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SELF-STUDY IN TEACHER EDUCATION:
A MEANS AND ENDS TOOL
FOR PROMOTING REFLECTIVE TEACHING

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<u>Self Study in Teacher Education: A Means and Ends</u>

<u>Tool for Promoting Reflective Teaching</u>

<u>Abstract</u>

This paper presents an argument for self-study of teacher education practices as a means and ends tool for promoting reflective teaching. The assertion is that self-study serves a dual purpose: as a means to promote reflective teaching and as a substantive end of teacher education. The argument consists of a five-part theoretical rationale for the use of self-study in reflection-oriented teacher education programs. Taken together, the various components of this rationale suggest that the promotion of reflective teaching will require something other than an additive approach to teacher education reform. Rather, self-study calls for a reconceptualization of the very process of teacher education itself. When teacher educators adopt self-study as an integral part of their own professional practice, the terrain of teacher preparation shifts. Self-study becomes more than just a means to the treasured aim of reflective teaching—self-study becomes an end of teacher education in its own right.

<u>Self Study in Teacher Education: A Means and Ends</u>

<u>Tool for Promoting Reflective Teaching</u>

The first social studies methods course I taught served the additional purpose of providing data for a dissertation on preservice teacher development. This first attempt at methods was also my initial, ambitious effort at building a classroom setting characterized by critical discussion, the challenging of assumptions, and an emancipatory discourse. These grandiose efforts were meant to send these beginning teachers into their student teaching semester charged to lead the democratic transformation of public schooling. In the middle of that semester, several class members let me know that my best intentions for the course were not being realized. On this particular day, as the class moved away from a discussion of the appointed topic, multicultural education, and toward a forum for airing grievances with the course, one class member began her contribution by saying, "I don't feel safe in this classroom..." and burst into tears. I was taken aback, to say the least, if not totally surprised. That our classroom had become a less than welcoming environment for some was an unsettling sentiment I had detected in the prior weeks, but try as I might to figure out what was so threatening about our class, I had few answers.

Then, two months later, after the semester came to an unceremonious end, I was nearing completion of an interview of a student/study participant from that class. I asked why she thought some students did not feel free to speak their minds in methods. She replied,

> You have to have, like, a safe place, and where you're going to feel comfortable saying things, and you're going to feel like you can say stuff and you won't get a funny face. I mean, you kind of have that wrinkled face when you look at people, like that right there....You have a face. It's stupid. It's totally stupid. It shouldn't matter, but it does. Like, it shouldn't matter, but if you don't care that I say it, I know that people have said, "And then you're talking and he gets this face like, and it looks like, what are you talking about? Like, are you stupid?" That's what the face looks like.....And it's good to, like, criticize and look at critical parts and pick things apart, but I don't think there was that safe place and developed relationship to do that yet... because some days when we were talking, some days, people around me would say, "I'm scared to say what I'm going to say." That's pretty sad. People were scared to say what they had to say,

that you would look at them funny and look at them like, "What the hell are you talking about?"

I was stunned. This response was truly a revelation to me. Promotion of open discourse was, and is, one of the most valued objectives of my teaching, one that I was unknowingly squelching. Immediately after the interview, I phoned several of my closest friends, all of whom worked outside the field of teacher education, to ask them if they knew of this "look." To a person, they did. One of my closest friends told me he knew the look well. I asked, "What does it mean?" He explained that it meant I was thinking very hard about what he was saying, trying to deeply understand his point. He claimed it was one of my most endearing qualities as a friend. I continued, "Could it mean anything else?" My friend continued, "Oh yeah, if I didn't know you very well, I'd think it means that you think I'm stupid."

Several years later, my efforts in teaching essentially the same methods course, with the same aim of promoting critical reflection, meet with far different results. Each semester, in the very first class meeting of methods, students hear me explain "the look" and what it means. As a result of this simple yet powerful discovery, subsequent groups of students have experienced the class far differently than did that first group. As a teacher educator, I am much better at promoting reflective teaching today than I was several years ago. My newly found effectiveness is not so much a result of using different techniques of instruction, though I have added different strategies to my repertoire. Rather, I believe a large part of the difference is accounted for by knowing something important about my practice that I did not know before, something I only came to know about as a result of self-study.

This story serves as an introduction to the main argument of this paper—an argument for self-study of teacher education practices as a means and ends tool for promoting reflective teaching. The assertion is that self-study serves a dual purpose: as a means to promote reflective teaching and as a substantive end of teacher education in its own right. As reflective teaching has grown to become a treasured aim among growing numbers of teacher educators over the last three decades, a concurrent interest has developed in the manner by which this

aim is effectively advanced among both preservice and experienced teachers. There has been a rush to share experiences of what works in promoting reflective practice, and a growing body of research has addressed particular techniques and strategies for promoting reflective teaching (e.g. Valli, 1992; Calderhead & Gates, 1993; LaBoskey, 1994).

In this paper, I hope to add to that literature by advocating a means of promoting reflection that is not so much a technique as it is an approach to the work of teacher education. Self-study is not a direct intervention done with beginning teachers in the same way as arrow-in-the-quiver methods such as dialogue journals (Stephens and Reimer, 1993), structured curriculum tasks (Beyer, 1984; Hatton and Smith, 1994), or the use of case and ethnographic studies (Gitlin & Tietlebaum, 1983; Fueyo & Neves, 1995). In a larger sense, I argue the potential benefits of self-study by teacher educators are so compelling that self-study should be considered a viable and powerful strategy for promoting reflective teaching in its own right. At the same time, self-study can itself be understood as a reflective end for those teacher educators who aspire to practice that encourages reflective approaches to teaching.

By self-study, I mean intentional and systematic inquiry into one's own practice.[1] Included in this definition is inquiry conducted by individual teacher educators as well as groups working collaboratively to understand problems of practice more deeply. Clearly the story of my own experience is one piece of evidence to strengthen the argument for self-study, but in this paper an attempt is made to build a broader case grounded in more than anecdote. My aim is to advance a five-part theoretical rationale for the use of self-study to promote reflective teaching, while selectively drawing on the experiences of teacher educators and

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[1] As used in this paper, self-study is synonymous with popular notions of teacher research and action research. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) define teacher research as "systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers" (p. 5). Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) define action research as systematic inquiry by practitioners into their own practice, usually proceeding by way of a spiraling, recursive series of at least these four steps-- plan, act, observe, and reflect. Variations on these terms abound. There is significant debate over what should and should not be included under these headings. Questions center on the purpose of the inquiry, whether or not collaboration is an essential feature, who benefits from the research, the use to which resulting knowledge is put, and the intended audience. In this paper, I employ an inclusive, broad definition of self-study, since the argument for self-study presented in this paper applies to a wide range of forms of formalized inquiry by teacher educators into their own practice. A framework for understanding types of self-study/action research is provided by Rearick and Feldman (1999).

researchers who have reported results of studying their own practice. The rationale rests on the following:

- the congruence of reflection with the activity of teaching
- the potential of self study for knowledge production, of value for both local contexts and the broader teacher education research community
- opportunities to model reflective practice
- value of self-study participation for preservice students
- possibilities for programmatic change

Each part of this rationale contributes to an argument for the more widespread practice of teacher educator self-study in programs for the preparation of teachers that feature an emphasis on reflective teaching.

The Congruence of Reflection with the Activity of Teaching

The first part of the argument is a normative conception of teaching that puts reflection at the center. It is common for those who advocate reflective and critically reflective approaches to instructional practice to draw on the work of John Dewey. From the large body of work Dewey produced on the nature of thinking, problem solving, democracy, and educative growth, an idea of teaching emerges that fuses the process of reflection with the process of education such that the two become difficult to analytically separate. Dewey (1916) writes, "The sole direct path to enduring improvement of methods of instruction and learning consists in centering upon the conditions which exact, promote, and test thinking. Thinking *is* the method of intelligent learning..." (p. 153, emphasis in original). Though it may serve our purposes in day-to-day discourse to speak of reflection as something distinct from teaching, for Dewey the concepts intertwine to the point that separating them becomes an artificial act leading to serious and damaging consequences in practice. In other words, education is a construct unified with the idea of reflection. This conceptualization of teaching, including teaching done by teacher educators, makes a definitional case for self-study. That is, if teaching is what teacher educators do, and teaching must include reflection, then self-study, as a form of

reflection, ought to be an essential part of the activity of teacher educators. Thus the process of teaching reflects the process of reflection. The process of reflection reflects the process of teaching. In this same vein, Grumet (1990) maintains that teaching *is* research.

Dewey's theory of reflective thinking (1933) involves both a process and a set of attitudinal dispositions brought to that process. The process is represented by the steps of confronting a puzzling situation; identifying a problem posed by that situation; forming an hypothesis about what might be done to solve that problem; considering the hypothesis by drawing on experiences, linking understandings, and combining ideas; and testing the hypothesis against the realization of desired ends. These steps often overlap and are not meant to describe a mechanical, lock-step process. This theory of thinking could very well serve as a template for framing the activity of teaching. Equally important, the method of thinking, to be meaningful, requires that people approach the task with three essential attitudes, identified by Dewey as open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility (Dewey, 1933). As these attitudes provide the depth and life to the process of reflection, so too do they infuse the activity with meaning and vitality.

Self-study takes Dewey's theory of reflective thinking and brings its features into sharp relief, setting them apart for the purposes of a more mindful consideration than is typically experienced by teacher educators in the daily activity of their work. In some sense, all teachers are reflective in that one cannot perform the activity without thinking about it. Schön's (1983) idea of "reflection-in-action" captures the thinking that teachers bring to their work in the moment of teaching. However, self-study is reflection of a different sort. By distancing oneself from the immediacy of the classroom, by deliberately pursuing understanding— via the intentional framing of a problem, collection of data, and testing of hypotheses— self-study highlights the reflective process and yields knowledge about practice that does not arise from daily practice alone. Self-study is not the whole of teaching, but it mirrors and systematizes that part of pedagogy that is reflection. Contrary to cliché, experience teaches nothing to the non-reflective practitioner. Thus the very nature of the activity of both teaching and reflection is an

argument for self-study by teacher educators. In one very important sense teacher education self-study, the systematic and intentional inquiry into practice by those who prepare teachers, is an ends-oriented tool for promoting reflection by virtue of its congruence with the nature of teaching itself.

Potential for Knowledge Production

A second argument for self-study in teacher education follows closely on the heels of the conceptual congruity between reflection and teaching. Once again, we return to Dewey, who suggests that reflective thinking is always purposeful. It has an end. A problem is solved. A deeper understanding is formed. New possibilities are seen. Yet these outcomes are never ends in themselves. Rather they add to our intelligence such that subsequent experience is influenced. For Dewey, the very test of whether an experience is educative rests in whether that experience makes possible a deeper appreciation for, and intelligence about, future experiences. He defines education as "that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct subsequent experience" (1916, p. 76). In teacher education, then, the knowledge yielded by self-study not only provides insight into the particular issue under investigation but also helps us to recast our future efforts to encourage reflective growth in preservice teachers.

If our aim is to produce teachers who are reflective about professional practice, then self-study can generate knowledge that is useful in two ways. First, there is knowledge about the application of specific techniques to promote reflection. For example, self-studies might explore how the use of videotaped teaching episodes stimulate the reflection of student teachers. Second, and at least as important, the teacher educator/researcher, in the process of investigation, stands to acquire a deeper, more sophisticated theory of promoting reflection that can be brought to bear on problems of practice extending beyond those posed by the particular instance of research. This is true not only when the question under study involves promoting reflective practice, but when other questions are pursued as well. In short, the argument here is that deeper, more sophisticated understandings of teacher education practice put teacher

educators in a position to meet their aims, including, of course, the promotion of reflective teaching.

Examples of teacher educators using self-study to produce useful knowledge about furthering reflective practice are becoming more prevalent. Heichel and Miller (1993) worked collaboratively as a pair of researchers, consisting of university supervisor and student teacher, to examine the question of whether the use of journals during the student teaching semester promoted various kinds of reflection. The project helped them grow in their knowledge of reflective writing in journals and the manner as well as their ability to reflect on practice. Through self-study and reflective dialogue, Rosaen and Gere (1996) developed new ideas about how they might link methods and field experiences in secondary English teacher education. Stanley (1995) utilized self-study in her work with preservice physical education teachers. She investigated her attempts to raise questions of multicultural education via a method she described as "critical-emancipatory action research." In this same vein, several descriptions of action research used by teacher educators to promote critical reflection are found in Tabachnik and Zeichner's *Issues and Practices in Inquiry-Oriented Teacher Education* (1991). In accounts of self-study, researchers usually report developing new knowledge about the particular questions that frame the studies. Importantly, they also tend to describe how the research process enhanced their more general understandings of the ways in which teacher education can work to enhance professional development.

That teacher educator/researchers are finding outlets for the publication of their work is of no small consequence, for the appearance of self-study research in forums accessible by the broader teacher education research community means knowledge that once was of use primarily to self-study researchers now becomes available to many others. Journals such as *Action in Teacher Education, Teaching and Change,* and *Teaching Education* have editorial policies that encourage submissions of self-study research. As traditionally less action-oriented journals in the field, such as *Teaching and Teacher Education* and *The Journal of Teacher Education,* and other research and professional journals outside of teacher education, make space available for

teacher educators who are researching their own practice, the production of knowledge moves from localized settings to a much larger potential audience. As well, in hundreds of conferences from local to international levels, teacher educators are disseminating the knowledge generated by self-study. Since its formation just eight years ago, the American Educational Research Association special interest group "Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices" has grown to become one of the largest special interest groups in the entire organization.

Though there have been questions raised about the extent to which knowledge generated by self-study meets traditional standards of research rigor (and thus adds to the knowledge-base on teacher education), there is no denying what self-study researchers claim the process does for generating knowledge that is useful in improving their own work (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Zeichner, 1993). Furthermore, the growing audience for reports of self-study may attest to the manner in which other teacher educators are finding value in exposure to accounts of teacher education self-study research. While more traditional educational researchers debate the academic rigor of self-study, whether carried out in teacher education or school settings, its rapid acceptance in the research literature has been nothing short of astonishing. As Zeichner (1999) describes in a review of the "new scholarship" in teacher education, self-study is "probably the single most significant development ever in the field of teacher education research" (p. 8).

Thus this piece of the rationale for teacher education self-study suggests that self-study produces knowledge of two different sorts, both useful for promoting reflective teaching. In the first case, there is the knowledge produced by practitioners that helps them understand how better to approach problems in their own immediate contexts and teaching situations. In the second case, there is a more generalizable kind of knowledge that teacher educators in other settings can draw on and adapt to their own teacher education settings. Richardson (1994) sees this distinction as the product of two different kinds of research—practical inquiry and formal research. She argues that both forms of research could play important roles in shaping the practice of preparing teachers, but in different ways. What exactly is the line that separates the

knowledge produced by self-study inquiry from that produced by more formal, academy-bound scholarship? This is a question future researchers need to address. However, for the purposes of this argument, if one goal of self-study research is to improve teacher education practice, particularly with reference to the promotion of reflective teaching, and teacher educators are, in large numbers, reporting that the knowledge produced by self study is helping them do just that, then the question of self-study as formal research very well may be, in effect, truly academic.

<u>Opportunities to Model Reflective Practice</u>

A third argument for viewing self-study as a tool for promoting reflection stems from the role of modeling in teaching. Learning theorists have long understood that students learn more than just the subject matter content of the curriculum. Subject matter is but one feature of an educational setting[2]. Other features of the setting shape what is learned as well, in ways both intended and unintended. Significant among these various features are the methods teachers employ in presenting, or making available for students, the content of a teaching episode. The medium of instruction, typically established in large part by the manner and activity of the teacher, is a large part of what is taught. McLuhan's famous dictum "the medium is the message" amplifies this relationship. The way teacher educators approach their work becomes a significant feature of the hidden curriculum of teacher education (Ginsburg & Clift, 1990).

If indeed students learn from the methods and manner of their teachers, and reflective thinking is an aim of instruction, then teachers should consider the ways in which their own work models reflective thinking. Simply put, students learn reflection from watching their teachers reflect. The point was not lost on Dewey, who wrote, "It is not too much to say that the most important thing for the teacher to consider, as regards his present relations to his pupils, is

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[2] Here I refer to subject matter content as conceptually distinct from the methods of teaching. It is this same analytical distinction that allows us to consider "curriculum" as something different than "instruction." Dewey challenged this "either-or," among other binaries he found harmful to thinking about education. Archambault (1964) notes Dewey's analysis is "a dynamic conception of subject matter, or the content of instruction, as consisting not only in the sentences, ideas and propositions presented, but the *way* in which they are presented by the teacher, and the *way* in which they are treated by the pupil"

the attitudes and habits which his own modes of being, saying, and doing are fostering or discouraging in them" (Dewey in Archambault, 1964, p. 326). For teacher educators who wish to promote reflective practice, an important tool then becomes reflective practice itself. Self-study by teacher educators, a form of deliberate and systematic reflection that is oftentimes visible to students, promotes reflective teaching by the very example it sets.

Teacher educators model, or fail to model, their reflection in various ways in their daily activity (Valli, 1989). For example, students see reflection when a teacher educator pauses in class to consider a remark or through the care and effort a supervisor puts into an observation visit post-conference. These instances of reflection are important, but self-study exemplifies a different sort of reflection. As a deliberate and more formalized form of reflection, self-study sends a message that reflective teaching is more than a hollow slogan, and that teacher educators are disposed to practice what they preach. It establishes they genuinely believe in the method they recommend and the philosophy they advocate.

The idea of modeling reflection to promote reflection is supported by the findings of Loughran (1996). He sought to investigate the ways in which his own efforts to systematically reflect were understood by student teachers in his preservice teacher education course. He used what he called a "thinking aloud" approach in the classroom; he also shared his journal-writing about his teaching with class members and gave them an opportunity to respond to his now public struggles with his practice. Through extensive interviews, he questioned students on how they came to see his efforts to put reflection into practice. He found that these student teachers not only recognized his efforts to make his reflection accessible to them, but they used his attempts at modeling to acquire a sense of how reflection might find a place in their own developing practices. Loughran notes, "The value of reflection for these student-teachers is that it gives them the confidence to test their hypotheses about their teaching and their students' learning. They are able to think about what they are doing and why, and reason through their

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(p. xxvi, emphasis in original). I draw the distinction here to help clarify the argument for the value of self-study as a form of modeling.

problems so that their pedagogy is more appropriate to the given situation" (p. 50). To the extent that self-studies are made visible to students, Loughran's work adds evidence to support the idea of self-study as modeling technique to promote reflection among beginning teachers.

Value of Self-Study Participation for Students

A fourth rationale for self-study as a tool to promote reflective teaching applies only to certain types of practitioner-based research—those that directly involve students in the process of inquiry. When teacher educators examine their work through self-study, they often rely on students to knowingly supply data for the investigation, or invite students into the research as collaborators or co-researchers. Not all self-study is of this type. For example, a teacher educator could do a document analysis of work turned in by students as part of a particular assignment. In this case, the students may not even be aware of how their work is being used. Or a methods teachers could look back after the course has ended at his or her notes taken during the semester in an attempt to systematically explore and more fully understand an identified concern. However, another form of self-study design actively seeks out student participation. In these kinds of studies, the nature of the participation in and of itself can serve as a powerful force for professional development along reflective teaching lines.

The study that led to my story about "the look" was an action research/case study into the question of the development of critical reflection and critically reflective teaching during a methods and student teaching semester (Dinkelman 1999; Dinkelman, 2000). I wanted to ascertain the presence and substance of the critical reflection exhibited by three preservice social studies teacher. In addition, the inquiry was intended to uncover aspects of their experiences that appeared to influence that development. In-depth interviews were conducted with the study participants, and evidence was collected from the field to locate the factors that lent support to, or distracted from, my attempts to promote a critical, democratic conception of social studies and the broader activity of teaching. The list of factors produced by this research draws attention to the complexity of preservice teacher education, as some factors worked to promote reflection for all three preservice teachers, while other factors were peculiar to each

case. An unsurprising, if unintended, finding emerged when each participant testified that their participation in the study was one of the most influential experiences with respect to developing their notions of critical reflection. More specifically, six times during the school year, they sat down with me for interviews in which they faced difficult questions about their developing theories of practice. These were times apart from the normal ebb and flow of classroom life. Here, issues concerning critical reflection were raised, and the process of the interview was an additional opportunity to reflect.

The students valued the requirement that they periodically pull back from their immediate situation and reflect on critical issues. One study participant stated that returning to the very question of reflection over and over again helped him further develop his conception of critically reflective teaching: "...it's been a matter of writing and of speaking on these topics, and keep coming back to them, and it refines it. It narrows it down" (Dinkelman, 1997, p. 246). Another preservice teacher felt the interviews helped him to "articulate what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. So I think it's a good process" (Dinkelman, 1997, p..266). For still a third participant, study participation worked in two ways to help her become more critically reflective. Amplifying her peers' claims, this study participant explained, "I think because we talk about this, it's kind of a special thing... I mean, you bring it up every time. And then I think about it when I go home, and I think, "Hmm, am I really being critically reflective? Am I being reflective at all? If I am, then what am I reflecting on?"" (Dinkelman, 1997, p. 201). As well, she felt the additional contact she had with the teacher educator/researcher, resulting from her study participation, helped to build a level of trust and support that she was not sure would have been there otherwise. She felt such a relationship with a mentor was crucial if she was to explore critically reflective issues together. Thus, in this work, the activity of self-study helped foster a productive relationship and gave cause to revisit the matter of reflection. In these ways, self-study was a tool for promoting reflective practice.

In a similar fashion, Gore and Zeichner (1991) used self-study as a tool for promoting reflective practice by examining the ways their practice facilitated critical reflection in their

student teachers. More precisely, they wished to examine the extent to which the practice of one University supervisor of student teachers (Gore), including her guidance of student teachers through a semester-long action research project, resulted in the development of reflective practice in her students. Here, self-study on her facilitation of her students' action research projects (sometimes called "second-order" action research) achieved a twofold purpose. Self-study promoted reflective practice in student teachers through the facilitation and programmatic support of their own self-study projects, and it promoted reflective practice in the teacher educator as she guided her students through the self-study process.

Possibilities for Programmatic Change

A fifth argument for the use of self-study to promote reflective teaching centers on its potential to generate programmatic change. In an important sense, every time a teacher educator employs genuine self-study, program change happens. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) note, "[I]n every classroom where teachers are learners and all learners are teachers, there is a radical but quiet kind of school reform in process." (p. 101) Yet more noticeable forms of change are also possible. Teacher education happens in the relationship between individual teacher educators and their students, but the accumulation of these experiences across school and university settings and through a planned curriculum of teacher preparation establish the context of initial teacher socialization. Whichever particular strategies promote reflective practice among beginning teachers, their greatest efficacy stems from their coordination within a coherent program of teacher education. When teacher educators develop understandings about their own work in promoting reflective practice through self-study, they generate knowledge that is potentially useful in reforming teacher education programs. Thus, even the impact of lone teacher educators closely studying their own practice extends outward to inform the work of others within a program.

Teacher education is always situated practice. That is, the work of preparing teachers for initial practice always takes place in a particular location shaped by a unique set of personal, institutional, and social characteristics. By working towards similar goals in the same teaching

and learning space, all members of a teacher education program bring knowledge and understandings unique to their own experiences. Yet, at the same time, this expertise is never entirely idiosyncratic, since it is always tied to the particulars of a common teacher education setting. The understandings generated by self-study are, in a sense, custom-made for that setting. Localized knowledge that comes from the study of problems tied to an immediate context suggests opportunities for a more powerful examination of the larger teacher education setting. One's own efforts to promote reflection among beginning teachers yield insights into how an entire program promotes reflective practice. When teacher educators study their own practice, they make changes in their pedagogy, and can suggest changes through conversation and collaboration with peers. The process is reflexive. As self-study informs an immediate context, teacher educators can see the results of direct application of their research efforts, and programs become more effective in promoting reflection. In short, self-study fosters the production and development of knowledge that can help create change in programs as well as changes in pedagogy.

The extent to which the knowledge produced by teacher educator self-study acts as a force for programmatic change is dependent upon several factors. Among these are the channels of communication open to the participants in that program, the determined use of these channels by program participants, and institutional support. Knowledge about promoting reflective practice spreads among teacher educators in various ways, from informal conversation with colleagues and students to more formalized interaction, such as department meetings. Perhaps at no other time is the potential for self-study to influence programmatic change more powerfully felt than when self-study is done collaboratively. Systematic inquiry into one's own practice is often made more productive when alternative perspectives are brought to bear on questions under study. From a programmatic standpoint, collaborative self-study goes beyond merely establishing opportunities to bring diverse viewpoints to the problem of promoting reflective teaching, helpful as that is in its own right.

Indeed, self-study can bring together ways of seeing reflective teaching that are rooted in a shared context, characterized by common experiences stemming from participation in a mutually constructed set of teacher education activities. Collaborative self-study takes advantage of this special sort of insight through a process that encourages greater familiarity with the approaches to inquiry and practice employed by participants in the surrounding teacher education program. In a sum-is-greater-than-its-parts manner, effective and collaborative self-study enables program participants to bring together expertise about promoting reflective teaching. These collaborations create understandings that can lead to program changes tailored to particular teacher education settings. The potential for such deep understandings has lead Richardson (1996) to conclude, "Practical inquiry should be considered as an essential element of the work of individual and groups of faculty members and other teacher educators in understanding and improving their teaching and programs" (p. 727).

In many ways, the argument for self-study as a means to program development parallels recent shifts in emphasis found in the teacher education research community, and even more broadly, in educational research as well. As the process-product research orientation of the 1960s and 1970s proved inadequate to the task of fully explaining the mystery of teacher education, teacher education researchers moved to more interpretive forms of research, approaches to inquiry that honor the complexity of learning to teach (Zeichner, 1999). Reflecting the shift in research orientations, the simultaneous decreasing popularity of competency-based teacher education speaks to the shifting terrain of teacher preparation. The contemporary embrace of qualitative and critical forms of research is fueled by the growing acceptance of an important educational proposition—context counts. The argument for self-study builds on this realization by elevating the local and immediate context to a position of prominence in investigations of teacher education. Of course, models of program effectiveness developed apart from specific teacher education situations can suggest important program modifications. Yet reflective teacher education never takes place in the abstract. Self-study

broadens the range of inquiry tools available to teacher educators looking for ways to better develop teacher education programs for reflective teaching.

Numerous examples highlight the power of collaborative self-study to promote reflective practice, professional development and programmatic change. Ward and Darling (1996) investigated the extent to which they promoted reflective practice in their preservice teachers through the design and teaching of an integrated elementary social studies and language arts methods course. They offer insight received through reflective dialogue and articulate changes that arose in both their students and themselves because of their collaborative self-study. Importantly, Ward and Darling note that the change was twofold, occurring at both the individual and programmatic level: "Collaboration allowed us to construct new frameworks for teaching and conversation helped us to evaluate them. We became self-conscious in the best sense of the word" (86).

Rosean and Gere (1996) worked together to examine ways to increase richer, more reflective learning in their preservice secondary English students. They shared their perceptions of the weaknesses in their instituion's teacher education program. They also identified problems in their own practice through reflective dialogue and continuing self-study. As a result, the program underwent a marked change. For example, methods classes became linked to highly interactive field experiences. Moreover, Rosaen and Gere noted how these programmatic changes resulting from their own self-study fostered more critical reflection in their preservice students. They required students to conduct mini self-studies and analyses as part of their fieldwork, and to share valuable journal entries, effectively highlighting the increase in critical reflection.

On a larger level of programmatic change, self-study is becoming increasingly recognized as an important factor in national teacher education reform efforts. Organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), for instance, require that institutions seeking the its seal of approval demonstrate evidence of self-study among their faculty as they develop and articulate a conceptual framework and rationale for

their programs (Tom, 1997). Similarly, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards lists self-study amongst its five essential propositions of accomplished teaching (Riley, 1998). In addition, various organizations, including the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), have started sponsoring efforts to support teacher research through direct funding (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993).

While it is encouraging to witness the growing respect for self-study as a viable means to achieving programmatic change, it is important to note a potential danger of such national recognition. The very spirit of self-study may be compromised if it becomes institutionally required and backed by funding sources. Genuine self-study is generated and initiated by teacher educators at the local levels because they are curious about something in their own practice and wish to systematically study it. Advocates for self-study as a tool for promoting reflective practice and programmatic change must also be cognizant of ways in which mechanisms of top-down control that seek to regulate self-study projects are contradictory to the notion of self-study. Preserving the potential of self-study for program reform requires guarding against the risks posed by its institutionalization.

Conclusion

Self-study is a powerful tool that can be employed to serve any number of purposes in the preparation of teachers. . The prevalence of different reform traditions in US teacher education reflects various interpretations of fundamental aims and commitments in preparing beginning teachers (Liston and Zeichner, 1991). Self-study can be appropriated by teacher educators to promote non-reflective approaches to teaching. For example, self-study could be used to investigate how teacher education might encourage beginning teachers to see their emerging practice as merely a low-status matter of technical competence in delivering a pre-defined curriculum, as a process that does not require careful consideration of the ethical and relational dimensions of pedagogy.

However the rationale described in this paper suggests that self-study by teacher educators serves some ends better than others. The argument for self-study presented here builds on the claim, as described by Elliott (1993), that the ability of teacher educators "to support reflective practice in schools is dependent on the extent to which they operate as reflective practitioners themselves" (p. 10). The reflective turn in teacher education of the past two decades calls for more than an introduction of new techniques and practices designed to push beginning teachers toward personal theories of teaching that value reflection. The call is further reaching, in that it asks teacher educators to themselves approach their work reflectively. Self-study systematizes, channels, and gives form to such reflection.

The five-part rationale sketched in this paper begins to address the power of self-study as an integral part of teacher education for reflective practice. Self-study is congruent with the activity of teaching and thus calls forth the reflective dimension of instructional practice. It further generates knowledge about the promotion of reflective practice, knowledge that is of value in local contexts and to the broader educational research community. By making self-study visible to their students, teacher educators promote reflective teaching by modeling an inquiry-based approach to pedagogy. Going further, when beginning teachers are participants in self-study research projects, they are offered first-hand experiences that encourage a deeper mindfulness about the ways in which their teacher education curriculum is encouraging their development as teachers. And finally, self-study, especially in its collaborative forms, generates rich understandings that can be used to facilitate program change.

Taken together, the various components of this rationale suggest that the promotion of reflective teaching will require something other than an additive approach to teacher education reform. That is, leading new teachers to see the value of reflective approaches to teaching involves something more than merely adding the right exercises and techniques to a teacher education curriculum. Rather, self-study requires a reconceptualization of the very process of teacher education itself. When teacher educators adopt self-study as a integral part of their own professional practice, the terrain of teacher preparation shifts (Adler, 1993). Self-study becomes

more than just a means to the treasured aim of reflective teaching—self-study becomes an end of teacher education in its own right. In this sense, self-study situates itself as a reflexive and mutually informing means and ends component of teacher education for reflective practice. Whether the outcome of self-study is as complex as a re-theorizing of the foundations of one's work as a teacher educator, or as simple as the realization that a "look" given to a student in class discussion can be threatening, this rationale is a call for the increasing presence of self-study in the evolving landscape of preparing beginning educators as reflective teachers.

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