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THE METHODOLOGY OF SELF-STUDY AND ITS THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS*

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Abstract

In this chapter I summarize the epistemological, pedagogical, and moral/ethical/political underpinnings of self-study, which serve as the conceptual framework for the field. I then offer a characterization of the methodology of self-study in relationship to those theoretical foundations by encapsulating the predominant pedagogical strategies, research methods, and research representations in the literature to date. I conceptualize self-study as "a methodology for studying professional practice settings" (Pinnegar, 1998) that has the following characteristics: 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 (Mishler, 1990). The chapter thus serves as an introduction to this section on the methodology of self-study.

Many have argued that the methodologies of research and practice employed by educators do and should derive from our conceptions of knowledge and learning (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2002; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Gudjónsdóttir & Dalmau, 2002; Eisenhart, 2001; Eisner, 1997; Fenstermacher, 1994; Gitlin, Peck, Aposhian, Hadley, & Porter, 2002; Paul & Marfo, 2001; Whitehead, 1989). In Eisner's (1997) words, "What we think it means to do research has to do with our conception of meaning, our view of cognition, and our beliefs about the forms of consciousness that we are willing to say advance human understanding – an aim, I take it, that defines the primary mission of research" (p. 5). Educational researchers need, therefore, to be explicit about our theoretical stance and take steps to ensure that our methodologies are consistent with those theories. As Fenstermacher (1994) argues, there is a, "quite tight connection between the form of inquiry one uses and the type of knowledge one

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produces" (p. 20). If we want to generate the knowledge and understanding that we need, we must engage in appropriate forms of inquiry. By implication, a discussion of the methods of research and practice in self-study must be situated within the context of its theoretical underpinnings.

Research in teacher education[1] is attempting to answer questions about how best to prepare new teachers and facilitate ongoing teacher development. Typically, when teacher educators raise such questions, we are deriving them from our own practice. In the investigation of these questions, we, like teacher researchers, are endeavoring to meet the "dual demands" of producing knowledge and informing "the complex and ever-changing process of teaching" (Gitlin *et al*., 2002, p. 313). We feel responsible for the immediate implementation of any new understandings that result from our research. Thus, the rationale for self-study needs to extend beyond the epistemological into learning theory, beliefs about the nature of teaching, and moral, ethical, and political values regarding the means and ends of education. As Cochran-Smith (2002) has noted,

> Questions about how to prepare teachers can never be answered solely on the basis of research evidence. These questions also have to do with ideas, ideals, values, and beliefs about teaching and learning, the resources available to communities, and the purposes of education in a democratic society. Ultimately, we will need to debate values and beliefs, as well as the "research-based evidence" if we are to make progress in our thinking about how to prepare new teachers. (p. 285)

The epistemological foundations for self-study were explored in depth in the previous section. This chapter will highlight the key theoretical points that provide the grounds for and connections to the methodology of self-study research and practice, derived largely from post-modern, feminist, and post-colonial paradigms. The resultant perspective considers knowledge production and development to be context and culture sensitive; indeed the aim is not the identification or acquisition of knowledge as traditionally defined. In the words of Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), "The aim of self-study research is to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle" (p. 20). The advancement of the field is, therefore, exemplar-based and validity is redefined as "trustworthiness" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; Mishler, 1990). Self-study researchers are concerned with both enhanced understanding of teacher education in general and the immediate improvement of our practice. We are focused on the nexus between public and private, theory and practice, research and pedagogy, self and other. Also relevant to self-study methodology, then, are theories about learning and the nature of teaching.

Wilson and Berne (1999) have delivered a mandate to researchers concerned with teacher learning: "All research on teacher learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge would benefit from more systematic theorizing about the mechanisms by which teachers learn" (p. 204). Self-study scholars are engaged in this effort. Grounded in social constructivist learning theory, the

evolving perspective of the field at this point includes such notions as: "change cannot be effected from outside a person" (Korthagen, 1995); learning is processed through previous experience so personal history and cultural context must be considered; and learning is enhanced by challenging previously held assumptions through practical experience and the multiple perspectives of present and text-based colleagues.

Again, the way in which self-study researchers are engaged in developing and testing these theories about teacher learning is through the investigation of our own practice, our own efforts to facilitate such learning. This means that we are simultaneously concerned with our own learning; indeed, evidence in the field consists of substantiation for "reframed" thinking on the part of the teacher educator (e.g., Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Schön, 1983), transformed practice, and the resultant effects on the reframed thinking and transformed practice of our student teachers. The impetus for the research often derives from a recognition of, "shortcomings in [our] work and the gaps between [our] rhetoric and the reality of [our] practice" (Zeichner, 1999, p. 12) or of what Whitehead (1989) refers to as "living contradictions." This, according to Zeichner (1999), offers "a challenge to academic theories of teacher education that are formulated at a distance from the practice of teacher education and new possibilities for reformulating and strengthening those theories" (p. 12).

But we do not engage in the process of self-study research solely for the purpose of theorizing. We have pedagogical imperatives, responsibilities to our current student teachers, as well as their students.

> Self-study is about the learning from experience that is embedded within teachers' creating new experiences for themselves and those whom they teach. … Our goal may well be the reinvention of learning to teach, enabling others to understand learning from experience by showing them how we do it ourselves. (Russell, 1998, p. 6)

We recognize and accept the uniqueness of our circumstances – since we are teaching about teaching, we serve as powerful role models for our students, whether we acknowledge it or not. Thus, "practicing what we preach" must be an inherent guide to our pedagogy and one that needs continuous monitoring.

Because we are concerned about our immediate interactions with students, as well as the long-term transformation of educators, our student teachers, and ourselves, and of educational programs and the institutional climate in both universities and K-12 schools, we must also be guided in our self-study research by our moral, ethical, and political values and ideals (e.g., Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Hamilton, 1998). Equity and social justice are core values for self-study researchers. Interested in "anti-oppressive education" (Kumashiro, 2001),

> [We] are intellectuals with liberatory intentions [who] take responsibility for transforming our own practices so that our empirical and pedagogical work can be less towards positioning ourselves as masters of truth and

> justice and more towards creating a space where those directly involved can act and speak on their own behalf. (Lather, 1991, pp. 163–164)

We honor, therefore, the insider perspective and the marginalized voices and consider the subjectivity of both researchers and their students to be important.

Like Coulter and Wiens (2002), who base their arguments on the philosophy of Hannah Arendt, we acknowledge that knowing more may not necessarily lead to good teaching. We must also strive to "foster educational judgment in students, teachers, and researchers" (p. 23). Educational judgment "links actors and spectators in two activities, acting and thinking" (p. 22) so that they can exercise their freedom understood as responsibility: "If our aim is to foster people who are educational judges, then separate discussions of acting and thinking, teaching and researching, are incomplete. The challenge involves helping teachers and researchers become both actors and spectators, that is, good judges" (p. 23). Self-study researchers are both actors and spectators who act and think with regard to educational questions; they are attempting to be "good judges" who help others to be so as well.

These moral/ethical/political underpinnings of self-study interconnect with the epistemological and practical to provide a guide for the selection and design of pedagogical strategies and research methods. Approaches to teaching consistent with this conceptual framework might be generally characterized as student-centered, process-oriented, and inquiry-based (Guilfoyle, 1995). They are models for what we hope our students will do with their students and they are context-sensitive. We characterize our work in ways similar to Robert Bullough (1994):

> My task as a teacher educator is to encourage my students through a variety of means to identify the assumptions – many of which are hidden – that compose their implicit theories about teaching and themselves as teachers that are embedded in their personal histories. Then, I prompt them to reconstruct these assumptions in ways that are likely to lead to increased control over future professional development. In particular, my aim is to help them to develop a kind of understanding of self as teacher that will enable them to establish a role in a school and within the community of educators that is educationally defensible and personally satisfying, congruent with a desired teaching self. (p. 108)

Our instructional techniques derive from our theories of teacher learning so that they will be most likely to benefit our students and our students' students. But this conceptual framework also implies that we can never be sure; that this intensely interpersonal, highly complex, always changing, moral and political act requires continual monitoring and adaptation, which is self-study research.

Self-study methodology is, therefore, *initiated by and focused on us* as teachers and teacher educators in relation to the others who are our students (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). It seeks to determine whether or not our practice is consistent with our evolving ideals and theoretical perspectives. The research is *improvement-aimed*; we wish to transform ourselves first so that we might be better

situated to help transform our students, their students, and the institutional and social contexts that surround and constrain us. In order to guard against the inevitable limitations of individual interpretation so affected by personal history, self-study is *interactive* at one or more stages of the process. Since the aim is greater understanding rather than immutable law, the methods of self-study are largely qualitative; but they are *multiple* because "a mix of methods will tell you more than a single approach" (Hutchings, 2000, p. 6). As Craig Nelson, a Carnegie Scholar, pointed out, "Learning and teaching are complex activities where approximate, suggestive knowledge can be very helpful, and, indeed, may often be the only kind that is practical or possible" (Hutchings, 2000, p. 6). "Approximate, suggestive knowledge" cannot be validated in the same way as that aspired to by positivist paradigms. Therefore, validation, as Mishler (1990) has noted, is redefined "as the social construction of knowledge. With this reformulation, the key issue becomes whether the relevant community of scientists [teachers and teacher educators] evaluates reported findings as sufficiently trustworthy to rely on them for their own work" (p. 417). We advance the field through *the construction, testing, sharing, and re-testing of exemplars* of teaching practice.

How we do this – represent and share our self-study – is also derived from our conceptual framework. As Eisner (1993) makes clear, "The meaning that representation carries is both constrained and made possible by the form of representation we employ. Not everything can be 'said' with anything" (p. 7). So, in aiming to expand the depth, breadth, and nature of our understanding, we employ multiple means of representing our experiences, our knowledge, our emotions, and our values to ourselves and to one another.

There are many reasons, epistemological, pedagogical, and moral/ethical/political for the methodology of self-study. These reasons, and the interconnections among them – the resulting conceptual framework – lead to particular ways of teaching, of coming to understand that teaching through research, and of representing that understanding to others. This chapter will expand upon both the theoretical underpinnings of self-study and the instructional strategies and research methods that derive from them. It will thereby serve as an introduction to the other chapters in this section, each of which explores the methodology of self-study in greater depth.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Epistemological

The call for a *knowledge base for teaching* is widespread and frequent. Many policy makers, community members, and educators want us to figure out what it is and how it might be fostered and assessed. The assumption is that once we understand this, we will have the foundations for successful programs of teacher education and professional development. A central challenge of this effort is that there are differences, whether explicit or implicit, in what people mean when

they talk about knowledge. Epistemological questions are not, of course, new, but the current environment has spawned renewed attempts to articulate and debate what we mean by such terms as knowledge, cognition, understanding, and scholarship.

According to Sleeter (2001), "Epistemology refers to how people know what they know, including assumptions about the nature of knowledge and 'reality,' and the process of coming to know" (p. 213). It seeks to examine these questions:

1. To what extent is reality "out there," to be known through detached sensory observation or systematic data collection? Or, to what extent is our knowledge of it a product of our own mind?
2. What is the nature of knowledge?
3. What is the nature of the knower and who can know? (p. 213)

She suggests that research on teacher education has been framed by four epistemologies that answer these questions differently: positivism; phenomenology; narrative research; and, emancipatory research. After considering each one, she concludes by proposing that all have their merits and have the potential to benefit the field in different ways. She recommends, therefore, that teams, whose members have different theoretical perspectives, conduct research – one possible way to resolve epistemological variation.

Fenstermacher (1994) argues that there are different forms of knowledge used by and useful to teachers: formal and practical. One has to do with knowing *that* and the other with knowing *how*. The former is knowledge about teaching that can be made available to teachers for their use: "Such knowledge is gained from studies of teaching that use conventional scientific methods, quantitative, and qualitative; these methods and their accompanying designs are intended to yield a commonly accepted degree of significance, validity, generalizability, and intersubjectivity" (p. 8). In contrast, practical knowledge is concerned with what teachers already know, as revealed in what they do – the aim of those who study this form of knowledge is the illumination of classroom practice. This knowledge might also become useful in informing future teaching, according to Fenstermacher, but only if it can be shown to meet appropriate evidentiary standards. He critiques much of current research in this area as lacking in epistemic merit, but suggests *practical reasoning* as a way to enhance such study. Thus, he, like Sleeter, concludes that there are different forms of knowledge, generated in different ways, which might be of benefit to teacher education.

These scholars have, at least to some degree, built upon the earlier groundbreaking work of Jerome Bruner (1985), who made the claim that there were two irreducible modes of thought – narrative and paradigmatic:

> Each of the ways of knowing … has operating principles of its own and its own criteria of well-formedness. But they differ radically in their procedures for establishing truth. One verifies by appeal to formal verification procedures and empirical proof. The other establishes *not* truth but truth-likeness or verisimilitude … one seeks explications that are context free and

> universal, and the other seeks explications that are context sensitive and particular. ... one mode is centered around the narrow epistemological question of how to know the truth; the other around the broader and more inclusive question of the meaning of experience. (pp. 97–98)

Bruner suggested that, at that point in time anyway, "The psychology of thought [had] concentrated on one mode, the paradigmatic, at the expense of the other" (p. 102). Since then, researchers have attempted to equalize the field (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; McEwan & Egan, 1995; Witherell & Noddings, 1991), especially since many have come to believe that narrative knowledge, which "is concerned with the explication of human intentions in the context of action" (Bruner, p. 100), better characterizes the knowledge of teaching.

In their article, "What Do New Views of Knowledge and Thinking Have to Say About Research on Teacher Learning?" Putnam and Borko (2000) summarize current conceptions of cognition, or the act of knowing. They describe it as situated, social, and distributed. Therefore, research on teacher knowledge and learning, in their view, must include ways of identifying and representing the physical and social contexts, communal interactions, and distributed expertise in and by which that knowledge has been developed and revealed in order for it to be understood by and informative to others. Because so many factors influence knowledge construction, they suggest that "various settings for teachers' learning [will] give rise to different kinds of knowing" (p. 6). Thus, teacher knowledge may be more contextual than categorical.

Lee Shulman and his colleagues at the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning are attempting to advance the knowledge base of teaching by focusing their attention on the questions of *who* and *how*. They see teaching as "an extension of scholarship" (Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan, 1991, p. 2). But scholarship is more than just good teaching:

> For an activity to be designated as scholarship, it should manifest at least three key characteristics: It should be *public*, susceptible to *critical review and evaluation*, and accessible for *exchange and use* by other members of one's scholarly community. We thus observe, with respect to all forms of scholarship, that they are acts of mind or spirit that have been made public in some manner, have been subjected to peer review by members of one's intellectual or professional community, and can be cited, refuted, built upon, and shared among members of that community. Scholarship properly communicated and critiqued serves as the building block for knowledge growth in a field. (Shulman, 1998, p. 5)

Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler (2002) propose a similar set of criteria in their consideration of what it would take, "to transform teachers' knowledge into a professional knowledge base for teaching" (p. 4). But they have a different conceptualization of the *who*. They suggest teacher/researcher collaboration, rather than self investigation.

Shulman and his colleagues, like Fenstermacher, do not consider the knowledge generated from the scholarship of teaching to be the only building block; it is an addition to the general principles achievable through more traditional forms of research (Shulman, 2000): "The strategy we must pursue is an approach to scholarship that legitimates more than one kind of research. Research that renders one's own practice as the problem for investigation is at the heart of what we mean by professing or profession" (p. 11).

Others in the field are also addressing the epistemological question of *who*, but in a somewhat different way. Feminist, post-modern, and post-colonial scholars (e.g., Eisenhart, 2001; Foley, Levinson, & Hurtig, 2001; Kumashiro, 2002) are urging us to respect multiple epistemologies: "Given a new sensibility toward epistemological racism, ethnographers of color are increasingly questioning the universality and neutrality of all educational theories" (Foley *et al*., p. 50). The attempt should not be to generate "a coherent picture or story of class, ethnic, or gender groups, but a collage of their similarities and differences" (Eisenhart, p. 23). We are to find ways to maintain the complexity, include more voices, detect bias, and disrupt our own ways of knowing.

This brief overview of some of the most predominant and recent work with regard to knowledge in teacher education should help to situate the epistemological perspective of self-study scholars. That is not to say, of course, that there is universal agreement; as with any healthy discipline, debates exist and will continue. Nonetheless, certain consistencies or at least dominant trends in our definitions of teacher knowledge and our beliefs about how and by whom that knowledge might be generated, fostered, and shared can be identified. Indeed the way in which self-study scholars have answered these questions helps to distinguish it as a field of study.

Again, Section Two of this handbook is devoted to a substantive explication of the epistemology of self-study so I will not go into depth here. Using Sleeter's (2001) questions, as delineated above, I will iterate a few of the aspects most directly relevant to the current status of the methodology of self-study.

Coming to Know

We question the distinction between producing/generating knowledge and becoming knowledgeable or coming to know and thus also, the distinction between research and practice. In the words of Korthagen (1995), we believe that, "knowledge about teaching develops in the interaction between the individual's hopes, ideals, and desires, on the one hand, and the feedback, or 'backtalk,' from the other participants in the concrete educational setting on the other" and that "knowledge created in this way is uniquely relevant for practice" (p. 102). Teacher knowledge, therefore, develops "through a better understanding of personal experience" (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 7).

How we achieve this better understanding of our teaching experience is through critical reflection (Guilfoyle, 1995; Hamilton, 1995). According to Wilkes (1998),

> Brookfield (1995) suggests that reflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes: the first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests, and I would add those of our students. (p. 206)

Self-study is not the same, therefore, as reflective practice. Not only should such political questions as these be asked and explored, but the practice setting must also be framed and reframed in sequences of reflective instances that are responded to with action. In addition, a variety of viewpoints must be employed in the reframing process; divergent rather than convergent learning outcomes are sought (Loughran, 2002a). The only way this can be accomplished is with the input of others: "Reflexivity, wherein worldviews clash from the input of critical friends and theory, can push reflection past defensiveness into transformative learning" (Bass, Anderson-Patton, & Allender, 2002, p. 67). So critical reflection must be publicly articulated and self-study collaborative; it "requires a commitment to checking data and interpretations with others" (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 12).

In their review of the last twenty years of research on the relationship between knowledge and practice, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) identify three different conceptions of teacher learning or of coming to know. They situate self-study in the category entitled "knowledge-*of*-practice," along with much of their own work. And I would agree that self-study does fit all of their articulated attributes. But they go on to posit a fourth conception of teacher learning toward which we might all be moving: *inquiry as stance*. Its characteristics are articulated in the section headings, which might be abbreviated as follows: beyond certainty in teacher learning, against dualisms, teaching as praxis, local knowledge, learning across the life span, questioning the ends, and the culture of community. They summarize in this way: "The idea of *inquiry as stance* is intended to emphasize that teacher learning for the next century needs to be understood not primarily as individual professional accomplishment but as a long-term collective project with a democratic agenda" (p. 296). This seems to be an image of teacher knowledge development that self-study could embrace, and in many ways, already has.

The Nature of Knowledge

We question the distinctions that have been made between formal/theoretical and practical knowledge. Because we believe that knowing is experiential rather than conceptual (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998), we consider it to be more of a "flexible and generative" process than a product (Hamilton, 1995, p. 32). A distinction between formal and practical is only sensible and useful if the aim is to "assert with certainty a particular claim of meaning" (Pinnegar, 1998, p. 31). Since we believe that that is neither desirable nor possible with regard to most teacher knowledge, we endeavor rather to understand the meaning of particular

situations or phenomena (Pinnegar, 1998), or to develop local knowledge, that may also be useful to other educational communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

In Smith's (1998) words, we tend to take the "cultural psychological perspective" that "all knowledge [is] constructed, distributed, mediated, and situated" (p. 21). Teacher knowledge, in Bruner's (1985) terms, is narrative rather than paradigmatic. What is more, we believe teacher knowledge to be historically embedded and culturally imbued (Hamilton, 1995, p. 32). The particulars of time, place, content, process, and persons matter.

The Knower

We question distinctions between expert and novice, teacher and researcher. All teachers and teacher educators who engage in self-study can generate knowledge and theory (Hamilton, 1995). Since knowledge is experiential and knowledge generation is critical reflection or *inquiry as stance*, teacher knowledge can best be understood, transformed, constructed, and articulated by the teacher self in collaboration with others. In Ross Mooney's (1957) words, "We want a way of holding assumptions about research which makes it possible to integrate the pursuit of science and research with the acceptance and fruitful development of one's self" (as cited in Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 13). The way in which we do that, according to Bullough and Pinnegar, is to join biography with history: "When the issue confronted by the self is shown to have relationship to and bearing on the context and ethos of a time, then self-study moves to research" (p. 15). In self-study, private experience and public theory offer insight and solution to one another.

The self is central and that means the whole of the self – past and present, emotional and cognitive, mind and body (Weber & Mitchell, 2002). And because each self is different, all offer an important, yet necessarily constrained perspective. Therefore, the knowledge of teaching can only be developed in a diverse and inclusive, particularly of previously marginalized voices, teacher-learning community.

Pedagogical

Our beliefs about teaching and learning – about pedagogy – are, of course, well connected to our epistemological perspectives. The way in which we generate knowledge about teacher learning is to carefully examine our own efforts to facilitate that learning; what we learn from this self-study, when articulated and shared with our teacher education community – when *formalized* (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998) – contributes to the knowledge base of the field. "Such connections between our learning and teaching are the essence of self-study" (LaBoskey, 1998, p. 153; see also Gudjónsdóttir & Dalmau, 2002; Lomax, Evans, & Parker, 1998; Loughran, 1998; Russell, 2002b).

As Hamilton (1995) points out, "Freire (1973) identified the act of teaching as a knowledge-producing process that involves a critical look into a person's

experience. Praxis, the interrelationship of theory and practice, uses research to inform the other about a situation with the goal of change" (p. 34). Self-study exists, then, at the intersection between theory and practice, research and pedagogy (Allender & Manke, 2002; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; Russell, 2002a). Teacher education has a history of struggling with making connections between theory and practice. We believe that a major contributing factor to this difficulty has been the artificial epistemological and pedagogical separation between the two. Self-study holds promise, therefore, of reducing this problem (e.g., Hamilton, 2002a; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999).

Fenstermacher (1994) has argued that,

> The critical objective of teacher knowledge research is *not* for researchers to know what teachers know but for teachers to know what they know. … The challenge for teacher knowledge research is not simply one of showing us that teachers think, believe, or have opinions but that they know. And, even more important, that they know that they know. (pp. 50–51)

Implied in this statement is a distinction between teachers and researchers. Teacher educators engaged in self-study are both. And our work is about showing ourselves and others that we know, and inherently, that we know that we know. As Hamilton (1995) has pointed out, we do not need to go to the public schools to study teaching: "We can examine ourselves in our own acts of teaching. If we can understand how we ourselves teach, we can inform ourselves about how others might teach" (p. 39).

Seeing such close connections between learning and knowledge construction, we believe in facilitating the learning of our student teachers in ways analogous to our own knowledge producing processes. Thus, we engage our student teachers in "self-study-like" activities. I say self-study-like because I do not consider strategies to facilitate the learning of our students to be the same as self-study. Though some in the field would disagree with me, I believe that, in most instances, student teacher assignments are lacking in certain requirements of self-study, most particularly in the metacognition involved in theorizing the learning experience and in the formalization of the work. There are many ways, however, in which the activities are very similar.

Inquiry Orientation

Since we want our student teachers to understand teaching as an activity with knowledge-producing possibilities, we want them to take an inquiry orientation toward their work and to develop the skills and attitudes that will allow them to do so. Furthermore, since knowledge of teaching is uncertain, complex, dynamic, responsive, and context and culture dependent, we need them to see themselves as lifelong learners engaged always in the "troubling" of their own practice and the imagining of different possibilities for teaching and learning (Kumashiro, 2001, p. 11).

Because knowledge develops through a better understanding of personal

experience, we must offer our students opportunities to engage in inquiry themselves and to observe and participate in the disciplined and systematic inquiry of others. The latter can be accomplished by our engagement in self-study, as long as we involve our students in the process, which of course we should do, since their learning, in addition to our own, is the aim of our efforts. "We believe that we should model the learning that we expect in our students and that we should account for ourselves in the same way that they must account for themselves" (Lomax *et al*., 1998, p. 16; see also Bickman, 2000; Fitzgerald, Farstad, & Deemer, 2002; Guilfoyle, 1995; Russell, 1998, 2002a; Zeichner, 1999).

This means that we consider all student work to be potential evidence or data in our investigations. Since the purpose of teaching is the facilitation of learning, we can only understand and evaluate our efforts and monitor the improvement of our practice, by attending to the cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and moral/ethical development of our students. We need to employ strategies, therefore, that will make transparent to us, as well as to our students, their learning processes and outcomes, in all of its variation, complexity, and fluidity. Simultaneously, we need to use methods that will provide evidence to us, to our students, and to our colleagues that we are learning from what we are discovering; that we are reframing our thinking and transforming our practice in defensible ways.

Reflective Practice

Another way to characterize such inquiry activity is as reflective practice. Although reflective practice is not the same as self-study, it is foundational – necessary but not sufficient. Therefore, we aim to help our students become reflective educators (e.g., Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Lewis & Johnson, 2002). This means that their knowledge of teaching is never conclusive; it must be "subjected to careful reconsideration in light of information from current theory and practice, from feedback from the particular context, and from speculation as to the moral and ethical [and political] consequences of their results" (LaBoskey, 1994, p. 9). And again, we do so by both involving them in such activity and modeling it for them.

We endeavor, then, to engage our students in ventures where they will experience conflict in competing knowledge claims and moral positions (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 24); that will slow down their thinking, "so that they can attend to what is rather than what they wish were so" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 231); and that will allow "questions to surface within themselves" (Cooper & McNab, 2002, p. 56). We try to provide them with ways to get to know their students, with a broad repertoire of instructional strategies, and with adequate subject matter background, and then with reflective processes for mediating among the three systematically and justifiably (Freidus, 2002, p. 84).

Assumption Challenging

A vital feature of reflective teaching involves the challenging of previously held assumptions about all aspects of the educational process. There is widespread

agreement in the field of teacher education that there is "a strong relationship between what a teacher believes and how teaching occurs in the classroom" (Tidwell & Heston, 1998, p. 45; see also Fitzgerald, Farstad, & Deemer, 2002; Knowles, 1994; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1994; Lewis & Johnson, 2002; Tidwell, 2002; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Thus, to influence practice we must transform teacher thinking, but this, for a variety of reasons, is easier said than done. For one thing, our beliefs, values, and knowledge of teaching are derived from our experiences – our personal histories, which are necessarily limited and variant. In addition, many of these assumptions are implicit; they have never been articulated even to us. What is more, some of these ideas are deeply held and intimately connected to our identities as teachers and learners.

The challenge for teacher education is then to provide ways for students to articulate and interrogate their personal histories and resultant understandings. We need to engage them in contexts discrepant from what they have previously experienced so that the limitations of their autobiographies might be exposed and reframed; that is, we need to put them into appropriate disequilibrium. But this requires considerable risk-taking on their part. Thus, we need to provide adequate scaffolding and emotional support; a key way in which we do this is by taking similar risks ourselves (Loughran, Berry, & Tudball, 2002). In engaging them in our self-study where we investigate our "dilemmas, tensions, and disappointments" (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 15), we demonstrate to them how the process of learning requires vulnerability and the courage to problematize our practice and confront our living contradictions.

Identity Formation

The process of learning to teach, therefore, has much to do with identity formation or *reconstruction*: "Education is more a process of rethinking and rebuilding the past" by "learning to tell and retell educational stories … with added possibility" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, pp. 149–150). We teach who we are so learning to teach is not just about coming to know a series of behaviors or accumulating subject matter knowledge; it has to do with constructing an identify of self as teacher (Hamilton, 1995; Palmer, 1998; Wilcox, 1998; Wilson & Berne, 1999) – it is an "on-going quest for authenticity" (Bullough, 1994, p. 110). When we speak of the authentic self, we mean the whole self, e.g., the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual (Palmer, 1998); the gender and racial identity (Brown, 2002; Hamilton & Guilfoyle, 1998); the body and its dress (Weber & Mitchell, 2002). We thus need to create ways for our students to reinvent all aspects of themselves, again both by engaging them in identity reconstruction activities and by showing them how we are continuing the process ourselves.

We do so not only because they need to begin to think like teachers, but also because, in the words of Pinar (1988), "Understanding of self … is a precondition and a concomitant condition to the understanding of others" (as cited in Casey, 1995, p. 217). Likewise, the "development of one's own cultural identity is a necessary precursor to cross-cultural understanding" (Schulte, 2002, p. 102). By

implication self-development must be accompanied by efforts to enhance our understanding of others. In fact, we see those as mutually dependent endeavors.

Social Constructivist

Believing in the social construction of knowledge, including self-knowledge, and considering teacher knowledge to be distributed, situated, and mediated, we feel the need to create for our student teachers communities of learners of which we are a part (e.g., Griffiths, 2002). These communities must value individual differences and provide multiple and varying opportunities to process together our different ways of making meaning from our shared experiences. We can only influence learning, we cannot control it (Senese, 2002); but the Vygotskian theoretical perspective suggests that we will be better able to do so in desirable ways if we build on "local funds of knowledge" through culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum that appropriately scaffolds individuals within their zones of proximal development (Foley *et al*., 2001). In Bickman's (2000) words, "Teachers should be encouraged to join with their students in a pedagogical alliance founded on self-reflection and openness that will 're-form' every educational situation" (p. 301). Students are thereby engaged more as, "culture-creating agents than as vessels for the reception of culture" (p. 300). Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1999) advocates for an approach of Cochran-Smith's that, "relies less on received knowledge than on knowledge in the making. It is a risky but sincere effort at generating theory – a generation that must occur with each new cohort of teachers" (p. 229).

We are building relationships with our students – relationships that are aimed at individual and social transformation. Of necessity, therefore, self-study is also generated from and guided by our moral, ethical, and political beliefs, values, and agendas.

Moral/Ethical/Political

We consider teaching to be not just a pedagogical task, but also a "social-pedagogical" task (e.g., Fenstermacher, 1994; Korthagen & Verkuyl, 2002). That is, we agree with Korthagen and Verkuyl (2002) that, "one of the central aims of education is … to ensure that students of every race, social class, sex and age are aware of, and give shape to, their own inner potential, strength, talents, value, and dignity, whereby others, including teachers, can provide support and guidance" (p. 44). So good teaching includes, as Shulman (Tell, 2001) suggests, "nurturing." Thus, in teacher education, we believe we need to be as concerned with the moral, ethical, spiritual, emotional, and political development of ourselves and out student teachers as we are with the cognitive and strategic. We conceptualize our work, therefore, as moral and value-laden (e.g., Cole & Knowles, 1998; Hamilton, 2002b; Hamiltion & Pinnegar, 1998; Whitehead, 1989).

Integrity

As always in self-study, we believe we need to begin with ourselves. Accepting our responsibility as powerful role models, we are concerned with the integrity

of our work, with "walking our talk" by bringing together our beliefs and actions (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). We are centrally involved with the asking and investigation of the question, "How do I live my values more fully in my practice?" (Loughran, 2002b, p. 240). We are willing to do what Ladson-Billings (1999) suggests we need to do – deal with the difficult issues, with the challenges of anti-oppressive teacher education that require us to examine and problematize our assumptions, to attend to both the intentional and the unintentional in our teaching (Kumashiro, 2002), and to emphasize and interrogate the "enduring ties between the rational and the emotional" (Smith, 1998, p. 56; see also Cooper & McNab, 2002).

Ethic of Caring

Since we agree with Noddings (1984) that, "the primary aim of all education must be nurturance of the ethical ideal" (p. 6), we embrace the notion that all teaching must be grounded in "an ethic of caring." This was apparent to Douglas Barnes (1998) when he attended the first conference sponsored by S-STEP at Herstmonceux Castle in 1996. Providing the "outsider" perspective on the proceedings, his first impression was that:

> "Caring" seemed to be an underlying concern for them. Almost everywhere I heard about caring for other people and their experiences. I heard about the importance of supporting colleagues, of helping pre-service teachers find their own voices so that they are able to express and organize their experiences in the classroom and of responsibility for the young students who will be the eventual recipients of all the efforts to help teachers to teach more sensitively and reflectively. Underlying self-study was an essentially *humane* approach to education. (p. ix)

A humane approach to education with an equity agenda has been identified by many as a social justice orientation (e.g., Griffiths, 2002; Hamilton, 2002a; Kumashiro, 2002). Accompanying this perspective is an acknowledgement that we have not yet achieved these goals in our world, our communities, or our educational institutions, which means that education must be about change rather than the preservation of the status quo. It also implies that we cannot rely upon what we already know and practice; we must work against "harmful repetitions" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 69). It involves risk-taking, attention to insider and marginalized voices, and, because social justice is never achieved once and for all, constant vigilance (Griffiths, 2002) – that vigilance is self-study research.

Political

Power

Research that is concerned with challenging and transforming existing inequalities and relationships of power is inherently political (Kuzmic, 2002). We thus find ourselves in agreement with and drawing upon the theoretical and methodological work of many feminist and post-colonial scholars who emphasize "the

relationship among knowledge, power, and research" (Foley *et al*., 2001, p. 70). These authors define critical ethnography, for instance, as "well-theorized empirical study with serious political intent to change people's consciousness, if not their daily lives more generally" (p. 42). Casey (1995) in her explication of "The New Narrative Research in Education" characterizes these researchers as having "progressive political intentions," often "represented in the form of the metaphor of voice" (p. 223). She goes on to speculate that "the most important development within this strand of narrative research has been a reconceptualization of what it means to be 'political.' Central to this redefinition is the recognition that the personal is political and, furthermore, that power is exercised in all relationships, not just those connected to the state" (p. 223). Accepting this definition of political, self-study researchers like Ann Schulte (2002), believe that teacher education is about transformation.

> I define the transformation process as the continuous evolution of one's own understanding and perspectives in order to better meet the needs of all students. It is marked by a disruption of values or cultural beliefs through critical reflection with the goal of more socially just teaching. Transformation requires teachers to think critically and challenge ideas of how power and control are constructed in the world and mapped onto them. (p. 101)

We engage in self-study to both orchestrate our own transformations and to monitor and understand our progress in facilitating the transformations of our student teachers. We consider this personal work to be a necessary, but not sufficient, part of our reform agenda.

Reform agenda

The larger effort includes the reform of teacher education, of institutions of higher education and K-12 schools, of the enterprise of educational research, and ultimately, of society in general, which we see as closely interrelated. In that regard the perspective of self-study researchers is consistent with much of the current school reform literature, which also considers the essence of institutional reform to be teacher development (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1993; Fitzgerald, Heston, & Miller, 2002; LaBoskey, Davies-Samway, & Garcia, 1998; Little, 1993; Loughran & Northfield, 1998). Representative is Lieberman's (1995) suggestion that schools need to be transformed into "learning organizations" by giving teachers opportunities to develop, implement, analyze, and modify new practices within the context of a professional community. Similarly, Sykes (1996) proposes that the promotion of teacher learning that can lead to improved practice on a wide scale might best be accomplished by engaging "teachers in learning about their own learning, in studying their own teaching, and in sustaining relationships with other teachers, both near and far away" (p. 467). Or, we might say, by involving them in self-study research.

But what we have found, when attempting to engage in such efforts within

the context of existing institutions of higher education, is that there are considerable barriers to the initiation and sustenance of this orientation to research and practice. The proverbial "chicken/egg dilemma" might be one way to characterize this problem. We need to reform conceptualizations of what counts as knowledge and research in order for our self-study work to be appropriately supported and acknowledged, but we can only demonstrate its legitimacy by doing the work. One of the reasons our research has not been honored or attended to as much as it should be, either within or outside our colleges and universities, is that teacher education suffers from a tradition of low status (Zeichner, 1999). The reform agenda of self-study thus must include the simultaneous transformation of us, teacher education epistemology and practice, and our institutional contexts. Though we have experienced discouraging setbacks (e.g., Hamilton, 2002a; Myers, 2002), we have also made considerable progress, as this handbook represents. We have done so by creating a community of scholars that helps support our local resistance (Guilfoyle, Placier, Hamilton, & Pinnegar, 2002) and by engaging in research and practice that can not only improve teacher education and contribute to the knowledge base of teaching, but also develop the "voice" and thus, political power of teachers, including teacher educators, and their respective students (e.g., Bass *et al*., 2002; Hamilton, 1995; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998).

We acknowledge that all questions about knowledge – what it is, how it is developed, and who decides – are political questions. We accept the impossibility of moral, ethical, or political neutrality when it comes to education and educational research. We recognize that the privileging of certain pedagogies and particular research methodologies is as much about power as it is about intellectual responsibility. "This struggle over legitimate knowledge is not simply an individualistic conflict between academics and teachers but rather a historical struggle that has shaped institutional priorities and structures as well as the knowledge-power nexus found in the educational community (Gitlin & Burbank, 2000)" (Gitlin *et al*., 2002, p. 304). We realize that we are both products of this tradition and enmeshed in institutional and social contexts that help to perpetuate it. We know, then, that our methodological decisions must be guided not only by our epistemological and pedagogical theories but also by our ethic of care and our reform agenda. We must select and construct instructional strategies, research designs, and research representations that will, for instance, attend to the "insider" perspective, where all voices are listened to and heard, but also examined and questioned (Gitlin *et al*., 2002; Grumet, 1991); require us to interrogate our own power and privilege, especially in relationship to our students and our teacher colleagues (Gitlin *et al*., 2002; Kuzmic, 2002; Luttrell, 2000); render problematic both the content and process of our teaching (Kumashiro, 2001); and include multiple perspectives, especially those traditionally marginalized, in ways that encourage universal and repetitive reframing (Dalmau & Gudjónsdóttir, 2002). We understand also that these decisions about how to undertake our self-study work are not additive, but transformative: "As long as we look at (or fail to look at) the challenges that teacher research poses

to educational research more generally seeing them as merely methodological or as merely adding teachers' voices to the research community, we ignore the reality that this is also about power and the authority of the voices heard" (Kuzmic, 2002, p. 231).

These moral/ethical/political values and ideals combine with our epistemological and pedagogical theories to form the underpinnings of the methodology of self-study. In the remainder of the chapter I will summarize this methodology by highlighting the predominant methods of pedagogy, research design, and research representation that have been derived from that conceptual framework.

Methodology

Pedagogy

The pedagogical practices employed by self-study researchers are an integral part of the methodology of self-study because it is those efforts that we are investigating. They are the interventions in our research design. These are the activities that embody our theoretical perspectives and pedagogical goals, our moral, ethical, and political values and agendas, at least we hope they do, which is the impetus for and essence of our central research questions: "How do I live my values more fully in my practice?" and "How do I improve my practice?" (Whitehead, 2000).

Our conceptual framework suggests, of course, that there cannot, and indeed should not be any singular or final answers to these questions. They must be asked with regularity; the quest must be career-long. Furthermore, the pedagogies that are selected, constructed, and adapted need to be context-sensitive and individually responsive, and they must be multiple and variant. Nonetheless, we can identify certain instructional genres that are particularly compatible, both on theoretical grounds and research evidence. The categories into which I have placed these strategies are not discrete; creative and conscientious teacher educators have and will combine these in a multitude of productive ways. They are also not meant to be exhaustive; more options have and will be chosen and created. But they can help to provide us with a sense for the current field of self-study practice.

Dialogic Communities

Especially prevalent in the practice of self-study teacher educators are activities that aim to create an interactive community wherein student teachers and their instructors and mentors can engage in critical dialogue about all aspects of their educational experiences and understandings. The aim is to position, "the student teacher as a learner in a curriculum constructed as a result of real experiences and reconstructed through interaction between learners" (Loughran, 2002a, p. 41). Particular variations within this category include "communities of learners" (Peterman & Marquez-Zenkov, 2002); relational teacher education (Kitchen, 2002); learning circles (Fitzgerald, Heston, & Miller, 2002);

Participatory Interview Approach (Bodone *et al*., 1997); micro-teaching (Loughran *et al*., 2002); and "think-pair-share" (Gudjónsdóttir & Dalmau, 2002). Various forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been utilized for this purpose with varying degrees of success. Though some have noted limitations to the interpersonal quality in such exchanges (e.g., Ham & Davey, 2002), others have found that, if appropriate adaptations are made, critical dialogue can indeed be facilitated, and even enhanced, by ICTs (e.g., Hoban, 2000).

The general preference in the field is for group talk rather than unilateral lecture so that knowledge can be socially constructed, all voices heard, personal responsibility encouraged, and assumptions challenged (e.g., Guilfoyle, 1995; Kaplan, 2002; Tidwell, 2002). Such a perspective is consistent with what Wilson and Berne (1999) have found to be main characteristics of good pedagogy for adult learners in preservice and inservice programs: "The privileging of teachers' interactions with one another" often situated in "communities of learners that are redefining teaching practice" (pp. 192–193). Frequently included in such interchange are stories of experience.

Narrative

Conceptualizing teacher knowledge as narrative knowing means that the writing and sharing of teacher stories are common occurrences. But since we consider the aim of teacher education to be transformation, the simple telling is not enough. As Connelly and Clandinin (1994) make clear, opportunities for teacher educators and their students to rewrite and retell new stories that imagine other possibilities need to be provided. This is fostered by collaborative contexts that include multiple perspectives, particularly those of typically marginalized voices. Though best if these variant interpretations come from the verbal input of colleagues, they can also be supplemented by other sources, e.g., written cases of special needs students (Hutchinson, 1998) and theoretical literature that challenges the "myth of racelessness" (Brown, 2002). Grumet (1991) sees story-telling as "a negotiation of power" and suggests that "we are, at least partially, constituted by the stories we tell to others and to ourselves about experience" (p. 69). Thus, as we engage our students in the construction of their identities as teachers, we often connect their stories of teaching with their personal histories.

Autobiography/Personal History

In response to the self-posed question, "Why write about personal histories?" Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1994) propose that it is

> Because in one sense, they *are* teacher education. Teachers' lives as school pupils, before they become teachers, their lives as scholars while they prepare to become teachers, their lives as variously contributing members of the work force and society, and their lives as professionals in a career of teaching present few clear boundaries. (p. 6)

But again, they argue that personal histories cannot be simply elicited, they must also be analyzed; cherished beliefs need to be acknowledged and then challenged. Holt-Reynolds (1994) suggests further that if we do not engage our student teachers in explorations of how their past experiences influence and necessarily limit the choices they make as teachers, then we run the risk of mistaking "practical proficiency" for "conceptual change" (p. 31). That is, even if student teachers employ strategies we suggest, we cannot assume from behavior alone that their theoretical understandings have been transformed. All courses, in her view, thus need to be safe contexts where teacher educators and their students come together to debate specific pedagogies and possible rationales underlying them in light of their variant and equally valuable backgrounds, which, if so respected, will necessitate a shift toward a more inclusive perspective.

Coia and Taylor (2002) also emphasize care in the use of, in their case, autobiography, which they define as personal narrative "written with an audience in mind" (p. 48). If the ultimate purpose is to be realized, the making and remaking of meaning in the context of community, then a democratic environment must be created where vulnerability is shared and, "the idea of critique as demolition from a privileged viewpoint" is eschewed (p. 51).

Personal history/autobiography in its various forms including journaling recognizes and therefore allows for the inclusion of the emotional in the process of teacher development; the whole of the individual is thereby incorporated and addressed, as it should be. Another realm commonly believed to include both feeling and cognition is that of the arts.

Visual and Dramatic Art

Self-study teacher educators often engage student teachers in visual and dramatic art activities. They do so not only because art is potentially holistic, but also because it can allow us to see the world in new and different ways; it can promote what Maxine Greene (1978) refers to as the "wide-awakeness" so essential for critical reflection.

> I am convinced that, if teachers today are to initiate young people into an ethical existence, they themselves must attend more fully than they normally have to their own lives and its requirements; they have to break with the mechanical life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual, even in what they conceive to be the virtuous, and ask the "why" with which learning and moral reasoning begin. (p. 46)

She argues that the arts and aesthetic education hold particular, though not unique promise, for triggering these necessary questions of the status quo. Eisner (1995) emphasizes an additional advantage of the artistic – it can capture and reveal those aspects of our experience and understanding that cannot be expressed in words.

Exemplary of this pedagogy is the Theater of the Oppressed (ToO) used by Cockrell, Placier, Burgoyne, Welch, and Cockrell (2002) which invites audience

members, in this case students, to participate on stage in the resolving of the educational problems portrayed by the actors. Cockrell *et al.* have found that ToO has helped to create "visual imagery from which learners may explore [the assumptions embedded in an imposed ideology] and problematize the conditions of their [teaching] lives" (p. 43).

Richards (1998) has had her student teachers create self-portraits for similar reasons. She has found that they help her learners to, "develop a conscious awareness of their own performances with students and to address discrepancies" between what they believe and what they do (p. 34). Drawing and acting actively engage student teachers in the process of learning; they involve the body as well as the mind, another common feature of self-study pedagogy.

Active Learning

Berry and Loughran (2002), believing that "experience precedes understanding," have employed micro-teaching in their teacher education courses. One of their reasons for this choice is that it, "would help [their student teachers] explore and understand the relationships between what they taught, how they taught and what was learnt" (p. 16). This focus is consistent with what Wilson and Berne (1999) have found to be another of the main characteristics of good pedagogy for adult learners in preservice and inservice programs: It must, "engage them as learners in the area that their students will learn in but at a level that is more suitable to their own learning" (p. 192). Pereira (2002) in mathematics and Bencze and Bowen (2002) in science teacher education have taken this approach. Pereira, for instance, in aiming "to reacquaint teachers with themselves as learners of mathematics in order to help them to re-conceptualize themselves as teachers of mathematics" had, as one of his course's central activities, "the construction, description, and analysis of geometric objects" by the inservice teacher participants (p. 79). Bencze and Bowen found that by engaging their preservice students in a variety of activities that incorporated aspects of scientific inquiry, their prospective teachers had "increased tendencies to promote contextualized student-directed open-ended scientific investigations" (p. 30). Tasks that involve learners in inquiry of one form or another are not unique to science teacher education, indeed quite the contrary.

Reflective Inquiry

Most predominant in the practical methods of self-study teacher educators are inquiry activities and assignments, which makes sense given that we believe teacher knowledge is constructed and advanced through critical reflection on personal experience. In fact a reconsideration of all of the previously identified strategies would reveal that each has an inquiry aspect to it. In general, such strategies are characterized as reflective practice or teacher research (e.g., Dalmau & Gudjónsdóttir, 2002; Kuzmic, 2002; Loughran, 2002a). The emphasis is on finding ways for our student teachers and in turn their students to raise and explore their own questions. Freidus (2002) summarizes the approach well:

> It is not our role to impose our vision, but to help students understand what we value and why. Then, to help them become the best teachers they can according to their own visions, teachers who are willing to grapple with hard questions, listen to conflicting opinions, and articulate and implement their own ways of being in the classroom … to separate expert from expertise, acknowledge what each participant knows, working together to learn from and with each other, moving beyond the traditional power structures in search of new and better ways to meet the needs of all learners. (p. 86)

Because cognition is situated, we recognize the need to provide our students with different contexts for learning. As Putnam and Borko (2000) suggest, "Thoughtfully combining university- and field-based experiences can lead to learning that can be difficult to accomplish in either setting alone" (p. 7). Furthermore, case-based teaching can expand access to meaningful settings; in fact, they speculate that "this experience *of* the setting may afford reflection and critical analysis that is not possible when acting in the setting" (p. 8).

In addition to the pedagogies already iterated, other inquiry approaches have included Professional Working Theory (Dalmau & Gudjónsdóttir, 2002); "discrepancy analysis" workshops (Korthagen & Verkuyl, 2002); the exploration of paradox in education (Wilkes, 1998); and deliberative questioning (Cooper & McNab, 2002). Especially widespread in this category of teacher education practice are variations of action research and portfolio.

Action research

Geoff Mills (2000) defines action research as a, "systematic inquiry done by teachers (or other individuals in the teaching/learning environment) to gather information about – and subsequently improve – the ways their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (p. 21). Since the theoretical underpinnings and practical goals of action research and self-study are so similar, it is no wonder that self-study teacher educators choose to engage their students in comparable cycles of inquiry that rely upon and promote critical reflection. Mills suggests that action research holds particular potential for challenging "the intractability of reform of the educational system" because it engages teachers in change-oriented practice with requirements for immediate implementation (p. 14). Because the research is their own, the results are necessarily more persuasive and authoritative, relevant, and accessible.

Portfolios

Connecting theory with practice and the development of critical reflection are also cited as primary reasons for the use of portfolios in self-study teacher education. As Lyons (1998) has noted, the portfolio process not only, "helps [preservice and inservice teachers] to identify for themselves the critical features of their own teaching platforms and philosophies" (p. 248), it also obliges them to find evidence in their practice of the appropriate enactment of that knowledge and those values. In other words, it asks them to engage in an investigation of

potential "living contradictions" in their teaching, and thus, in the asking of the central research question of self-study, "How do I live my values more fully in my practice?" Anderson-Patton and Bass (1998) engage in the construction of their own portfolios in collaboration with their student teachers as they develop theirs, in part to create a democratic community of learners and in part to model the practice.

Modeling

Many in the field believe in modeling for their students both particular pedagogical strategies and reflective practice in general. Since we are teaching about teaching, it is essentially, as Bullough (1994) makes clear, an issue of authenticity: "For me, authenticity in teaching requires that I be able to articulate for my students my own teaching metaphors as they arise from life-history and that I be actively exploring myself as teacher, just as I require that they engage in such exploration" (p. 110). We believe we need to "practice what we preach" or "walk our talk." We must create safe learning environments by exposing our own vulnerability, as well as promote the necessity of life-long development by making explicit our own efforts to do so. Engaging in self-study is a primary vehicle for this modeling of practice, and thus provides a bridge between our pedagogy and our research.

Connections Between Pedagogy and Research Design

The well-known Biblical phrase "Physician, heal thyself" is commonly enlisted to suggest that doctors need to attend to their own well being before they can expect or presume to care effectively for others. Self-study teacher educators believe that this admonition applies similarly to us. This impetus for self-study influences our choice of research methods and designs. Wanting our student teachers to become critically reflective practitioners who will engage in teacher research, we employ research strategies that are particularly appropriate for teacher inquiry – that will exemplify what we hope they will do themselves. Since we cannot teach something we do not know, nor advocate for a practice we do not embrace or emulate, one critical connection between our pedagogies and our research designs is that the latter are meant to instantiate the former.

A second connection resides in our belief that we have a pedagogical responsibility to continuously monitor our progress; to check for discrepancies between our ideals and our practice, our practice and student growth; to challenge our assumptions; and to articulate and support for ourselves, our students, and our colleagues what we know about our teaching. We need to justify the pedagogies we employ and advocate on evidentiary, as well as theoretical grounds and moral/political ideals. We thus utilize research methods that will rely upon and give access to evidence of student learning, that will capture the complexity and particularity of what we do and of the ways in which what we do result in, or not, the reframed thinking and practice of our students and ourselves.

Instantiation

The self-study literature is replete with instances where there is explicit acknowledgement that, "one of the purposes in this self-study is to model professional learning in ways that support candidates just beginning to understand the nature and challenges of professional action and learning from experience" (Russell, 2002a, p. 84; see also Hutchinson, 2002; Kitchen, 2002; Lomax *et al*., 1998; Peterman & Marquez-Zenkov, 2002; Schulte, 2002; Schwabsky, 2002). But the modeling of which we speak is somewhat different than that intended by more traditional pedagogies. This is due in part to the nature of *what* we are instantiating, and in part to the *rationale* for it. We are not simply presenting a "model" of practice for our students to imitate; we are engaging in the process to improve ourselves, as much as we are to improve them.

Because we are as limited by our own personal histories and cultural identities as are our students, we cannot expand their horizons if we do not expand our own. Similarly, we cannot help them to detect and interrogate their biases if we do not detect and interrogate ours. As a result, when our goals are to enhance the multicultural teaching of our students, for example, we might engage in the self-study of our own cultural influences (e.g., Brown, 2002; Oda, 1998; Schulte, 2002). Or when our focus is on the transformation of our institutional contexts, we might undertake a critical analysis of our teaching myths (Louie, Stackman, Drevdahl, & Purdy, 2002). We believe that in order to facilitate the transformation of our students, we need to transform ourselves by developing our "voices," which provide us with "the power to critically examine a situation and confront it, rather than be dominated by it" (Hamilton, 1995, p. 39). This position is well-illustrated by Korthagen and Verkuyl (2002) who engaged in a self-study to investigate whether or not they could help student teachers become aware of and develop their professional identities and gain "a renewed sense of mission." "From the very beginning it was clear to us that we could not undertake this enterprise without questioning our own professional identities and missions as teacher educators" (p. 43). But at the same time we recognize that we cannot be sure that this modeling is making any difference. We need to assess our inquiry-based pedagogies by seeking evidence of growth.

Assessment

Our self-study research projects, then, are meant to serve as "reality checks" (Schuck & Segal, 2002) on our pedagogy. In pursuit of enhanced understanding of our practice settings so that we might improve as we go, we pay attention to our learners:

1. We attempt to find out who they are and what they already know, including their cultural proficiencies (Kumashiro, 2001), so that we can target our interventions appropriately and have a basis for comparison over time. One way in which we do this is by generating and examining their initial metaphors of teaching (Knowles, 1994).
2. We analyze their responses to our assignments and activities, especially

because, as Holt-Reynolds (2002) points out, "Assignments or tasks seem to lie at the core of a teaching/learning exchange" (p. 14). They represent what we "value enough to insist that students address" (p. 16). Understanding, as McNiff (1993) warns us, that living contradictions can go both ways, that is, students can not only espouse verbally theories they do not exhibit in practice, they can also engage in practices they do not theoretically support, we attempt to employ curriculum that will "reveal learning rather than just answers" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 232). As an example, Tidwell and Heston (2002) prompt their student teachers to provide their "practical arguments" for what they have done in practice, thereby making explicit the rationales for their observed behavior.

3. We attempt to document our work as accurately as possible so that we can have a more reliable record of what we are actually doing, as opposed to what we think or hope we are doing, which we then can relate to those identified student outcomes. For instance, we might audiotape our teaching sessions (Bullough, 1994) or have students dialogue with one another and us on the computer (Ham & Davey, 2002) or keep anecdotal journals of our interactions with students (Watson, 2002).
4. We obtain alternative perspectives on what we are doing and finding from our colleagues, often by engaging in collaborative self-studies with them (e.g., Coia & Taylor, 2002; Feldman *et al*., 1998; Fitzgerald, Farstad, & Deemer, 2002; Kosnik, Freese, & Samaras, 2002; Louie *et al*., 2002).
5. And we solicit our students' reflective reactions to our practice and their learning (e.g., Bullough, 1994; LaBoskey, 1997; Russell, 2002b).

Our research methods are thus interactive and responsive: "In teaching, there is a sense of the need to act immediately on new possibilities and to adjust one's teaching in accord with these possibilities. The research focus therefore alters and, as adjustments are made, new insights and possibilities emerge. Hence the intertwining of teaching and researching is such that as one alters so does the other" (Loughran, 2002b, p. 243; see also Lighthall, 2002; Schuck & Segal, 2002).

Though "self-study is about identifying existing strengths as well as pinpointing places for improvement" (Freidus, 2002, p. 82), the impetus is more likely to be the latter. As has been mentioned before, Whitehead (1989) has referred to self-study as the exploration of "living contradictions." Others have also identified discrepancies or gaps between our ideals and our actions (Zeichner, 1999) and dissatisfaction with existing practice (Loughran, 2002b) as the likely initiator. Kuzmic (2002) has employed the particularly compelling term, "hauntings," in this regard: "It is, indeed, those issues, questions, and experiences with teachers or students that continue to haunt me that I see as deserving of both reflection and self-study" (p. 226). Childs (2002) might find this descriptor particularly appropriate for referring to the brief interchange wherein she felt she failed one of her students most egregiously: "Nobody trips over mountains. It's the little stones – the pebbles – that cause us to stumble and slip. It is the memory of that one tiny moment – an entire incident of no more than perhaps thirty-five

seconds – that still keeps me contrite and eager to confront the contradictions and the complacencies in my practice as a mentor" (p. 39). And this confrontation takes the form of on-going self-study research.

So there is a quite tight connection between our pedagogy and our research design because, as Hamilton (2002b) has noted, the work, "strives to explore ways in which methodologies used in self-study can support the development of teachers' ideas about teaching" (pp. 112–113). According to Pinnegar (1998), self-study researchers,

> Observe their settings carefully, systematically collect data to represent and capture the observations they are making, study research from other methodologies for insights into their current practice, thoughtfully consider their own backgrounds and contribution to this setting, and reflect on any combination of these avenues in their attempts to understand. They utilize their study to represent for others what they have come to understand in their own practice and ultimately to perfect and improve the quality of their own practice setting. (p. 33)

Thus, she concludes, "Self-study is not a collection of particular methods but instead a methodology for studying professional practice settings" (p. 33). The predominant characteristics of this research methodology will be explored in the next section.

Research Design

Self-Initiated and Focused

A critical identifying feature of the methodology of self-study involves the question of "Who?" – both who is doing the research and who is being studied. In self-study the *self* is necessarily included in the response to both queries. Thus, the professional practice settings we study are our own. We agree with the argument that those engaged in the practice of a particular profession are particularly well qualified to investigate that practice (Zeichner, 1999; see also Cochran-Smith & Lytle, as cited in Fenstermacher, 1994; Schön, 1983). In the words of Bass *et al.* (2002), "Self-study re-centers research and grounds it in classroom practice, using the language of teachers rather than the distancing voice of erudite theoreticians" (p. 66). We believe that challenges to the validity of research on one's own practice that are based in a supposed inherent lack of "objectivity" have political overtones. As Eisner (1997) has stated, "This question – what should count as research – leads to a very deep agenda. It is also an agenda with high stakes for it pertains to matters of legitimacy, authority, and ultimately to who possesses the power to publish and promote" (p. 5). As Casey (1995) has pointed out, objectivity is a problematic aim even in the researching of others – it marginalizes "the authenticity and integrity of narrators' stories" (p. 231). It is possible, of course, for research to be overly subjective, but we suggest that the other characteristics of self-study methodology can serve as appropriate and adequate checks to this eventuality.

Believing that teacher knowledge develops through a better understanding of personal experience – by cycles of critical reflection on that experience – we assume that critical reflection on our personal experience as teacher educators will produce knowledge of teaching and teacher education. Granted it is knowledge of our context, but we also accept that all teacher knowledge is situated and contextual. The local knowledge that is thereby generated, when made available to others, can still serve as a trigger to their question-asking and expand the possibilities of their activities and explorations, thus making a contribution to "the long-term collective project with a democratic agenda" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) that is *inquiry as stance*.

Since the goal of research on teacher education is to improve that enterprise, then by implication a main purpose is to enhance the learning and practice of teacher educators. Self-study research combines the two aims and, social constructivist learning theory would predict, may make the latter more likely and more robust. As Lee Shulman (1998) and his colleagues in the Carnegie Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Project have found, when faculty engage in a scholarly inquiry into their teaching for the purpose of preparing a course portfolio, they "often report that the process of investigation, selection, and reflection entailed in writing the portfolio caused them to change the way they teach – to be more self-conscious about purposes, more vigilant about data collection, more thoughtful in assessing what works" (p. 12). Jean McNiff (1993) has said of action research that it is, "a form of educational enquiry that empowers practitioners to generate and control their own process of change" (p. 37). By extension, it can contribute to the development and recognition of the "voices" of teachers and teacher educators, which is consistent with our political agenda. It might also help to make us the "good judges" we want to be since we are, in the process of doing this inquiry, both acting and thinking about educational issues (Coulter & Wiens, 2002).

Self-study researchers are, therefore, not only the selves doing the research, they are the selves being studied, which does not mean the self is the sole focus. Nor does it entail the opposite extreme – the study of our practice or our students' learning without also attending to our personal role in that process. As Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) make clear, there should be a balance between the two. Acknowledging that teaching is an interpersonal act, that we teach who we are, and that though there is a close connection between our beliefs and our actions, we can sometimes behave in ways contradictory to our values, we accept that to better understand and improve our practice, we must incorporate self-analysis and tools of self-transformation. An example of such a mechanism is "memory work." According to Weber and Mitchell (2002), "The object of critical memory work is to make the past usable – a remembering in the service of future action" (p. 122). The assumption is that the accuracy of our memories does not matter; whatever shape they take, they influence the construction of our identities, our current thinking, and our future behavior. Therefore, if we begin to access and interrogate those memories, we can have more control over them and their impact on our teaching:

> The process of memory work can offer us insights into how and why we became who we are; help us make connections between our pasts and what is occurring in our lives today; give us a framework for action; illustrate how influential and powerful our own words and actions as teachers and teacher educators may be; and provide us with possibilities for self-growth, greater understanding and transformation. (O'Reilly-Scanlon, 2002, p. 75)

She suggests that the real power of memory work may be in its ability to generate questions: "Paradoxically, the more we learn – the more questions are generated. And the more we learn about ourselves, the more questions we begin to ask about others" (p. 77). The questions about teacher education posed by teacher educators are especially significant and relevant to the field because they are generated from within the practice by actual dilemmas, puzzles, and ambitions. And these questions lead to research that is conducted by the teacher educator self, thus connecting both aspects of the *self* in self-study.

The literature includes numerous examples of self-studies that explicitly emphasize both manifestations – the self as the researcher and the self as the researched (e.g., Bass, 2002; Feldman, 2002; Gitlin *et al*., 2002; Hamilton, 2002b; Lomax *et al*., 1998). Whitehead (1989), for instance, describes an action research project wherein the participants, including him, videotaped their teaching and then viewed and critiqued the recordings together. In the process of doing so, they were able to see their own "I's" existing as living contradictions (p. 4). That is, they could detect instances where they seemed to be nullifying in their practice the educational values they claimed to hold. These discrepancies caused tension, which moved them "to imagine alternative ways of improving [their] situations" that they then put into practice (p. 4). "In this cycle we can study the gradual emergence of our values through time as we struggle to overcome the experience of their negation" (p. 5).

The goal of self-study teacher educators engaged in such research is to better understand their practice – to generate knowledge about teaching – but the process does not end there, which is another way in which this work is differentiated from more traditional research. Self-study scholars are interested in the resolution of current problems and in the achievement of short- and long-term educational reformation. Indeed an essential requirement of this research methodology is that it results in and provides evidence for the reframed thinking and transformed practice of the teacher educator researcher. Self-study thus aims to improve teaching and teacher education and the institutional contexts in which they take place.

Improvement-Aimed

In a special edition of the *Teacher Education Quarterly* published in 1995, Fred Korthagen served as respondent to five self-studies written by Stefinee Pinnegar, Peggy Placier, Tom Russell, Mary Lynn Hamilton, and Karen Guilfoyle. In his comments he made some distinctions between conventional research and self-study, one of which is this: "We might say that traditional research helps us

realize that education is often bad and unsuccessful. Stefinee, Peggy, Tom, Mary Lynn, and Karen prefer to apply their time and energy to the improvement of education" (p. 104). He acknowledges that this statement is an exaggeration and recognizes that traditional research has contributed much to our understanding of educational phenomena. But he justifies the critique on the grounds that conventional researchers have not tried hard enough to put the implications of their theories to the test in practice. He warns though that we need to understand an educational setting before we attempt to improve it. He commends the work under review on that basis – that the improvement intentions of the authors are generated from the "critical issues" they discover in studying their contexts. Korthagen concludes, "[The critical issues developed by practitioners] make it possible for action research [or self-study] aiming at the improvement of educational practices, and research aiming at the understanding of those practices, to go hand in hand" (p. 104). Feldman *et al.* (1998) would agree: "We assume that the goal of action research is both the improvement of practice and an improved understanding of the educational situation in which our practices are immersed" (p. 7). Self-study methodology is designed to understand and improve our professional practice settings.

Holt-Reynolds and Johnson (2002) provide us with an example of this bringing together of understanding and improvement. They analyzed the responses of their students to one of their course assignments:

> As we read through these, we see our assignment come back to us in twenty-five different forms. We learn what any author learns from listening to her work come back to her from an other – how our assignment was ambiguous, how it omitted invitations for thinking we had hoped to see, and where it led students down a not-so-productive-after-all-path. We learn how to make it a "better" assignment. (p. 17)

We aim to improve our practice based upon a careful and thorough understanding of our settings, which in turn results in an enhanced understanding of that practice. By making changes in this way and then taking them public, we also hope to contribute to a larger reform agenda.

In her introduction to a book of cases of the scholarship of teaching and learning, Pat Hutchings (2000) summarizes the value of the work: "[The cases] both benefit from and contribute to changing conditions on campuses that can make the scholarship of teaching and learning (and its various cousins and relations, whatever they're labeled [e.g., self-study]) more central and valued – an outcome supported by the efforts of scholarly and professional societies that have been working to give prominence to teaching [e.g., S-STEP SIG]" (p. 9). The work, then, has the possibility of reforming our institutions of higher education. It might also, as the Arizona Group (Guilfoyle, Placier, Hamilton, & Pinnegar, 2002) suggests, support our resistance to the sometimes-problematic reform agendas of our institutional, state, and national contexts.

The ultimate hope is that if we and our student teachers continue to engage

together in this practice of critical self-inquiry that takes into account, and thus begins to challenge, "how our lives are mediated by systems of inequity such as classism, racism, and sexism (Lather, 1992, as quoted in Guilfoyle, 1995, p. 23), we might strengthen "the quality of schooling for all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse learners" (LaBoskey, Davies-Samway, & Garcia, 1998). As Griffiths (2002) put it: "[We are] keen to understand – to do self-study on – what it is to work for social justice, so we (me, you, me and you, me and they, you and they) can do more of it better" (p. 162).

A particularly illuminating example of self-study research aimed at educational improvement on both the individual and institutional level is one done by Gitlin and Russell (1994) that investigates a method for structuring the storytelling process they call Educative Research. The strategy includes several steps: the writing of two texts – one personal history and one school history without analysis; personal reflection on the texts to consider what is missing and to raise questions; the sharing of the narratives with others who then analyze them looking for themes and categories; the reading of relevant literature that can help reveal "oppressive formations" in their stories; and a comparison across histories to identify common themes and apparent differences, identify constraints, and raise questions about assumptions of possibility or impossibility at the school level (p. 126). The authors make very explicit the assumptions upon which their work is based:

1. Research/Subject Relationship – They engage in a "'dialogical process' where meanings are negotiated and both can be changer and changed. The intent of the dialogue is not to discover absolutes or *the truth*, but to scrutinize normative 'truths' that are embedded in a specific historical and cultural context. In this way, taken-for-granted notions can be challenged as educators work to better understand schooling."
2. Voice – "The central motivation for encouraging a dialogical approach is that it can further the aim of developing voice among those who have been historically silenced. … Voice as a form of protest is directed both outward at the social construction of meaning making and the structures that reinforce those meanings, and inward at the way the individual takes part in the production of certain constrained beliefs, roles, and practices."
3. Understanding and Practice – "To confront this threat to the linkage of understanding and practice, Educative Research is viewed primarily as a process with turning points that redirect inquiry, rather than being seen as a product. This allows the research process to alter the questions asked and influence practice as insights are gained."
4. Authenticity – "However, the author is part of the research not only because the questions posed reflect a focus on one set of concerns rather than another, but also because the constructs developed … are linked to the perspective and orientation that the author brings to the research project. For research to be authentic, the relationship between what is said and the person(s) doing the talking must be made apparent. Put simply, the author must be included in the story being told."

5. Validity – "The validity, or 'truthfulness' of the data [can be understood] as a mutual process, pursued by researcher and those studied, that recognizes the value of practical knowledge, theoretical inquiry, and systematic examinations. … The influence of the research process on who produces knowledge, who is seen as expert, and the resulting changes at the level of school practice are also part of an expanded and political view of validity."
6. Reliability – "Reliability, therefore, cannot be based on duplicating procedures, but rather must center on attempts to satisfy the underlying principle of voice and its relation to a desired type of school change." (pp. 122–124)

In summarizing what they have discovered about the value of this approach in the process of doing their own self-study research on it, they say: "This give and take between questions, analyses, and actions differs from traditional methods by taking an activist stance toward research and giving more weight to the process of question posing. … When successful, this sort of dialogical process makes it possible for those traditionally silenced to have a voice in educational matters. It can also encourage protests about one's actions and the school context" (pp. 126–127). The efforts to improve both individual practice and institutional contexts described in this exemplar were made possible by a variety of interactions, e.g., interactions among participants, interactions of individuals with their own histories, interactions of individuals with the literature and with the stories of their colleagues. Interactive structures and activities like these illustrate another characteristic of self-study methodology.

Interactive

Social constructivist learning theory requires interactive/collaborative pedagogy and research strategies. Likewise, conceptions of cognition that consider it to be social, situated, and distributed mean that we must capture and attend to group interactions and knowledge development, as well as individual. Loughran and Northfield (1998) have given considerable emphasis to the collaborative nature of self-study methodology, not only because it is consistent with the above theories, but also because if genuine reframing is to result, as it needs to, then alternative perspectives and interpretations must be included in the process. Many others have similarly stressed this rationale: "It [is] clear how important reframing must be to the process of self-study. It is not sufficient to simply view a situation from one perspective. Reframing is seeing a situation through others' eyes. … The issue of collaboration often revolves around the need for interpretations of data to be checked against a valued or trusted other" (Gitlin *et al.*, 2002, pp. 243–244; see also Bass *et al.*, 2002; Guilfoyle *et al.*, 2002; Johnston, Summers-Eskridge, Thomas, & Lee, 2002).

Despite the frequent use of the term *collaborative* in the field, I have deliberately chosen the term *interactive* to refer to this aspect of self-study methodology because, as I have said elsewhere (LaBoskey, 1998), "There are distinct differences between typical collaborative research and collaborative self-study. … Indeed,

interactive may be a more apropos referent for multi-party self-study than *collaborative*, especially because, in many cases, the researchers are not just interacting around an external data set; the interactions are the data set, or at least a part of it" (p. 151). I would now add another reason for this choice: Interaction within self-study for the purpose of studying our professional practice settings takes many forms, in addition to collaboration among researchers.

First, self-study teacher educators do collaborate directly with colleagues in an effort to better understand and improve their own practice and institutional contexts. Berry and Loughran (2002), for instance, partnered in the teaching of a course and in a self-study on what they and their students were learning from the experience. They found that the modeling of their pedagogical risk-taking, cooperative critical reflection, and resultant transformed practice facilitated the learning of similar practices and perspectives by their student teachers. Cockrell *et al.* (2002) collaborated on an action research project designed to help two different student groups learn to focus on issues of diversity via a performance activity. They discovered that the differences in their areas of expertise resulted in the identification of different trends in the data, thus enhancing and diversifying the knowledge generated by the study. Similar examples include Griffiths' (2002) study of the long-term practice of a reform group of which she was a part, Russell and Upitis' (1998) study of their efforts to establish a professional community in their department through e-mail communications between the new Dean and a faculty member, and Conle, Louden, and Mildon's (1998) study of the nature and impact of their graduate student support group on one another.

Second, self-study researchers also collaborate with colleagues near and far who are working on different professional practice agendas. Louie *et al.* (2002) worked together on a self-study where they interrogated the various teaching myths they held as professors of different disciplines, which resulted in changes in their respective beliefs and behavior. Tidwell (2002) called upon a colleague of hers to "confirm or oppose" the findings that resulted from her self-study of her teaching in a large group instruction situation. Several folks have engaged in cross-institutional self-study that has allowed them to gain multiple perspectives on and emotional support for their efforts to improve their practice in sometimes similar, sometimes different arenas (e.g., Freese, Kosnik, & LaBoskey, 2000; Gudjónsdóttir & Dalmau, 2002; Guilfoyle *et al.*, 2002; LaBoskey *et al.*, 1998; Schuck, Brown, & Schiller, 2002). If face-to-face meetings are not possible due to distance, ICTs and telephone conversations have been found to facilitate this potentially challenging process that depends upon trusting relationships and respectful interaction. A caring approach to collaborative research is required if assumptions and interpretations are to be adequately interrogated and perspectives reframed. One way to characterize collaborators who participate with us in these ways is as critical friends (Schuck & Segal, 2002).

Third, self-study researchers also interact with their own students in a variety of ways. In fact, since self-study is always conducted in relation to the others who are our students (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001), input from them, whether direct or indirect, with regard to the aspect of our practice under investigation

is important. They may become informants in our self-studies (e.g., Bass *et al*., 2002; Johnston *et al*., 2002). Or their work and reflections on that work may be a primary data source and interpretation check (e.g., Hopper & Sanford, 2002; LaBoskey, 1997). Or they may actually engage with us as co-researchers in the self-study project (e.g., Kaplan, 2002; Lomax *et al*., 1998).

Fourth, self-study teacher educators interact with "text" of various kinds in varying manners. For example, researchers may engage with the professional literature in ways that will inform their personal experience: "We approached our study from an insider standpoint – the perspective of those enmeshed in the everyday politics of practice – and tried to reflect on this standpoint by looking at its relation to the data collected from an outsider point of view (academic research) to help make sense of this experience" (Gitlin *et al*., 2002, p. 309). Similarly, they might use texts in alternative media like video, audio, or, in Hamilton's (2002b) case, visual art to expand on the potential interpretations of the collected data of practice. Or they may bring into their deliberations the multiple perspectives available in collections of personal narratives or cases (e.g., Hutchinson, 1998). The texts with which they interact might also be ones constructed by themselves that they then revisit with new lenses in the process of their critical, or in Feldman's case (2002), existential reflection on their practice. The critical autoethnography of Bass' (2002) and the performance of Austin, Gaborik, Keep-Barnes, McCracken, and Smith's (1996) are examples of such practice. Perselli (2002) articulated one of the merits of these approaches in describing the rationale for her performance self-study where she portrayed an artist disguised as a visitor to her own show, who could ask questions about the work: "This was one way of achieving reflection and reflexivity at a time when no 'outsider' audience was available. In other words, it was a device which enabled me to get into a dialogue with myself and to theorize the work once more, in preparation for the wider audiences to whom it was about to be exposed" (p. 82).

Interaction in self-study can take many forms. Garnering multiple perspectives on our professional practice settings helps to challenge our assumptions and biases, reveal our inconsistencies, expand our potential interpretations, and triangulate our findings. This variation is representative of another characteristic of self-study methodology.

Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods

"Self-study research is a research methodology in which researcher and practitioners use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding their practice" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 240), as was recognized by Zeichner (1999) in his review of the field at that point. To develop an understanding of all aspects of the self and its development in complex and differing educational contexts, multiple means for defining, discovering, developing, and articulating teacher knowledge must be employed (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). According to Hutchings (2000), those in the field of the scholarship of teaching and learning would agree: "A key principle of this volume

is that there is no single best method or approach for conducting the scholarship of teaching and learning. Indeed, the cases illustrate a need for approaches that are useful and doable in the varied contexts represented by their authors" (p. 1).

Though there is diversity in the methods we use to study our professional practice settings in self-study methodology, the majority of it is qualitative. The primary reason is that the qualitative approach is more consistent with our conceptual framework, as is apparent in the distinctions made by Smith (1983), as summarized by Paul and Marfo (2001):

> He points out that the two approaches have different procedures and different epistemological implications. Specifically, Smith observes that (a) the quantitative approach takes a subject-object position, whereas the qualitative approach takes a subject-subject position; (b) the quantitative approach separates facts and values, whereas the qualitative approach views them as inseparable; and (c) the quantitative approach searches for laws, whereas the qualitative approach seeks understanding. (p. 540)

Self-study researchers have employed qualitative, and sometimes quantitative, methods already quite prevalent in the general domain of educational research, but also have developed new strategies. One of the approaches most prevalent in self-study research is action research; as a matter of fact many have considered the two to be synonymous – a question that is explored in Chapter 24. One of the key aspects of action research that is particularly appealing is the inclusion of cycles inquiry that incorporate the immediate practical application and testing of insights gained. This recursive and ongoing process allows for responsive adaptation with regard to the forms of data collected and the means of analysis. It is possible to subsume other research strategies within this overall format.

Another method category especially common in self-study is narrative research. Believing that teacher knowledge is primarily, in Bruner's (1985) terms, narrative knowing, this is no surprise. As an example, Cooper and McNab (2002) have employed narrative inquiry and hermeneutics in their self-study work because they see these approaches, "as necessary to understanding the reciprocity of shared experience and meaning-making in the classroom where a multiplicity of perspectives is valued. The larger lessons and implications of the human story are infused with life and meaning, are illuminated, made relevant and understood best, through the tangible immediacy of stories of individuals" (p. 53). Wilson and Berne (1999), in summarizing the research on teacher learning, have found that capturing teacher knowledge has been difficult and speculate that "one way of measuring teacher knowledge within [teacher learning] communities would involve documenting and assessing what [their] stories were and what meaning they held for the teachers" (p. 179). Such stories have been captured in a variety of forms by self-study researchers, for example, as small and tall tales (Griffiths, 2002) and as autobiographies of home school decision-making (Muchmore & Sayre, 2002).

A related and comparably popular method category in self-study is dialogue,

because it often includes story-telling. But there are additional reasons for its frequency, e.g., it allows for the social construction of knowledge, can capture the distributed and dynamic nature of teacher cognition, provides for immediate opportunities to confront misconceptions, supports the development of caring communities, and helps to strengthen the voices of the teacher and teacher educator participants. The Arizona Group members (Guilfoyle, Placier, Hamilton, & Pinnegar, 2002), who have engaged in dialogue-based self-study over a several year period, have found that their dialogue "seemed to run in cycles of personal reflection, professional interchange and public analysis, followed by private analysis" (p. 99). The end result is not answers to the questions they originally posed to the group; instead, "We come away renewed because we have reached new epiphanies about the analyses that brought us together and new questions to explore – we leave with new ways to walk our talk and learn" (p. 99). Since we are not seeking to confirm and settle, then such an outcome is quite appropriate.

Yet another major type of self-study method is the artistic mode. Fischman (2001) has suggested that there has been a growing interest in inquiry into visual experiences in the scholarly world in general because, "images have become an omnipresent and overpowering means of circulating signs, symbols, and information" (p. 29). Complementary reasons within the self-study domain are that the artistic medium can convey emotions (Derry, 2002), as well as other important aspects of human consciousness that cannot be represented in words, and that the visual and performing arts can help us to see our educational experiences with new eyes.

These and other qualitative research methods, which will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent section chapters, are often combined within a single self-study in order to capitalize on the assorted advantages of each. Bencze and Bowen (2002), for instance, used students' course assignments, semi-structured repertory grid interviews, and photographs of apprenticeship workshop activities as data sources in their research. The data in Tidwell's (2002) study included course notes, meeting notes, student response cards, her journal, and pictures she drew of events. In a project designed to better understand and improve their supervision, Paris and Gespass' (2001) data were comprised of excerpts from collaboratively written reflections following classroom visits; the researchers' own reflections and notes from visits; records of individual meetings with student teachers; course evaluations; and records of the dialogue from focus group meetings.

This mix of mainly qualitative methods can enhance our understanding of our professional practice settings and help us to reframe our thinking and our teaching in appropriate and defensible ways. But since it can only provide us with situated and local or approximate, suggestive knowledge, validation has to be conceptualized differently than it is in positivist paradigms. The final characteristic of self-study to be discussed here has to do with its redefinition of validity as trustworthiness, meaning that the field is advanced by the construction, testing, sharing, and re-testing of exemplars of teaching practice.

Exemplar-Based Validation

Pinnegar (1998) has emphasized the "authority of experience as a warrant for knowing in self-study research" (p. 32). Dalmau and Gudjónsdóttir (2002) have proposed that knowledge in self-study is tested at two levels: "Both the rigorous demands of practice and the questions from the broader field work together in a dialectical process" (p. 17). But ultimately, according to Loughran and Northfield (1998), it is the "reader" who assesses the reliability and validity of a self-study of our professional practice settings. Therefore, the report: "Includes sufficient detail of the complexity and context of the situation for it to 'ring true' for the reader; provides and demonstrates some triangulation of data and a range of different perspectives around an issue; makes explicit links to relevant educational literature and other self-study accounts and literature" (p. 13).

Others have made similar arguments. Eisner (1997), for instance, has stated: "What succeeds in deepening meaning, expanding awareness, and enlarging understanding is, in the end, a community decision. Conversation and publication are, in part, aimed at testing ideals in that community" (p. 6). All of the criteria for the scholarship of teaching and learning proposed by Shulman (1998, 1999), as previously noted, have to do with the public review and testing of one's work by the relevant scholarly community.

Elliott Mishler's (1990) articulation of a rationale for and approach to such a reconceptualized notion of validity in "inquiry-guided" research is especially illuminating and, I believe, not only supports self-study's current position on the question of validity, but can also serve as a guide to our future endeavors. Thus, I will discuss his views at greater length. Mishler grounds his argument for change in a recognition that though inquiry-guided qualitative researchers have long been aware that the traditional approach to validity testing is inappropriate, experiment-based methods of validation have still been applied, which has resulted in their studies being judged as lacking in scientific rigor: "With failure built in from the start, they are systematically denied legitimacy, and the dominance of the experimental model is assured" (p. 416). A new approach to validation is therefore necessary, he claims – one that will accommodate the distinctive qualities of this research methodology and still address the intended aims.

He then proceeds to describe and support his posited alternative, which he describes as follows:

> I propose to redefine validation as the process(es) through which we make claims for and evaluate the "trustworthiness" of reported observations, interpretations, and generalizations. The essential criterion for such judgments is the degree to which we can rely on the concepts, methods, and inferences of a study, or tradition of inquiry, as the basis for our own theorizing and empirical research. … By adopting a functional criterion – whether findings are relied upon for further work – rather than abstract rules, validation is understood as embedded within the general flow of scientific research rather than being treated as a separate and different type of assessment. (p. 419)

This perspective is particularly consistent with self-study in that it seeks, as does narrative knowing, trustworthiness or verisimilitude rather than truth; it eschews objectivity; and it moves validation into "a world constructed in and through our discourse and actions" (p. 420).

In formulating this new notion of validity, Mishler tries to avoid making lists of rules or criteria and instead, drawing on the work of Kuhn (1970), utilizes the notion of "exemplars" to address the problem of "how claims for trustworthiness may be made and evaluated" (p. 421). By exemplars he means documentations of "normal practice" within a community, e.g., self-study researchers, that as a whole constitute, "the ordinary, taken-for-granted and trustworthy concepts and methods for solving puzzles and problems within a particular area of work" (p. 423), e.g., teacher education practice. Validation is accomplished when "the results of a study come to be viewed as sufficiently trustworthy for other investigators to rely upon in their own work" (p. 429). To encourage such reliance the author of a report needs to include sufficient information with regard to what was done and why. Mishler proposes that the reader of one of our studies should ask the following questions: "What are the warrants for my claims? Could other investigators make a reasonable judgment of their adequacy? Would they be able to determine how my findings and interpretations were 'produced' and, on that basis, decide whether they were trustworthy enough to be relied upon for their own work?" (p. 429). This means, he says, that we must make visible our data, our methods for transforming the data into findings, and the linkages between data, findings, and interpretations, features that map well onto the aspects of a self-study report previously identified by Loughran and Northfield. But no matter how much is provided in the write-up, according to Mishler, the assessment of the validity of a single study must remain provisional. The trustworthiness of an approach or of a finding needs to be tested repeatedly within a field and can thereby gain in strength over time. The mandate to a community of scholars that accepts the notion of validation as trustworthiness is, "to develop a collection of relevant exemplars ... a range of alternative approaches" (p. 437), a call comparable to that made by Shulman (1999) with regard to the scholarship of teaching and learning. A response to that mandate requires us to attend to the ways in which we represent our research on our professional practice settings to the community so that it will be appropriately trustworthy and in this manner advance our understanding and practice of teacher education.

Connections Between Research Design and Research Representation

Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) acknowledge the use of multiple qualitative methods in self-study methodology and suggest that in using "borrowed methods" we can to some extent, "assert authority ... from the frame or frames of the borrowed methodology" (p. 15). Not wholly, however, because of the differences caused by bringing in the self. In self-study not only must we employ established research methods competently, we must also attend to the form in which the study is organized and the quality of the story told; that is, we need to give

careful consideration to the way the research is presented and represented. They suggest further that narrative methods, such as autobiography and correspondence, are predominate choices because "they capture the concern with 'self' that distinguishes this body of research" (p. 16).

Others seem to agree that our conceptual framework and research methodology might tend to favor narrative forms of representation, in part, because self-study involves cycles of inquiry that result in changes over time; the research is responsive and progressive. Even "usual" data is thus gathered and analyzed in a storied way (Griffiths & Windle, 2002). Likewise, the "publication" of the research is seldom seen as an endpoint, as it typically would be; instead, it is meant to continue to advance the field by serving as an exemplar of practice that will contribute to the transformed thinking, teaching, and research of the reader – to keep the story going. For instance, Hamilton (2002a) has suggested that the story form "might help other white scholars recognize their (personally unseen) privilege, and the study itself might contribute to our understanding of the change process related to teacher education reform efforts" (p. 187).

This is indicative of another reason why self-study researchers might select narrative forms of representation – they may better support our reform agenda and interest in social justice. As Ladson-Billings (1999) has argued, a major principle of Critical Race Theory is, "that people's narrative and stories are important in truly understanding their experiences and how those experiences may represent confirmation or counter knowledge of the way the society works" (p. 219). But as Grumet (1991) warns us, we need to be careful of the potential "dogmatism of a single tale" (p. 72), which leads us back to the requirements of representation called for by Mishler, Loughran and Northfield, and Bullough and Pinnegar that both make the foundations of the story explicit and invite alternative tellings and interpretations.

But narrative is not the only reporting method we utilize. As Eisner (1993) has repeatedly emphasized, "Humans have the capacity to formulate different kinds of understanding and that these understandings are intimately related to the forms of representation they encounter or employ and the way in which those forms are treated" (p. 9). Therefore, since our research methods vary and combine in order to capture the complexity of the teaching-learning process and to expand and deepen the nature of our knowledge of it, so do our representational modes. Consequently, our research representations are tightly connected to our research designs. In fact, our forms of inquiry and of presentation often develop simultaneously and interactively rather than linearly (Berry & Loughran, 2002), so much so, in some cases, that they can become one in the same. For instance, Weber and Mitchell (2002), said this of their readers' theatre performance:

> It was on-stage, in the process of performing our own words, that we came to our first tentative and embodied understanding of the significance of performance to self-study and professional identity, not only as representation, but as a form of inquiry ... in enacting and retelling our stories, we

> became aware of the significance of the *processes* involved not only in the autobiographic writing and staging of a literary self-study, but also in the very performance itself. … The rigour of the methodology is its emphasis on formal or systematic re-visiting, re-questioning, re-writing, re-imaging, and re-thinking. The writing and production of a play necessitates thoughtful acts of symbolic interpretation that are subject to public scrutiny. (pp. 121–122)

Also apparent in this example and many others in self-study is that we are often pushed by our "breakthroughs in epistemology" and resultant new research methods to "create new forms and formats for representing our accounts" (Guilfoyle *et al*., 2002). As noted by Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998), "Representing living educational theory is more problematic than communicating statements about practice that work and about which the researcher only feels compelled to state that it works" (p. 240). The challenge when validation is reconceptualized as trustworthiness is to bring the details of the work into the public domain so that both the research process and the resultant reframings and evidentiary supports can be as fully and fittingly understood as possible. This is particularly difficult, according to Gitlin *et al*. (2002), in practitioner research wherein a primary purpose is to improve our teaching. "We have not," they say, "developed a form of representation that does justice to the process orientation of teacher research" (p. 311). But, we are making progress.

Research Representation

We seem to be approaching this task of developing appropriate forms of research representation in self-study in two ways. Some in the field have worked on the explicit delineation of aspects to be included in self-study reports. Some have also or instead focused on developing the rationale and theoretical support for alternative representations, usually within the context of a specific study and its public rendering.

Explicit Delineation

The list generated by Loughran and Northfield (1998), as cited above, is representative of the former category. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) present and discuss fourteen guidelines for autobiographical forms of self-study, which they summarize as follows:

> As we have said, articles need to be readable and engaging, themes should be evident and identifiable across the conversation represented or the narrative presented, the connection between autobiography and history must be apparent, the issues attended to need to be central to teaching and teacher education, and sufficient evidence must be garnered that readers will have no difficulty recognizing the authority of the scholarly voice, not just its authenticity. (p. 20)

Barnes (1998), in serving as outside respondent to the first S-STEP SIG castle conference, inferred from his readings that the "best" papers were those that made obvious the "process of self-study": "The papers that did this began by explaining the institutional context, quoted next (rather than summarized) some of the evidence used, illustrated the processes of interpretation, including alternative views, outlined any changes made in the course being studied, and discussed general conclusions" (p. xi). These factors are comparable to those identified by Mishler as necessary for the validation process.

Particular Rationales

Illustrations from the latter category might be sorted by the nature of the rationale used to justify the alternative form of representation. One contention that has been made is that there needs to be a match between the research design (or the nature of the knowledge/understanding being generated) and the structure of its presentation. Eisner's (1993) work could be seen as foundational to this perspective. He argues very explicitly that different forms of representation and their treatments can both render and make feasible different kinds of thinking, which in turn can both illuminate and encourage the construction of different meanings. He notes, for example, "That poetry and pictures, literature and dance, mathematics and literal language" make possible unique kinds of understanding (p. 8). An exemplar of a self-study report from this group is a chapter by Griffiths (2002) where she creates a unique form that consists of a primary text written in a more typical style and an accompanying lengthy set of endnotes that includes "the rest of the story" in two styles – "notes *about self-study in italics* and about **small tales (examples of them, and also reflections on them) in bold**" (p. 162). She does this, she claims, because "neither life nor thought are as tidy or as linear as they are when presented in this form, so popular in academic presentations" (p. 162).

Another rationale is that the report should continue the process of deliberation about the investigated practices and the accompanying understandings for both the author and the reader; that is, the representation needs to promote and support further testing of the exemplar. Emphasizing the self-benefits, Bass *et al.* (2002) note that the activity of trying to represent their research creatively helped them to learn even more about teaching than they already had. Lomax *et al.* (1998), on the other hand, stress the desire to engage the audience in the research effort: "We invite the reader to be not just an observer but an active participant with us in the process in the same way we are active participants and not simply observers in the action research processes within which our own students engage" (p. 167). Shulman (1998) strives for a similar goal when he considers how to represent and report on the scholarship of teaching. He says that it needs to be done "so that it can become part of the community's intellectual property; so that it can inform other members of the community, engage them in deep and significant conversations, provide a basis for the formation of communities of scholars, and be evaluated in that community" (p. 7).

Still another justification is also for the continuation of the process, but in

these cases the emphasis is on the reform agenda, on the desire to transform educational contexts and activities. Both Fischman (2001) and Eisner (1997) have argued that alternative forms of data representation, particularly those dealing with visuality, "have the potential of making our work not only more comprehensive and clear, but also politically more relevant because images not only carry information in the constant battle over meaning, but they also (or even fundamentally) mediate power relations" (Fischman, 2001, p. 31). Cole, Knowles, brown, and Buttignol (1999) understood this potential in making the choice to represent their study of the constraints of their institutional contexts in visual art formats. The visceral experience of "witnessing" their confinements and challenges might serve as a powerful inspiration for viewers to engage in the questioning and transformation of higher education's approaches to research evaluation, teacher education design, and promotion and tenure systems.

Eisner (1997) has suggested that we choose tools of data representation on the basis of whether or not they will do the jobs we want done. His response to the question of what jobs need to be done might be summarized as follows:

1. To engender a sense of empathy because understanding human lives may require an understanding of their/our feelings.
2. To provide a sense of particularity and dimensionality because those are conditions of something being "real."
3. To be evocative rather than denotative so that it "generates insight and invites attention to complexity."
4. To "increase the variety of questions that we can ask about the educational situations we study" or to stimulate our "capacity to wonder."
5. To "exploit individual aptitude" and thus "activate wider varieties of human intelligence." (p. 8)

These and more are good reasons for continuing to explore alternative forms of representation for our self-study research. Clearly, the aim is for all aspects of our research methodology to be consistent with and supportive of our epistemological, pedagogical, and moral/ethical/political theoretical underpinnings so that we can produce the knowledge and understanding that we need for the continuous improvement of teaching and teacher education.

Conclusion

Self-study is "a methodology for studying professional practice settings" (Pinnegar, 1998). The purpose is to *improve* that practice, in this case teacher education, in order to maximize the benefits for the clients, in this instance preservice and inservice teachers and their current and future students. Thus, the aim for teacher educators engaged in self-study is to better understand, facilitate, and articulate the teaching-learning process. What we currently know of this endeavor tells us, among other things, that it is enormously complex, highly dependent on context in its multiple variations, and personally and

socially mediated. Since the knowledge of teaching is more narrative than paradigmatic, we must be concerned with the "explication of human intentions in the context of action" (Bruner, 1985). Teacher educators are actually engaged in the effort to enact their intentions in practice so our perspectives and explanations add a critical dimension to an understanding of teacher knowledge development. As many have argued (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Schön, 1983; Shulman, 2000; Zeichner, 1999), the professionals in a field are particularly well situated to construct knowledge of that profession by engaging and investigating their own authentic questions of practice. So self-study researchers study our own professional practice settings; it is scholarship *initiated by and focused on us.*

Because we are simultaneously engaged in practice and in the investigation of that practice, we aim to both generate knowledge of teaching and enhance our own pedagogy by immediately applying what we have learned. Thus teaching and research in self-study are iterative and responsive. We are actively engaged in the reform of our particular contexts, in part by transforming us, our teaching, and our programs. But we also hope to contribute to a larger reform agenda by making the "local knowledge" we have generated available to the whole educational community in ways that will raise new questions, stimulate debate, and suggest other possibilities.

We begin with and include the self not only on epistemological and pedagogical theoretical grounds, but also because of our professional responsibilities and our moral, ethical, and political values. We care deeply about the current and long-term welfare of our students and their students. Thus, we consider it imperative to engage in the continuous monitoring of our relations with and influence on them – to check for consistency between our espoused theories, values, and aims and our actual interactions and outcomes. We strive for what has been variously described as integrity (Loughran & Northfield, 1998), authenticity (Bullough, 1994), and fidelity (Shulman, 1998) in our teaching and our research on that teaching. We link acting and thinking, teaching and researching because we are aiming to be and to nurture "good judges" (Coulter & Wiens, 2002).

We feel that this can only be accomplished through a genuine and systematic interrogation of our work in teacher education. This means that we need to be prepared to "problematize our practice" (Zeichner, 1999) and acknowledge our "living contradictions" (Whitehead, 1989). "This willingness to admit that we stumble in our teaching practice is a central part of work in self-study. From this stumbling and our efforts to both understand and act differently that the knowledge we produce about teaching emerges" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 243). But it takes courage to expose our shortcomings, to make ourselves vulnerable not only with our professional colleagues, but also with our own students. We do the latter to enlist them into our self-study, to model for them the process of life-long learning, and, most importantly, to help them feel safe enough to take the similar risks necessary for their own development. We want them to embrace the notion of an inquiry orientation toward practice and recognize the potential for teacher and teacher educator research to make

significant contributions to our understanding of teaching and learning to teach, a goal with political intentions.

Giving more "voice" to the professionals engaged in the practice of teaching in both higher education and the K-12 schools is one of our political reasons for the self in self-study. Like many feminist and post-colonial scholars, we believe questions regarding knowledge and research, e.g., who gets to produce it and how, necessarily involve issues of power. Our claim is that those who are supposed to have, acquire, and employ the knowledge of teaching are quite capable of identifying, generating, understanding, theorizing, and communicating it. Granted there are needs for checks on the biases and limited perspectives of the researcher self, but all research is necessarily constrained and influenced by the subjectivity of the investigator(s), at the very least by the questions deemed worthy of study. More traditional research paradigms have developed means to minimize, though not eliminate, this problem. So too has self-study; the ways are necessarily different, not only because of who is doing the research but also because of the questions asked and the aims intended.

First, the methodology of self-study, being *improvement-aimed*, looks for and requires evidence of the reframed thinking and transformed practice of the researcher, which are derived from an evaluation of the impact of those development efforts. As Gitlin *et al.* (2002) argue:

> It is vital ... for teacher researchers to find ways to expose their perspectives and assess these perspectives in relation to the knowledge produced. ... Put differently, the contextual demands of teaching require teachers not only to produce knowledge but also to see the relation between knowledge and self on a continuous basis. A process approach to assessment fits well with the epistemological demands of teaching. ... We want to replace the charade of neutrality with a more authentic approach to research that will allow us to interrogate our perspectives and their relation to knowledge production. (p. 312)

We look with regularity for evidence of progress and, depending upon what we find, make immediate adjustments to our understandings of practice.

Second, self-study methodology is *interactive* at one or more points during the research process. Those interactions with our colleagues near and far, with our students, with the educational literature, and with our own previous work help to confirm or challenge our developing understandings. They provide us with multiple perspectives and require us to justify and interrogate our assumptions, assertions, and values. "The need to honestly hold up practice to critique by colleagues, by oneself, and by ones' students is an important hallmark of self-study work" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 240).

Third, the methodology of self-study employs *multiple, primarily qualitative, methods*, some that are commonly used in general educational research, and some that are innovative. With regard to the former, competent use of these methods allows us to draw, at least in part, upon the frames of those "borrowed

methods" to assert authority (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). For the latter, self-study researchers are attending to explications of the conceptual frameworks for these new approaches, in addition to revealing their structure. Inclusively, these multiple methods provide us with opportunities to gain different, and thus more comprehensive, perspectives on the educational processes under investigation.

Fourth, self-study methodology demands that we formalize our work and make it available to our professional community for deliberation, further testing, and judgment. Several scholars within the field have articulated criteria or guidelines for acceptable self-study "reporting" (e.g., Barnes, 1998; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Loughran & Northfield, 1998). These map well onto the characteristics of the scholarship of teaching identified by Shulman (1998) and to the validation process described by Mishler (1990) for inquiry-guided research, which self-study certainly is. Due to the latter, I have argued in this chapter that Mishler's redefinition of validity as validation through the social construction of knowledge is an appropriate way to conceptualize what has been done in self-study: We advance the field through *the construction, testing, sharing, and re-testing of exemplars* of teaching practice. As Mishler has noted, this formulation means that validation of a single study, though important, must remain provisional until the knowledge generated and procedures employed establish a history of trustworthiness within the field. Thus, bodies of work become the more relevant domain for the validation process than individual investigations, an idea I will explore in greater depth in Chapter 29.

The methodology of self-study is well conceptualized, well grounded in epistemological and pedagogical theory, and well justified by interconnected moral, ethical, and political values and ideals. It has clear features that, though they may and should evolve over time, will allow us to proceed with integrity and evaluate with confidence. It is, of course, not the only viable methodology for engaging in educational research, but it is an important one that has resulted in a considerable body of literature on the professional practice of teaching and teacher education, as represented by and summarized in this handbook. This methodology suggests that the validation of the local knowledge, the approximate, suggestive knowledge, thus generated must be on going. Those of us in the field need to continue the process by incorporating into our teaching and research practice the understandings and procedures we deem trustworthy enough to risk trying, with appropriate adaptation and assessment, in our own programs with our own students. In this conscientious bringing together of the hearts and minds of a professional learning community over time, we stand to not only contribute to our understanding of teaching and teacher education, but also improve our practice settings and enhance the learning opportunities for all of our students and our students' students.

Dedication

This chapter is dedicated to the memory of my daughter, Sara LaBoskey, who died on July 28, 2002 of a rare form of bone cancer at the age of 21. Her wisdom,

optimism, strong moral character, and genuine care for the world and all of its inhabitants have been my inspiration. Engaging in this work in the year following her passing has made it ever more clear that the enhancement of life's opportunities for all children everywhere must be our central purpose and that a better understanding of what role teaching and teacher education can play in this effort can only be attained by the conscientious interconnection of our epistemological and pedagogical groundings with our moral, ethical, and political values that begins with and always includes attention to our own integrity.

Note

1. The emphasis in this chapter will be on teacher education since that is both my personal area of expertise and the birthplace of the S-STEP SIG. This is not meant to imply that self-study cannot be done by educators in other venues and/or professions.

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