emphasizes that we need to state our assertions more clearly and boldly. LaBoskey (2006) adds, “Only in that way can the ideas be employed, applied, and re-tested by the teacher education community in ways that will help us embrace, discard, or transform those assertions; that is the essence of the validation process for the field” (p. 258). It is ultimately the self-study community that has shaped, and will continue to shape, the future of self-study research (Dalmau & Guðjónsdóttir, 2008). These recommendations warrant our attention as we maintain our uniqueness as a methodology, while also bringing our work into the mainstream of teacher education. In that manner, our voices can be heard by our teacher education colleagues outside the field of self-study. They too are fellow travelers, all working for the common purpose of improving teaching and learning and contributing to the knowledge base of education and research.

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2. TRUSTWORTHINESS IN SELF-STUDY RESEARCH

The fact that a story is credible tells us nothing—*absolutely* nothing—about whether or not it is true or false.

(Phillips, 1993, p. 21, italics in original)

Like many other kinds of inquiry, the self-study of teaching and teacher education genre of research employs narrative as an expression of practical knowledge and/or a research methodology and/or a form of representation. Hence, critiques such as the aforementioned one have been leveled at it and similar kinds of research. On one hand, the claim can be made—with sufficient evidence (human initiation and ongoing intervention)—that no research genre achieves its results from brute data and that criticisms directed at personal inquiries apply to all forms of investigation, albeit to varying degrees. On the other hand, it also can be argued that self-study research is part of a movement toward a “new epistemology of practice” (Schön, 1995) and that it is being held accountable to misplaced demands for verification (Bruner, 1986). In other words, new approaches are being “grafted on” (Schön, 1991) to conventional ways of warranting knowledge and are not passing muster (Fenstermacher, 1994). Hence, pressure has built in the field and the “new paradigm wars” (Anderson & Herr, 1999) have waged. In fact, Fenstermacher (Personal Communication in Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001) has noted that it remains unclear whether conventional criteria will continue to hold sway or whether an “epistemologically humble” (Barone, 2008) way to verify human knowledge—already at work in so many practice-oriented inquiries, will be officially recognized as something other than an aberration or anomaly indicative of the swampy lowland of practice (Schön, 1983) and its perceived lack of rigor. In the meantime, signs of struggle abound in the field. One prime example is *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). In that report, the hegemony of the dominant research paradigm rendered invalid self-study research contributions, despite self-study researchers constituting the largest Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. Another prominent example is the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NICHD, 2000), which managed to nullify the contributions of all qualitative researchers, including those involved in the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices.

In this chapter, I steer clear of the cantankerous “what constitutes truth” debate, which has become increasingly politicized due to the U.S. government’s privileging of medical model research in the educational arena. Instead, I accept at face value trustworthiness as a way to ground self-study researchers’ claims to knowing and doing in the Deweyan (1938) sense of the terms. My interest is not in abstract discourse—talk about “deathless shadow[s] of once living act[s]” (Carse, 1986, p. 77). Rather, my concern is with what comprises trustworthiness when one practically engages in, and makes sense of, self-study inquiries. I focus my attention on the kinds of obvious and not-so-obvious decisions self-study researchers make as they conduct, represent, and communicate their inquiries in public forums. Like Schön (1983), I respect the value of practitioner research and the contributions of the study of teaching and teacher education to the production of knowledge (Bullough & Gitlin, 2001). However, I also understand that such knowledge would have to be, in Schön’s words, “valid, according to criteria of appropriate rigor,... susceptible to critical review and evaluation, and accessible for exchange and use by other members of one’s scholarly community” (Lyons & LaBoskey, p. vii). Before I continue this discussion, I need to share my understanding of self-study research and the way I see it positioned on the educational research landscape.

THEORETICAL BACKDROP

In my work, I adopt Hamilton and Pinnegar’s (1998) definition of self-study as “the study of one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas, as well as the ‘not self’” (p. 238). In that view, self-study is “autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political and takes a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known and ideas considered” (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 236) and their connections to teachers’ and teacher educators’ practices. As can be seen, matters of context, process, and relationship are foundational to the self-study study of teaching and teacher education (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Also, self-study research differs from reflective practice in that it is “an extension of reflection on practice, with aspirations that go beyond professional development” to the “wider communication and consideration of ideas, i.e., the generation and communication of new knowledge and understandings” (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 15).

The self-study research genre employs a broad range of qualitative methods, all of which employ narrative in one form or another—for example, narrative inquiry (i.e., Kitchen, 2005; Pinnegar, Dulude Lay, Bigham & Dulude, 2005), case study research (i.e., Dinkelman, 2003; Gipe, 1998), action research (i.e., Feldman, Paugh, & Mills, 2004; Whitehead, 2000), teacher research (i.e., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Senese, 2005) and arts-based approaches (i.e., Weber & Mitchell, 2004). As is evident, self-study’s intellectual roots are intimately tied to the development of the qualitative research paradigm (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). Hence, interpretation and meaning-making, rather than explanation, sit at its core. As with other qualitative research approaches (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the idea of the trustworthiness of research findings—as opposed to their validity—is a generally accepted rule of thumb. In this view, trustworthiness is

defined as “the degree to which other practitioners or researchers turn to, rely or will rely on, and *use* the concepts, methods, and inferences of a practice as the basis of their own theorizing, research, or practice” (Mishler, 1990, p. 419 in Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 6). Thus, instead of capital ‘T’ Truth, studies trustworthy in nature demonstrate a “true for now” (Bruner, 1986) quality since studies involving narrative—indeed life—are inevitably “unfinished and unfinishable business” (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2006).

Thomas Kuhn’s (1962/1996) concept of a “paradigm shift” greatly aided the development of qualitative research methodologies in education. Kuhn asserted that new paradigm researchers “think with exemplars” (Schön, 1983, pp. 183–184) rather than communicating certainties as “rhetoric of conclusions” (Schwab, 1961/1978), which is the prevailing approach. These exemplars, in Kuhn’s words, are “the concrete problem-solutions” encountered “in laboratories, on examinations, or at the ends of chapters in...texts...that...show...by example how the job is to be done” (Kuhn, 1962/1970, p. 187). As for Schwab, one of the first with whom Kuhn shared his groundbreaking manuscript (Ian Westbury, Personal Communication, 2006), such exemplars would necessarily be “narratives of enquiry” that communicate tentative formulations—not facts, but *interpretations* of facts” (p. 242; italics in original). Furthermore, these interpretations would “end in doubt or in alternative views of what the evidence shows” (p. 270). This is because scientists, in Schwab’s (1967) view, do not prove truths as the rhetoric of the dominant research paradigm would have us believe, but tell “likely stories” (pp. 14–15) until such time new discoveries are made.

Further building on the available research in the field, Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) maintained that “validity in the [exemplar] approach...*depends on concrete examples of actual practices, fully elaborated so that members of a relevant research community can judge for themselves their ‘trustworthiness’ and the validity of observations, interpretations...*” (p. 20, italics in original). In this scenario, validation rather than validity forms the impetus for action. As Mishler (1990) further explained:

focusing on trustworthiness rather than truth, displaces validation from its traditional location in a presumably objective and neutral reality, and moves it to the social world—a world constructed in and through our discourse and actions, through praxis” (p. 420).

Having introduced self-study research and pertinent background concerning trustworthiness and validation, I now launch into a fine-point discussion of trustworthiness as evidenced in the self-study of teaching and teacher education.

THE NATURE OF NARRATIVE EXEMPLARS IN SELF-STUDY RESEARCH

Following in the scholarly footsteps of Kuhn in the nature of science and Mishler in social psychology, Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) made a case for the use of narrative exemplars to instantiate the trustworthiness of teaching and research practices involving narrative. Because self-studies interrogate practice and often

use narrative in a variety of ways, it makes sense to filter representative self-studies through the criteria Lyons and LaBoskey proposed. Such an approach would add to the body of knowledge concerning what is known about the trustworthiness of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices research in two important ways: one, rather than taking narrative in self-study for granted, as often is the case in both qualitative and quantitative types of research, narrative would be placed at the forefront of discussion; and two, the approach would offer a productive response to Zeichner's (2008) recent critique of self-study inquiries. In Zeichner's professional opinion, those researchers involved in the self-study of teaching and teacher practices have too frequently focused on asking whether particular pieces of research fit the self-study genre (i.e., bounding the field) and too little time "accumulating knowledge across self-studies" (i.e., building the knowledge base). Hence, this chapter follows the lead of researchers already pushing the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices in that direction. For example, Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006), writing in the year preceding Zeichner's criticism, discussed fundamental principles that transcended their sustained research on teacher education programs in The Netherlands, Australia and Canada, research that curiously went unreported in the U.S.-dominated AERA report on research and teacher education (see Brower & Korthagen, 2005; Loughran, Korthagen, & Russell, 2008). Also, Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2008) have probed narrative, self-study, and auto-ethnography and have connected the overall intent of the studies with the most appropriate methodologies. With this additional background in place, Lyons and LaBoskey's characteristics of narrative exemplars will now be elucidated, with the understanding that exemplars are "candidate" ones until they are accepted by rigorous review by the field.

QUALITIES OF NARRATIVE EXEMPLARS

In Lyons and LaBoskey's view, narrative exemplars share five characteristics that traverse studies, regardless of the content of the inquiries. Narrative exemplars:

- capture intentional human actions that not only tell a story, but convey the developing knowledge of those involved;
- are lodged in socially and contextually embedded situations; hence, readers come to know pertinent background, the subtle nuances of how the self-study unfurled, and the inner thinking of main characters;
- draw other people into the mix as the narrative exemplar is unpacked and experiential storytelling and restorying (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) ensues;
- implicate people's identities as a consequence of the inquiry;
- focus on interpretation, frequently taking different perspectives into account.

With these characteristics in mind, the four self-studies I have selected to analyze as narrative exemplars will now be identified.

By way of general introduction, each of my four choices is conducted by a different researcher/different research team; each takes up a topic illustrative of the broad spectrum of themes self-study addresses; and each has been published in a reputable venue, elevating it from a candidate exemplar to narrative exemplar

status. Vicky Anderson-Patton and Elizabeth Bass's (2002) work, *Using narrative teaching portfolios for self-study*, is a collaborative research study involving two investigators and includes both student and faculty participation in the creation of narrative teaching portfolios. This chapter, by the way, is in some ways a doubly recognized exemplar; it is found in Lyons and LaBoskey's (2002) edited volume. Located in the *Teacher Education Yearbook XVI* (Craig & Deretchin, 2008), the second study, Helen Freidus's *Small steps: Moving toward a renaissance in teacher education*, centers on an innovation made to a graduate literacy course that then became part of Bank Street College's teacher education program. As for the third study, Clare Kosnik's (2005) *No teacher educator left behind: The impact of U.S. policies and trends on my work as a researcher and teacher educator*, it is situated at the intersection where U.S. educational policy and teacher educators' and researchers' practices meet and involves Kosnik's transition from a Canadian teacher education landscape to an American teacher education milieu. Finally, my essay (Craig, 2006), *Change, changing and being changed: A self-study of a teacher educator's becoming real in the throes of urban school reform*, addresses the theme of school reform, a topic largely on the edge of mainstream self-study literature. Referred to as the Craig article from here on in, the latter self-study has been chosen because it provides insider insights into trustworthiness, but also because it holds me accountable to the same criteria to which the other researchers are being held, which is in keeping with the spirit of self-study. Both the Kosnik and Craig articles are carried in *Studying Teacher Education*, the flagship journal of the Special Interest Group of the Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices.

QUALITY 1: INTENTIONAL HUMAN ACTION LINKED TO HUMAN KNOWLEDGE GROWTH

In the first exemplar, Anderson-Patton and Bass (2002) recognized that "reading research on teaching is not effective in transforming practice" (p. 101). Their collaborative action introduced narrative teaching portfolios to their creativity and writing classes: Anderson-Patton, in an elementary school context, and Bass, in a practicum setting. As a result, interactions took place in a layered sort of way, as did the reflections that accompanied the narrative portfolio development. The inquiry question, 'Do we teach according to our values?', borrowed from Whitehead's (1993) action research-driven self-studies, propelled the multi-dimensional inquiry.

Freidus, in the second self-study, recognized that the teaching preservice candidates had observed in New York schools had radically changed due to the No Child Left Behind Act and the manner in which local implementation had taken place. In order to provide prospective teachers with more robust literacy experiences, Freidus intentionally revised a graduate course as a way of responding appropriately to the teacher candidate's needs and those of future students with whom they would interact. Along the way, Freidus documented her own and others' responses in order to trace their knowledge growth.

As for Kosnik, in the third narrative exemplar, she purposefully moved from a premier public research university in Canada (University of Toronto) to a premier private institution in California (Stanford University). She temporarily changed contexts to learn about teacher education in the U.S. and to carry lessons back with her to Canada when she resumed her work at the University of Toronto.

In the fourth self-study, Craig centered on a reform initiative where she worked alongside teachers on five school campuses as a planning and evaluation consultant and on a sixth campus as a formal evaluator. Craig's dual role-taking afforded her multiple insights by virtue of the different perspectives to which she was privy. In the investigation, she centered on four dilemmas with the intent of arriving at overarching understandings.

QUALITY 2: SOCIALLY AND CONTEXTUALLY SITUATED

As foreshadowed, Anderson-Patton and Bass's study involved different ages of students, different content areas, different contexts, and different instructional responsibilities for the two self-study researchers as well as Jerry Allender, another self-study researcher, who questioned their assumptions and helped them to sharpen their thinking. As for Freidus, she worked closely with an American Museum of Natural History collaborator and her students additionally participated as learners and as prospective teachers. Also, the workshop took place in the museum setting, which was in the local community, although outside Freidus and her students' educational milieu. In Kosnik's case, she was situated in the context of teacher education reform in one of the most diverse, populated states in the U.S., working alongside preeminent researcher, Linda Darling-Hammond. Craig was also located in the midst of reform, albeit a K-12 initiative. In Craig's diverse, urban backdrop, interactions occurred with teachers, principals, reform movement personnel, students and other evaluators as well as university detractors.

QUALITY 3: ENGAGING SELVES AND OTHERS IN INTERROGATING ASPECTS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING BY "STORYING" EXPERIENCE

In the first narrative exemplar, Anderson-Patton and Bass provided longer reflective passages excerpted from their portfolio project as well as pithy examples of exchanges among their students. What follows is an example of the latter:

THEME 1: PROCESS ANXIETY

A: What does she want?

B: What's a teaching portfolio?

A: She said we could do anything we want.

B: But we need artifacts, and it has to be about our teaching.

A: What's an artifact? This is too loose for me. I need more structure. Tell me how many words, and I'll do a research paper. I'm good at that.

B: I just want to learn some new tricks to be more creative in my classroom.

A: Self-study—what's that?

B: She's not clear. She said it is a process and will emerge.

A: I guess it has to do about self. That's no different than research.

B: I just don't get it. (Anderson-Patton & Bass, 2002, p. 104).

Like Anderson-Patton and Bass's exemplar, Freidus's (2008) chapter was chock-full of reflective passages about what the Bank Street College teacher candidates said about the revised course—i.e., “It inspired me to include not only factual texts in my work with students, but also objects, manipulatives, and other items, students can interact with and research” (p. 323), but also of how they applied what they learned in classroom settings, as the following representative passage written by one of Freidus's students suggests:

In context, Emma [one of the student's students] was able to understand and use new vocabulary to describe objects. Her vocabulary includes limited descriptive language. Still, since she is younger than six and speaks Spanish at home, it seems obvious that she simply needs more exposure, appropriate modeling and more opportunities to use more specific vocabulary (in order to learn)... Walking back from the museum, I realized how important the pumpkin was to Emma...Children with no prior knowledge of pumpkins as plants assume that they come from the market, and the men in the market make them. No wonder Emma had trouble making sense of the story we read about pumpkins last week. (Freidus, 2008, p. 325)

Moving on to the Kosnik exemplar, much of the interrogation in her work is necessarily centered on self. In the essay, Kosnik framed her discussion around ‘Working as Teacher in Canada,’ ‘Working in the U.S. Context’, and finally, ‘Balancing My Integrity and Not Being Left Behind.’ After reviewing her accumulated evidence, Kosnik frankly declared:

It has become strikingly apparent that I must continue to modify my practices, or I will be left behind. The challenge will be to remain true to my values while living and working in a highly politicized world. This will require a high level of ingenuity and the identification of strategies to achieve this balancing act. (Kosnik, 2005, pp. 218–219)

As for Craig, she made sense of her school reform work alongside teachers from several campuses and other evaluators involved in the effort. Her evidence included journal entries, meeting notes, and audio-taped discussions. The following exchange is with teachers from three schools and is illustrative of the tenor of the work:

CRAIG

Craig: When we first started, the group at one of the schools sometimes met before I came and decided “this is what we are going to share with her today.”

Shannon: Oh, my word.

Mari: That is so funny because that was my initial reaction to you—with us too it was like, she is ‘the man’ and we need to be perfect for her (because she comes from the university).

Shannon: That is because you did not have her living in your school...like we did... We never had that issue.

Annette: As for (my school)...we came to know Cheryl Craig before the...retreat. And we already knew we didn’t have to do that.

Craig: So this is what makes relationships interesting for all of us.

Mari: Well...We’re teachers, we’re pleasers. You know, somebody who is above us, we want to show them that we are wonderful...and what is wonderful makes us interesting...but it is not the full picture.

Craig: Point of clarification, Mari. I don’t consider myself above you. I think we have knowledge of different kinds.

Sandi: But being at the university does that to you...

Craig: I guess it does.

Annette: Yes, it does.

Shannon: That is how you were chosen to work with us. (Craig, 2005, 109–110)

QUALITY 4: IMPLICATING IDENTITIES

The short passages highlighted in the previous section set the stage for the fourth characteristic of narrative exemplars: implicating identities. Anderson-Patton and Bass, for instance, frequently spoke of the vulnerability of their identities and learning to work with that vulnerability. Anderson-Patton, for example, reflected:

I was caught between my belief that the self is intrinsic to transformation and my aversion to narcissism. My three-part graphic—Who am I? What and how do I teach? And what did I learn? forced me to articulate my living contradictions. I felt exposed through this process; however, the work reminded me how central personal voice, risk taking, and diversity, are in my teaching. Wrestling with how to articulate my teaching helped me stay more authentic with students. (Anderson-Patton & Bass, 2002, p. 112).

The Freidus chapter also implicated identities, most especially the identities of the teacher candidates Freidus taught. The following lengthy excerpt captures how deeply student identities were confronted and positively shaped:

Working with Ann [a particular young child] has been an inspiring experience for me. I went into this practicum thinking it was my job to fill a child with new knowledge. I now see that teaching is a far more complicated and interesting task. It is the teacher's job to inspire a student to motivate him/herself to deepen and expand the knowledge. Simply sitting at a desk and having children write and observe may enable some children to absorb the facts, but I see now that the goal of a good teacher is first to engage the student...I have read these ideas over and over. It took the hands-on experience at the museum [and my second trip] with Ann to make this real for me... (Freidus, 2008, p. 326).

As for the Kosnik work, the 'Balancing My Integrity and not Being Left Behind' section captured the identity of a more internationally-informed teacher educator and researcher. In her essay, Kosnik asserted:

Over the past 5 years, some of my perspectives and practices have changed. I now give greater attention to the global context and am acutely aware of how difficult it can be to gain a true understanding of another culture when working outside of it. Shared research agendas, collaboration across countries, joint publications, exchange programs, and on-going conversations may be strategies to help acquire insider knowledge. (Kosnik, 2005, p. 222)

Among the specific commitments Kosnik made—without putting her integrity at risk—was a minded decision to advance the knowledge base for teaching and teacher education, to become more involved in cross-site research, and to urge her Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Educator Practice (S-STEP) colleagues to play a greater role in policy discussions through voicing their interests and concerns “forcefully and convincingly” in public audiences (p. 223).

The Craig essay came next. She took up the identity topic as well. She wrote: “I developed my identity as a teacher educator further in my new setting, rather than claiming a “high ground of theory” position or evaluator plotline, other opportunities that were readily available to me.” And she concluded: “In the process, I found my teacher educator self to be vulnerable yet resistant, tentative yet knowing, hurt but not destroyed, in the making but never made...” (Craig, 2005, p. 114).

QUALITY 5: TOWARD CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING AND KNOWLEDGE

After presenting four of Lyons and LaBoskey's criteria and a plethora of evidence drawn from each of the exemplars, we have now reached the fifth quality of narrative exemplars: the knowledge contributions they make. Anderson-Patton and Bass (2002) vividly showed how flaccid “force-fed best practices” are and how “working with what is real is a great palliative” (p. 101). More than that, they provided the field with a roadmap of how two teacher educators worked productively together and with their students and a more distant colleague. Stated differently, they shone the spotlight on the process of “trying something different, being vulnerable, exposing one's self, articulating one's teaching, and interacting

with a wider world,” (p. 112) all experiences that they found engaging and valuable.

Moving on to the second narrative exemplar, Freidus illustrated how teacher educators might creatively resist the test-driven culture underway in schools, which inherently spills over to teacher education programs. Pulling on her institution’s long and distinguished history, Freidus found both instruction and ammunition in the words of Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Bank Street’s founder, who maintained that “We are not interested in perpetuation of any special ‘school of thought.’ Rather, we are interested in imbuing teachers with an experimental, critical and ardent approach to their work” (Mitchell, in Antler, 1987, p. 309, cited in Freidus, 2008, p. 316). Freidus not only defended and held the revamped course open to public scrutiny, but she also clearly articulated that her teacher education practice was anchored in the history of the field and broader visions of what constitutes science-based research.

Where Kosnik was concerned, in her work, she showed teacher educators how to wrestle incessantly with educational policy, while keeping their integrity intact. Kosnik especially demonstrated an inquiry stance, even with a topic she found confounding and disagreeable at times. Perhaps more than this, Kosnik illustrated how teacher educators can strengthen their research repertoires in order to respond to, and more fully participate in, the politicized teacher education debates.

Lastly, Craig added conceptual heft to existing understandings. While Clandinin and Connelly (1996) conceptualized stories of school—school stories and stories of teachers—teachers stories on the professional knowledge landscape of schools and Craig (2001) added stories of reform—and reform stories and stories of communities—communities stories (2004), the idea of stories of teacher educators—teacher educators’ stories had not yet been included as part of the story constellation. Hence, Craig’s exemplar made this knowledge contribution. Also, it demonstrated how deeply embedded faculty members are in the conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). To this point in time, the conduit has mostly been associated with individuals outside of classrooms, such as those in administrative and school district positions. But, in Craig’s work, the role that teacher educators play in the conduit rises to the fore.

All in all, the four selected candidate exemplars resonated well with the five characteristics Lyons and LaBoskey associated with narrative exemplars and their trustworthiness. In short, each of the self-studies fit the proposed criteria, despite at least three of them not being written with the particular characteristics foremost in mind. This suggests that those who conduct research in the self-study of teaching and teacher education arena are well-versed in Kuhn’s idea of “thinking with exemplars,” in Schwab’s commitment to “*interpreting* facts” and in Mishler’s challenge to validate practice “through discourse and action, through praxis.” At the same time, the representative self-study researchers appear to have intuitively embraced Lyons and LaBoskey’s characteristics of narrative exemplars. Yet, the selected narrative exemplars made no claims to Truth. Rather, they conveyed “likely stories” that were “true for now.”

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Working closely with the aforementioned exemplars, the idea of how the trustworthiness of self-study research might be increased crossed my mind, particularly since all four had undergone critical blind review and were no longer of the candidate variety. Hence, I conclude with some friendly suggestions that are meant as much for me as for anyone else in the self-study community. One of the first things that struck me was that the first two narrative exemplars—the Anderson-Patton and Bass one and the Freidus one—were in many ways a response to “the literacy wars” and the results of the National Reading Panel I mentioned in passing earlier in this chapter. It occurred to me that those authors—and Craig (me) as well with the organized school reform topic—could have been much more explicit about their policy connections. If we are writing around the debates—rather than in them, we are apt to be excluded, as Kosnik compellingly argued. Hence, for me, this became one important way the narrative exemplars could have been more deeply embedded in ways that would add to their trustworthiness and fuel their usefulness in the action arena. At the bare minimum, the studies would at least show up in the relevant literature searches.

A second idea would be to pay more attention to history. Freidus beautifully demonstrated how history could be used to her and her students’ advantage but also to the advantage of her self-study. This caused me to wonder why Kosnik had not been more explicit about the differing histories in Canadian and U.S. educational policy and why Anderson-Patton and Bass and Craig (me) spoke about creativity, portfolios and school reform as if they were devoid of history. Here, I suspect word length prohibited what the authors wrote. Nevertheless, a few lines appropriately placed in the narrative exemplars would have captured the historical connections and rendered the exemplars more believable and actionable to other teacher educators and researchers.

Finally, I would like to address conceptualization. Self-study is a relatively new field and “a mongrel” at that (Stefinee Pinnegar, Personal Communication, 2007). But its eclectic nature does not preclude it from having its own language and terms. Here, I am not advocating for taxonomies or anything of that nature. But I am thinking of “conceptual containers” that could hold big ideas central to the field. As I read the Anderson-Patton and Bass work, for example, I became intrigued by the rigor and the complexity expressed in an elegant and compact way. The same thought came to mind as I became immersed in the Freidus chapter and the Kosnik essay and I know that other people have responded in similar ways to my own work. At the same time, I intuitively knew that there was something more in the works than what the authors had written. Perhaps the something more intentional is the linking of clusters of self-studies as a way to enhance and draw additional attention to them as Zeichner has advised. However, for me, more explicit naming of their knowledge contributions also has a major role to play in increasing the trustworthiness of studies as defined and described in this chapter. Taking up Zeichner’s suggestion as well as the three I have offered would help expand the trustworthiness of exemplars in the self-study of teaching and teacher education enterprise, augmenting their utility and potential outcomes when acted upon. While

J. C. Phillips, author of the opening quotation, may still not be satisfied, thinking across self-study exemplars as I have done in this chapter helps to move the deliberations along and to fortify the ground on which the self-study community has chosen to stand.

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