RESEARCH METHODS FOR THE SELF-STUDY OF PRACTICE
RESEARCH METHODS
FOR THE SELF-STUDY
OF PRACTICE

Edited by

Deborah L. Tidwell
University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, USA

Melissa L. Heston
University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, USA

and

Linda M. Fitzgerald
University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, USA

Springer
Series Editor’s Foreword

This series was initiated as an extension of, and support for, the International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004). As such, the books that comprise the series are designed to offer new and engaging ways of examining issues (both theoretical and practical), associated with self-study research.

Through this text, the editors have taken a bold stand in holding up to scrutiny the work of a number of scholars in ways that shed new light on the methods, practices and outcomes of their self-study endeavours. They have assembled an outstanding array of authors that demonstrates well the way in which the self-study community functions as a collaborative and supportive enterprise in the work of teacher education.

Deborah Tidwell, Melissa Heston and Linda Fitzgerald are an experienced and talented team of editors who have accepted responsibility for a number of the recent Castle proceedings (Fitzgerald, Heston, & Tidwell, 2006; Heston, Tidwell, East, & Fitzgerald, 2008; Tidwell, Fitzgerald, & Heston, 2004, the biennial conference of AERA’s S-STEP SIG). Through that work they have been fortunate to be fully immersed in the most up to date and influential research conducted by members of the self-study community. As a consequence of that involvement and leadership they have been exceptionally well placed to be familiar with, and therefore attract, authors that have a great deal to offer by sharing their work through this exceptional text.

As the editors and authors make clear, self-study as ‘inquiry-guided’ research demands a great deal from participants. However, an issue at the heart of this book is the need to demonstrate that self-study can, and must, move beyond the individual and impact other teacher educators, and teacher education programs more generally, if it is to be truly effective. In their introduction to the book the editors draw attention to the notion of trustworthiness. This is an interesting and important issue because the nature of self-study means that it is far from ‘recipe driven,’ rather, it tends to evolve and develop over time, all of which require confidence skill and expertise by the researcher. Therefore, when done well, it is a demanding task.

Deborah Tidwell, Melissa Heston and Linda Fitzgerald have done a remarkable job in supporting the authors and developing this text into a coherent and well-conceptualized body of work that has much to offer both the novice and the
experienced self-study researcher. This is an important book developed by a strong group of scholars who have worked together to offer a range of insights and new possibilities for those interested in supporting and further pursuing the work of self-study.

It has been a pleasure to work with the editors in bringing this book to fruition. As you work your way through the myriad of new, challenging and exciting ideas encapsulated in each of the chapters, you will no doubt see that the editors’ efforts have been well rewarded by the quality of this text.

This is a fine piece of work by a fine group of teacher education scholars.

References


J. John Loughran
Contents

Part I Self-Study Through the Use of Text

Co/autoethnography: Exploring Our Teaching Selves Collaboratively . . . 3
Lesley Coia and Monica Taylor

Teaching and Learning Through Narrative Inquiry ......................... 17
Rosa T. Chiu-Ching and Esther Yim-mei Chan

Passages: Improving Teacher Education Through Narrative Self-Study . . 35
Julian Kitchen

Part II Self-Study Through Discourse and Dialogue

Talking Teaching and Learning: Using Dialogue in Self-Study ............. 55
Katheryn East, Linda M. Fitzgerald and Melissa L. Heston

“Name It and Claim It”: The Methodology of Self-Study as Social Justice Teacher Education .................................................. 73
Vicki Kubler LaBoskey

Many Miles and Many Emails: Using Electronic Technologies in Self-Study to Think About, Refine and Reframe Practice ................. 83
Amanda Berry and Alicia R. Crowe

Part III Self-Study Through Visual Representation

Faces and Spaces and Doing Research ........................................... 101
Mорwenna Griffiths, Heather Malcolm and Zoë Williamson
Facing the Public: Using Photography for Self-Study and Social Action . . . 119
Claudia Mitchell, Sandra Weber and Kathleen Pithouse

Making Meaning of Practice through Visual Metaphor ................. 135
Deborah Tidwell and Mary P. Manke

Creating Representations: Using Collage in Self-study ................. 155
Mary Lynn Hamilton and Stefinee Pinnegar

Part IV  Self-Study on the Impact of Practice on Students

How Do I Influence the Generation of Living Educational Theories
for Personal and Social Accountability in Improving Practice? Using
a Living Theory Methodology in Improving Educational Practice . . . . 173
Jack Whitehead

Assumption Interrogation: An Insight into a Self-Study Researcher’s
Pedagogical Frame ................................................................. 195
Robyn Brandenburg

Teacher Education for Literacy Teaching: Research at the Personal,
Institutional, and Collective Levels ........................................ 213
Clare Kosnik and Clive Beck

Author Index ................................................................. 231

Subject Index ................................................................. 235
Contributors

Clive Beck  Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON M5S 1V6, Canada, cbeck@oise.utoronto.ca

Amanda Berry  Faculty of Education, Monash University, Wellington Road, Clayton, Victoria 3800, Australia, amanda.berry@education.monash.edu.au

Robyn Brandenburg  University of Ballarat, Ballarat, Victoria 3353, Australia, r.brandenburg@ballarat.edu.au

Rosa T. Chiu-Ching  Department of Educational Psychology, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Counselling and Learning Needs, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, NT, Hong Kong, tlchiu@ied.edu.hk

Lesley Coia  Agnes Scott College, 985 Wesley Drive, Macon, GA 31210, USA, lcoia@agnesscott.edu

Alicia R. Crowe  Kent State University, Teaching Leadership and Curriculum Studies, 404 White Hall, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242, USA, acrowe@kent.edu

Katheryn East  University of Northern Iowa, 617 Schindler Education Center, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0607, USA, katheryn.east@uni.edu

Linda M. Fitzgerald  University of Northern Iowa, 618 Schindler Education Center, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0606, USA, linda.fitzgerald@uni.edu

Morwenna Griffiths  The Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Hollyrood Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 8AQ, UK, morwenna.griffiths@ed.ac.uk

Mary Lynn Hamilton  University of Kansas, Room 344, 1122 W. Campus Road, Joseph R. Pearson Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045, USA, hamilton@ku.edu
Melissa L. Heston  University of Northern Iowa, 617 Schindler Education Center, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0607, USA, melissa.heston@uni.edu

Julian Kitchen  Brock University, Faculty of Education, Hamilton, Ontario, L8K 1V7, Canada, jkitchen@brocku.ca

Clare Kosnik  Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON M5S 1V6, Canada, ckosnik@oise.utoronto.ca

Vicki Kubler LaBoskey  Mills College, Education 219, Oakland, CA, 94613, USA, vickikl@mills.edu

Heather Malcolm  The Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Hollyrood Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 8AQ, UK, heather.malcolm@ed.ac.uk

Mary P. Manke  University of Wisconsin, River Falls, College of Education and Professional Studies, River Falls, WI 54022, USA, mary.p.manke@uwrf.edu

Claudia Mitchell  McGill University, Faculty of Education, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1Y2, Canada, claudia.mitchellll@mcgill.ca

Stefinee Pinnegar  Brigham Young University, 201W MCKB, McKay School of Education, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, USA, stefinee@byu.edu

Kathleen Pithouse  McGill University, c/o Claudia Mitchell, Faculty of Education, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1Y2, Canada, Kpithouse@gmail.com

Monica Taylor  Montclair State University, 7 Morningside Road, Verona, NJ 07044, USA, taylorm@mail.montclair.edu

Deborah L. Tidwell  University of Northern Iowa, 618 Schindler Education Center, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0606, USA, deborah.tidwell@uni.edu

Sandra Weber  Concordia University, Department of Education, 1455 de Maisonneuve West, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8, Canada, sandra.weber@education.concordia.ca

Jack Whitehead  University of Bath, Department of Education, Bath BA2 7AY, UK, edsa@bath.ac.uk
Zoë Williamson  The Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Hollyrood Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 8AQ, UK, zoe.williamson@ed.ac.uk

Esther Yim-mei Chan  The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, NT, Hong Kong, echan@ied.edu.hk
Introduction

Deborah L. Tidwell, Melissa L. Heston and Linda M. Fitzgerald

Self-study as an established genre of educational research has grown dramatically over the last 15 years, and in 1999 was acknowledged by Zeichner as research that could potentially have the greatest impact on teacher education and the transformation of practice. Self-study is a methodology that embraces multiple methods of research. While drawing heavily on traditional qualitative methods of data collection, self-study generally transforms those methods by taking them into a new context and using them in ways that often depart from the traditional. These transformations highlight the fact that the role of the researcher in self-study and the role of teacher educator are closely intertwined and generally inseparable. Thus, self-study is centrally concerned with seeking to “understand the relationship between the knower and the known” as well as seeking “to understand what is the form and nature of reality” (Kuzmik & Bloom, 2008, p. 207).

Self-study as inquiry-guided research must be sufficiently trustworthy (Mishler, 1990) for others to be able to find that research both meaningful and potentially generative in relationship to the readers’ own teacher education practices. This trustworthiness can best be achieved by making the data visible and by clearly presenting and illustrating the “methods for transforming the data into findings, and the linkages between data, findings, and interpretations” (LaBoskey, 2004, p. 1176). This can be a challenging task for a variety of reasons. While self-studies are embedded with an overarching research question – How can I improve my practice? – some self-studies do not begin by formulating a formal and clearly defined research question in the traditional sense. Indeed, only about half of the studies in this book have clearly defined questions from the outset of their particular work. Among those that do have an initiating question, the process of self-study can provoke a significant change in the nature of the question being asked. Thus, the methods selected for use in a study are not solely or inevitably driven by the nature of the research question as is the case in more traditional forms of research. Rather, the particular methods used in self-study emerge as a function of the particular context within which the study is being pursued, which is evident in each of the studies in this book.

D.L. Tidwell (✉)
University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, USA
e-mail: deborah.tidwell@uni.edu

xiii
Other factors can make establishing the trustworthiness of a self-study somewhat more difficult than is the case with studies using more traditional kinds of qualitative methods. In self-study, the data-generating and data-analysis processes are often mutually interdependent and can even occur simultaneously. In addition, even the practice which is being examined in a self-study can itself evolve during the study. That is, in the course of a given study, important and yet subtle aspects of the researcher’s practice as a teacher educator may actually be transformed without conscious awareness, and such transformations may only come to be recognized through post hoc reflections.

Finally, self-study is often conducted collaboratively. In fact, the findings of any given collaborative study depend critically upon who the collaborators are and what they individually and collectively bring to the research process. This is quite different from more traditional research in teacher education where there is an a priori agreement among members of the research team regarding how data will be gathered and analyzed; rigor in this type of research depends upon adhering carefully to that agreement in all its aspects. In self-study, however, rigor, in the sense of maintaining a critical stance towards one’s practices, can demand that self-study researchers negotiate, adapt, and change research methods, processes, and even the research questions as the study unfolds.

Every self-study unfolds in a somewhat fluid and unpredictable manner. We believe it is important to illustrate more explicitly how self-study researchers have examined their education practices. In particular, how do their ways of gathering and analyzing data relate to their education practice and their understandings of that practice? The 13 self-studies in this book were selected to provide readers with concrete and authentic illustrations of self-study as it naturally unfolds. In addition, while the studies have been grouped into four broad areas, even within a given area, the specific methods used for collecting and analyzing data related to practice are somewhat different.

We begin with a set of studies that all emphasize or describe the use of text as the central prompt for the self-study process. Text has been used extensively in self-study work; sometimes the texts are self-generated by the teacher educators engaged in the study, while other times, the texts arise from published sources. In either case, the text offers a critical lens through which teacher educators can problematize their practice, seeking insight into the implicit assumptions that may be more influential on those practices than is the propositional understanding these teacher educators have about practice. In Part I, *Self-Study Through the Use of Text*, three self-studies present different ways in which researchers use texts chronicling accounts of their personal experiences to elucidate the meaning within their practice. In *Co/autoethnography: Exploring Our Teaching Selves Collaboratively*, Monica Taylor and Lesley Coia provide an in-depth examination of co/autoethnography, a distinctive method they have developed and used to conduct a number of self-studies (Coia & Taylor, 2006; Taylor et al., 2006). Striving to be accessible to all audiences, they discuss co/autoethnography in two sections: conceptual and application in real-life contexts. In the first section they explicate co/autoethnography, focusing on the distinctive nature of collaboration and collaborative research undertaken with
the aim of understanding the present through the use of past experiences. They use what they describe as a thick description of the self, serial and simultaneous writing, and a research method that evolves from personal experiences. These methods have been drawn from various sources, including self-study of teacher education, anthropology, literacy theory, autobiography, narrative inquiry, and qualitative research. In their chapter, they explain the ways in which their co/autoethnography method emerged within the context of their teaching collaboration and was built upon their own teaching histories and disciplinary backgrounds in philosophy, English education, and literacy. In the second section of the chapter, they guide readers through the process of co/autoethnography, highlighting appropriate types of pedagogical contexts, demonstrating the ways they were able to recognize emerging research questions from their teaching or collaboration, sharing the various possible collaborative methods of data collection (in particular technological tools such as google.docs and email), and providing guidelines for data analysis strategies.

In the second chapter of this section, *Teaching and Learning Through Narrative Inquiry*, Rosa T. Chiu-Ching and Esther Yim-mei Chan explore the use of teacher stories to promote teaching and learning of child development. Instead of teaching the grand theories of child development, their description of their teaching begins in the sharing of their family stories of their fathers with their students. Students are then invited to reflect on these stories and resonate with their own father stories. Chiu-Ching and Chan adopt Clandinin’s (1993) view of teacher education as narrative inquiry and ground their work in self-study (Loughran, 2004b) via their use of father stories as narrative inquiry (Clandinin, & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Through sharing stories, they investigate their own practice to learn how their fathers have shaped their development and views toward students and teaching. In stimulating students’ reflection (Schön, 1983) and resonance (Conle, 1996), they suggest that child development can be learned via an experiential and a narrative approach. Storytelling, then, becomes a tool for understanding the meaning of lived experiences and for the construction of knowledge that informs professional practice. In this self-study, the authors discuss how they made sense of their teaching, validated their narrative inquiry process as a way of knowing, and found new ways to story and restory the teaching and learning of child development in teacher education programs.

The work of Clandinin and Connelly (2004) also sets the focus for the third self-study in this section, *Passages: Improving Teacher Education through Narrative Self-Study*. In this chapter Julian Kitchen focuses on narrative knowing as a means of improving teacher education practices. Narrative knowing, which has been at the heart of his self-study practices for a decade, has enabled Kitchen to navigate a meaningful passage for preservice students. He juxtaposes how narrative knowing informed his practices as a neophyte teacher educator (Kitchen, 2005a, 2005b) with his present efforts as a reflective teacher educator in another university. Through his research question, How does narrative knowing inform my practices as a teacher educator? he illustrates the “living of teacher knowledge in action” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 582) by drawing on artifacts of practice (e.g., lessons, reflections, observations, feedback by students) from his experience as a neophyte and at
present. Through this process Kitchen formulates the resolution of tensions between belief and practice as an action research project aimed at improving classroom practices. In constructing meaning from these artifacts of experience, he draws on multiple frames including Schwab’s (1970) four commonplaces and Loughran’s (2006) Developing a Pedagogy of Teacher Education.

The studies in Part II, Self-Study Through Discourse and Dialogue, provide different ways in which teacher educators have used dialogue as a data generation tool, and even an analysis tool. In Talking Teaching and Learning: The Use of Dialogue in Self-Study, Katheryn East, Linda M. Fitzgerald and Melissa L. Heston describe their use of dialogue as a methodological tool which poses some unique challenges in terms of both its creation and its analysis. They found that as they engage in dialogue for collaborative self-study, they must be thoughtful, intentional, and earnestly adhere to a set of specific conversational practices and principles. Through the resulting dialogue they uncover tacit beliefs together, which they then subject to focused examination. At unpredictable intervals in this process they reach points where they recalibrate, as an individual and as a group, due to an insight in a moment of clarity or through a gradually dawning realization. In this chapter they describe how they go about structuring their self-study work using dialogue, what they believe to be essential for the creation of useful self-study dialogue, and how they in turn have used that dialogue as data. They conclude the chapter with a set of cautions and caveats.

According to Brown (2004), “Self-study is uniquely suited to contribute to an understanding of race and social class issues in education” (p. 520). Vicki Kubler LaBoskey agrees that self-study has the potential to enhance our knowledge and implementation of social justice education, but it is a potential yet to be fully realized (LaBoskey, 2004). In “Name It and Claim It”: The Methodology of Self-Study as Social Justice Teacher Education, LaBoskey examines the language of inquiry in making explicit the issues of social justice in teaching and learning. LaBoskey’s study was designed to help fill the gap by examining the learning outcomes of a student teacher inquiry project focused on race/racism in their teaching contexts. Additionally, the aim was to explore ways in which self-study methodology might be strengthened by incorporating methods more consistent with and thus contributory to social justice education. The findings in her study support the notion that the essence of social justice education is inherent in the conceptualization of self-study, particularly with regard to its personal responsibility for both self and student learning and for the enactment of that learning; for its insistent attention to affective, as well as cognitive growth; and, for its aim of learner empowerment. She explains how this potential can only be realized if the implicits are made explicit, if hard questions are asked about issues like race/racism; and if social justice criteria are incorporated into measurements of progress.

In Many Miles and Many Emails: Using Electronic Technologies in Self-Study to Think about, Refine and Reframe Practice, Amanda Berry and Alicia R. Crowe describe their collaboration through the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT). Their chapter explores the development of a long distance critical friendship between two teacher educators, each seeking to better understand how
she might improve the quality of her students’ experiences of learning to teach. The research approach is based on collaborative inquiry conducted via email dialogue. Using this approach, “Each participant in the collaborative research is helping the other identify and interpret his (sic) professional knowledge as a teacher [educator] by reading and commenting on email accounts of teaching-learning experiences” (Beck, Freese, & Kosnik, C., 2004, p. 1269). They describe how email offers a form of ICT that supports the development of thinking about, refining, and reframing practice. They discuss the development of their collaboration through email, issues they encountered through the use of email as a tool for both collaboration and analysis in self-study, and implications for the use of this methodological tool in studying teacher education practices.

The studies in Part III, *Self-Study through Visual Representation*, explore the use of various kinds of visuals both as data and as prompts for reflection in the self-study process. These studies draw upon pictures, video, drawing, and collage as ways of documenting practice and professional experiences, which can then be analyzed for what these visual representations can tell us about practice. In *Faces and Spaces and Doing Research*, Morwenna Griffiths, Heather Malcolm and Zoë Williamson describe their collaborative work which highlights the significance of space and place for research processes and research culture. The authors worked together to develop an inquiry into the question, How do we make places and spaces for research, and how do they influence how and what we research? An iterative and collaborative research design was developed using photos, videos, and other visual representations to create an exhibition with the intention of developing a greater collective understanding of the available spaces and places and their significance for research. The process of analysis is itself done visually through small group presentation and discussion, and then, in more depth, in the process of creating the public exhibition. These visual and discursive dynamics are documented and presented through an in-depth description of the analysis process.

In *Facing the Public: Using Photography for Self-Study and Social Action*, Claudia Mitchell, Sandra Weber, and Kathleen Pithouse look at ways in which working with the visual through the participatory construction and performance of a ‘curated’ photo album can contribute to the public face of self-study in education. Visual approaches facilitate a meaningful engagement with the social and political as well as the professional and personal dimensions of education. In this chapter, their focus is on professional practice in what might be described as ‘the face of change,’ a context in which social issues and ‘going public’ are integrated as an inevitable part of self-study. They illustrate the processes and potential of working with photo albums in self-study with concrete examples from their work with teachers in South Africa, where the practices of teachers and teacher educators are critical in relation to addressing the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. What emerges from their work is the realization that some forms of self-study not only involve changing individual practice and perspectives but can also illuminate critical social challenges and stimulate creative, context-specific responses to those challenges. Building on previous writings (Mitchell & Weber, 1999; Pithouse & Mitchell, 2007; Weber, & Mitchell, 1995, 2004), what they develop (and theorize) further in this chapter is the
social and educative value of going public through participatory and performative visual approaches to self-study.

In *Making Meaning of Practice through Visual Metaphor*, Deborah L. Tidwell and Mary P. Manke describe their use of drawn metaphors as a means to examine their professional practice in administrative work in teacher education programs. Their chapter describes the process they used to develop visual representations of challenges they experienced in their administrative work. Having drawn visuals representing key moments in practice (Tidwell, 2002; Tidwell, & Tincu, 2004), they used these drawings to discuss, deconstruct, reconceptualize, and analyze that practice. Guided by their research question, How can we use metaphorical drawings of nodal moments to inform our practice?, they focused on specific archetypal nodal moments that captured experiential commonalities across typical events in each of their administrative lives. The use of the archetype resonated with similar moments across time and space, which then became the metaphoric representation upon which they focused their discussions and reflections. Tidwell and Manke chronicle the process that unfolded when using nodal moments for self-study research. They describe the impact that drawn metaphorical representations have on understanding their practice and on influencing their professional decision making.

In *Creating Representations: Using Collage in Self-Study*, Mary Lynn Hamilton and Stefinee Pinnegar argue the importance of stepping beyond the veil of tradition to use imaginistic tools to help them see what is absent, important, or unimportant in their texts. Within self-study research they identify three important conversations – dialogue, trust, and ontology. Their work with images combines their interest in all three, especially ontology, as a way to establish the value of the imaginistic in self-study. For this study they return to their early work in collage with a critical eye as they collaboratively explore possibilities and construct analyses. They looked at their previous work for themselves and others with whom they write and think. Imagistic representations like collage are symbolic narratives which force the creator and viewer to think beyond interpretation and tradition. In their chapter they discuss how collage (and other art forms, like poetry and painting) offer levels of nonlinearity facilitating simultaneous understanding of cultural models and praxis (Weber & Mitchell, 2004).

Finally, the book closes with studies that step back, to some extent, from self and examine more explicitly the impact of practice on students while maintaining a reflective stance toward that practice. While the studies in Part IV, *Self-Study on the Impact of Practice on Students*, may use methods similar to those used in the other sections, they differ in that they focus specifically on the impact of their practices on others. *How Do I Influence the Generation of Living Educational Theories for Personal and Social Accountability in Improving Practice?* chronicles Jack Whitehead’s self-study of his working life in the Department of Education at the University of Bath. In this study, Whitehead analyzes the impact his work with educators has had on their professional growth through examining his distinctive academic approach to the education of professional practitioners. In particular, his approach focuses on the generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge from living educational theories in inquiries of the kind, How do I improve
what I am doing? The living theory research methodology used to address this question emerged in the course of his inquiry and includes action reflection cycles from the work of Whitehead and McNiff (2006) and McNiff (2007), methodological inventiveness from the work of Dadds and Hart (2001), and narrative inquiry from the work of Clandinin and Rosiek (2007).

In *Assumption Interrogation: An Insight into a Self-Study Researcher’s Pedagogical Frame*, Robyn Brandenburg seeks to contextualize Dewey’s (1909/1933) attitude of “responsibility” (p. 12) through identifying and interrogating taken-for-granted assumptions about learning and teaching mathematics in preservice teacher education. Beginning with a framed yet flexible research design, Brandenburg used a triad of written reflective tools, ALACT (Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, & Wubbels, 2001), Freewrites (LaBoskey, 1994), and Critical Incident Questionnaires (Brookfield, 1995) to foster reflection in and on learning among her students. She came to see that as a self-study researcher she needed to be responsive to the data, and in some cases be creative about data gathering so that more could be understood about how teacher educator/preservice teachers were making sense of learning through reflection. In this chapter, she presents new understandings that emerged as a result of interrogating assumptions about reflective practice in preservice education which, in turn, relate to understanding ‘reflective traction,’ and the impact of understanding sub-assumptions in learning about teaching through reflective practice.

The final chapter, *Teacher Education for Literacy Teaching: Research at the Personal, Institutional, and Collective Levels*, Clare Kosnik and Clive Beck describe how following 22 graduates helped them identify strengths of the program (e.g., focus on engaging the pupils, creating a class community, incorporating children’s literature). Linking the new teachers’ practices to their preservice program resulted in the identification of seven priorities for teacher education: program planning; assessment; classroom culture and classroom management; vision for teaching; inclusive pedagogy; professional identity; and subject specific knowledge. While they found the design of the study worked well, overall, they found two challenges: analyzing the interviews and developing a classroom observation form that was both focused and suitable for use by the entire research team. Their self-study examines the processes by which they made sense of the data, the process in identifying the seven priorities for teacher education, insights they gained from examining their research practice within a longitudinal research frame, and issues they uncovered when attempting to disseminate their results to the university community.

As Berry and Crowe point out, self-study is often quite messy. In the 13 chapters that follow, the authors present their work in ways that highlight what is problematic for them, not just as teacher educators but as self-study scholars. Moreover, looking across these chapters, we see a wide variety of methods being used within this broad methodology called self-study. Clearly there is no single best way to engage in self-study. Yet as diverse as these chapters are in the specific methods being used, all of these studies use a highly recursive process in which data are revisited, reinterpreted, reframed, and restoried. We agree with Parker Palmer (1998) and Tom Russell (1997). Palmer argues that we teach who we are, while Russell asserts that how
we teach is the message. Self-study provides a means for examining the messages we give as compared to the messages we intend to give, paired with a critical examination of the self that is the medium of those messages. In pursuing self-study, even familiar and comfortable practices become suspect. We cease to be naïve about our practice and increasingly recognize our individual and collective roles in the success or failure of teacher education. External factors (e.g., the students, the curriculum, the administration, colleagues, government mandates, socio-cultural contexts) can no longer excuse us from being responsible for our impact, and thus we are called to change.

References


