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Self-study of Practice as a Genre of Qualitative Research

Theory, Methodology, and Practice

SELF-STUDY OF PRACTICE AS A GENRE
OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices

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SELF-STUDY OF PRACTICE
AS A GENRE
OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

THEORY, METHODOLOGY,
AND PRACTICE

by

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Preface

Self-study is a stance toward understanding the world. Scholarship in the social sciences has as its basis human interaction and when one person studies another, the self in relation to the other becomes a primary focus. As researchers write biography, collect narrative, study history, employ an action research cycle, or even investigate economic issues, the questions raised and the interpretations proposed emerge from within the researcher's head as do understandings of the data, the literature, and the document sources. In other words, in the social sciences we study ourselves in relationship to others and we seek to gain understanding in order to move ideas forward in specific settings like classrooms or more general settings like education. Researchers engaged in self-study methodology do not reject other research paradigms, strategies, or methods. Rather we use those methods rigorously taking into account the researchers' position as both the researcher and researched and as having a central role in the practice being studied. When we label the work we do as self-study, we do so because in the collection of the data and the presentation of the work, we make the relationship of self to the other a central part of the focus of the work. This book attempts to make the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices (S-STTEP¹) methodology transparent for those researchers and practitioners interested in the work.

We organized this book with attention to what we perceive as the next steps for the S-STTEP community. Looking back on previous conferences, including the American Educational Research Association and the Castle Conference (focused specifically on research done by self-study scholars), we see a multitude of definitions, standpoints, and understandings about the work in self-study. More importantly, we see many levels of experience. Consequently, we bring our perspectives on

¹ Commonly, self-study is captured through the work of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices SIG of AERA, and so S-STEP is the most common acronym associated with this work. As the *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* illustrates, the acronym for self-study work should be S-STTEP as it is meant to be inclusive of teachers beyond those teachers in teacher education. However, the acronym has tended to remain unchanged in general use as a consequence of the naming of the SIG. We therefore use the full acronym in this book to ensure that the "teaching" is not considered restricted to teacher educators only, despite the fact that they have been the pioneers of this work.

theory and practice into this text in a variety of ways. Since we believe in the strong interrelationship of theory-experience-practice, we begin by introducing theoretical issues about self and practice and then take PAUSES throughout the text to invite consideration of the ways we might move theory to experience to practice and back again.

First, however, we have certain chapter routines. Before every chapter we present questions around which we organized the text. Then after each chapter we make *connections* using relevant quotes from a variety of scholars to underscore critical points in the chapter. We also offer a brief discussion or interpretation of the quote along with possibilities and wonderings to consider. We have also included activities designed to deepen understandings about dialogue, the characteristics of self-study, and the issues of knowledge in-of-for practice.

We organized the text in this way. In Chapter 1 we frame our plan for the exploration of S-STTEP research methodology. In Chapter 2 we consider practice and why it might be a worthwhile focus for research.

At this point we PAUSE, to introduce frameworks for inquiry and analysis that can guide research design and analysis as well as help consider the success of your potential research efforts. We also introduce an example from our work to illustrate how one of us used these frameworks.

In Chapter 3 we begin a discussion of ontology, a focus on what is real, as a grounding for an S-STTEP research. To complement our words and ideas we PAUSE this time to include a pertinent discussion that situates self-study within the larger context of qualitative research. Here we offer a useful graphic that places S-STTEP research alongside other qualitative research methodologies.

In Chapter 4 we explore dialogue and its value within S-STTEP research. At the end of this chapter we present an activity that calls for definitions and practical applications of the ideas presented about dialogue.

At this point in the text we PAUSE again. This time we offer an activity to help identify S-STTEP research. This activity explores characteristics of self-study proposed by LaBoskey (2004) and requires application of ideas presented in previous chapters. The next two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) focus more on the dailiness of conducting and completing S-STTEP research. Those who conduct these kinds of studies realize fairly quickly that data collection strategies and analytic processes are not unique to S-STTEP research. In fact, S-STTEP researchers make adjustments to typical strategies for data collection since the data must capture evidence of practice from the perspective of the self and the other as well as the space between those two. As a result of the tension between self and the other, the common *us* of collaborators and dialogue as the basis of knowing, there are special issues in data analysis and interpretation. We define and explain data analysis techniques generally and then articulate the additional concerns of S-STTEP researchers attending to how these concerns are met. Here we reinforce understandings about *dialogue* and examine how dialogue informs our research process.

Between Chapters 5 and 6 we PAUSE again to reconsider the framework for inquiry and analytic charts. Once researchers progress in their thinking about selected

issues, it becomes appropriate to reconsider what, where, how, and so on in a deeper fashion. Again we extend a discussion of how one of us progressed in her work using these tools.

Issues of ethics and value become part of our discussion in Chapter 7. Here we address the tensions regarding these terms and related meanings. For example, we explore relationships (if they exist) between validity and trustworthiness along with the spaces between authority of experience and authority of reason. Another PAUSE finds us reexamining our frameworks and analysis. We revisit points within the frameworks and include the final public documentation of our example. We present it, not as a perfect example, but as one example of the development from inception to published work. Finally, we examine how the two frameworks that guided this S-STTEP informed this work.

In our concluding chapter, Chapter 8, we return to points raised throughout the text to draw together our ideas. Then, in a final PAUSE we offer a comparison of general qualitative research and self-study methodologies. In particular we address the ways in which S-STTEP research extends general qualitative research strategies to enhance this work.

In appendices we include three items that we find important. First, we have selected Castle Proceedings readings that connect with the knowledge in-of-for activity after Chapter 5. Second, we include a short case regarding Institutional Research Boards (IRBs). In our experience as S-STTEP researchers we notice more and more colleagues concerned about how to approach IRB expectations and felt it important to include relevant information. To that end we offer a case from one institution as one representation of working with an IRB. Third, we include a glossary for quick reference. Here we offer brief definitions of terms used through the text.

Given our desire to address our community we grappled with pronoun use, specifically the use of “you,” in our text. Since we imagined our community alongside us in conversation – beginner and veteran – we sometimes used the pronoun “you” not as a prerogative “you” or a parental “you” but as a collegial you – as in “you might consider this, colleague.” Sometimes in our text we simply present ideas to be considered. Other times we invite *you*, the reader, to join in our exploration.

As researchers and colleagues, we have worked together for many years. In this text we share the ways we have come to think about the work involved in S-STTEP. With our community of scholars in mind we offer this text not as the answer to questions or the way to pursue research. Rather, we offer our text as a way to continue grappling with the ideas around self-study to forward the conversation. Whether a novice or a veteran in self-study, we hope you will find our ideas provocative in ways that beneficially push forward your work.

Note: As self-study researchers we are committed to improvement of practice. Although in this text we may simply state – improvement of practice – let us make clear from the outset of this text that we mean improvement of practice for the benefit of *all* people in a way that is just and treats each person with dignity, humanity,

and honesty. Further, improvement of practice includes a commitment to an elimination of domination, exploitation, and discrimination of any one over another and a sensitivity to the many facets of diversity. As LaBoskey admonished

[If] we take this [claim for the improvement of practice] seriously – of caring for *all* of our student and our students’ students – then . . . we necessarily need to acknowledge the current inequities that exist in our classrooms, our institutions, and our societies. This in turn will require use to actively engage – in ways guided by a social justice agenda – in the transformation of these contexts and the individuals, including ourselves, who support and sustain them. (p. 1181)

We add to that – taking seriously also the care of teacher educators and others so that when we address improvement of practice we begin that “explicit intentionality” (p. 1181) called for by LaBoskey (2004a).

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Making Connections

... inquiry is not a search “behind the veil” of appearances that ends in the identification of appearances that ends in the indication of an unchanging transcendent reality. Instead, inquiry is an act within a stream of experience that generates new relationship that then becomes a part of future experience. It also problematizes the boundaries of inquiry. If experience is continuous, then the initial parameters we set up for our inquiry are themselves a form of relation that can and should be questioned in the course of ongoing research. (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 41)

Connections to Consider

S-STTEP inquiry is situated in the midst of context, content, and process. This kind of inquiry involves questioning all three of these aspects from our perspectives while simultaneously accounting for the experience of the other(s) within our practice. As this quote reminds us, understanding our practice is not about seeking to unmask an unchanging reality. Instead we seek to make sense of the stream of experience we act within, knowing that our action generates new relationships, new practices, and new understandings of our reality. The way we stand in that stream defines its boundaries, and the way we move through it forms our practice and our inquiry into it. Our dialogue with the fluid and colliding parameters of our study within our experience leads us to know that we know, how we know, and what we know. Our preface has positioned us within an historical stream of experience and provides our account of how we come to be here at this place and time.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder, if experience is continuous, how do we come to make sense of it? We ask you to ask yourself:

- What impact does being in the midst of constructing practice have on self-study of practice? Inquiry?

- How is inquiry an act within the stream of experience? And how do the two influence each other?
- How do the relationships I create and come to understand lead to new inquiry?

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Chapter 1

Arriving at Self-Study

Questions

- *How Do We Arrive at Self-Study?*
- *Why Study Practice, Particularly from the Perspective of the Self Engaged in Practice?*
- *What Supports the Task of Developing Questions for S-STTEP Research Topics?*
- *How Do We Locate Ourselves Paradigmatically?*
- *How Does the Use of Dialogue Promote Value as a Basis for Knowing?*
- *How Are Considerations of Research, Ethics, and Values Informative?*
- *What Reconsiderations Can Guide Us?*

In this chapter we present an organizing plan for our text. Some researchers have seen self-study methodology as controversial. One reason for this is the perception that there is a disconnection between self-study methodology and the research methods and strategies employed by self-study of teaching and teacher education practices (S-STTEP)¹ researchers. Another is the lack of agreement on a single definition for self-study of practice research. While we do not claim to have THE answers regarding self-study methodology, we use this text to present our understandings and in that way situate S-STTEP research *in the midst* of research that contributes to teaching and teacher education. As the questions above indicate, issues of practice, ontology, and dialogue will take the center stage in this text. Less apparent from the questions but important in the text are the aspects of dailiness – research strategies, for example – in this work. We use this chapter to frame the work that follows.

Self-study methodology emerged at a time when what seemed acceptable by the academy did not answer the emerging questions about practice. In fact, some researchers questioned taken-for-granted assumptions about methodology, practice, and the ownership of knowledge-pondering issues like the following: did practitioners understand their experiences in ways that counted as knowledge, or were only researchers standing outside the experience competent to identify that which contributed to the knowledge base? In teacher education, questions about teaching

¹(See first footnote of preface.)

and teacher educators emerged where those outside practice and classrooms raised questions about the validity of the research undertaken by those engaged in practice and in classrooms. Essentially, questions about the ownership of knowledge along with questions about the claims of certain knowledge and what those claims must look like emerged from this history, as did questions about which branches of education could claim knowledge about teaching and teacher education. While these questions are epistemological ones, most recently we have realized that fundamentally establishing self-study as a methodology centers on a look toward ontology. The basic question is actually more about *what is* than about claims to know.

Those conducting the research in teaching and teacher education were not or did not necessarily consider themselves teachers or teacher educators. In the United States, during the 1950s teacher education was a highly contentious issue, especially with the emergence first of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) in the late 1940s and then the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the 1950s. Liberal Arts Colleges, which had hitherto provided the bulk of teachers, saw themselves losing out to the professional schools of education and the new standards. At the core was tuition money, of course, but ideologically the “Great Debate” centered on teacher education and whether teachers were best prepared by having a strong liberal arts background or by having a practice-centered curriculum. Ultimately schools/colleges of education won out, largely because the wave of post-war children started to swamp liberal arts colleges (for a history of the relationship of universities and schools of education, see Clifford & Guthrie, 1988 or Labaree, 2008).

Prior to the 1970s, scholarly research on education was dominated by psychology, with the other disciplines of philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and history contributing to the body of the literature. Although all of these disciplines provided contextual theory to education, few authors concentrated directly on the practices of teaching (Lagemann, 2000). The change in this perspective and focus began first with the development of research centers that studied teaching (once at Michigan State and more currently at the University of Wisconsin, Madison) and with the emergence of Invisible College for Research on Teaching and Teacher Education at about the same time. Initially, this work centered on the effective teaching movement (represented clinically in the Essential Elements of Instruction or the Madeline Hunter Model).

However, as interests in cognitive science emerged and researchers became more involved with teachers and their interactions with practice, attention moved from research on effective practices in teaching to research on student and teacher cognition (documented in the various chapters in Wittrock, 1986). As researchers became interested in teacher thinking and its development, they became more interested in knowledge growth in teaching and its relationship to teacher education. Importantly, Schön’s *Reflective Practitioner* (1983) generated renewed interest in the development of tacit knowledge in various arenas of professional practice. In education, as researchers became more interested in tacit knowledge, teacher cognition, and teachers’ personal practical knowledge, this arena of research became vitalized, and teacher educators themselves began studying teaching and teacher development more directly.

This interest in the direct study of teaching and the practice of teacher education coincided with teacher educator's increasing discomfort with the representation of their research in the distanced voice of the third person. Situated in the crisis of representation in the general research community of the time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), these teacher educators began to explore their own practice and the ways this study of their practice could contribute to teacher education and teacher development. At the same time, the crisis of representation sparked questions about tenure and how these researchers might fit (successfully) within the academy. Consequences of these interests and questions included the organization in the early 1990s of an international group of researchers known as the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices-Special Interest Group (S-STEP-SIG). At its inception, these researchers situated themselves outside traditional research and inside the experience of practice.

In his 1998 vice presidential address to Division K, Zeichner argued

that a significant development in the new scholarship of teacher education is that more and more of the research about teacher education is being conducted by those who actually do the work of teacher education. The birth of the self-study in teacher education movement around 1990 has been probably the single most significant development ever in the field of teacher education research. (1999, p. 8)

While still in its infancy, this movement continues to attract teacher educators to this form of research. Research using this methodology allows researchers to document not only what they learn about teaching and teacher education from the study of them, but also the tacit and personal practical knowledge they possess that contributes to our knowledge and understanding of teaching. It allows teacher educators to more fully bring their scholarship into their teaching by providing a robust methodology for studying teaching and teacher education practice.

This shift in focus occurred in research within and beyond teacher education. Whether called auto-ethnography or auto-phenomenology or self-study or by another name, the recognition of the authority of the researcher engaged in practice and the turn of the work toward an ontological frame bring a provocative texture to this scholarship. In our text we elaborate on the theoretical strengths of this work and explicate the ways to engage in S-STTEP methodology.

How Do We Arrive at Self-Study?

Standing together as authors on a new threshold of learning about self-study research, we wonder what brings you, the reader, to this text. Is it as simple as a professor assigning a project of self-study of practice? Is it that you are intrigued by the idea of a study of self? Is it that you were interested in practice? Is it that as a practitioner you have been interested for a long time in what you do and why you do it? Is it that you hold an interest in practical knowledge and wonder how your practice might reveal what you know about teaching and how you know it? Is your interest directed not so much at either the self or the practice but at how action and understanding grow in the space between them? We consider that perhaps you are

new to self-study research or want to try it out for the first time. Or perhaps like us you have been doing self-study research for a long time and you just wonder whether there is anything you do not already know. Or perhaps you want to understand better what you already do. Or perhaps you hope to develop new strategies for studying your practice in order to understand more or become better. We know there can be many possibilities.

Whatever brought you here, we are both, you as reader and we as writers, arriving at self-study research. Just like Feldman (2006) suggests, we are always becoming practitioners and self-study researchers at the same moment that we are acting as one or the other – we are being researchers of our professional practice. We stand in that tension between arrival and arriving. As S-STTEP researchers, what we study is not just about understanding what we do and how we do it, but also about how we can improve it (practice). In this way, we stand in a place of growth and change. Such ground is never solid and secure; it is not a ground from which foundational claims about what we know can be made, since what we know changes and evolves as we act upon it. However, as we study we develop confidence in what we understand, how we act, and how we share what we know within the larger arena of research literature. We have come to this confidence through developing and using the strategies for doing S-STTEP research that we discuss in this text.

Reading this book is an exercise in improvement, yours and ours. As we write this book and as we use it to help others become better S-STTEP researchers, our knowledge of practice and the study of it improve. We agree with Pagano (1991) who says, “To act is to theorize” (p. 194). From this perspective we believe that practice is an integrated yet physical expression of both experience and theory. To this end, we have a dual focus in each chapter. We offer ways to understand how to conceptualize, design, and undertake an S-STTEP research project, while we simultaneously suggest ways to understand the theoretical groundings of the research – in other words, we hope to explore the *practice* of S-STTEP research.

We begin by considering practice and attempting to unravel the relationship of self and practice in this kind of research. As we proceed through the text, we push on the theory–experience–practice relationship as we address what we consider to be the essential aspects of S-STTEP research.

Why Study Practice, Particularly from the Perspective of the Self Engaged in Practice?

Initially, in Chapter 2, we explore the value of studying practice along with what can be known in and of practice. As S-STTEP researchers, our orientation is toward improvement. We believe that educational theory, unlike psychological theory, for example, is living. It lives in the practices of teachers and teacher educators. It lives because it is based in practice, and therefore as practice grows and changes, our understanding grows and changes and our theories grow and change.

S-STTEP research leads us to understand practice better, share the assertions for understanding and action in practice, and create more vibrant living educational theory. While S-STTEP exists on shifting ground, it also leads to the development of powerful theories clothed in practice and told from the perspective of the practitioner. Because it is based in teaching and teacher improvement and expressed in the voice of the practitioner, self-study is fundamentally political and also provides fruitful sites for inquiries. Most of what we know about teaching and teacher education practice resides in the hearts, minds, and actions of teachers and teacher educators. Unfortunately, a treasure-trove of that knowledge disappears as teachers and teacher educators leave the profession. Unless we use research practices such as the S-STTEP methodology and encourage teachers and teacher educators to move what they know tacitly to explicit knowledge of teaching and teacher education, we risk losing wisdom of and insights into teaching and teacher education.

Writing along the fine line of theory–experience–practice, we PAUSE after our discussion of practice to introduce frameworks that we use to guide research design and analysis. The first framework is referred to as an *inquiry planner*. The planner guides self-study researchers through the process of identifying a site for an S-STTEP research project, narrowing that to a question or an issue, designing data collection and analysis, and conducting the study. The second tool we use is the *analytic framework for S-STTEP research*. This tool supports self-study researchers in evaluating the quality of their own work and the work of others in the process of conducting the research. In this PAUSE we also introduce an example of S-STTEP. The thread of this example will be carried through the text to elucidate understandings about the process involved in S-STTEP methodology. This leads us to a series of chapters that articulate the process.

What Supports the Task of Developing Questions for S-STTEP Research Topics?

In Chapter 3 we begin with finding questions. We suggest that an ontological stance when developing a study better situates researchers in self-study methodology. Here we stipulate ontology to mean a focus on what is real, constructed from our place within that experience with a commitment to shaping what is real to conform more closely with what we value. We offer guidance in finding questions to guide S-STTEP research and shape those questions in ways that lead to engagement in fruitful studies while simultaneously exploring ontology as the grounding for this research. Confronted by the holistic nature of practice, determining the focus of a self-study is often not a simple task. We explore the identification of living contradictions, sites of discernment, and professional curiosity as fundamentally political. In this chapter we guide researchers in identifying issues and concerns in order to sharpen the focus of the study. In addition, we examine how an ontological stance supports the trustworthiness and moral commitment underlying S-STTEP research.

How Do We Locate Ourselves Paradigmatically?

In our discussion we PAUSE to situate S-STTEP research within a broader historical and methodological context. We do not retell the history of how the S-STTEP work began in teacher education. Rather, we situate self-study work within the realm of qualitative research and position it alongside other similar and different methodologies, offering a diagram to represent explicitly those similarities and differences with the intention of exposing the strengths of all. Indeed, we believe an overarching understanding of how we position ourselves as S-STTEP researchers in relationship to other paradigms of research can support S-STTEP researchers in realizing the unique and overlapping aspects of S-STTEP research.

How Does the Use of Dialogue Promote Value as a Basis of Knowing?

Situated paradigmatically, researchers explore how to design the context of S-STTEP research. In Chapter 4 we define dialogue and assert its value as a basis for knowing in the S-STTEP research. Through dialogue, researchers develop their ideas about and their knowledge of practice. We articulate our understanding of *dialogue* as the process of coming-to-know in S-STTEP research and examine how recognition of this process of coming-to-know guides researchers in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. In Chapters 5 and 6 we address the dailiness of self-study methodology by offering some detail about strategies used to examine practice and approaches to data analysis.

How Are Considerations of Research, Ethics, and Values Informative?

In Chapter 7 we turn to a discussion of how the S-STTEP research connects and contributes to teacher education research generally as well as issues of ethics and value. We have long labeled the findings that emerge from S-STTEP research as *assertions for action and understanding* (Berry & Loughran, 2002). We have marked them in this way to distinguish them from “results” or “findings” that emerge from other research paradigms. Because the knowledge that emerges from S-STTEP research is different from knowledge that emerges from other kinds of research, we take time to explore how S-STTEP research can inform and be informed by more traditional research. We explore Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2004) conception of knowledge in, of, and for practice as a strategy for delineating the differences in these kinds of knowledge and the ways in which self-study overcomes discord among them. We also examine the ethics and value of this kind of research, exploring issues of establishing coherence and trustworthiness in such research.

What Reconsiderations Can Guide Us?

In our concluding chapter, Chapter 8, we return to points in the text to reconsider issues we have presented. We use this reconsideration not just to recapitulate what we have explored together but also to interrogate and develop these understandings:

1. We believe that S-STTEP researchers are guided by unique assumptions about research that are revealed in the stances toward research that we take on. S-STTEP researchers ground their research in ontology (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) and embrace dialogue as the process of knowing (see Arizona Group, 2004).
2. S-STTEP researchers believe that providing careful and accurate accounts documenting the pragmatic resolution of an intractable problem of teaching, how one might act on or understand differently a dilemma of teacher education, and how knowledge and relationships developed in practice are of value (Putnam, 2004).
3. As part of our stance toward research, we desire to create “living” examples of the practices and theories we value. Our interest in these kinds of research tangles – commitment to creating “living educational theory,” our willingness to grapple with and make public the private, and our dedication to finding ways to collect evidence that will allow for a systematic analysis of both the internal and external aspects of the experience – are the constellation of practices in research that energize us and lead us to continue to embrace self-study methodology and engage in self-study practices.

As we explained at the beginning of this chapter, researchers arrive at S-STTEP research from a number of directions and for a number of reasons. Probably, the fundamental reason is that they care about understanding and improving practice. Thus, a central focus of this kind of research is on the understanding and improvement of practice. Other researchers arrive at S-STTEP research because they wish to understand phenomena that require that they have unfettered access to the thinking of the practitioner. They desire to understand practice better, believing that such understanding will lead to improvement. They desire to study how the improvements they make influence and shape their practice and the impact that action has on understanding practice. Indeed the functional definition of S-STTEP is that self-study is the study of teacher education practice in order to understand and improve it. The purpose of this book is to help practitioners understand and do S-STTEP research.

From our experience as S-STTEP researchers and with the resistance generated by this work, we realized that the kind of work that informs teacher education and teaching is often dismissed in the academy. We came to understand that there needed to be a questioning of the taken-for-granted assumptions of a field that negated the essence of what the field of research was purported to do. Who owns the territory of research? Who can claim knowledge? What must those claims look like? What areas of field can claim knowledge about teaching and teacher education?

We recognize that ontology (the study of what is real) implies epistemology (the study of how we know what is real), and epistemology implies ontology. We can

know what is only in so far as our epistemological stance tells us. However, we realized that for us the basic question has always been more about *what is* than about claims to know. This led us to identify ontology, rather than epistemology, as the orienting stance in S-STTEP research. Through this work, we hope to develop new understandings about the power and promise of S-STTEP research and that progress these understandings will energize in teaching and teacher education. We are pleased you have arrived at this point in your journey as S-STTEP researchers and hope that the text will move you forward in your work.

We (Mary Lynn and Stefinee) became self-study researchers by accident. As we (the Arizona group) left a session of Invisible College, a pre-conference for AERA in 1990, we were discussing our experiences as young academics and the ways in which we could not understand these experiences. We stood on the steps, next to a fountain, deeply engaged in our conversation. When Tom Russell said to us, “You’re qualitative researchers. Why don’t you study your own experience in the practice of educating teachers?” we immediately began developing our first self-study (Guilfoyle, 1991; Hamilton, 1991; Pinnegar, 1991; Placier, 1991). The experience was so energizing that the next year Tom asked to join us and we decided to continue to study ourselves, but we were more interested in understanding better our specific practices as teacher educators (Guilfoyle, 1995; Hamilton, 1995; Pinnegar, 1995a; Placier, 1995; Russell & Pinnegar, 1995). The energizing entanglement that comes from creating understandings of practice and developing better practice continues to liberate us and keeps us engaged in S-STTEP research.

In the next chapter we explore the self in self-study and begin to probe the ways in which practice and self-study can work together in S-STTEP research. This chapter sets the groundwork for our discussion in Chapter 3 about practice and the ways a person’s ontological stance affects research choices about practice and about methodology.

Making Connections

History, literature, story-telling, therefore, have important functions because they provide discourses and opportunities for dealing with experiences by discussing them. Only experiences confirmed and corroborated through discussion and coped with as collective experience can be said to be truly experienced. According to this view, consciousness is the historically concrete production of meaning, and every historical situation contains ideological ruptures and offers possibilities for social transformations (Sarup, 1993, p. 187).

Connections to Consider

Sarup's quote reminds us that life is particular and contextual. His naming of those contextual elements from the abstract "history" to local and personal "story-telling" echoes our understanding of the abstract and concrete contextual frames that inform and shape our experiences and how we make meaning of them. This quote asserts that we must not just report our experience but open that report to discussion filled with the ebbs and flows of interpretation and the disruption, rupture, and agreement that form a conversation.

In this introduction we began to address the uncertainty researchers may experience as they begin to consider self-study of practice. It would not be far-fetched here to reflect on Dewey's (1933) notions of open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility as we move through this text. Because self-study research can be both similar to and different from other research, openly engaging in this work will be important. In this quote, Sarup reminds us that we may stand in the present, but our history – personal and social – affects our stories and potential for change.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about the ways our personal stories may affect our approaches to research. We ask you to ask yourselves the following questions:

- What are my own living contradictions?
- What are sites of discernment?
- In what ways might I study my own practice?

Chapter 2

The Self, the Other, and Practice in Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices Research

Questions

- *Why “Self” in S-STTEP Research?*
- *What Are the Self and the Other in S-STTEP Research?*
- *How Do We Conceive of Practice?*
- *What Do We Mean by Practice?*
- *What Can Be Known from Practice?*
- *What Is Tacit Knowledge?*
- *What Is Personal Practical Knowledge?*
- *How Does the Concept of the Present Moment Help Us Understand Practice?*
- *How Do These Conceptions Relate to Each Other?*
- *What Can Be Known from Practice?*
- *What Is the Relationship Between Experience, Theory, and Practice?*
- *Why Conduct S-STTEP Research?*
- *What Is the Relationship of Issues of Power and S-STTEP Research?*
- *How Do We Address Understanding and Meaning-Making Through S-STTEP Research?*

As we construct this book to share with you and relearn for ourselves what S-STTEP research is and how to do it, we begin with the name itself. To summarize succinctly we define self-study in the words of Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998a) as,

the study of one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas ... It is autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political ... it draws on one’s life, but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known and ideas considered. (p. 236)

We do this not to provide a detailed definition of S-STTEP research, since Loughran (2004) and others (e.g., Ham & Kane, 2004) provide excellent elaborations. Instead, in this chapter, we explore how S-STTEP researchers interpret the “self” in the title of this methodology and how attention to the *self* functions as a characteristic of self-study of practice research. As we do that, we will consider the role and contribution of the *other* in this research. Then, we turn to a consideration of practice: what it is, what can be learned from it. Finally, we return to the question of why a researcher might conduct S-STTEP research.

Why “Self” in S-STTEP Research?

The self in the label of the self-study of practice research often distracts researchers. Immediately they begin to think about this study as somehow a study of self or even mostly a study of self when actually the purpose of the word “self” in the label is an assertion that the self – who is enacting a practice with others – is the self who is doing the study and is in practice. When distracted by the word “self” in the title, people take it up as the focus of the research, or their critique of it or the views and ideas they have about the current state of psychological research on the self. While various theories of the self can be helpful as we engage in research on our practice, conceptions of the self are in many ways tangential since it is not the self but the *self and the other in practice* that is of most interest.

LaBoskey (2004a) identifies self-focus and self-initiation as one of the characteristics of S-STTEP methodology. In its very title, this research places responsibility for practice and the developing understanding of it on the self conducting the inquiry – the self who initiated the research. For this reason, S-STTEP research participates in different processes of knowing and different orientations toward the epistemological questions of what it means to know, *what is worth knowing*, and how one can verify what one asserts as knowledge. From this orientation the self, who is the inquirer, has a private vested interest in coming to understand the practice. The self seeks to explore the gap between who I am and who I would like to be in my practice and studies that self and the others involved as the self takes action to reduce or alter that gap. Producing untrustworthy findings has intense personal consequences for the inquirer. The researcher holds himself or herself accountable to truly understand, because of the deep personal stake the inquirer has in developing and utilizing the understandings that emerge – it is always personal.

When theories of self increase our understanding of ourselves in relationship to our practice or the others in our practice, then they become interesting to S-STTEP researchers. For example, Harré and van Langenhove’s work (1998) in positioning theory articulates the ways in which identities (conceptions of the self) emerge as we position others and are positioned by them. They suggest it is not always how we are positioned but which positions we take up and how we embrace and enact the rights, responsibilities, and duties entailed in one position rather than another. This theory can be used as a tool to examine how we understand or enact practices as we position and are positioned by students, our institutions, or our colleagues. It can be a valuable tool for S-STTEP researchers because it allows for a consideration and exploration of the space between self and the other in practice rather than simply a focus on self.

The self in the title, S-STTEP research, positions the researcher as a particular kind of inquirer and declares the relationship of that inquirer both to the practice and to others who are engaged with the inquirer in constructing the practice. It also marks who takes responsibility for doing, understanding, enacting, and improving the practice. In asserting this position, inquirers embrace Dewey’s (1933) notions of the learner as open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible, since it is these orientations of working to learn from, understand and take action toward improvement that the “self” in this kind of research embraces.

As traditionally trained researchers, we may know “tricks” for verifying the “truths” we want to assert. We can get a larger sample. We can use a different expert. We can ask the question in a different way. We can collect a different set of observations. We can connect to a different theoretical framework for explanation. However, if the inquirer has a personal stake – the understanding and improvement of the practices and relationships they are enacting with the other(s) in the practice setting – then developing accurate, coherent trustworthy accounts has value. Indeed, assertions that the inquirer knows to be untrue or flimsy seem not only pointless but also to involve deep self-deception as well as research fraud. While any researcher conducting any kind of research might have a moral and ethical commitment to establish the validity of his/her findings, in S-STTEP research, because the inquirer is the self and the practice being studied is his or her own and the relationships being reported are personal as well as public, the ethical and moral obligations have public as well as personal strength. What our mothers said to us as children, “when you lie, you are only lying to yourself,” can also hold true for the S-STTEP researcher. Thus, the position in doing self-studies that an S-STTEP researcher can claim as accurate and trustworthy is both a public and a private one. In the design and the analysis of S-STTEP research, we, as researchers, hold high expectations for the integrity and thoroughness of our work.

One expectation of S-STTEP research is that we present what we come to understand in two arenas: one is in peer-reviewed research publications and the other is in the change or improvement of practice. Thus, as S-STTEP researchers, we always have an ethical obligation to bring our best self to the practices we enact. We have an ethical obligation to enact what we have come to understand. Thus, manipulation of results or faulty analysis, or fudging the findings has a personal and ethical dimension that, while potentially shared by other researchers, is more fundamental to this kind of research.

Furthermore, while theories of self will always inform the self doing self-study of practice research and, indeed, can be a conceptual tool for guiding data collection, thinking, analysis, and developing trustworthiness of findings, the self in the label of S-STTEP research marks publicly that the responsibility for findings and enactment rest on the “self” who is doing the research. In this way, it marks an ontological commitment more than an epistemological one, because it asserts publicly who owns the responsibility for both the practice and the research on it.

What Are the Self and the Other in S-STTEP Research?

S-STTEP research always involves relationships. Again, LaBoskey (2004a) in identifying the five characteristics of this methodology argues that interactive is one of these characteristics. She suggests that the term in this context refers to the way in which the methodology of self-study always involves others, since the focus is on the self studying his or her own practice and human practice always involves others either in the immediate present or in the reconstructed memory of interactions. Interactive is a deliberate choice since it is a larger term than the more commonly

used term ‘collaboration’. Interactive similar to the term dialogue captures the multi-dimensionality of action that is the norm for self-study.

Another reason is the need to collaborate with others in order to understand more completely, complexly, and thoroughly the practice or practices being investigated. We speak elsewhere, often and more fully, about this commitment to collaboration because we believe that the process for coming-to-know in S-STTEP research is dialogue, and therefore, communication and collaboration form a foundation from which S-STTEP researchers can draw authority for making assertions about action and understanding.

Most fundamentally, as suggested earlier, S-STTEP research involves others and our relationships and interactions with them because *practice* – understanding and improving it – is the focus of this research. Potentially, a person might be involved in studying practice that does not involve other humans, however, particularly in studies of professional practice, it is difficult to conceive of practices enacted by practitioners that do not involve other human beings and our relationships and interaction with them. Perhaps this is so because we conceive of S-STTEP inquiries emerging out of living contradictions – spaces in our practice where there is a disjuncture between our belief and our action or there is a contradiction between the accounts we tell of ourselves and the account someone else provides (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Such spaces in practice – spaces where seemingly we do not live our values and commitments in our practice or spaces where we are perceived to be other than what we think we are – are the spaces where S-STTEP researchers focus in their studies of practice. Perhaps, as teacher educators, we determine to study our planning because we teach planning processes and because we wish to determine how we come to create the activities we enact in our classroom. While the study might truly involve only our own constructions of activities and the processes underlying that construction, we are confronted by the others with whom we will enact the plans, as well as the others to whom we teach to plan.

Across the years we have come to realize that in our S-STTEP research, inquiry grows up in spaces between (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Hamilton, 2004) where the most apparent space is the space between self and practice. The spaces also emerge between what we believe and how we act. Inquiries into our practices are influenced and informed by the space between the larger historical and institutional context and the personal local space of our classrooms; the space between our public and private lives; the space between public theory and private action; the space between what we already know about our practice and the new reading we do to understand in a particular practice; the space between our data and our interpretation of it; and the space between what we know explicitly and what our action reveals we know implicitly. The space between ourselves and the others (present and absent) who are involved in our practice is the most fundamental space between that contributes to S-STTEP inquiries. We do not construct practice alone, and most often coming to know practice involves deepening our understanding of and relationship with others.

While S-STTEP research enables us to learn some things about ourselves, it often reveals important understanding about the others engaged in the practice, which

provides understanding and assertions about how we might act differently in our future practice. Julian Kitchen's (2005) narrative self-study of relational teacher education illuminates the value of attending to our relationship with others in preparing them to be teachers. Deborah Tidwell (2002) leads us to trouble more about our responses to some of our students, when she explores how as she worked with a strong student she found herself potentially disengaged with the student's learning since the student appeared to need so little from her as a teacher educator. In our own work exploring our obligation to unseen children (Guilfoyle, Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1997), one of us asserted that when she reconsidered herself as a beginning teacher, it caused her to look on her students with more loving eyes. As a result, we have found ourselves being more open in our relationships with our students.

When we want to understand our practice more deeply, we use the voice of the others in our practice to support our interpretations. They provide evidence of our claims about what our practice produces through their assignments, reflections, interviews, or actions in our practice. We ask students to explain their understanding of what happened or is happening or to describe their experiences or to share their understandings to support or question our conceptions of our practice. We engage critical friends or other collaborators asking them to question our data, our interpretations, our analysis, and our assertions about our practice. In this way, others in our practice are a valuable source of data and analysis as well as a source of confirming and disconfirming evidence for our understandings and assertions for action.

How Do We Conceive of Practice?

We begin here with a definition of practice followed by an exploration of three conceptions of practice that are helpful in guiding S-STTEP research – tacit knowing, personal practical knowledge, and the present moment. We then consider what we can know from practice. Next, we turn to a consideration of what knowledge of practice can contribute to a professional field. Finally, we explore the relationship of theory to experience and practice.

What Do We Mean by Practice?

Practice is the activity or activities engaged in by a person in a particular profession or as an artist or craftsperson. Practice is a word attached to the work someone does in a particular role whether that role be personal, professional, or artistic. Practice refers to all the activities of a person engaged in that role. It includes the responsibilities, beliefs, and knowledge that informs and shapes that practice. When artists paint or musicians sing or dancers dance, they engage in their practice as an artist. When doctors, lawyers, or teachers complete their schooling, they begin to practice law, medicine, or education. They begin to see patients, clients, or students and engage in a whole set of activities that characterize the practice of medicine, law,

or teaching. The doctor examines, diagnoses, and treats patients. The lawyer elicits narratives, evaluates them as particular kinds of cases, and acts on behalf of the client by taking evasive, assertive, or defensive action. The teacher designs lessons and engages with students in ways that lead to learning and development. Engaging in practice as an attorney, a doctor, or a teacher always involves analyzing a situation in terms of knowledge, theories, and understandings about the law, medicine, or education – healing, defense, or learning. When nurses begin their practice, they begin working with patients in a hospital, doctor’s office, or other settings in order to support the diagnosis or healing of the patient. When we speak of the practices of business, we talk about the set of things that businesspeople do to sell or promote a product. This can include reporting sales, calculating profits, developing or engaging with clients, advertising a product, setting up a store, or myriad other activities related to interacting with others in order to make a profit from a service or product. Practice then involves engaging with others in ways that lead to the accomplishment of goals through the use of knowledge, theories, and understandings.

When we talk of studying practice we may use the term singularly to refer to all that we do as a practitioner or to name one activity that we do. As teacher educators, in exploring our practice we might label discussion as a practice we are studying or we might label our interaction with our colleagues in developing a teacher education program as practice. So, when we speak of studying practice as self-study of teacher education researchers, we mean that term to encompass all we do in our role as teacher educators. However, in doing a research study of our practice, we focus on an aspect of our work within that more encompassing use of the term.

S-STTEP researchers will also use the term in its plural form “practices” to refer to the multiple yet specific things we do as part of our work. Sometimes when we use the plural form practices – we talk of studying teaching “practices.” When we articulate practices as the focus of our study, we are usually including the study of specific routines and actions within the larger conception of practice such as portfolio use. When S-STTEP researchers say they are studying their “practices,” they can also be referring to the study of the larger constellation of roles and responsibilities that make up their position as teacher educators, which might include research practice, practice as a mentor, practice as a supervisor of teacher candidates or colleagues, as well as teaching teacher candidates. When we study our practice, we usually target a particular set of actions used to accomplish particular goals that are a subset of the larger conception of practice expressed in the singular form of the word.

That we see practice as a slippery term becomes apparent in these last few paragraphs. This term can be seen as representing individual strategies in teachings or as Practices (capitalized P) representing a larger conception to include text, knowledge, and so on that influence the practices of involved in teaching practice. Either way, the term addresses aspects of the work undertaken in a professional setting. From our perspective, the exact definition here is not as important as the clarity of definition when a researcher engages in S-STTEP research. How the researcher defines the term must be apparent from the onset of the study because it is part of the focus of the study.

What Can Be Known from Practice?

As S-STTEP researchers we believe that explorations of knowledge from practice could lead to deeper understandings not only in all of the professional fields, but also in research on personal roles in psychology and human development. Here we explore three avenues to knowledge of practice that inform our understanding of what is knowable from practice, including the works of Polanyi, Clandinin and Connelly, and Stern. Polanyi's (1967) exploration of tacit knowledge has informed much of the work that focuses on tacit or practical knowledge. Clandinin and Connelly's (1986, 1992, 1995, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999) work on personal practical knowledge accounts for the implicit and explicit knowledge teachers draw upon in teaching. Daniel Stern's (2004) work focuses on knowing in the *present moment*. Other work on everyday knowing has also been conducted and might serve as a basis for knowing in practice for others. For example, self-studies of practice might use conceptions from Lave (1988) about peripheral participation that builds on Rogoff's research (1984). These self-studies might include additional theories from the research on the phases of interaction that provide analytic lenses for exploring accounts of practices. Moreover, studies of knowledge in everyday life (Emmons, 1991) and appreciative inquiry (Watkins & Mohr, 2001) might be used in self-studies of practice to explore organizational behavior and business consulting. However, in the next part of this chapter, we explore the works of Polanyi, Clandinin and Connelly, and Stern because their ideas most directly illuminate ideas about practice addressed in S-STTEP research.

What Is Tacit Knowledge?

For us tacit knowledge refers to the kinds of things revealed not so much in our ability to articulate them as in the action or actions we take. An interest in understanding the kinds of knowledge embedded in expert action animated in expert/novice research. Differences in this research (Berliner, 1986) rested in a desire to understand meaning-making by novices and its relationship to action by experts. The patterns of meaning-making used by experts (their tacit knowledge and the processes attached to it) could be used to inform both expert computer systems as well as pedagogy for educating novices to a higher level of expertise while still being novices. In this way, the novices might move more rapidly toward expertise through education. Further, the researchers thought that if novices could more quickly develop their expertise, then potentially the knowledge of experts in practice settings might increase as well (e.g. Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Berliner, 1986).

Polanyi (1967) begins his exploration of the tacit dimension of human knowledge from the fact that "we know more than we can tell" (p. 4). He argues that a large portion of what we know is tacit and that in research in the human sciences we know things tacitly and then translate that knowing into hypotheses that we can test using the scientific method. He begins his exploration in research on Gestalt

psychology with its focus on perception. Through explorations of research projects he demonstrates how, although the knowing is divided between an experimenter and a subject, tacit knowing is its basis. He argues:

... I am looking at Gestalt psychology ... as the outcome of an active shaping of experience performed in the pursuit of knowledge. This shaping or integrating I hold to be the great and indispensable tacit power by which all knowledge is discovered and once discovered, is held to be true. (p. 6)

Polanyi asserts that the basic structure of tacit knowing involves two terms. He argues that knowledge becomes tacit because we focus on our response to stimuli rather than on what triggers that response. When the sight of an object, expression, or interaction makes us expect something, then our initial recognition of the object, expression, or interaction signifies to us the approach of something to which we need to respond. In turn, this need to respond becomes the meaning of the initial object, expression, or interaction and our need to respond in a particular way. Thus, the experienced teacher sees a particular kind of interaction between two children and can appropriately anticipate what the interaction will produce and responds in ways that head off or support that response. The experienced doctor notices symptoms and recognizes what the result of that combination of symptoms might produce, acts intuitively to diagnose a potential or possible condition, and suggests treatment. Polanyi labels this response as the basic structure of tacit knowledge, which he attributes to the relationship of *knowing from* to *knowing to*: in attending *from* what we know *to* how we should respond. The functional, phenomenal, and semantic characteristics of tacit knowledge result in this meaning shift.

Polanyi (1967) establishes his case for tacit knowing with: (1) a description of a shock experiment, (2) a discussion of understanding of how theory applies in our everyday lives, and (3) an explanation of the tacit dimension of moral action. He begins with a description of an experiment in which particular syllables are always followed by an electric shock. Soon the person in the experiment anticipates the electric shock the moment the syllables appear. However, the person does not recognize consciously that those syllables are related to the shock. Rather, the person has tacit knowledge of the relation of syllable and shock. From this analysis, Polanyi notes that the way we interpret theory in practice is by using the theory to identify the action, interaction, object, relationship, or thing, and we use our everyday life experience to decide how to respond. While theory and action connect, these links exist below consciousness. Thus, in our practice we may lose track of the theoretical foundation or apperception that led to the action. We act and the action carries meaning. We articulate it as a way of being or acting in practice – we say, “That’s how I am as a teacher.”

Polanyi argues that moral action becomes *interiorized* in the same way. He demonstrates that in research of any kind, we come with a question that in some ways identifies the *from* term of tacit knowing – that is, what we know – and we connect it to the *to* – that is, how we respond – because it has familiarity. In other words, researchers intuit the *from*, that which they know, link it to the *to*, that which

they do, which triggers something recognizable in the action. Consequently, Polanyi suggests that we design research studies that provide evidence of these relationships.

As teachers and teacher educators, we know that in our role as teachers and in our teacher candidates' experiences as teachers, we often consistently act in ways that are opposite to or not in harmony with our beliefs. Examples of knowing from and to in practice include engaging in behavior like lecturing, when we think we are discussing, or calling on the same few students repeatedly, when we think we are being inclusive. Polanyi's discussion here suggests that explorations into these from/to relationships could support S-STTEP researchers both in developing better practices themselves and in coming to understand the from/to relationships that occur in professional practice. Polanyi's identification of the potential of these from/to relationships makes his conception of it, helpful for focusing the research of those who engage in self-study of practice.

Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge also articulates for S-STTEP researchers the value of dwelling on the particulars to arrive at deeper, more complex, and more helpful understandings of the everyday world. Polanyi (1967) explains the development of more abstract, complex relationship among signals and actions in practice. He contends that learning and growth in practice occur because as we develop particular knowledge, a higher conception of the relationship of those particulars materializes. This more advanced conception of the world and the relationships among things emerge as knowledge and understandings develop. According to Polanyi, this occurs in ways similar to the development of simple from/to relationships of tacit knowledge. In other words, when attention *from* (the particular) takes its meaning in the *to* (more general idea), the relationship of the emergence from the lower level to the higher level remains tacit. People's minds make "ever new sense of the world by dwelling in its particulars with a view to their comprehension" (p. 56). Thus, as Polanyi asserts, "We have seen that tacit knowledge dwells in our awareness of particulars while bearing on an entity in which the particulars jointly constitute" (p. 61). Polanyi asserts that almost all of what we know carries this tacit dimension within it and that tacit dimension is hidden from our view.

In order to move knowing practice forward within the tacit dimension, we embrace our knowing by exploring our action or understanding. We seek to uncover the particulars that lead to the more general response we provide. We can seek to uncover, as Polanyi suggests, the hidden reality and unlimited potentiality behind the particulars we observe. By finding ways to attend to both terms of tacit knowing (*from* and *to*), we are able to unpack and come to understand more completely our practical knowledge in a setting.

As S-STTEP researchers we assume this will proceed through collaborations with others or in careful consideration/reconsideration of action and understanding of teaching in which we intentionally take on assumptions and interpretive stances different from our own. Through the use of careful observations (fieldnotes, interviews, journaling, videotaping, etc.) and intentional collaboration (including collection of multiple and diverse points of view about the action and understandings being studied), we explore the relationships and tacit meanings in our practice more accurately.

In many cases, as we uncover tacit knowledge in our practice, we seek to alter it to make new connections that lead us to act upon and understand these tacit relationships differently. One of the reasons S-STTEP researchers study action is that we believe that understanding our tacit knowledge allows us to act more strategically or develop new ways of acting in relationship to the others in our practice. This uncovering, transforming, or reconstructing of our tacit knowing – what we often call reframing – holds promise for improvement in our practice. Additionally, documenting and establishing what we learn can inform other practitioners who seek to improve practice, since it gives them new ideas about the relationships of tacit knowledge and action in their own practices. As S-STTEP researchers we embrace a careful study of our practice to uncover the simple and complex from/to relationships Polanyi describes. By uncovering our knowing (revealed in our action and our understanding of it), we can contribute to the general conversation in research in teaching by providing assertions for action and understanding from our practice that can be used by others in theirs and can be used by traditional researchers seeking to understand practice. We agree with Putnam's (2004) assertion that solving a particular problem in a particular place at a particular time has value for improving knowing and being in our society.

Of course, Polanyi's account of tacit knowing in practice raises issues about the accuracy of what we know. Tacit knowing can be consistent and regulated, but it is also open to change. However, uncovering from/to relationships is not simple. Thus tacit knowing raises issues about claims of validity, since it would appear that we shape knowledge in the very act of knowing it. Polanyi (1967) describes the seeker of knowledge as one whose "acts are personal judgments exercised responsibly with a view to a reality with which he is seeking to establish contact" (p. 77). Moreover, Polanyi (1967) says:

It is the image of human immersed in potential thought that I find revealing for the problems of our day. It rids us of the absurdity of absolute self-determination, yet offers each of us the chance of creative originality, within the fragmentary area which circumscribes our calling. It provides us with the metaphysical grounds and the organizing principle of a Society of Explorers. (p. 91)

Polanyi's conception of tacit knowledge resonates with Pagano's (1991, p. 194) statement, "to act is to theorize," since in responding from one set of particulars with an action we have a theoretical, if intuitive, understanding about the relationship of stimuli, elements, and particulars within our context. In exploring tacit knowledge in practice settings, each thing we come to know represents a commitment to particular ways of acting and being. These acts and our understanding of them and their interrelationships become the assertions for actions and understanding that we act on in our practice. Although messy and contingent, working to articulate, alter, and understand these relationships holds great potential for producing knowledge – actions and understandings – that will allow practitioners to develop better practices.

What Is Personal Practical Knowledge?

Clandinin and Connelly (1986, 1992, 1995, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999) developed the concept of personal practical knowledge. It is the fundamental knowledge that guides teachers' practice in their role as curriculum makers and includes the knowledge that guides them in planning and in practice. The concept emerges from a reconsideration of Dewey's (1938) concept of experience, Schwab's (1978) idea of the practical and the role of the teacher in enacting curriculum, Polanyi's assertions about tacit knowledge and the tacit dimension, and Merleau-Ponty's (1968) ideas about embodied knowledge.

Personal practical knowledge emerges from our narrative history as humans and names the things we have learned that have become intuitive and instinctive. There are other conceptions of aspects of this kind of knowledge, but most are not as comprehensive or do not capture the fundamental link between the things we learn from our own personal experiences, our family background, our history of interaction with others, and our professional experiences, including the things we learn from formal professional education that become practices in our work. The conception of personal practical knowledge contains within it what others label as judgment (e.g., Goodlad, 1990) or concepts of pedagogical content knowledge and wisdom of practice (Shulman, 1986). Schön's (1983) conception of the kind of knowing-in-action that informs the reflective practitioner provides another partial accounting for this term.

Personal practical knowledge guides teachers in decision-making. For example, it guides them in deciding which literary text to teach in their classroom. The teacher may or may not carefully consider all options, but may instantly and intuitively reach for a particular text that seems to be the one to use. In this decision, the teacher's sense of esthetics and intuitive understanding of the potential links the text could make from literacy to science, math, and/or social studies form part of this knowledge. It includes insights into the interest of students, the ability of the text to develop and promote literacy, and the intellectual development in students. It can also include the teacher's experience with the text as a child, in a children's literature class, or her past teaching – when the teacher either used or sought a text like this.

This conception of practice supports S-STTEP researchers in exploring their practice beyond the borders of their action in practice. The concept of personal practical knowledge guides S-STTEP researchers to interrogate the immediate contexts of classroom and institution and the more distant ones of cultural milieu and their contribution to the practice of the researcher. The concept guides researchers in analyzing the ways in which the background knowledge of teacher and student (or patient/client and practitioner) contributes to immediate action and interaction and the knowledge constructed in those relationships. Understanding of personal practical knowledge and its constituents broadens and deepens the focus and tools for S-STTEP research, leading researchers to explore autobiography, memory, and community and their impact on practice.

What personal practical knowledge emphasizes are the ways in which the many kinds of knowledge a practitioner, like a teacher or teacher educator, holds coalesce and become a foundation from which decisions are made and actions are taken. Using narrative inquiry, S-STTEP researchers can unpack the basis of many, but not necessarily all, of the things that guide them in living and acting on the professional knowledge landscape of, in, and outside of classroom (or other practice) spaces (Clandinin et al., 2006). Through the process of living, telling, reliving and retelling, researchers are able to uncover personal practical knowledge and elements of the terrain of the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Like explorations of tacit knowledge implicit in Polanyi's conception of it, explorations of personal practical knowledge are potentially more fruitful and more trustworthy when collaboration involving conflicting, competing, and alternative accounts of experience and interpretation is considered in the research process. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) articulation of narrative inquiry provides helpful guidance for uncovering personal practical knowledge and again advocates for collaborators in this process. Telling, reliving, and retelling are entailed processes that suggest that others, either in the concrete or in the abstract, are part of the process of uncovering personal practical knowledge and determining ways to use it to understand and improve practice.

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) recognize personal practical knowledge as a fluid, intuitive knowing based in experience – personal, formal, and educational – that becomes embodied in practice and guides teachers in the creation of a “curriculum of lives.” This personal practical knowledge, which stands under and supports the construction of practice, provides a vital theoretical frame for the design and implementation of S-STTEP research.

Findings from studies of practice based in tacit knowledge or the present moment may best be represented as assertions for action and understanding. For Clandinin and Connelly, narrative inquiry serves as the methodology to reveal practice, curriculum, and experiences for researchers. Narrative inquiry as a methodology explores practice in ways that overlap and support S-STTEP methodology. For example, Huber and Clandinin (2005) introduce the interpretive device of “wondering” as a tool for presenting findings. Wondering, as a kind of finding from a research of practice study, is a profitable device for S-STTEP research. It allows researchers to create interpretive accounts of practice, and rather than assert ways of understanding or acting, provide questions that reopen the account, allow readers to insert themselves into it, and provide another way for research on practice to be taken up and used by others interested in a field of practice.

While Connelly and Clandinin developed the concept of personal practical knowledge to account for the knowledge a teacher brings to her role as curriculum maker, it is also an important concept for S-STTEP researchers. Indeed, their concept accounts for the personal practical knowledge practitioners engaged in any form of practice bring to their work in a practice setting or in their own professional

knowledge landscape. As a tool for thinking and guiding research, this understanding of practice is central for supporting S-STTEP researchers in unpacking their understanding and action in their everyday work and invaluable as a guide for sharing understanding of action and practice with others.

How Does the Concept of the Present Moment Help Us Understand Practice?

Daniel Stern (2004) articulates the concept of the present moment. He argues that our lived experience is made up of small momentary events, present moments, or “nows.” It is in these moments that change occurs and our lives unfold. He further asserts that change occurs because in the present moment we participate in events that can either positively or negatively impact the rest of our lives. In a present moment, as we bring a past experience forward and reconsider it in this moment, we may reinterpret, relive, and retell, coming to new understandings that have the power to both reinterpret the past and propel us forward into the future. Because an S-STTEP research is at its heart about studying and changing practice in the moment of practice, Stern’s concept of the present moment opens up present moments in practice as a valuable venue for studies of practice.

Stern’s concern with the present moment centers on his focus on its use in psychotherapy and the intersubjective quality of experience that connects us within and across such experiences. While his focus is not necessarily our interest as S-STTEP researchers, we include a discussion here because of the conceptual depth of the idea of the present moment and the way in which it holds and develops implicit knowing. Present moments are not just segments of time that we live, but those moments when we are aware and conscious of our experience which is felt as a whole. This insight into the construction of understanding and action in moments of practice brings S-STTEP researchers new ideas for exploring worlds of practice.

Stern argues that the present moment is a conception of “now,” a moving point in time that eats up the future and lays behind itself the past. This moving point in time has duration and thickness. Such present moments are the smallest unit of lived experience containing a beginning, a middle, and an end. The present moment exists continually in Bakhtin’s (1981) zone of maximal contact – a zone where past, present, and future come together and in that moment can be shaped and transformed. When we have a memory of a past event or retell a story of it, we bring it forward into the present moment, thus repositioning it on the landscape of our total lived experience. The present moment is determined in some ways by our past. Indeed, Stern argues that past experiences can hold the present hostage, spreading such a strong shadow over it that the present only confirms that past. The future can also decompose or destroy the present by reorganizing it as quickly as it happens. In order to use present moments to understand practice, we must conceive of them as being in “a kind of dialogic equilibrium with the past and the future” (Stern 2004, p. 28). As S-STTEP researchers, capturing (e.g., through fieldnotes, videotaping,

and reflection) moments allows us access to multiple layers of our experience as we identify the pasts that are resident in the present and the future orientations that rewrite the experience of the present as we capture an account of it. Construction and interpretation of present moments provide a venue for S-STTEP researchers to uncover and utilize our tacit or personal practical knowledge and use it to understand and alter our practice to improve it.

In the present moment, when we are uncertain of the coming future, we take all that we know from our past to confront what is happening now and then take action. Principles from Gestalt psychology, such as proximity, good continuation, and similarity, help us in this task. Yet there is a constant and ongoing in-conclusiveness in the moment-to-moment living of a life.

Stern uses the concept of a musical phrase to articulate the ways in which these moments adhere and move forward. As we listen to a note, we are still aware of the note that went before and we predict the note that will follow. In this way the form “of the musical phrase is revealed and captured by the listener as the crest of the immediate present instant passes from the still resonating horizon of the past . . . toward the anticipated horizon of the future” (Stern, 2004, p. 29). In these moments we are very aware of “self” because we experience ourselves as existing in the moment and of that moment happening to us.

Stern (2004) reminds us that “we are aware of our status as experiencer” (p. 59). While present moments have duration, they also carry vitality effects such that we experience some moments of awareness with greater or lesser intensity, interest, and emotion. Thus, some of these moments seem thicker than others. Examining practice from a present moment perspective allows S-STTEP researchers to attend to, explore, and develop understandings of vitality effects in practice.

Stern (2004) argues that in therapy, attention to the present moment is critical, since the longer the therapist stays with the present moment, the more pathways for therapy will open up. Therefore, from the perspective of exploring the present moment, there is value in lingering within the present moment. This insight supports the need for and value of S-STTEP research, for such studies can support practitioners in staying in a “present moment of practice” long enough to more fully understand practices and to deepen the understanding and potential for action that emerges. Just as staying in the present moment opens up more pathways for therapy, staying in the present moment opens up more pathways for considering and changing practice for improvement.

Practices are built up in present moments, and careful attention to them and exploration of them hold potential for coming to understand practice and relationships in practice with others better and more deeply. Since awareness in present moments can lead to reconsiderations of the past and transformation of the future, opening them to understanding becomes an important tool for exploring and improving practice. As a strategy, the exploration of present moments can help those who study their own practice uncover more completely the tacit knowing they hold in practice.

Stern’s (2004) description of implicit knowing also holds great promise for explorations of practice, since his theory of knowing in present moments highlights

and expands on the role of the conscious in implicit knowing and the way in which present moments hold both explicit and implicit elements. According to Stern (2004), “implicit knowledge is nonsymbolic, nonverbal, procedural and unconscious” (p. 113). Most of what we know about being and acting in the world is potentially implicit knowing.

This implicit knowing is built up in present moments when we acted one way rather than another in response to our experiences and thus built up practices and ways of being in the world. Stern argues that explicit and implicit knowledge live side by side and grow across our lives. Implicit knowledge applies to our ability to intuit what “lies between the lines” (Stern, 2004, p. 114). Implicit knowledge is not primitive but rather rich and deep, including affects, expectations, shifts in motivation and action, as well as orientations to the world and styles of thought. Stern suggests that probably most of what we know about relationships with others, and how to be in relationship with them, resides in implicit knowing.

Just as importantly for S-STTEP researchers, Stern asserts that implicit knowing is not unconscious in a Freudian sense, which includes a resistance to making explicit what we know implicitly. Instead, implicit knowledge is nonconscious, which means there is not a dispositional resistance to uncovering what we know implicitly. While this makes the exploration of implicit knowledge a more open process, Stern warns that uncovering implicit knowing cuts it apart from the wholeness we experience as we act on it. Therefore, making such knowledge explicit can render it less deep, rich, and holistic in the way it was when it remained implicit. Therefore, implicit knowledge of practice made explicit, while it may be helpful for guiding and developing practice, will necessarily be a shadow of what it was when it remained implicit. Yet uncovering implicit knowledge can help thoughtful practitioners more systematically and strategically act on that knowledge. Furthermore, in a forum that targets understanding and improving practice, it can contribute to the development of not only new practices but also deeper understandings of practice that hold promise for future research on practice.

How Do These Conceptions Relate to Each Other?

These three conceptions of practical knowledge highlight in slightly different ways why the study of practice and the knowledge constructed in practice by the practitioner would contribute to the research conversations of education as well as other human sciences. All three conceptions articulate the embodied nature of much of what practitioners know about practice. Merleau-Ponty (1968) described in complex ways all the body knows as it interacts in a context. This embodied knowledge is revealed in the ways we orient ourselves in an environment, we approach and sit in a chair or other tools of our trade, we are constantly aware of the three-dimensional nature of objects in our world, and we hide certain dimensions from our view. This knowledge addresses the way in which, although each moment-to-moment encounter with our environment is unique, our body seemingly has an awareness

of its sameness and so on. In order to uncover what practitioners know requires careful attention to their thinking and action in an environment and what thought and action reveal about the practitioners' knowledge of and assumptions about that environment.

Each of these conceptions of practical knowledge highlights similar but differing aspects of practical knowledge and therefore provides differing reasons for and points to differing strategies for the study of practice. Tacit knowledge suggests the need to attend carefully to action and to uncovering the intuitive understanding of the stimuli and the network of stimuli that led to certain actions. This conception of practical knowledge focuses directly on the complex interconnection of noticing and responding that goes on intuitively in the work of practitioners. It allows a theoretical framework for bringing together not only our knowing in the moment but also the rich interplay of experience, context, and participants that contribute to what a practitioner knows and uses in practice. Uncovering the knowledge behind an action has the potential to contribute much to research on practitioners that can guide others in their development as practitioners. Just as clearly, it can guide the practitioner herself in refining practice, helping her to act either differently, not at all, or more purposefully in her practice.

Furthermore, personal practical knowledge, as a conception of our knowing in practice, points to a fuller exploration of both practice and the potential knowledge that might inform practice. Practical knowledge from this perspective is personal and involves the past history and experience of the person, the constraints on practice that emerge from the context itself and others in that context, as well as the emotional and relational responses that motivate and guide action in practice. Uncovering the personal practical knowledge of practitioners in a setting and in collaboration with each other holds promise for shaping new practice, for understanding better the practices of hegemony, and the way in which experience in life emerges in our practice. Personal practical knowledge becomes evident through processes of living, telling, retelling, and reliving. Uncovering personal practical knowledge can lead to improvement and understanding in contexts of practice as well as practices themselves. Thus, the research moves beyond exploration of the response of individuals toward the construction of ways of being in practice.

Stern's conceptions of the present moment and nonconscious implicit knowing suggest the ways in which attention to the moments in which practice is enacted and constructed holds promise for both uncovering and developing practice – for making explicit and visible the ways in which the meaning of lived experience and practice is constructed. The concept of the present moment with its elements of duration, vitality effects, and thickness and the understanding that practice exists in an unfolding moment of inconclusivity suggest ways in which careful attention to and microanalysis of our practice hold great promise for uncovering what we implicitly know. His perspective on implicit knowing reminds us that much of what we do and know is implicit and not *unconscious* but *nonconscious*, and therefore, open to exploration. His understanding concerning the movement of implicit knowing to explicit knowing reminds us that what we know in expert practice will always be richer, deeper, fuller, and more holistic than the explicit representations we create

of it. This means that explorations of the present moment and attention to uncovering what we know in practice is and will remain a promising site for research into practice. For us, each of these conceptions reminds us to look most carefully and critically at our practice as we prepare to engage in S-STTEP research.

What Can Be Known from Practice?

Studies of practice in any field can either explore all that a practitioner does or target the individual practices within the various arenas of practice that the practitioner engages in. What becomes the focus of a study of practice depends on the research conversation in the field. There are many things about teacher education that we might study, and any study we undertake might be productive for our own individual development. However, for a study of practice to contribute to research within the discipline the practice represents, the study of practice must connect to the current larger discourse. It must identify, address, and connect to the larger questions of interest in the field as a whole. Just as in traditional research, the person who studies practice must connect the study to past research and current discourse in the field, both in terms of the design of the study and in connecting what the researcher comes to understand to the larger discourse. In S-STTEP research, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, 2004) differentiate between three kinds of knowledge that contribute to understanding practice. Each represents a different kind of relationship among inquiry, knowledge, and practice. They suggest that each relationship has its own tensions and characteristics. As discussed earlier, knowledge of practice is their label for the kinds of knowledge produced in published S-STTEP research accounts.

Learning from observation has a long history in research of every kind. In studying practice, we learn by observing and gathering evidence about aspects of our practice. Through analysis of the data gathered, we are able to make explicit what is implicit in practice and available to inform research in an area of professional practice. Like other definitions within research on practice, the definition of what counts as practice is a functional one. The most encompassing sense of practice includes everything that a person does to enact their role in a practice setting. When one of us studies our practice, we study everything we do to enact our role. Thus when we say, "I am studying my practice," there are myriad of things we might be studying.

For us, research on our own practice might include study of our actions in the institutional roles we fulfill. In studying our institutional roles, we might examine how particular committees make decisions from our perspectives enacting our own roles in that decision-making process. We might examine faculty meetings and how they relate to the emotional climate of the department, the actions taken and policies that emerge, and the relationships that develop among faculty members across time and our contributions to those decisions and relationships. We might consider the role of a college within a university and how our status is communicated in official documents or how our documents communicate the status of others. We might examine how the status of the department or the college contributes to our sense

of self as scholars or teachers. We might examine the ways in which we, as emissaries of the university, interact with other institutions and what this reveals about the development of relationships across institutions.

We might explore our roles in State Office of Education committees or in the development of documents and proposals within a state office of education as a study of how we in our practice enact power relationships. We might study how colleges of education, from our perspective as a participant in the practice, influence or are influenced by policies. We might explore the process of applying for external funding and the set of practices that develop within that experience. We might study teacher education reform, integrating what we learn about reform at our institution with the larger reform efforts in teacher education across the country and how this external initiative impacts our own practice. We might also study the impact of school reform on universities from our experiences in engaging as university people in school reform or from our experiences in being excluded from participation in deliberation and actions as local schools attempt to reform themselves.

Since a part of our practice as teacher educators includes our responsibility to develop as a researcher, we might study our development as a scholar – exploring what scholarship is. We might examine how scholarship develops or is interpreted. We might study how we engage in research or the development of a group of researchers as a research team. We might study the interpretation of data or the development of tools for research (Lomax, Evans, & Parker, 1996). We might look carefully at ourselves as we enact the role of researchers in a particular setting. We might study how the institution defines us as scholars and how that definition is communicated to us through decisions about rank and advancement. We might study the thesis or dissertation process from our perspective as dissertation chairs or as students in that process. We might study coming to understand research through participation in a research study group in which we come together and analyze articles that our colleagues write for publication and submit for critique.

Another part of our practice as teacher educators related to teaching is a curricular one. We could study how our students represent us in the institution as a whole and how the reputation of a colleges of education develops through the actions of our students in the larger university. We might study how a curriculum in our college or program is developed. We might study engaging in an NCATE review and our own ethical concerns in that process (Manke, 2004). We might study the development of documents for review. We might study program development among a group of faculty members teaching a sequence of courses in literacy, for example, and come to better understand what we as teacher educators understand about the knowledge needed to teach someone to become literate. We might study the process of curriculum approval. We might study the relationships around curriculum development. We might also study the development of a particular course as we build it or as we examine our own beliefs about what should occur in a course in relationship to what is considered standard practice. We might study the determination of how field experience or practical experience is embedded in the program as a whole and our understanding of the interaction of field experience and university coursework.

Another responsibility we could study resides in our own teaching and interactions with students in our classrooms. We could study particular activities and how we use them in our teaching (study of the use of story-telling in our practice). We might study how we develop and use an assignment and what we learn about our students' development as teachers from that work (Placier, 1995). We could study our understandings of the ethics of teaching and what stories of teaching and our response to them teach us about ethics in teaching (Murphy, Pinnegar, & Pinnegar, 2008). We could also study how we used an assignment in one setting (like portfolio) and how a colleague used it for similar purposes but in a different institutional setting (Lyons, Freidus, LaBoskey, & Hamilton, 2004). We could interview students and examine what their understanding of teaching and the practice/theory divide reveals about teacher education and the development of knowledge for teaching (Martin & Russell, 2005). But we also might study experiments in using particular teaching methods. We might study our interactions with particular groups of students. We might study the university evaluation system in relationship to our own teaching (Gipe, 1998). We could study further the competing tensions we confront in various aspects of our role as teachers and teacher educators (Berry, 2007).

Our studies of our practice as teacher educators could include the interactions we have with students both inside and outside the classroom. Included are the interactions and connections we have with public school personnel and what those interactions reveal about the power relationships in teacher education or shared responsibility for educating teachers. Studies of interactions in all these settings are connected with our practice as teacher educators.

What Is the Relationship Between Experience, Theory, and Practice?

Most of the social sciences have a division between areas of practice and areas of research. This is highly visible in education in the split between teachers, principals, superintendents, and curriculum developers in public schools, and administration in higher education and those who study various aspects of and practices for educating students, organizing schools, and preparing teachers. Therapists and social workers, as well as other practitioners, represent a similar division in other areas of social sciences.

Researchers usually purport to hold theory, which can be applied in practice, and much of the discourse across these two groups focuses on how best to do that. At least in education and particularly in teacher education, there is an ongoing discourse that focuses on the relationship between theory and practice and the need to educate educators to move theory into practice. What is often missing from this discourse is the recognition built on an understanding of the development and the use of tacit, implicit, or personal practical knowledge that practices represent theories just as theories contain practices within them. S-STTEP research developed out of several understandings about research and practice. First, we recognized that the traditional conception of the theory/practice divide, where the role of theory is

to guide practice and researchers' own theory and practitioners' own practice, is not particularly helpful. Theory does not easily guide practice. Indeed, practice can actually be useful and helpful in guiding theory, and practice is in some ways a kind of theory. Second, we felt that part of the difficulty in the theory/practice relationship was a misunderstanding of the relationship between theory and practice. We found that experience as a context for both theory and practice more productively illuminates the relationship. Theoretical knowledge becomes evident and is altered when it is applied in experience, often emerging as practice in the hands of the practitioner who applied it. The knowledge of practice held by the practitioner is revealed in experience. Theory and practice are both enacted in experience, and they are revealed as they bump up against each other and potentially new theory and new practice emerge. Third, practitioners are increasingly beginning to realize and value the knowledge of skillful practitioners evident in their practice and their thinking and problem-solving. Fourth, a traditional research separates knowledge from practice and develops theory. This theoretical knowledge must then be reinserted into practice if it is to be helpful. Often this task is not straightforward, and theories developed in this way may be neither particularly veridical with practice nor useful to practitioners. Reformulating an understanding of the theory–practice–experience relationship can guide S-STTEP researchers in doing this kind of work.

When we enact a practice, we base the action on productive ways of being in the world as well as interpretations we construct from observations we make within our practice. Embedded in and revealed by our action in practice are the assumptions we have about what works. Indeed, practitioners and researchers are aware that there is nothing more practical than a theory, just as there is nothing more theoretical than good practice.

Conceptions of practice remind us that it is in and through experience and our observations of it that both theory and practice get constructed. As a result, careful observations of experience allow us to develop, uncover, and understand practice. Good practices may be adopted and continue within a context of practice, but unless those practices are framed and articulated, they are unavailable to inform and be adopted or adapted in wider arenas of practice.

Polkinghorne (1988) argues that, at least in terms of psychology, the promise of research in social sciences for theory and research to delineate practice completely has simply not borne fruit. From this basis, he argues the importance of the development of narrative research for informing and improving practice. He proposes narrative as the method for such research because it is more harmonious with practice.

Similarly self-studies of practice that account for practice from the perspective and understanding of the practitioner have the same potential for informing research useful in practice. S-STTEP researchers focus on uncovering, expanding, and articulating practices, regardless of the method or methodology. Therefore, the studies of these researchers promise to add deeper understandings of practice. Such research is uniquely situated to contribute to the research conversation about practice and practitioners.

An examination of the way in which diagnosis in medicine develops demonstrates the interplay between practice and theory in experience. When novices enter the field, their practice routines may be underdeveloped or even obstructive. Practice in a field, at least initially, is based on the personal experiences they have had with the practice in the past and the relationship of that experience to the things they have learned about practice from their education, training, or mentoring. In most disciplines of practice, the practitioners talk about learning their practice on the job. This is because of the important role experience and personal theory play in the construction of practice.

Traditionally in medical schools, students were taught categories of disease types, after which they attempted to diagnose disease types by matching these stereotypic definitions with the descriptions provided by their patients. In fact, the status of their patients or their belief about the veracity of the patient (such as the patient's addiction status or proclivity to whining, etc.) may lead doctors to disregard important information that might lead to a more accurate diagnosis. During the process of interacting with patients across time, this disease-type categorization is interrupted by a reorganization of the doctor's thinking based on their interactions with patients, their learning and study, and their experience as practitioners of medicine (Feltovich & Patel, 1984).

Feltovich and Patel (1984) assert that this matching of reported characteristics is replaced with a new way of thinking in practice whereby the doctor uses the information from the patient to construct a "diseased" person in their head. They look at the imagined patient to identify what seems to be happening to the patient. When computer diagnosis processes are compared with those of doctors, the researchers realize that whereas a computer can keep track of all the details that a patient provided with equal weight, expert diagnosticians do not have that processing space, so they focus on a few systems – tracking them and then going back to review specific details in relationship to the systems being tracked. Moreover, as any patient knows, when seeking an accurate diagnosis and appropriate care, we want to visit a doctor who has excellent diagnostic and treatment skills. In other words, we want a doctor with considerable practice and experience with disease and treatment.

Similar to doctors developing their practice, researchers in other fields can bring practice and theory together in experience. As we try out practices and theories in an arena of experience, theories become embedded in practice and practices begin to guide us theoretically in the experiences we have. Across time our experience may lead to a disruption of a theory we try out in practice. As a result it reformulates as a more useful practice. Such is the case illustrated by the move from the novice application of disease types to the expert who builds a picture of the diseased person to determine which disease is displayed by the internally constructed patient.

S-STTEP research attempts to uncover what we know in our practice. Our practices are uncovered when we study our experience since our practice is exhibited in experience. It is in experience that we also attempt to use the theories we identify as useful or others that are imposed on us as practitioners. In experience, then, theory and practice come together (see Fig. 2.1). Careful observation of and reflection on

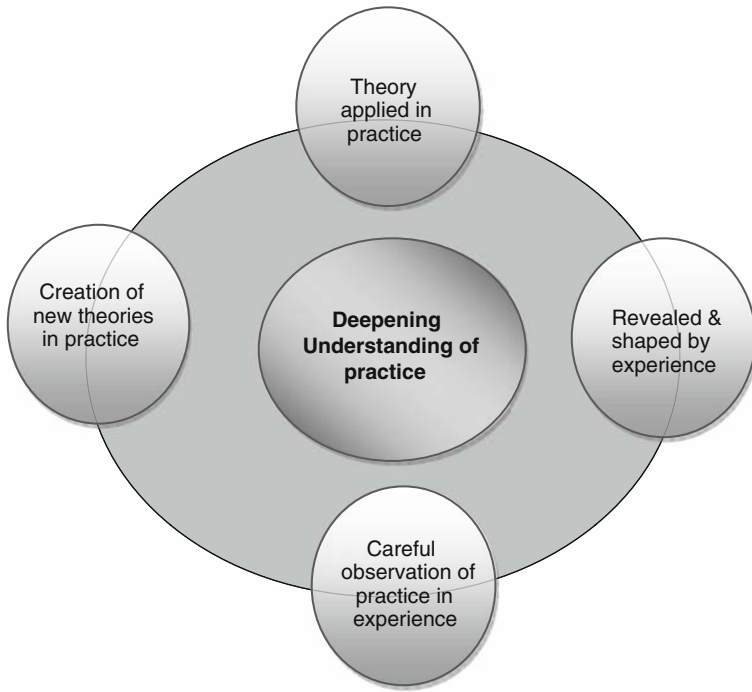


Fig. 2.1 Interaction of theory, practice, and experience

experience allow S-STTEP researchers to recognize what they know and uncover it developing new theories that can be applied in experience (see Fig. 2.2).

Because of this relationship between theory, practice, and experiences, S-STTEP research represents a potentially unending, and at the same time deepening, pool for research. From an S-STTEP research perspective, the researcher is studying practice to improve it; the practices of such researchers will evolve and develop in increasingly sophisticated ways. Therefore, the potential for theories of teacher education

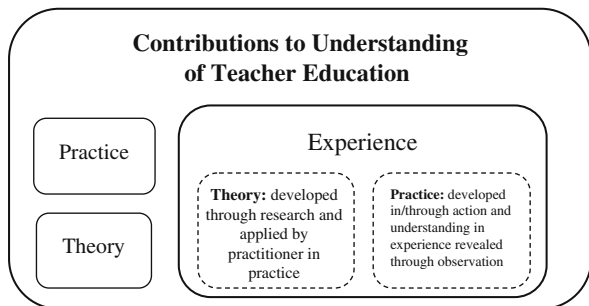


Fig. 2.2 Relationship of theory, practice, and experience

to deepen and become more useful is increased when research is undertaken from a research on S-STTEP perspective.

Why Conduct Self-Study of Practice Research?

The functional definition for an S-STTEP research contains within it the reasons for doing such research. We study our practice in order to understand, critique, and improve it. We began doing an S-STTEP research because we wanted to better understand our experiences in teacher education as faculty members, as researchers, and as educators of new teachers. As we attended professional conferences, we found the ideas and the issues important to us, which emerged from our reflection on our practice as teacher educators, missing in much of the research on teacher education. Although basic issues of interest were not completely absent in the discourse, our understandings, so deeply embedded in practice and in our understanding of theory, seemed to our colleagues to be issues both anecdotal and private. At the time, our interests and ideas around constructing research on them were not seen as substantive lines of inquiry or potential methods for study within the research conversation.

Educated as qualitative researchers, we determined to use qualitative methodology to come to an understanding of our practice as teacher educators from our perspective as teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. In doing this work, we became invigorated and revitalized. As we developed and conducted studies on our own practice, we were amazed both at the depth of the insights about teacher education that emerged as well as at the level of rigor such research required of us. We also came to understand that in doing S-STTEP research we were also creating evidence of the theories of teaching and teacher education in our practice. When we consider why we continue to do S-STTEP research, the reasons coalesce around two themes. The first theme is one of power relationships. The second is a theme of understanding and meaning-making.

What Is the Relationship Between Issues of Power and S-STTEP Research?

One of the issues of power relationships that have led us to continue to do S-STTEP research is more theoretical and ontological. As Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) expressed, it is a matter of being honest about the fact that since we study teacher education as teacher educators, what we study is our own work – our own practice is central to the behavior we study. Many of those who do research on teacher education, even today, are teacher educators. However, when they do research in teacher education, they tend to treat that which they study as separate from themselves as teacher educators. They adopt a Modernist epistemology and ontology that would consider as fatally flawed any research in which there was not clear ontological distance between the researcher and the researched. Since there is

really no way to completely overcome such a bias, judgment about the validity of the study based in traditional notions about it potentially would leave the results of our studies constantly in question, no matter how useful they were in our practice, and to the thinking and practice of other teacher educators/researchers.

Traditional research teaches us that we must distance the researcher and the researched in order for the researcher to validate the emerging findings as objective and generalizable. This distance gives the researcher more power in the research process because the researcher identifies the questions, selects the instruments, develops the treatments, conducts the analysis, and, ultimately, provides the published account of what happened. As S-STTEP researchers, along with other qualitative researchers, we recognize that this division of roles is impossible to maintain since the researcher and the researched can be the same person. Using research paradigms that require such contortion in a situation when researchers study their own context or students seems to be based on a false accounting of the actual role of the researcher in the process. S-STTEP research actually requires researchers to abandon this false power differential. As calls for multi-site studies of teacher education are made (see Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), if studies are conducted by teacher educators on teacher education practice or pedagogy, there are clear ways in which what is being studied is the practice of the researcher. More importantly, through S-STTEP methodology, clear representation of what is studied and learned can be provided.

A second way that concerns issues of power that emerge in reasons for doing S-STTEP research is related to our first concern with power itself. We have always been teachers. Before we joined institutions of higher education, we were classroom teachers. We recognize the power differential in the institutional relationships in teaching and in legislation guiding schools. Some research on teaching and teacher education has been done by others who are not teachers and do not consider themselves teacher educators. Such research can have a quality of paternalism, leading to infantilizing those who are researched. In qualitative studies of this kind, the researcher uses the knowledge and understanding of research subjects, that is, the words and actions of teachers, to uncover what the researched subjects know and then packages that information as if it belonged to the researcher. In S-STTEP research, since we study our practice and ourselves, we are in a better position to avoid this kind of colonization.

The research on teaching, teacher education, and other professions that has traditionally held the most power in reform efforts, professional development, or policy is usually done on the practice and people involved in conducting the practice rather than done from within the practice. The knowledge produced in such research is what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004) label *knowledge-for-practice*. The goal of this research is often the creation of formal knowledge that can be added to the “knowledge base for teaching” and used to cajole or force teachers to teach differently. In this situation, improvement in practice requires that the practitioner act on the theory or research finding developed by the researchers. Thus, improvement in practice is externally driven: the target for improvement is imposed from outside. Even when the pedagogy used to teach about an innovation or teaching practice takes care

to engage practitioners in developing understanding of the theory or innovation, practitioners are not seen as people who could develop knowledge that might be used by others to guide practice.

Often more important to the professional developer or policy maker is the imposition of research-based practice in order to produce “results” in student performance or some other external indicator. Thus, understanding how to act on the findings of research, rather than on understanding what was uncovered in order to think about how and where it might be useful, is the focus. The Essential Elements of Instruction movement is an example. Research showed that the students of teachers who engaged in certain practices scored higher on achievements texts (Good & Brophy, 2002). Since researchers used quantitative methods, findings were considered generalizable; therefore, they were considered applicable in any teaching context. Teachers across the United States and around the world were taught to use “wait time” and were monitored in their practice. Rather than exploring the mechanisms behind wait time within the practice of a teacher, the practice of using wait time was imposed. We continue to be dismayed by the ways in which teachers and teacher educators, when they are the source of researchers’ understandings of teaching, are often dismissed as knowers about teaching (Tidwell, 2002).

How Do We Address Understanding and Meaning-Making Through S-STTEP Research?

Early in our history as educational researchers, we became interested in teacher knowledge. Although one of us took a more anthropological and the other a psychological perspective, we both realized that there was much about teaching that is more clearly understood from inside teaching. Fenstermacher’s work on practical arguments is an example of that. Fenstermacher (1986) argues that unlike propositional knowledge, which results in propositions, the arguments emerging from practical knowledge are actions. Researchers who worked with teachers’ practical arguments often asserted that a researcher is needed if teachers are to successfully and accurately uncover the arguments behind their practice. Yet as an S-STTEP researcher who uses practical argument as a tool reveals (Tidwell, 2002), the teacher holds the key to understanding the knowledge represented in her practice. Through participation in various research projects that explored teacher knowledge and teacher belief, we came to realize that much of what we wanted to understand better about what went on in the mind of a teacher would be best uncovered from inside the teaching experience. This realization became even more apparent to us as we began to do S-STTEP research.

Research conducted within most other research paradigms does not allow the private thoughts and personal understanding to emerge in the research account in the voice of the researcher. Thus, when these researchers attempt to provide insider accounts of teaching and teacher education, they are hampered in their ability to share many of the things they learn about teacher education, the learning-to-teach

process, their own development as a teacher educator, or their understanding of the power and politics of teacher education. Most research paradigms do not provide a space in the research report to articulate the “so what” that the self uncovered doing the research. Nor is there space to articulate how what was learned could be used to improve the practice of the researcher. Self-study of practice research opens up this space.

In the next PAUSE, we explore S-STTEP research in relation to general qualitative research. Clearly situated within the larger research frame, we examine the ways that self-study fits alongside other qualitative methodologies. From there we turn, in Chapter 4, to issues of context and dialogue as a process of knowledge in S-STTEP research.

Making Connections

When one asks what it means to study education, the answer – in its most general sense – is to study experience. Following Dewey, the study of education is the study of life – for example, the study of epiphanies, rituals, routines, metaphors, and everyday actions. We learn about education from thinking about life, and we learn about life from thinking about education. This attention to experience and thinking about education as experience is part of what educators do in schools. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxiv)

Connections to Consider

Clandinin and Connelly’s quote while focused on the study of education suggests that the study of practice in any field connects to experience and thus to life. In S-STTEP we intentionally link practice to experience and experience to life as we trouble and create understanding. While we are positioned at the center of our lives and our experience, we try to understand ourselves in relation to others as well as ourselves in the space between practice and the other. Therefore, when we wonder “What is it I ought to be studying?” we respond by examining those experiences that we have with others in practice – the rituals, the traditions, and the experiences that form the rituals of daily life. We recognize that in order to study our practice, we need to attend to our sense of the experience. As we do that, we learn about our life, but more importantly we learn about our life within practice and develop new understandings of and actions in that practice. This chapter reminds us of the way in which exploring our knowing–in–practice reveals us to ourselves. We question, how did we arrive at our epiphanies?

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about ways to connect experience and life while decentering self in relation to practice. We ask you to ask yourselves:

- What do the taken-for-granted aspects of practice reveal about practice?
- What are the rituals, routines, and daily activities in my practice that could help me understand my practice better?
- How is a study of practice a study of experience and a study of life?
- How can I decenter self? How do I locate self in my study?

PAUSE

Introduction of Framework-for-Inquiry Planner and Framework-for-Analysis

Here we PAUSE in the text to introduce practical aspects of S-STTEP research. We offer ways to frame a self-study inquiry and an analysis of that inquiry. We believe that in the next few pages you can consider what you would do, how you would arrive at an issue, how you would explore the issue, and what pieces might be included for a fledging imagined study – not just a self-study of practice but a publishable self-study of practice. We also introduce an example of the initial responses from a self-study undertaken by one of us. Importantly, throughout this text we return to the frameworks and example several times, each time adding more detail about and discussion of the process.

Inquiring Minds: An Inquiry Planner

When we began to envision this text, we explored possible ways to address methodology. We asked ourselves what comes first – the practice or the theory – when preparing a text focused on self-study methodology? Originally we thought we would begin with theoretical pieces that discussed practice and ontology, stacking the important theoretical pieces at the beginning of the text. Then we stopped ourselves and asked – how does it work for us? We wondered, when we began our work as researchers long ago, how did we work through our ideas to reach our study?

Mary Lynn suggested, thinking of her own experience, that her understanding emerged *in the midst* of attempting to do self-study. Stefinee, pausing for a moment to capture those past moments, agreed that her own understanding of self-study research emerged as she wrestled with ideas and experiences. Continuing our organizational discussion centered on the text, we recognized that we only had our own history to draw upon as we considered how best to draw our readers into self-study methodology. We asked ourselves again, “Start with theory?” Again we wondered, “How can we put together a text that might simultaneously address the theory and practice of this work?”

As we negotiated and considered possibilities, we realized that our own best work occurred (and still occurs) *in the midst* of grappling with the practice–theory aspects. Rather than take a more standard approach to a methodological text, we

wanted to interrupt our text to provide multiple levels and multiple ways to enter into self-study methodology. We figured that readers, as they proceed through the text, might want some way to situate their work in relation to the ideas we present.

To do that, we wanted to encourage our readers to draw upon their own practice at this point in time, and ask themselves, how might I undertake a self-study? Further, we thought it would be helpful to generate a framework around the questions that we ask when we begin to think about self-study. So we generated the Framework-for-Inquiry planner that follows (Fig. 2.3).

<p>What am I interested in exploring? What do I identify as problems in my practice, where my actions do not seem to match my values (living contradictions)? What issues do I want to further understand? What do I want to learn about these interests, issues, and concerns?</p>
<p>How could I explore these concerns and issues? What contexts might be most fitting? Who are the most appropriate participants – me? My students?</p>
<p>What methods might I use? What would count as evidence?</p>
<p>What work in teacher education research (or other research fields) will guide my inquiry? What beliefs are embedded in my questions? What values do I embody in my practice and research? How will I hold myself accountable? What do I expect to contribute to the knowledge base?</p>

Fig. 2.3 Framework-for-Inquiry planner

This Framework-for-Inquiry planner asks a series of questions that invite reflection on practice, experience, and the issues that provoke researchers toward a study. Set in four categories, the categories themselves are less important than the questions. Moreover, although these questions are set in a linear format, we recognize that S-STTEP research does not occur in a linear, sequential order. Each question is designed to help potential self-study researchers situate themselves *in the midst* of their work and their wonderings about that work. When progressing through the questions, consider how/if the directions and personal questions lead them toward self-study.

In our arrangement of the text, this PAUSE represents the first of several interruptions. In the Preface and Chapters 1 and 2, we began to build a theoretical frame for S-STTEP methodology with particular attention to self and practice. In the next few chapters we explore ontological frames and dialogue as necessary aspects of S-STTEP methodology. However, before we present more theoretical issues, we invite the practical consideration of framing an inquiry and ask, “Does S-STTEP methodology fit your question and your curiosity about your topic?” We think our Framework-for-Inquiry will help answer that question.

In the first set of questions we ask researchers to consider interests, curiosities, and contradictions as a way to tease out potential research directions. These questions emerge from Chapter 1 where we ask, where is self in relation to others? What do I want to know about my practice? The second set of questions invites context setting, participant identification and begins to address more fully the exploration of practice as defined by the researcher and as related to those in the practice setting as addressed in Chapter 2.

In the third set of questions we turn to method and analysis. We have not yet addressed these issues but will do so in Chapters 5 and 6. For now, we simply invite consideration of possible choices to push forward thinking about S-STTEP inquiry. The fourth set of questions situates ideas within a broader literature, practice, and theory base. These issues will also be addressed in the final chapters. So here simple lists will do, detailing what connects and why. Please address each set of questions in some way. In future PAUSES in this text, we return to these questions and your responses to develop your inquiry.

Inquiring Minds: An Inquiry Analytic Tool

As we worked to create the planner framework, we began to wonder if this would be the best approach or if we needed to introduce an analytic tool as well that would help our readers examine their own ideas and the ideas from other self-studies as we explored the inquiry process. When we undertook self-study, we queried, do we ask ourselves questions about the quality of our work as we proceed, or do we wait until the final stages? We pressed ourselves to ponder, do we apply an analytic frame to the reading of the work of others, or not? In our initial response about the value of an analytic tool, we thought it might be the more important framework to present. Yet in careful conversation we decided that each framework held equal levels of

importance. The planner framework starts the research process, and potentially the analytic framework sharpens our thinking about possible study.

As we grappled with ideas about the analysis that would help us critique our own research process as well as the published work of others, we asked ourselves:

- What is sufficient for a study?
 - What is sufficient when collecting information about ourselves? Our programs?
 - If we simply focus on ourselves, is that sufficient for a research study?
 - If we record the voices of others, is that sufficient? How do I know? How do I bring in the marginalized voices?
- How can we address the conspiracies of politeness that exist?
- If we just focus on self as we engage in study, does that help us understand the setting and the practice we hope to improve?
- What are the research strategies we might use to study practice, if we use a self-study methodology?
- What tool might help us as we analyze our work?

These questions pushed us to consider issues that we thought would strengthen our work. As we addressed these questions and reviewed our own work and the work of others, we formulated questions (and answers) that we thought would identify strong self-study research. These questions include:

- What is the purpose? The purpose of a self-study – any study – should be obvious to the reader.
- What is the definition of self-study? The definition of self-study needs to be apparent for the reader to understand the researcher’s frame.
- What is the definition of self-study methodology? How the researcher defines their methodological approach becomes essential for the readers to discern whether they are reading a self-study.
- What are the rigorous research practices of S-STTEP methodology? The use of strategies that fit the researcher’s questions empowers any study.
- What is the explicit evidence? Evidence of the data collected, like excerpts from fieldnotes or interviews and so on, helps readers see the connections the researcher identifies.
- What is the authority of experience expressed in the paper? The ways researchers position themselves within practice–experience–theory inform the reader about the study and the stance of the researcher.
- How is the research situated within a related yet broader research literature? A self-study must be situated within the broader related research literature to help the reader understand the frame presented.
- What is the story of self? The ways the researcher situates self provide evidence of self-study.
- What are the questions raised while reading the study? This question addresses the queries that emerge when reading any research.

Although we wrote responses to all these questions when reading someone else’s work, we can and do apply them to our own work.

Purpose	What is the purpose that you identify for your study?	
Definition of self study	What definition of self-study do you use in the work you undertake? Where is the self situated in this study?	
Definition of self study methodology	When describing your methodology, how is it apparent that you are engaged in self-study? How do you describe your methodology?	
Rigorous Research Practice	What data collection and data analysis tools do you use? How are the aspects of your methodology described? How do you make apparent your thoughtful research practice? As part of making a study rigorous comes in the context you select to study, in what way or ways does the context support the rigor of the study?	
Explicit Evidence	In what ways do you connect the data collected with the assertions made in your study? For example, if you said that you interviewed people, how do you display the data collected? Will the evidence you collect allow for the insights you claim?	
Authority of experience	How do you situate the authority of your own experience in the study? How do you situate yourself in the study so that the readers (when you are ready to present your work) will accept your work as trustworthy?	
Story of self	In what ways is the self portrayed in the study? Where is the self in relation to others? How is the self evident?	
Situate in larger literature	Within what research literatures do you situate your work? How do you bring depth to your understandings of your field of focus?	
Questions raised in/by study	In this category you ask yourself questions that arise as you review your own work and/or engage in your study.	

Fig. 2.4 Framework-for-Analysis of personal practice and research

We designed these grids with the intent to situate S-STTEP methodology explicitly in relation to social science research. To us, this means that the left column identifies issues any qualitative researcher might address regarding their study as they attend to the careful design of their study. The middle column brings the S-STTEP research design alongside that series of questions with extensions of our own that involve issues specifically focused on self and practice. The third column represents the space for readers to join the conversation. We believe situating our framework like this allows S-STTEP researchers to inform colleagues less familiar with this work about the operational hows and whys of an S-STTEP research study.

In the grids that follow, the first grid (Fig. 2.4) offers questions about personal work and ways to question personal practice and research. We recommend glancing at these questions initially and then returning to them periodically throughout your

Author			Comments
	Purpose	What is the purpose of the study?	
	Definition of self study	What definition of self-study does the author use? Where is the self situated in this study?	
	Definition of self study methodology	When the author describes methodology, how is it apparent that the study is a self-study? How does the author describe the methodology?	
	Rigorous Research Practice	What data collection and data analysis tools are used? How are the aspects of the methodology described? How did the author make apparent thoughtful research practice? As part of making a study rigorous comes in the context selected for study, in what way or ways does the context support the rigor of the study?	
	Explicit Evidence	In what ways does the author connect the data collected with the assertions made in the study? For example, if they said that they interviewed people, how is that displayed in the evidence? Does the evidence collected allow for the insights the author claims?	
	Authority of experience	How does the author situate the authority of her/his own experience in the study? How do he/she situate themselves in the study so that the readers will accept their work as trustworthy?	
	Story of self	In what ways is the self portrayed in the study? Where is the self in relation to others? How is the self evident?	
	Situate in larger literature	Within what research literatures does the author situate their work? How do they bring depth to the understandings of their field of focus?	
	Questions raised in study	In this category ask questions that arise as you review this study work and/or engage in the reading of the study.	

Fig. 2.5 Framework-for-Analysis of the work of other researchers

study. The second grid (Fig. 2.5), quite similar to the first, invites an examination of the work of the other S-STTEP studies or the work of other researchers using the questions to explore their work. Ultimately the question here becomes, did I read a self-study, and if I did, how does it inform my work?

Although these ideas and this information are presented in a linear fashion, these questions and our own writing and thinking about these issues follow a far less straightforward approach. When we reviewed different works, we found that often we could answer some questions before others and some questions not at all. Yet these questions seem to probe the aspects of S-STTEP methodology that we find important and the linear structure connect it to the typical narrative of social science research.

After the grids we present an example of a self-study using the Framework-for-Inquiry planner and the Framework-for-Analysis. We offer this as a good example of how a researcher might undertake a study and prepare readers for the next chapters in this text.

In the Reconsideration PAUSE later in the text, we provide an example of how this grid might be used to explore the work of others. In that same PAUSE, we have fused the Framework-for-Inquiry with the Framework-for-Analysis to continue our example of Mary Lynn's study (Hamilton, 2008).

Introduction for Mary Lynn's Example Planner

The next look at the Framework-for-Inquiry offers an example from Mary Lynn's work. Here she presents her initial thoughts for the inquiry grid. Please note that while we present them together we leave the Framework-for-Analysis blank because this example represents only the initial stage of research consideration.

We return several times in this text to this study example, filling in questions and developing ideas. By the end of the text, we present her re-consideration of ideas and her re-presentation of the study in its published form to connect the kernel of an idea to the final re-presenting of the work at the Castle Conference (Hamilton, 2008). We recommend reading through the example and noting where questions emerge. We present this work not as an exemplar, but as an example. As you review this work, we encourage questions to emerge, like – is this a self-study? Where is the self? Moreover, we encourage the use of the analytic grid to situate this work.

Framework-for-Inquiry Example - Mary Lynn's Planner

- 1. What am I interested in exploring?** What are my living contradictions? What issues do I want to further understand? What do I want to learn about these interests, issues, and concerns?

I am interested in exploring my experience as a teacher of the Curriculum and the Elementary Learner class. As a result of reading my student evaluations from my Fall classes, I felt in a quandary about my teaching practice and my ability to bring students into the profession of teaching. The harsh critique of one class took me up short since I felt the class had been so productive, well-organized, and well-executed. My students had identified my living contradiction. After dismissing my initial desires to ignore and discount their comments, I forced myself to consider how best to explore my practice.

Given that I want to prepare the best students possible to reach the unseen children, what could I do to examine my practice? How could I inform myself about ways to improve my practice? How could I improve what needed improvement? To complicate matters, the students in one class offered harsh critique, but the students in the other class offer strong praise. What is a teacher educator to do?

I examined their comments. Unfortunately, most of their comments seemed to center on me as a person rather than any particular teaching strategy or idea. After reviewing their comments and categorizing their comments, the negative ones, the issues seem to focus on issues of organization and usefulness. That is, could I have presented the information differently or could I have presented more useful information? Or could I have done something that created a "need to know" within the students?

Analytic Frame: Purpose
(Story of self)

2. How could I explore these concerns and issues? What contexts might be most fitting? Who are the most appropriate participants – me or my students?

Since I believe that my materials are most current, I began to formulate a plan to begin in the Fall. In the spring, I will work with willing students who have taken the class already to discuss possible improvements for the course – in style, in design, in content. I will open the discussion to all students who have taken the course. My current idea is to focus the course in a narrative direction, encouraging the creation of narratives that will help the students develop a “book of understandings” about curriculum and learning and so on.

The context will be my Fall classes. I will engage my students in the work as well as invite a graduate student to participate with me.

Analytic Frame: Self-Study Definition

3. What methods might I use? What would count as evidence?

We will write about our experience, I will write about my experience and the graduate student, an experienced teacher, will write about her experience – watching me and watching the students. The graduate student and I will work together to create an exploration of the course, the teaching, the content, and more. I will also invite the students to write. In other words, the methods will include fieldnotes, observation, ticket-out-of-class activity used at strategic times (after the firsts in class), student/teacher narratives, dialogue, and informal interviews.

Evidence: Plans, journals, dialogue transcripts, student/teacher narratives, interview transcripts, and results of ticket-out-of-class activities.

Analytic Frame: Self-Study Methodology
Research Practice Evidence

4. What work in teacher education research (or other research fields) will guide my inquiry? What beliefs are embedded in my questions? What values do I embody in my practice and research? How will I hold myself accountable? What do I expect to contribute to the knowledge base?

Schwab, constructivist teacher education . . . curriculum theory, stuff about beginners, and so on. Narrative.

Knowledge base: an understanding of the struggles . . . both ends of the spectrum . . . of the learning-to-teach process; role of narrative in constructing a need to know; the use of and development of personal practical knowledge.

Maybe using narrative as a strategy . . . will allow me to test if a narrative is a fundamental way to “see” in the learning-to-teach process.

Analytic Frame: Authority of Experience
Literature (Story of Self)

Chapter 3

Questions of Practice

Questions

- *How Do We Reframe Questions, Issues, and Concerns to Guide S-STTEP Research?*
- *What Counts as Knowing in Self-Study?*
- *What Is an Ontological Stance?*
- *How Do We Orient Ourselves in S-STTEP?*
- *What Is an Ontological Stance Toward Research on Practice?*
- *Why Does Ontology Matter in the Design and Conduct of Research?*
- *What Questions Guide S-STTEP Research?*
- *How Can Living Contradictions Become Questions in S-STTEP Research?*

We experience our practice as teacher educators in a holistic way, constantly aware of the layers and that our lives and our various roles intertwine: We are faculty members, researchers, teachers, members of departments, confidants, community members, lovers, friends, sons, daughters, and/or, perhaps, parents. Stern's (2004) notion of the present moment. A conception of the practice on which S-STTEP research can be based, suggests that moment to moment, as we become conscious or non-conscious (that is, as we move between states of awareness regarding our actions and states where we enact routines intentionally or automatically), these roles, our knowledge from them, and our responsibilities within them surface – seldom individually, usually collectively, and often in multiple ways, usually intertwined with each other. Here Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) conception of personal practical knowledge reminds us that we bring into any moment of acting and being our histories, the contexts within which we act, and our relationship with others, along with our knowledge and beliefs. As S-STTEP researchers we stand in that moment of holistic, bubbling, buzzing experience; yet to move forward, we must focus on one piece of that moment, that practice, and that world. We seek, to understand it more fully. In this chapter we begin by considering what counts as knowing and discussing the usefulness of taking an ontological stance rather than an epistemological one in S-STTEP research. We consider how such a stance impacts the questions that guide S-STTEP research. Then we explore where to look to uncover or identify issues and

concerns that serve to focus our S-STTEP research. Finally, we consider how we reframe those issues and concerns as questions to guide our research.

What Counts as Knowing in Self-Study?

Early in our careers as we began studying our own practice, we thought that establishing our understanding of knowing some “thing” and being able to assert that “thing” as knowable required that we use the scientific method. We thought that doing that allowed us to assert what we believed to be true as formal knowledge (Fenstermacher, 1994). At that time we believed that formal knowledge was the only kind of research knowledge worth claiming or asserting. Now we recognize that, as critiques of modernism, logical positivism, and even empiricism have been around for a long time (e.g., Toulmin, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), the story of research in the social sciences presented to us was not necessarily the only way to view research.

At this early moment in our careers, we thought that claiming to know required using research strategies that established the veracity of what we claimed because then our claims could be asserted as valid and accurate. As qualitative researchers, we knew we stood outside the magical kingdom of positivism that has and had foundational criteria for knowing, or the scientific method. We thought that while we had tools and techniques for establishing the trustworthiness of our claims (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994), we had no formal ground from which we might claim certain and ultimate validity for the results or findings of our studies. As a result, our claims to know in practice and to reveal knowledge of practice would and could be easily dismissed by those who required that knowledge meet the test of what counts as knowledge within the epistemology of logical positivism.

Of course, even then the ground seemed uneven, and researchers like ourselves raised questions in the social sciences about the usefulness of foundational criteria, particularly if researchers planned to respond more helpfully to the enduring difficulties of human and social interaction (see Toulmin, 2001). Since pragmatic solutions to the problems of poverty, diversity, health, family life, and literacy enacted in a local context were worth studying, reporting on studies with successful responses to the problems of a particular place held promise for informing and guiding responses to those problems in other places (e.g., Putnam, 2004). For example, around this time Polkinghorne (1988) published his analysis of the failure of psychology to meet the demands of helping people live healthy lives. Toulmin (2001) argued that reasonableness was more valuable than rationalism alone; Connelly and Clandinin (1985) and Polanyi (1967), as well as Merleau-Ponty (1994), established the importance of understanding embodied knowledge. Clifford and Marcus (1986) had already called into question the basis for authority in claiming to know in anthropology, and Hayden White (1987) raised similar claims in history. Yet even then the discourse, at least to us, seemed to require a clear division between our roles in our practice and our work as researchers. Even when educators studied their own teacher education program and the development of knowledge by their own

students, they distanced themselves from their practice. Usually, their ownership of their position in the teacher education practice they studied disappeared in their research accounts. On this shifting ground we began our first self-studies of practice.

At this fragile beginning, we questioned the focus of our study and why we wanted to pursue this line of inquiry. We realized our desire to study our practice related to our desire to understand it and know how to improve it. We felt that the insider knowledge about practice we developed could make important contributions to educational research. As we watched teachers and teacher educators negotiate the terrain of moving pre-service teachers toward the role of teachers, we understood that if the knowledge of their practice were uncovered, it could potentially transform teacher education. It would also contribute to our understanding of teaching in ways that would improve the practices of teacher education. At the same time, we sought outlets for our work through presentations at national conferences and in refereed journals. Researchers doing research on personal knowledge of practice began to resist demands that research should meet positivistic validity claims. They turned their action to development strategies for making claims from a basis of the authority of experience rather than the authority of reason (Munby & Russell, 1994). Researchers of practice began asking in what ways their research represented and provided evidence for their understanding of practice. (We discuss these strategies in greater detail in Chapter 5.) The larger educational research community, particularly qualitative researchers, spoke of the need for evidence, rigor, and trustworthiness.

However, just as importantly for self-study, we began to question and explore what kind of knowing and claims to know help researchers in studying their own practice. From this practice perspective, research concerns about experience could be situated locally. Indeed, what it meant to know, what counted as knowing, and how to ground claims for knowledge – our epistemology of practice – differed from the claims of logical positivists or even qualitative researchers who struggled and felt compelled to meet demands for validity claims. (See Denzin & Lincoln [2005] for a detailed historical elaboration of the moments of qualitative research.) For us, two things about the epistemology underlying studies of practice became apparent. First, as researchers/teacher educators/practitioners, the knowledge from our studies needed to have enough trustworthiness to guide us in our own practice and be useful to others who wanted to understand or improve their practice. Second, linking the understandings we developed of our practice to the larger research conversation could and did contribute to the studies of teaching and the process of becoming a teacher when we made visible those connections. These contributions could move forward both the field of teacher education and the research conversation in that field. Those researchers, including ourselves, interested in S-STTEP research directed their inquiries toward the improvement of practice – specifically our own practice, and through their application of S-STTEP research, toward that of others. In this way, S-STTEP researchers sought to both understand our reality in our practice and improve it.

As a community, S-STTEP researchers questioned what made particular research studies, theories, or scholarly works valuable. In our work, we questioned how the authors and research established the authority claims in ways that drew readers to

acknowledge trustworthiness. We determined that when we found the ideas, the writing, the theories, and the findings of studies helpful in guiding our understandings and as tools for developing our practice, we judged the work to be veridical and credible. Moreover, when we read these studies, we trusted what the authors said and believed that attention to the ideas presented in practice would improve the lives of people.

Munby and Russell (1994) argue that research on practice conducted within the practice from the perspective of the person who holds responsibility for the practice gains authority based on the experience of the researcher (authority of experience). The work also gains authority because it is based in the process of dialogue and other analytic tools. In rigorous scholarship, the researchers establish trustworthiness or follow accepted criteria or guidelines for the research (e.g., LaBoskey, 2004a; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998b). While this gives weight to findings for S-STTEP researchers, the value of research is best established by the readers' judgment of the trustworthiness of the researcher of the study, the integrity of the study, and the assertions for practice presented in the account. In other words, trustworthy studies attempt to establish the accuracy of the account of the practice. They do this by constructing an account that resonates with the reader and provides insights that have the potential to improve or enlighten practitioners. S-STTEP research has standing and is judged trustworthy by researchers when the experience leads to understandings of the practice or refinement of an action that results in improvement. S-STTEP research is judged trustworthy by others when the assertions for an action or understandings seem plausible and when results can be used to guide action in practice. In this way, studies are valuable not so much for their contribution to knowing but because of their contribution to acting in practice.

What Is an Ontological Stance?

What we have suggested thus far is that S-STTEP researchers approach their work in ways that differ from that of traditional research, since there is always a dual focus. There is a focus on studying practice as they work to change it (from the early days of this work continuing into the present). What we state here is that underlying these differences is an ontological stance. For us, as self-study researchers, and we believe for others as well, our ground of being positions us differently in our work, leading us to address epistemology as well as to establish what is true and real in our world. This means that we give more attention to ontology (practice and its improvement) than to knowing or establishing foundational claims to know. Attention to ontology is our more central and vital concern. Other research methodologies have this ontological orientation; indeed, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) provide an excellent discussion of the ontological stance of narrative inquiry and other research methodologies that share its boundaries.

The inquiries S-STTEP researchers engage in generate living educational theories (Whitehead, 1993). The theories or assertions for action and understanding that

we develop through our studies of practice emerge in academic publications, but they also emerge in the lives we live in our practice – in our own ways of being with and for teachers, children, and young people. Thus, our theories of practice emerge in our practice and hopefully in the lives and practices of the teachers we educate. The knowledge we produce is also “living” because it constantly grows and changes. Stern (2004) reminds us that when we “uncover” or make explicit implicit knowledge, it is a shadow of the holistic, teeming, rich, interconnected implicit knowledge we enact in practice. For this reason, as we engage in a study of our practice and what we know in practice, the potential for increasing the knowledge of practice is never diminished. We always know more than we can say, and as the poem by Carl Sandburg reminds us, “She knew the meaning of meaning and then forgot it before she could tell it” (1960, p. 23).

Sometimes when we study our practice, we become so interested in understanding practice and what we know in practice that we care slightly, if at all, about discussions of epistemology or ontology. However, we do take certain stances toward what we know and how we know things. We also hold purposes for knowing those things. People who care about such things argue that self-study researchers have a pragmatist epistemology (based on experience and relationship), and others argue that we have a constructivist one (based on shared notions of knowledge). In such discussions, Dewey or Vygotsky are asserted to us as correct explanations of our orientations toward knowledge in our inquiry on or in our practice. In trying to present an understanding of knowledge in S-STTEP, we (the authors) at least do come from pragmatic and constructivist orientations. But the very fact that we hold a constructivist orientation to knowledge and epistemology leads us to be careful in asserting opinions about aspects of epistemology. We believe that we construct our own understandings. We believe that we live in a particular place and time and we act within certain and specific contexts with people who exist in that same space. However, we do not wish to make assertions about what is knowledge for all S-STTEP researchers.

As teachers, people whose obligation includes bringing someone else to learn something, we probably believe that there are things that are knowledge, but we just as surely believe that the teacher candidates we are educating construct and come to hold that knowledge through their own experiences with and in relationship to their own past histories, culture, social interactions, and emotional responses. As S-STTEP practitioners, we believe we come to understand our experience as we study it.

We acknowledge that an external world exists. As we interact with and seek to understand it, the world acts back on us and in this way in the space between our own construction of the experience, others’ experience of the event, and the experience in the world we create a conception of that experience. Therefore, just as we believe we can only partially make visible our implicit knowledge in a setting, we also think we can only partially understand our experience in that world. We do believe that as intelligent humans struggle to understand experience, theories and practices acquire meaning. Making explicit our understandings of practice has value for developing discourse about and guidance for practice in teacher education research.

We recognize that epistemology and ontology are inextricably linked to each other. However, we have come to understand that attention to being and becoming (see Feldman, 2006, for explanation) with and for others is the more central concern for S-STTEP research. Our stance in our research is essentially an ontological one. We have spoken elsewhere about our commitment to unseen children (the students of the pre-service and in-service teachers that we educate) and how this commitment forms the basis from which our research on practice proceeds (Guilfoyle, Hamilton, & Pinnegar, 1997; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2006). In our work, we have a fundamental desire to improve the lives of children in schools, and we believe that understanding and improving our education of their teachers – our practice as teacher educators – will lead to better schools.

How Do We Orient Ourselves in S-STTEP?

Our individual conceptions of epistemology are clothed in our decisions to do S-STTEP inquiries, our hopes about learning from these inquiries, and the ways in which we represent what we learn as accepted and acceptable (as “real”) in a larger research arena.

In studies of practice, practitioners come to study one thing rather than another because of their view of the world, what they believe the world should be like optimally, and how they believe we ought to act and be in the world. Indeed, many inquirers find the idea of exploring living contradictions a compelling way to move forward in research on practice. In this framework, we come to inquire into those areas of our practice where we become troubled or disturbed when we believe we are one thing and then find ourselves acting in opposition to that belief. We may find ourselves routinely lecturing on constructivist teaching rather than engaging our students in actively constructing their own knowledge. We may consider ourselves open and welcoming and overhear students representing us as mean-spirited and rigid. We may believe deeply in the value of community, but find ourselves isolated and alone in our institutional setting. We may believe that who pre-service teachers become as teachers will be guided by their own past experiences in schools and as learners, yet we may never make connections to their past experiences and belief into our courses and programs.

Another way we may decide to orient ourselves in studying our practice is not so much toward our problems of practice but towards our own interest in exploring what our world reveals to us. In this pursuit we explore what the way we act in the world reveals to us about how we experience and come to know the world and our practices. In so doing we interpret and construct our experiences and interaction using what we learn to reframe our practice. We may simply be interested in how we use story-telling in our teaching and what that reveals to us about teaching, learning, and knowing. Our identification of issues and problems, our choices about how to come to understand our practice, our decisions about data collection, and our processes for data analysis, all have epistemological bases

and reveal to us what we think is knowledge, what counts as knowledge, and how to insure the trustworthiness of what we assert. In S-STTEP research, the belief about knowledge that participants appear to share is merely the idea that examining practices carefully and completely will lead us to understand practice in ways that will improve it and contribute both to our own practice and to the larger research conversation.

Because in S-STTEP we acknowledge that the knower and the inquirer in the research study is the self, we must give up on being able to assert foundational criteria for knowing. This shift in understanding is often difficult for researchers trained at modern universities. Academia in general encourages scholars to make claims about what we have learned and insist on the fundamental nature of their rightness. Certainly, generalizability and knowability have value. Yet, in contrast, in S-STTEP research, we are more interested in using what we understand to improve teacher education at a particular place and time. As the label for this research makes clear, that the subjective and particularistic is the realm of inquiry.

In S-STTEP, we approach the inquiry from a perspective of not knowing and of the pursuit of understanding. We want to understand contradictions or problems, or ways to improve. We come in with questions or ideas but not hypotheses carefully crafted to be proven right or wrong. This means that the scientific method does not represent well our process for coming to know. We have asserted elsewhere and will explore later in this text that the process for coming to know upon which the authority for making claims rests in self-study of practices work is a process of dialogue. What this means in terms of the relationship of epistemology to ontology is that we believe that in order to develop confidence in our understanding and the trustworthiness of what we have come to see, we constantly question the viability of what we are coming to know and actively seek alternative explanations and alternative ways for constructing the meaning in the setting we explore. (We return to a discussion of trustworthiness in Chapter 7.) We do this through processes of internal or abstract self-collaboration (such as being skeptical), the process of validation suggested by qualitative research practitioners (Mishler, 1990), and the use of others as critical friends or providers of informed response (Schuck & Russell, 2005).

When we first began doing this work, on more than one occasion, we got drawn into long debates both inside and outside the S-STTEP community about the validity of our findings. There are researchers in this frame who want to be able to claim validity and generalizability supported somehow with foundational criteria for knowing. While we believe this is an understandable human desire, the epistemology and ontology of S-STTEP research makes that goal probably unreachable. After all, we study our own practice in the moment as it develops, we work to change and improve the practice as we study it, and we expect what we learn from improving our practice to change it even further. Thus, what we attempt to capture and understand is changing even as we study it. In addition, our studies often examine process and context. We sometimes attempt to stand within our context, while we attempt to uncover its impact on us and our action in the situation. These elements make the research ground we work from dynamic, and we must recognize that the knowledge we develop is always contingent.

Across time, as we engaged in numerous debates about the validity of our research and the claims we made, these discussions became increasingly uninteresting and repetitive. Thus, in our thinking about S-STTEP research, we found ourselves fairly quickly moving away from claims for validity based in warrants. However, we continued to be interested in developing criteria and strategies for guiding this research that allowed researchers to satisfy their own needs to feel confident in what they were coming to understand (see Feldman, 2003; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; LaBoskey, 2004a). In our own work, for example, we have used participant consultation, expert checks, and cross-validation and triangulation strategies, among others, to develop confidence in the veracity of the assertions we wanted to make about practice and our understanding of it. However, arguing about whether what we were asserting was true or not became less and less interesting, valued, and valuable to us. This for us has to do with our ontological rather than epistemological stance.

During this time, we constantly sought to understand our experience, not only by studying it, but also by reading the work of other scholars. As a result of our reading, we began to construct ideas about what made the work of others believable and trustworthy for us. We came to understand more fully that we do not think of knowledge as absolute and separate from the knower but part of the knower and relative to the individual experience of the knower. This understanding led us to the realization that results of research demonstrated trustworthiness when we felt that the author exhibited rigor and integrity in the research account. We might find that her findings resonated with us, or felt he offered a reasonable and reliable interpretation of experience. We recognized that our research had value for others when they judged us as having integrity as researchers and the accounts we presented as trustworthy and deserving of consideration. We concerned ourselves with the verifiability of representations of our construction of relationships, interconnections, and conceptions that would deepen and improve practice – wanting them to resonate with others' experiences of the world and in some way to be a viable and potentially authentic account.

At the same time, through the work of Berry and Loughran (2002), we came to realize that claims we made did not have to be secured as absolute knowledge. Instead, the kinds of claims that S-STTEP researchers were interested in making were claims that were useful to others for understanding their practice or action in it at that particular place and moment in time. We realized that we needed to make claims that were strong enough to allow us and others in the research community to take action in practice or develop deeper understandings of practice. Through the work of Huber and Clandinin (2005) we realized that constructing an authentic, rich, and deep account of practice against which wonders or questions could be raised also guided us in understanding and improving practice. Thus, we recognized that S-STTEP researchers were not developing objective generalizable truth claims but assertions for action and understanding or depictions of contexts for further wondering.

As a result, in our own research we sought to make claims about practice and experience that had sufficient strength to allow someone to take action in a practice or make assertions that would lead to deeper understandings of practice and

experience. We believed that knowledge of practice would always grow – the more we learned, the more we opened to our learning. Thus, we were not developing absolute final truth.

We did believe that some assertions for action and understanding that emerged from S-STTEP research would carry value and weight across time. However, we recognized that the power of this research rested in its ability to provide accounts of practice and understandings of practice that could inform teacher educators specifically and the community and discourse of teacher education research generally. Our ability to participate in the discourse of the research community of teacher educators rested on the integrity of our accounts, because on this basis the assertions for action and understanding that emerged would and could be accorded trustworthiness. In other words, decisions and judgment of their trustworthiness resided in the hands of the readers who would determine what was trustworthy based on their beliefs about such things as the rigor and integrity of the researcher as well as their belief about the viability of the understandings or assertions in accounting for the contexts in which they were created and the experiences and practices they provided an insight into. Thus, *the other* was the one who determined the value of the research. Several others unnamed in the title of this research methodology are important to this judgment. The absent other to be benefited by this research, the other in practice, the other collaborating in the research, and the other as a judge of the viability and trustworthiness of the research are vital contributors in the processes for determining the worth or value of the understandings that emerge from this research as well as its epistemology and its ontological stance.

What Is an Ontological Stance Toward Research on Practice?

Since the functional definition of S-STTEP research is the study of our practice in order to understand or improve it, then definitionally S-STTEP research takes an ontological stance toward research. The purpose behind coming to understand what is – the improvement of our practice and the lives of children and young people – orients us toward ontology. Our research stance is then one that is oriented toward making *what is* better for others. In other words, it makes a commitment to improving the world through improving the practice of the inquirer. We note here that the focus on improvement could send a colonizing or a directive pall over the understanding of this work. S-STTEP researchers must attend to their personal definitions of improvement to question their own direction with regard to this concept. Suffice it to say that when we use the term improvement here, we have the best, socially just intentions that contribute to rather than constrain others' liberty.

While S-STTEP research is orientated toward an ontological stance of improvement and obligation toward others, this stance is evident in other ways in this research methodology. The ontological stance is evident in the orientation toward

uncovering our implicit knowledge and understanding of experience. Experienced practitioners know that their philosophic beliefs about and orientations in the world have practical implications for their action. A network of values, intentions, purposes, and beliefs about and understandings of relationships among people and things becomes visible as we interact in the world. All of this is part of the implicit knowing practitioners have of their world, their implicit ontology. This ontology directs but does not determine action or experience. Thus, we may believe one thing (that kindness to others is a fundamental obligation) but then act in opposition to that belief (in unkind ways to a student). For this reason, we would argue that the decision to explore practice and experience necessarily positions S-STTEP research as oriented more toward issues of ontology than issues of epistemology.

The ontological stance in S-STTEP research orients the researcher differently in making claims and in developing the authority for knowing. This stance directs the researcher to attend to capturing clear, defensible, and compelling accounts of the contexts and experiences from which understanding emerges. The researcher attends to providing enough contextual depth to enable others to *see* the practice or experience in the same way the researcher sees it. In using strategies for verification, researchers develop authority for their assertions by providing clear evidence that they attempted to develop other constructions and interpretations of the experience. The researchers reveal the ways in which they sought the voices of others in the experience and how the experience of others did and did not support the interpretation provided by the researcher. This attention to solidifying and developing an understanding of *what is* as well as the experience of coming to that understanding enables us to reframe our practice. It also provides a stronger foundation for assertions for action or understanding.

Why Does Ontology Matter in the Design and Conduct of Research?

Taking an ontological stance impacts S-STTEP researchers in the design and conduct of studies. As Munby and Russell (1994) articulated for us, as S-STTEP researchers the claim we make is to the authority of our own experience as a foundation of our work. As practitioners, our studies rest on our authority as a person who has experience in a particular arena of action. That experience guides us in identifying questions of interest, in designing studies, and in interpreting data. In order to make our study worthwhile, we use intuitions and understanding from our experience to guide us. In designing and executing a study, we attend to ways to support the veracity of the authority of experience and the interpretations at which we arrive. The research design in S-STTEP must lead researchers to both construct and interrogate multiple perspectives on the practice being studied.

Often, when someone determines to conduct S-STTEP research, they focus on observing their practice and developing personal accounts of what they see. As they do that, the constraints of this context can affect that practice and their accounts. Recognizing what influences them along with the hows and the whys becomes a part of the study. They may collect past accounts and develop and elicit personal memories of their own experience in the practice. They seek to “understand” the practice or the “experience” they have in practice. Further, the ontological stance of self-study research includes within it an obligation to understand the broader context of the socio-political forces within which we work. What other researchers have said about the practice as well as the ways in which already published theories might account for or guide our action and our experience also fits into the inquiry. Indeed, past research in an area offers an important but sometimes neglected avenue that could inform studies of practice. Since S-STTEP rests in a pragmatic constructivist epistemology, inquirers seek multiple sources of confirming and disconfirming evidence, one element of which is past research reports.

In designing a self-study, the researcher will first want to understand the theories and research already available that purport to provide insight or guidance into the practice being interrogated and uncovered. When self-study researchers begin to think about something in their practice, they collect data from multiple sources, such as the students or others involved in the practice, materials or documents developed as part of the practice, visual data that captures the practice, as well as personal reflections on the practice, feelings about the practice, or understandings of the practice. This variety of sources suggests that self-study researchers may want others to observe the practice. They may want to hold debriefing sessions where collaborators interrogate the researchers’ understandings of the practice. They may want to construct interim accounts or interpretations that are shared with participants, outside observers, and other experts in such practice.

In other words, taking an ontological stance toward research by S-STTEP scholars has important implications. First, underlying our concern in studying our own practice as teacher educators is our obligation to create practice environments that enable our teacher candidates to flourish in ways that, in turn, contribute to deeper learning for their future students. We make a commitment to ontology. Thus, our orientation is toward developing the experienced world rather than making warrantable claims about that world. Second, our methodology rests in an arena of contingencies – in a zone of maximal contact – where past, present, and future are in flux (central to our studies is the idea that what we are studying will change in unpredictable and uncontrollable ways). We recognize that the ontology of the situation feeds the research and makes it vulnerable to acceptance as a way of knowing in traditional research communities. Third, the nature of the experience of the research we do requires commitment as well as careful attention to ontology. It requires that we provide clear, coherent, and viable research accounts that support readers in making positive judgments about the trustworthiness and rigor of our research.

What Questions Guide S-STTEP Research?

Just as in any form of research, self-study research projects are guided and shaped by the theoretical framework they emerge from and the questions we choose to explore. Self-study research questions, like those of other researchers, materialize from wonderings about the observations we make of the world. However, unlike research conducted from other frameworks, questions that guide a self-study research ask that the researcher focus more deeply and closely on the self, the relationships between self and practice, and what the researcher comes to understand by looking more clearly at personal understanding and practice rather than attempting to remove the self from the study and focus on abstract and distanced ideas about self-knowledge and experience. Indeed, developing self-study research questions begins with a focus on the self and the practice in which the self-study researcher engages. The S-STTEP researcher focuses on her reality and her wonderings about it. Living Contradictions, Discernment, and Professional Curiosity are all sites from which fruitful questions for S-STTEP research can surface.

How Can Living Contradictions Become Questions for S-STTEP Research?

From the beginning of the work in self-study, the concept of *living contradictions* has been a useful tool for locating research sites in our practice. Whitehead (1993) introduced the concept of living contradiction as a place in our practice where we would name ourselves one way, but others observing or participating in our practice would label us differently. Therefore, locating a living contradiction in our practice means paying attention to irony in our life space. It means locating places where there is incongruity or discord between what we say or how we act and what we believe – how we appear to others in our practice and how we would like to appear. There are several ways that living contradictions show themselves. One is that we think we practice certain kinds of pedagogy, but come to understand that we act in opposite ways. Whitehead (1993) talks about identifying a living contradiction when he videotaped himself and found that while he had thought of himself as a teacher who used inquiry learning, he actually lectured most of the time. We think we embody social justice in our teacher education practices and then uncover ways in which we participate in racism, paternalism, or sexism in some form. We think of ourselves as respectful and accepting but are caught up short when during class we find ourselves berating a student for comments we think are unacceptable.

Student evaluations and commentary can be an important indicator of living contradictions in our practice. They can provide evidence that we do teach in ways we want teacher candidates to teach. We may carefully design a course that we think will be a life-changing learning experience and provide stimulating discussion and conceptual tools and experiences that will be helpful for our teacher candidates as they become teachers, yet our student ratings and student comments tell us that this

was the worst course they ever took, nothing that was taught would be useful in practice, and that everything we did was irrelevant. During the following semester, we might explore carefully the ways our students experience the assignments we give, the way we interact in our class, and the kinds of opportunities for learning we actually provide.

One of our colleagues overheard a student from a past semester say to a friend currently enrolled in her class, “You just have to tell her the opposite of what you believe and write just what she says in class.” This statement pointed to a living contradiction in her practice and led her to study the ways she imposed her ideas on students in her course, when she thought she was being open and responsive. When students insist they have “learned nothing” in our classes and then list what they have learned (about how to work in groups, how to reflect on learning, and how to solve problems), we become interested in what we did in our teaching that led students to devalue learning processes.

Another indicator of having experienced a living contradiction occurs when we replay an experience with a student or experience feelings of uneasiness when things go smoothly in class. It might be a conversation with a student or colleague, a submitted paper, or a chance meeting on campus, but the thoughts about the experience stay with us refusing to disappear. For Gujonsson (2007) it was an on-going annoyance with student teaching and his wonderings about whether the experience was education or training. As his work demonstrates, when we feel irritated or bothered or just cannot forget an experience, we must stop and explore the experience more carefully, reflecting on what questions about teacher education or practices in teacher education arise for us or the ways in which we deny our values in our practice. We might find that the experience reveals to us that we actually hold different beliefs about learning to teach than we had thought.

We find an interesting example of such a contradiction in Tidwell’s (2002) article where she works to support students in their learning. During the course of the study, one of the students disappears; she becomes frustrated by a second student’s competence and her own feelings of being unnecessary.

Another example of a living contradiction occurs when we are given a role on our faculty and we have to figure out what that means. We might be notified that we are in charge of “technology transfer” for teacher education, yet we do not think of ourselves as particularly knowledgeable about using technology in our own teaching. We might explore the politics of the department that led those in charge to make this assignment, what it means to be “in charge” of technology transfer, or what impact being given that assignment has on our use of technology in our courses. We might be named the “new faculty mentor” when we ourselves feel we still need mentoring, and we find ourselves exploring more carefully what it means to mentor or engage in an autobiographical self-study about the ways in which we were mentored and the impact of mentoring on our current practice as a teacher educator. Ritter (2007) explores such a living contradiction. Having been named a teacher educator because of his admission to graduate school and the assumption of responsibilities for supervising practicum and field experiences, he studies his process of becoming a teacher educator.

Discernment is another site for developing S-STTEP studies. Discernment refers to the identification of places in our teacher education program or practice that might produce an interesting opportunity for making our practice better. We might notice that we have been assigned to teach a course in which faculty members teaching the course agree to use common assignments. The assumption is that teacher candidates will have more uniform experiences in teacher education. We might explore how alike and how different the courses are and where differences emerge. We might follow our students into the following semester to see what we learn about how variations in the curriculum and experience lead to differences in their development as a teacher and our understanding of our content, or we might look backward and track how what teacher candidates took earlier in their program shapes what we can and do teach them in this course.

We might notice that because of the way students arrange their curriculum, half of our students engage in a field placement during our course while others do not. We might become interested in what impact a field experience has on student learning and how their experience comes into classroom discourse and is welcomed or rejected in our course. We might become interested in how our teacher education program takes advantage of field experiences in linking them to the curriculum and what we learn about how to make stronger theory/practice connections.

Our intellectual growth may lead us to notice and reconceptualize practices that are tacit. We may want to study the experiences more closely, reinterpreting them and then attempting to work differently with our students. It may lead us to question whether we are living our beliefs or we may simply decide to analyze curriculum or programmatic practices with new theoretical lenses or with conflicting and competing ones. Sometimes simply listening to voices of colleagues or students may raise questions we want to pursue further in our practice. For example, Martin and Russell (2005) worked to understand more clearly how listening to the commentary students provided about their practice as teacher educators guided them in understanding and developing practice. These sites of discernment can raise many questions worthy of study.

Another site for S-STTEP research occurs as we read current research in teacher education or about current events that impact teacher education. Such research might prompt us to wonder whether our practice fits with described findings and how that information impacts us. We might become interested in the impact on our university-based practice or legislation targeted at public school teachers. Lyons, Freidus, LaBoskey, and Hamilton (2004) became interested in how teachers educated at their individual institutions used assessment in their teaching practice after the initial implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws. They were interested in how their practice emerged in the practice of their own students and how political opposition impacted or shaped teacher candidates' use of and response to what they learned in teacher education.

We might become interested in the development of the practice and thinking of our former students, now teachers, and how their thinking impacts our practice. For example, Helen Freidus (Freidus, Feldman, Sgouros, & Wiles-Kettenmenn, 2005)

joined a group of her former students who were working to do a better job of moving what they had learned from her into their own practice. Together they studied what they learned about practice and the ways in which each impacted the other in developing practice.

We also might become interested in a particular practice. We might simply want to watch carefully how we are doing something. One of us (Stefinee) became fascinated with teacher candidate support for a particular course. The candidates reportedly felt that the teaching helped as they moved into student teaching. With curiosity piqued, Stefinee returned to a public school classroom to explore whether issues she taught in her class were useful in a public school setting (Pinnegar, 1995a). Another example comes in the work of Coia (2008) when she pursued her interest in self-trust as she interacted with students in her classroom.

How Do We Reframe Questions, Issues, and Concerns to Guide S-STTEP Research?

Experiencing ourselves as a living contradiction, noticing something in our practice or context that intrigues us, or being compelled by profession curiosity to explore more deeply orients us toward what we want to study. To refine our questions and engage in an S-STTEP around that issue, we need to explore our concern, the issue, or our interest more completely. While global questions of the kind, “how do I do X?” or “how can I improve X?” can guide a self-study project, refining what we mean by the question and how we understand it will lead to stronger studies.

Proceeding from a living contradiction to a self-study research project is not as straightforward as it might initially appear. As indicated in the previous PAUSE, we can prepare for our inquiry by asking ourselves about our living contradictions and the evidence that might be used to unravel our experience as a living contradiction. We can probe further by identifying experiences that seem bothersome and/or identify a trigger phrase or image around that identified contradiction. Examining this contradiction for conflicted aspects of identity, value, and belief serves to situate possible inquiry. When we decide to focus on an experience that keeps replaying in our minds, it might require a deeper analysis of the experience to uncover what the contradiction is and how the experience led us to deny our values in our practice.

Recognizing a potential living contradiction and using it as the beginning point in a self-study probably requires that we first determine what the living contradiction is. This might require us first to determine why we continue to think about the experience and why the experience makes us feel angry, frustrated, edgy or dismissed. In this case, as we focus we might question what the phrase “the way things are” means to us and how whatever that means is in conflict with our morals, values, or understandings. We might ask what aspect of our identity, understanding, or values is being denied. Once we can uncover the living contradiction, we then need to focus more clearly on what the issues within the living contradiction are and what *I* want to understand about those issues and what *I* want to learn about them.

The statement of the living contradiction we experience can sometimes direct our inquiry. When we feel we act one way and someone reports us as being different from that, in designing our study and determining what evidence to collect, the first step might be to simply identify a space in our practice where the contradictory interpretation can occur and determine to carefully study that practice space. When teacher candidates claim to learn nothing from the work they did in our class, our attention could be targeted on the assignments we gave and the learning experiences in the course. We might begin by considering what research in our content area says about teacher candidate learning in that area and how well the structure of our assignments and the opportunities for learning relate to that. We might explore these assignments alone to determine what exactly we ask teacher candidates to do and what we suppose it demonstrates that they have learned. We might also include samples of teacher candidate responses to the assignments, analyzing the responses to uncover what they reveal about what was learned. Our study would target how teacher candidates learn particular kinds of content, how their experience prepares them to demonstrate what they know, how our assignments match those of others in this field, and whether using traditional orientations in our field is or is not productive in developing teacher candidates as teachers. As we bring these considerations into the analysis of our data, the questions we raise about our experience will push us to reframe that experience.

However, often discrepancies between a practitioner's and a participant's judgments of the value of an experience can be as much about the beliefs each brings to the experiences as it is about what actually occurred. This means that while the first step in determining what you will study may focus on identifying a living contradiction, the second step may involve digging deeper into the source of the contradiction. While the teacher candidate's comment may lead to a revelation that we are incompetent in our content area, it is more likely that the student's statement may mask the belief the teacher candidate holds about what counts as knowledge in the content area in contrast to the belief about content knowledge the teacher educator holds. As teacher educators we know that the beliefs teacher candidates bring to the learning may determine the ways in which they understand and value what the teacher was attempting to teach. Another possibility is that teacher candidates may actually value the content of the course but be resistant to the pedagogy used in the course, and they may be unaware of the evidence the pedagogy provides that they are learning. Each of these interpretations opens possibilities for guiding an S-STTEP research project.

The first might be a study of differences in what counts as knowledge in a discipline, teacher education, or public schools from the perspective of the teacher educator who has potentially stood in each of these roles. Another study might explore teacher candidate beliefs about the teaching of literacy and the impact of those beliefs on learning to teach about literacy. A third study might examine how the teacher educator's practice led to student resistance and how and when the resistance began and how a teacher educator might respond to the resistance in ways that expand teacher candidates' learning. Thus, we see that determining what value is

being denied, what issues are involved, and what we want to better understand will shape the self-study, helping us determine where we want to target the study and what we want to do to understand better.

Sometimes having identified the living contradiction, we immediately realize its verity and determine that we want to act differently in our practice. We might overhear teacher candidates laughing about the fact that we used a lecture to teach them how to plan for and conduct inquiry-driven lessons. When we ourselves recognize that we are denying our beliefs in our practice before we blithely determine to implement an inquiry-driven lesson to teach about inquiry lessons, we may want to explore more completely our beliefs about teaching and learning, or our beliefs about how teachers learn to teach. We may be interested in how particular pedagogies conflict with our beliefs about what pedagogies are best for public school teachers to use. We may want to study how we came to use lectures to teach about inquiry lessons. In other words, identifying the living contradiction is only the first step in focusing and refining a study.

Just as moving from identifying a living contradiction to an S-STTEP project informed by it requires exploring the contradiction further, reframing an S-STTEP based on “discernment” requires similar kinds of interrogation. We might begin by exploring our observation about our own interests, and the interests of others, and about what we might want to know more.

Perhaps we noticed that a particular course we teach leads to more powerful learning by teacher candidates when they have been involved in field experiences in proximity to when they take our course. We might begin by exploring what it was that made us notice the difference between these students and others. We might question why the relationship between field experiences and coursework is of interest to us. We might examine the research on field placements in teacher education and begin to formulate an understanding of what we noticed that might interest other researchers. We might then consider exactly what it is about the relationship of coursework and field experiences that we want to explore further. We might wonder how teacher candidates’ practical questions based on their field placement draws forth different responses from us or leads us to interact in different ways than we do when they do not have such experiences.

We might notice that our teacher candidates overwhelmingly talk about how their love of a particular content area led them to teaching. In this instance, we might not be so interested in what we discerned but what is of interest about it. We might wonder how we could reframe our practice to bring the love of subject matter more strongly into our discourse in general teacher education courses in order to lead our teacher candidates to create more interesting teaching for their students. We might want to explore how we interact with teacher candidates who hold such orientations. We might be interested in how they construct knowledge useful for teaching in contrast to our construction of usefulness in terms of the content area. We might want to explore further the relationship between our own content knowledge and creativity and flexibility in teaching. We might want to explore how our knowledge of content shapes the ways in which we teach teacher candidates. Any one of these suggestions could direct a possible S-STTEP study.

S-STTEP motivated by professional curiosity are less located in observation of ourselves and are more clearly located in wondering about ourselves and our practice. As a result, reframing a study motivated by professional curiosity might be best focused by exploring our curiosity, the text that prompted our curiosity, the idea that resonated with our practice, what we wanted to know more about, and where it resides in our practice.

After having read discussions on how knowledge is constructed, we might become interested in how knowledge of the content we are teaching emerges in the discourse of our classroom. We might wonder what our role is in shaping that discourse. We might question where in our practice we construct our knowledge about teacher education. Unlike other kinds of questions that guide an S-STTEP research, studies based in professional curiosity are usually externally prompted. By this we mean that we read something or listened to a lecture about an idea and that prompted us then to consider our practice further or in relationship to the idea. Often in these cases we may be more interested in simply observing and understanding what we do or how the idea is evident or not in practice rather than in creating new practice.

In this chapter, we have situated self-study research in an ontological stance and suggest that those who use this methodology are often inspired by the living contradictions that emerge in their work. In the next PAUSE we step back from theoretical discussions of self-study methodology to situate it within the realm of general qualitative research. We think establishing the place of self-study within qualitative research sets up the theoretical consideration that follows – the exploration of dialogue as a process of coming-to-know discussed in Chapter 4.

Making Connections

Some critics have suggested that the postmodern sensibility involves a shift of emphasis from epistemology to ontology. There has been a shift from knowledge to experience, from theory to practice, from mind to body. (Sarup, 1993, p. 172)

Connections to Consider

In discussing postmodern sensibility, Sarup charts three shifts in the research landscape. The movement from epistemology to ontology presents the move from establishing knowing to understanding our context or from using knowledge to predict and control to using knowledge to create more humanly viable environments.

The second shift from knowledge to experience is a change in orientation from definitions, categories, and controlled experiments to concerns of being and becoming or, as Sarup says, from theories (unmasked, unchanging realities) to practice (streams of experience). Finally, he asserts the shift from being to becoming from thinking to being.

In this chapter we suggest that the orientation of self-study researchers toward ontology animates all aspects of our work as a guide for our study and as a commitment to developing environments that support human flourishing.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about the politics of the theory/practice divide as captured by our exploration of our concerns with ontology. We ask you to ask yourselves:

- What public power emerges from knowing my practice?
- How do I privilege experience in coming to know practice?
- How does experience become questions for practice and inquiry in ways that lead to the development of living educational theories?
- How can arrogant conceptions of the goodness of our practices limit my ability to learn from my practice?

PAUSE

Situating Self-Study Within the Terrain of Qualitative Research

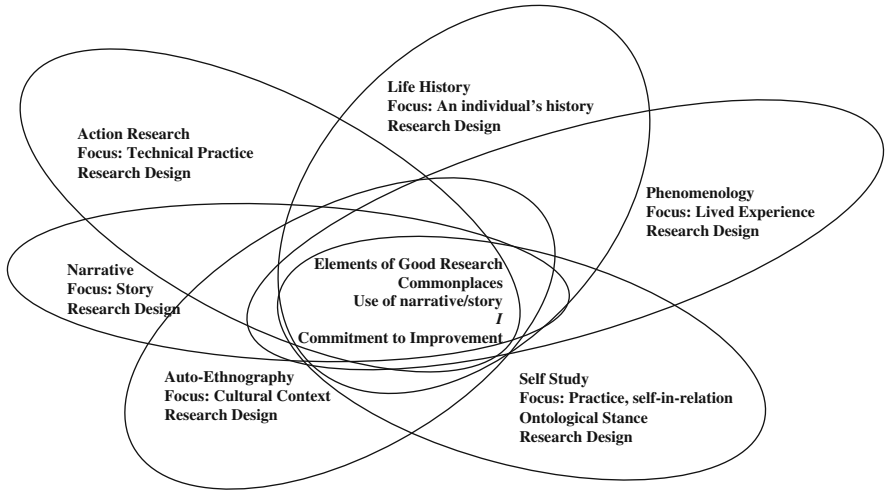
Questions

- *Historically Where Does Self-Study Research Fit Within the Qualitative Research Terrain?*
- *Can Comparisons Be Drawn Between Self-Study and Other (Selected) Qualitative Research Methodologies?*
- *What Are the Differences Among Selected Methodologies?*
- *What Are the Similarities Among Selected Methodologies?*
- *Methodologically, What Are the Unique Components of S-STTEP?*

When self-study of teaching and teacher education practice research first appeared on the research horizon in the early 1990s, those doing the work struggled for recognition as scholars; situating our ideas within research paradigms and approaches and traditions held a different level of importance than after that recognition occurred. As self-study scholars, when Borko, Liston, and Whitcomb published an editorial in the *Journal of Teacher Education* in January 2007 recognizing self-study as part of a genre of teacher education research, we could stand in our present moment looking backward and forward simultaneously to identify more clearly the methodological shifts that had occurred, to address absences in information or to point to places where we might strengthen our work.

In our collective past, situating our understandings within the larger realm of qualitative research seemed less important than doing the work. And doing the work seemed more important than providing details that might have strengthened other scholars' readings of our work. Sometimes self-study researchers assumed a position of trustworthiness without providing enough evidence to support that position. As a community we can now PAUSE, as we do in this chapter and in this book, to situate self-study within the context of qualitative research both historically and methodologically.

In our text we talk about practice and ontology, and dialogue and experience, and while situating self-study of teaching and teacher education practice among theoretical and practical perspectives, we have not nestled it among the research traditions, and so we PAUSE to do that now. Historically where does self-study fit



(Note: This diagram is an elaboration on the Venn Analysis - Hamilton, Smith & Worthington, 2008)

Fig. 3.1 Venn analysis of the six methodologies

within the qualitative research terrain? Does self-study bear some similarity to other methodologies? Does it bear differences?

Because the self-study community has spent considerable time developing self-study as a methodology and pursuing its recognition as a form of inquiry within the research conversation in educational research – or standing alongside other methodologies for comparison – in this PAUSE we situate self-study within the qualitative research terrain and compare it with closely related methodologies as well as with a more general description of qualitative research. We offer a graphic summary in Venn format that illustrates the convergence and divergence of methodological components (see Fig. 3.1). A careful exploration of the figure leads researchers to question how self-study as a methodology is situated in relationship to other methodologies that are situated subjectively. How, for example, does self-study relate to phenomenology? Where does self-study fit within the research terrain? Is it within the terrain of qualitative research, or is it off to the side? Is it nestled within a particular philosophy of research framework, or can it be found in relation to other methodologies? In our comparison we explore the unique aspects of self-study along with its similarities to other methodologies.

Historically Where Does Self-Study Research Fit Within the Qualitative Research Terrain?

Denzin and Lincoln (2005), in their latest discussion of the history of qualitative research, identify eight critical moments in qualitative research, including the crisis of representation (1986–1990s) and the postmodern period of experimental

ethnographic writing (1995–2000) that cover about 15 years of change within the approaches to both general and educational research. For Denzin and Lincoln (2005) the crisis of representation carries a triple threat to representation, legitimation, and praxis. Poststructural and postmodern discourses from assorted perspectives problematized

two key assumptions of qualitative research. The first is that qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience. Such experience, it is argued, is created in the social text written by the researchers. This is the representational crisis. It confronts the inescapable problem of representation, but does so within the framework that makes the direct link between experience and text problematic.

The second assumption makes problematic the traditional criteria for evaluating and interpreting qualitative researchers. This is the legitimation crisis. It involves a serious rethinking of such terms as *validity*, *generalizability* and *reliability* . . . The crisis asks, how are qualitative studies to be evaluated in the contemporary, poststructural moment? The first two crises shape the third, which asks, Is it possible to effect change in the world if society is only and always text? Clearly the crises intersect and blur, as do the answers to the questions they generate. (p. 19)

During this time, the voices of the researcher and the researched shifted as qualitative research scholars questioned ways to interpret experience (e.g., Crapanzano, 1985; Clifford & Marcus, 1986). They also questioned the use of positivist terms to define postmodern experience. While generally these questions propelled qualitative researchers to consider alternative approaches to methodologies, educational researchers brought the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices research into this terrain in the early 1990s with similar considerations. Not satisfied with the perspective of the distanced researcher that seemed to lack a focus on the moral commitment to improvement, a stance for the researcher, or a recognition of dialogue as a part of the coming-to-know process, self-study researchers joined these methodological discussions. They joined these discussions with a desire to enact their practice and bring different understandings to the teaching and teacher education experience.

As the research and thinking of qualitative researchers moved along into the postmodern period of experimental ethnographic writing, autoethnography, testimony, and narrative inquiry received more attention as the *I* in writing became apparent. Poetry, story, and decentered self emerged as tools for study (Ellis, 1991; Richardson, 1992). Alongside those general qualitative researchers, the self-study researchers made similar turns. The *self* of the study became a vivid part of the work under examination in the methodology, the analysis, and the representation of the findings. Importantly, no qualitative researcher would suggest that her/his work is narcissistic, nor do these researchers wish to be so. Rather these researchers would identify the *I* aspects of their methodology in ways that speak to and enhance rigor. The use of the *I*'s in research makes explicit the role of the researcher in research and the strength of the relation of self in relation to other. We situate self-study research within the terrain of qualitative research, and we see that the history of our use of *I* echoes the history of general qualitative research.

Can Comparisons Be Drawn Between Self-Study and Other (Selected) Qualitative Research Methodologies?

While qualitative research most often has been associated with various social science disciplines like anthropology, sociology, history, organizational behavior, and so on, educational research has a long history associated with qualitative research. (For example, see the three editions of Bogdan & Biklen, 1982–2007, or the *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* by LeCompte, Millroy, & Priessle, 1992.) Given that, we thought it appropriate to identify some qualitative methodologies that have a subjective orientation toward the use of *I* in research in a way that is complementary to its use in S-STTEP research. Although these connections may seem obvious to some readers, we observe that sometimes critics of this work place S-STTEP research in an atheoretical context, which fails to recognize the connection between S-STTEP research and other research methodologies.

We recognize that in our selection we may subsume some methodologies within others or draw distinctions where difference may be minimal, like narrative and life history or ethnography and autoethnography. These categories have fluidity of description. In fact, we encourage readers to make their own decisions. We selected these particular methodologies – narrative, life history, autoethnography, action research, and phenomenology – because we could easily situate self-study in relation to them and, in turn, situate self-study within the greater terrain of qualitative research. In this section we describe qualitative research generally and then lay out each methodology with a nod to historical and critical aspects of it. Once described, we offer a Venn diagram (see Fig. 3.1) to pictorially represent the overlap and difference of the methodologies and we follow that with a comparison of differences and similarities.

Generally, a qualitative research emphasizes the importance of meaning and process to the understanding of humanity (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Using a descriptive data collection–analysis–interpretation spiral, researchers engaged in this work allow theoretical perspectives and questions to emerge throughout the study. Through much of the early history of qualitative research in education, educational researchers assumed that qualitative research meant one alternative, ethnography (Jacob, 1988), rather than the pantheon of choices in qualitative research methodologies within the social sciences as a whole. Across the last three decades at least, the qualitative methodologies of educational research have continued to evolve, leading to not only a greater number of research strategies, methods, and tools but subtler nuances among them.

Most critical among the characteristics of qualitative research is the recognition that the researcher is a research tool (Wolcott, 1975). Because all data are filtered directly through the eyes of the researcher, detachment is avoided and careful subjectivity requires self-conscious and rigorous examination for bias along each step of the research process. Qualitative researchers also seek dialogue with the other researchers as well as study participants. Flexibility in qualitative research is essential for its exploratory, evolving, and interpretive process.

Generally, as the work of qualitative researchers moved through the moments identified by Denzin and Lincoln, attention to evidence became more specific to inspire trust in the researcher by the readers, recognition of alternative representations to present the evidence, and acceptance of the subjective voice in the findings of studies.

We selected *narrative* (a look at a story of self), *autoethnography* (a look at self within a larger context), *self-study* (a look at self in action, usually within educational contexts), *life history* (a look at an individual over time), *phenomenology* (a look at lived experience), and *action research* (a look at technical practice) as six methodologies found on the terrain of qualitative research that addressed self in some way. Importantly, while pictorially and verbally we attempt to seek clarity, we recognize that these methodologies are blurred (Geertz, 1983) with overlapping ideas. We also recognize that other texts can provide more detail about the intricacies of these methodologies. Here we offer brief descriptions for the purpose of situating self-study alongside them in the research terrain. Since in qualitative research the researcher's self has presence, it becomes the role of the self in the methodology that has importance for our discussion.

Narrative

Narrative research, in the social sciences and in education (Clandinin et al., 2006; Czarniawska, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988), has come to be described as the study of experience as a story – a way to situate participants and share experience. In the qualitative research moments mentioned earlier, some researchers' narrative encompasses the creation and analysis of stories about life experiences, and in this form the design can be described “as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17).

For others, a focus on narrative evolved into narrative inquiry where more attention to the stand of the researchers and their ethical considerations became apparent. Drawing from Dewey's (1916, 1922, 1938) emphasis on lived experience, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) applied these ideas to research and defined narrative inquiry that focuses on how lives relate to experiences. These researchers carefully explore identity landscapes to capture as best they can the experience of those that live there. Recognizing that the voice of researchers cannot/should not overpower the voice of others, the stories are placed in relation to depicting what happens on the knowledge and experience landscape. Others writing about narrative, like Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) and Josselson, Lieblich, and McAdams (2003), examine ways to make meaning of stories and of the self.

For narrative inquirers, three commonplaces – temporality (issues of time, always in transition), sociality (social elements and what forms the individual context), and place (the location of action) – guide their research. These commonplaces remind researchers about how to situate narrative as they engage in their research. In narrative inquiry, the identity and the understandings of the researcher are revealed

in the narratives and the inquiry process, and the narrative account should move forward both understanding of the phenomenon under investigation as well as the methodology used.

Self-Study

Since this text focuses on our definitions of self-study, suffice it here to say that the researcher's voice, the readings, and the researcher's sense of the socio-political aspects of their world come into play as the researcher engages in the systematic study of practice. In a careful study, self-study scholars contribute "to the professional knowledge base of teaching as well as generat[e] understanding of the world" (Hamilton, 2004, p. 402).

At the time of the crisis of representation – that moment of change – shifts in perspectives occurred simultaneously in many fields. For example, Richardson (1992), a sociologist, recognized that "the subject matter of qualitative research was the lived experience of the researcher" (p. 125). She went on to describe qualitative researchers as having "a particular set of norms and values regarding what should be studied and how it should be studied and communicated" (p. 125), who unfortunately "inherit an academic culture that holds a traditional authority over them" (p. 125) and devalues their work. Olesen (1992), another sociologist, described the vulnerability of the researcher where the "self reflect[s] upon self" to facilitate understanding (p. 205).

Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998b), educational researchers, describe the work of self-study as

the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas, as well as the "not self." It is autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political . . . it draws on one's life, but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known and ideas considered. (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 236)

Self-study of teaching and teacher education practices research fits well within the broader tremors of thought in the research terrain in those moments of time.

LaBoskey (2004a) outlines five elements of self-study: 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 process based on trustworthiness. With a focus on practice, the engagement of self in relation to other(s) reveals the professional identity and knowledge of the researcher and for research. Distinct in the work of self-study research is the focus on ontological stance. Recognition of her/his stance with regard to understanding holds a critical place in this methodology.

Autoethnography

Ethnography also evolved in these qualitative moments. The decentering of the researcher as the interpreter of a study opened a gap for alternative understandings. Originally used to describe cultural studies of one's own people (Hayano, 1979), autoethnography now refers to stories that feature the self or includes the

researcher as a character (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000, 2003). This alternative research methodology (Pratt, 1992) reveals aspects of self and experiences in a broader social context. Reed-Danahay (1997) identified autoethnography as post-modern ethnography that challenges notions of a single self with no one particular way to portray experience within the context of culture. A broad description of *culture* would include evidence of shared patterns of thought, symbol, and action typical of a particular group.

As auto-ethnographers engage in their research, they look for cultural elements of personal experience. They situate themselves in ways that contest and resist what they see. They do this to agitate, disrupt and contest views of the world (Jones, 2005) with a desire to make a difference in it (Renner, 2001). Considered an autobiographical genre of writing and research that reveals multiple layers of experience and understanding (Ellis, 2004), auto-ethnography includes a self-reflexive way of examining experience while considering how the self is *othered* (Bennett, 2004) in that experience. Like narrative and self-study, autoethnographers often write in first person, using a multi-genre approach that can incorporate short stories, poetry, novels, photographs, journals, and fragmented and layered writing. The way in which culture is revealed in the text distinguishes autoethnography.

Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology has various meanings. For Hegel, it is a more absolute examination of phenomena; for Husserl, it is an intuitive look for essential aspects of experience; Heidegger looks toward ontology, and his perspective has become recognized as existential phenomenology (Schwandt, 1997). These researchers wanted to study lived experience and how individuals live in their experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Originally, the basic purpose of phenomenology was to capture individual experiences to describe a phenomenon – a description of the universal essence of a phenomenon. As a philosophical concept, phenomenology sees a person as integral to the environment – I shape the world and the world shapes me (Schwandt, 1997). These definitions all challenge the scientific notion of objectivity and the sense that who one is can be easily defined. To extend these ideas into other social sciences, Schutz took some of these philosophical ideas to explore the social world and the ways that ordinary folk lead everyday lives (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). Methodologically, phenomenology asks, what is the meaning of one's lived experience?

Some phenomenologists with a more modern view (Moustakas, 1994) attempt to identify essential elements of experience or a phenomenon as a more distanced third party. Yet here again, there is evidence that the influence of the moments in qualitative research rippled through this work. Some researchers (e.g., Gruppetta, 2004) push toward an explicit self as researcher position in a study, while others (e.g., Dennett, 2003) seek a more distanced position for the researcher. Moustakas (1994) encourages the researcher to abstain from making suppositions about what they see and to look for essences. He promotes a method of reflection that serves as a systematic tool for carrying out analysis so as to best recognize those essential moments of experience.

Van Manen (1990), another proponent of phenomenological research, examined lived experience to gain deeper understandings of meaning in ordinary experiences and he describes that as a “systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures . . . [that becomes], a poetizing activity [that] attempts to capture experience” (p. 10). He asserts that “this is a methodology that tries to ward off any tendency toward constructing a predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques, and concepts that would rule-govern the research project” (p. 29) and describes a phenomenological researcher as “. . . a scholar, a sensitive observer of the subtleties of everyday life, and an avid reader of relevant texts in . . . human sciences . . . humanities, history, philosophy, anthropology . . .” (p. 29). More often, phenomenological researchers look outside themselves to make sense of the world, but in phenomenology over time more attention has been given to the researcher’s interpretive influence on understanding the ordinary world.

For Merleau-Ponty (1962) taking a phenomenological view meant to reexamine ways to look at the world by reexamining the basic ways we experience it. Phenomenologists engage in research activities, including the recognition of a phenomenon that has interest for the researcher and brings out their commitment; the investigation of experience as lived rather than conceptualized; reflection on themes that captures the essence of a phenomenon; and description of the phenomenon that comes in through the writing and rewriting process (van Manen, 1990).

In phenomenology, lived experience is the starting and end point of the research where the researcher captures the textures, tones, and feelings of those lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). To do this work, the phenomenologist uses personal experience as a starting point, drawing up personal descriptions of lived experiences. The researcher knows that one’s own experiences are also the possible experiences of others, yet van Manen (1990) warns against troubling readers with too much personal information. Here the researcher’s personal experience can contribute to but not overwhelm the work. Perhaps because of shifting moments in qualitative research and the recognition that the researcher is not the only interpreter or arbiter in the study, interest in phenomenology has waned.

Life History

Life history has its roots back in the early 20th century when anthropologists used it as a part of ethnography (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Originally collecting life history was a third-person methodology where the author remained distanced (Tedlock, 2003) and has been defined in a variety of ways – as biography (Schwandt, 1997), an account of a life in part or full (Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985), located in an historical context (Goodson, 1992), situated in context (Cole & Knowles, 2001), and as narrative (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). It provides an oral history that blends historiography and autobiography. The life history researcher draws on an individual’s experiences to make meaning of a broader context and relates those experiences to the ways in which history is defined.

Life history too underwent methodological shifts over time. Whereas formerly the life historian remained distanced, currently life history may focus on the relation of researcher/researched to be identified as testimonio (Tierney, 2003), which seems to be a life history focused on self.

The most recognized testimonio is *I, Rigoberto Menchu* by Rigoberto Menchu (1984). In this work, testimonio has been recognized as bringing a commitment to social change in the voice of the author where one offers testimony of a life that has been ignored or marginalized or cast to the side. Beverley (2000) writes that like “autobiography, *testimonio* is an affirmation of the authority of personal experience, but unlike autobiography, it cannot affirm a self-identify that is separate from the subaltern group or class situation that it narrates” (p. 321).

In a testimonio the purpose of the public document is to bring readers to awareness and action regarding transgressions described. In this work, qualitative researchers move “beyond the assumption that the only tenable way to present themselves in life histories is by authorial absence or through the third person” (Tierney, 2003, p. 310). Tierney recommends that in bringing the “I” to this work we add vulnerability in writing and research and strength as well. He goes on to warn that [western] epistemology was shaped by the belief that emotion needed to be cut out of the process of knowledge production. The authorial response of the postmodernist has been to insert the first person into the text. And yet one need not be a postmodernist to recognize that there are multiple ways an author might utilize the voice of the first person. (Tierney, 2003, pp. 310–311)

His warning comes from a desire to avoid possible oppression from marginalization and a recognition of the many ways the first person voice could be used. Tierney and other life historians (Henry, 2006 for example) advocate for the use of the first person in this methodology. Cole and Knowles (2001) suggest specific elements of life history research: intentionality, researchers presence, methodological commitment, holistic quality, communicability, aesthetic form, and knowledge claims. They, along with Tierney (2003) argue that life history both contributes to knowledge base and makes a difference in society (see Cole and Knowles pp. 125–27).

Action Research

Action research has been defined as a “practical kind of research that united experimental application to social science with programs of social action to address social problems” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 3). Lewin (1946), Corey (1953), and others (e.g. Feldman, Paugh & Mills, 2004) designed a formulaic process of hypothesis generation and testing to seek change in social settings like schools. As with the other methodologies, shifts in approaches to action research have occurred over time. For example, participatory action research, based in part on liberation theology where researchers attempt to address social issues (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003), came in that shift. Current action research researchers share desires for change and freedom from the restraints of tradition. While originally researchers engaged in action

research advocated a distanced “objective” study of practice, there have been moves away from that with participatory action research and some of the work out of Australia (e.g., Loughran, Mitchell, & Mitchell, 2002) and Britain (McNiff, 2005). Yet action research often remains a study of more technical aspects of practice, at least in educational research. For the improvement of curriculum and school practices the usual cycle of action research includes a process of problem posing, data gathering, analysis, and action in the form of a return to problem posing.

In Fig. 3.1 we map self-study methodology against other methodologies that share some of its features. It looks messy until we look more closely at the convergence of ideas at the center of the diagram. Those points in the center – elements of good research, commonplaces, use of narrative/story, the *I*, and commitment to improvement – represent common elements among self-study methodology and the other selected qualitative methodologies.

What Are the Differences Among Selected Methodologies?

Identification of experience as a story is a distinct aspect of narrative. The recognition that people shape their lives by story and the story is a “portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007, p. 22) makes narrative inquiry distinct as a methodology. Researchers engaged in narrative inquiry document the process, experience, and progress of their work in their narratives.

For autoethnography, researchers look broadly at their setting to include social and cultural aspects of their lives. Providing multiple layers of information and understandings contributes to understanding of self and self-in-relation to context. Importantly, the autoethnographer brings the vulnerable self to the work and explores the tensions of the contest and self.

Self-study research explores practice, the self in relation to practice, and the self in relation to other. For S-STTEP researchers, the self has a place in the foreground of the study along with the ontological stance of the researcher. This stance guides the work and brings dialogue in as a part of the research design and is a key element of this methodology.

Life history focuses on history of the individual and self in the historical context. For these researchers, collecting the texture and voice of the time – whether in the form of a testimonio or a life history – has central focus, suggesting that the researchers must have a sense of history or a desire to develop that.

Phenomenology brings an individual’s lived experience into focus. Important here is the notion of essence in the lived experience. Many people can tell a story of experience, but to pare back that story to reach its essence requires a careful process. In some ways, this seems to preclude a focus on self in the same ways that autoethnography or narrative or self-study might allow. Although the self would be a part of the data collection–analysis–interpretation process, a primary position in this

methodology might not be possible unless the central focus of the phenomenological analysis resides in the space between the self and the other or exclusively on the phenomenon as experienced by the self. Action research looks at the technical aspects of practice and tends toward more scientific application or has a focus squarely in the community and working with that community to understand experience or bring about change in community practices.

What Are the Similarities Among Selected Methodologies?

There are similarities among the methodologies. The use of strategies that promote creative writing and the use of conventions, fiction, and creative non-fiction, as well as poetry and other arts-based research strategies and tools, are aspects of narrative self-study, autoethnography, and phenomenology. All of these methodologies require that researchers engage in elements of good research, including clarity, application of good research practice, an ethical commitment, and attention to clarity and detail. (See Chapter 5 for more detail.) Because researchers in these areas have struggled for recognition, attending explicitly to research design is critical. Further, the commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) apply to these methodologies because situating self and other in time and place within a social context is critical to a strong research.

The use of narrative or story features prominently in each methodology. For example, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) list types of narratives that they expect to include when narrative inquirers undertake this methodology. Autoethnographers also write extensive personal narratives as they engage in their work. Self-study researchers would write reflexive journals to capture the critical moments of their research. Life historians, phenomenologists, and action researchers also keep narratives in some form. While the approach may vary, each methodology uses narrative as a research strategy.

For each methodology, the *I* position becomes critical. Part of this *I* position is the recognition of vulnerability in the research. Situating your self at the center or even simply with the study leaves the personhood of the researcher exposed to review and possible critique. Using any of these methodologies involves courage. For narrative inquiry, the self as it relates to others holds privilege in a developing study. In autoethnography, the ways the cultural *I* takes shape via cultural contexts and complexities has a primary place in the work. Self-study researchers look toward practice and improvement of practice, while self and others in relation to practice hold a central focus. The other methodologies also place the *I* in a more privileged place, although perhaps not centrally, in the research. Distinctions among methodological approaches and the use of *I* rest in the depth of the reflexive exploration and whether social and cultural issues emerge and, if so, how this takes place.

Lived experience is a similarity since each methodology attempts to reveal the lived experience – of self, of other, of practice, and of culture. While lived experience has a role in each of these methodologies, how that occurs is shaped by

the expectations and orientations of each methodology, and these differences are important distinctions as researchers employ these methodologies within their lived experience. While all of these selected methodologies attempt to capture at least some aspect of experience, phenomenology is the methodology attempts to depict the essence of the experience.

A final similarity among the methodologies is the commitment to improvement, to make a difference in the world. Each methodology carries a commitment to ethical behavior in interactions with colleagues and other participants in the study. Further, each methodology expresses in some way a desire to support change for the better. Whether the study has a focus on self or other or practice, the commitment to improve shines through the writing.

Methodologically, What Are the Unique Components of Self-Study?

Now, here we are at the end of this PAUSE. We think we have drawn together a series of methodologies from qualitative research that will help anyone attempting to situate self-study among general qualitative research both historically and methodologically. Yet you might still ask, what makes self-study unique? While it is true that self-study nestles nicely among some of the methodologies found in qualitative research, there are certain unique qualities. We could list many, such as the focus on neither the self nor the other but both as well as the space between them, but we select two critical points because we address those points in more detail elsewhere in the book. First is the explicit ontological stance of the researcher. Interestingly, to enact good research, a researcher must have a sense of their stance in the world, yet often that sense is an implicit subtext. In self-study that stance is exposed. Most often a methodology addresses issues of epistemology not ontology, yet it is the researcher's ontology that drives the epistemological bus. True, there are other names for ontology – like theoretical framework or conceptual approach, yet those too often remain implicit. Sometimes researchers set their work within a discipline, like sociology, but still this returns us to epistemology and ontology. (See Chapter 3 for a longer discussion of this distinction.)

The second distinction is the use of dialogue as an essential element of the coming-to-know process. While the other methodologies may give a nod to critical friends and relevant others at the site of their study, self-study researchers engage in dialogue, recognizing it as the basis from which they assert the authority of the claims they make and as a way to expose the ontological understandings and their practical actions. In turn, this becomes the way they develop their trustworthiness as a researcher in the ways they process and develop their ideas and develop their knowledge. (See Chapter 4 for a longer discussion of this distinction.)

Chapter 4

Context and Dialogue in the Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices

Questions

- *What Is the Role of Context in S-STTEP Research?*
- *How and Why Is the Relationship of the Researcher and the Researched Important?*
- *How Is Dialogue the Process for Coming to Know in S-STTEP Methodology?*
- *What Is the Value of Naming and Describing Dialogue as a Process of Coming to Know?*
- *How Do Understandings of Practice, Ontological Stance in Research, and Dialogue as a Process for Coming to Know Impact Research Design in S-STTEP Methodology?*

Thus far in this text we have suggested that selecting a focus from more general wonderings about practice –whether based in a living contradiction, site of discernment, or professional curiosity – as a research question or issue comes at the beginning of your study. S-STTEP researchers return to questions about practice(s) and move ideas forward as a research project by determining a design for their S-STTEP research project. In this chapter, we consider the evolving understanding of the relationship of the researcher and the researched in S-STTEP and the impact that this has in research design; in particular we attend to a consideration of the role of context in self-study design. Then we turn to a discussion of dialogue as a process for knowing underlying S-STTEP research and the ways in which that impacts the research process and research design. Finally, we explore how our understandings of practice, our ontological stance in research, and dialogue as a process of knowing impact research design in S-STTEP methodology.

In this chapter we explore issues of context for possible Self-Studies of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices, with particular attention to the ways in which dialogue propels our work. We begin with a discussion of the work of the Arizona Group. This group of four researchers (of which Stefinee and Mary Lynn are a part) came together initially during their graduate studies and maintained their connections as they moved into academia. They called themselves the Arizona Group because they attended and graduated from the University of Arizona and they hoped

to avoid privileging one voice over another by listing authors alphabetically or in some other systematic fashion.

When we, along with other researchers, decided to study our experience as teachers in our role as teacher educators (e.g., Guilfoyle, 1995; Hamilton, 1995; Placier, 1995; Pinnegar, 1995a), we recognized that our focus differed from the work of other researchers. While noticing these differences, we did not see this moment in the early 1990s as the beginning of a new research methodology. At that time, we also gave little thought to or clear consideration of many of the other issues we explore in this current text. Indeed we did not try to insure that we attended to the five characteristics of self-study methodology articulated by LaBoskey (2004a) (self-focused and initiated, improvement aimed, interactive, multiple [primarily qualitative] methods, and exemplar-based validation), since that conscious identification came later. We had not thought about a definition for the research with which we engaged because along with others, definitions of this work – S-STTEP – continue to evolve.

Yet we can identify one moment that pushed us toward the reconsideration of studies on our practice and propelled us toward our engagement in self-study methodology. That moment occurred at an American Educational Research Association conference when we realized to our surprise that each group member had taken the same set of data and provided different interpretations of our experiences. In that moment, essential research questions about data, experience, and practice emerged (see Arizona Group, 2004, for a further discussion). Ultimately, as we explored our surprise we decided to do a second set of self-studies. For us, the Arizona Group, this research moment presented each of us with a living contradiction. We found ourselves caught between our experience as teachers – a more expert position – and as teacher educators – for us a more novice position – wondering how to present our data.

As we talked, we decided that as former public school teachers, we all recognized that we brought to our experience teaching at the university the understandings and skills we had as K-12 teachers, and these understandings and skills permeated our teaching practice. However, we all also acknowledged that because of our commitment to particular kinds of teaching pedagogies, we often felt at odds with our students and colleagues. Furthermore, we were not always comfortable with the results of the decisions we made about our practice. Some of us made uncomfortable compromises because of agreements with colleagues about courses or outcomes. Through our discussions, we acknowledged our interest in understanding or improving our teaching and our desire to align our actions with our beliefs about teaching, requiring from ourselves what we asked our students to do.

At this point, we sat down together and discussed what we might study individually and how to undertake that study. In this conversation, we responded to questions similar to those questions proposed in the Inquiry Planner introduced in a previous PAUSE as a guide for self-studies. Looking backward at our initial discussions as S-STTEP researchers, we see that we incorporated the five characteristics of S-STTEP methodology outlined by LaBoskey (2004a). We left that meeting with an initial design for and a commitment to do self-studies of our practice to improve it and to use qualitative methods.

In the next few chapters we present practical discussions on data collection and data analysis strategies for S-STTEP research. In these chapters we offer details about how to engage in a study and how to analyze this work. Here, in this current chapter, we present a discussion of two issues that must come prior to those other descriptions and discussion – context and dialogue. We situate context at this juncture because context shapes practice. Experience and practice occur in particular settings and times, and understanding context situates the work of self-study. In turn, we situate dialogue at this nexus because we believe it is the process of coming-to-know within which self-study takes place.

What Is the Role of Context in S-STTEP Research?

Contexts of practice and relationships in practice are fundamental aspects of S-STTEP research. Experience is local and particular. It occurs in a particular place and at a particular time. The context of our practice, just like the *others* in our practice, shape the practice, our interaction and action in practice, as well as the understandings we develop. The impact of the context may often be hidden from us.

We realize but sometimes simply don't think carefully about the fact that we exist in a cultural milieu in a particular place in time. We practice in cultural settings that are part of a larger cultural milieu, have a history, have agreed-upon ways of acting and being, have a future, and provide evidence of beliefs and assumptions. Context is a usually silent but ever-present influential companion in S-STTEP research. Just as attention to context can lead to a reframing or transformation in our practice and our understanding of it, context can also constrain that understanding and limit our ability to act.

Often in S-STTEP research we explore the understandings we have of our practice or we design new practice and attempt to capture what we learn about teaching and learning as we engage in that practice. In other words, implicit, nonconscious, tacit, or personal practical knowledge may be what we are trying to uncover to help us inform, transform, or reframe our understandings and action. Merleau-Ponty (1994) suggests that our bodily knowing is revealed as we interact with others and things. When we use tools, sit in chairs, form groups, and stand in one place in the room rather than another, our action in the context can make visible the things we know, but without careful attention things remain invisible to us.

Including consideration of context in any S-STTEP is imperative both because the context shapes and constrains our practice and because in our actions we shape and change the context in which we act. Thus, as we design S-STTEP projects, we need to make certain that the data we collect will make visible the context – the fact of being at this place in time, with these particular students, in this setting – as part of data collection as well as in our deliberations about data analysis.

As we think back over the S-STTEP research we have conducted, we realize that we often overlooked the presence and impact of context on our research. Difficulties of data collection in our first self-study of practice come to mind. We origi-

nally planned to write weekly e-mails to each other. This would make the task of communicating with each other simpler, part of our campus work, and provide an electronic record of our interaction. It would also force all of us to connect to e-mail, which at that time was not as straightforward and simple a process as it currently is. When we returned home to our various institutions after making this decision, we each had experiences that taught us a lot about the politics of our institutions, the status and position of teacher education and colleges of education within our institutions, and the culture and history of communication and interaction. We also learned some things about us as negotiators of such systems. The use of e-mail in colleges of education while fairly regular was not then as simple or transparent as it is now. When one of us tried to connect to e-mail, she was told that the wiring system in the college of education was so out-of-date that no one in the college could use e-mail in their offices. We do not know if this was true or if the university had simply not allocated funds for the technological equipment needed for college of education faculty to have e-mail access. We do know that it was over two years before this colleague had regular access to e-mail. After working on this problem for two months, we finally had to call each other on the phone and alter our data collection plan. As a result, we had to use snail mail to conduct the study, and instead of e-mail messages we sent letters. This meant our communication was not as frequent, and individual pieces of data (letters) were longer.

What this example reveals is that we take an ontological stance in S-STTEP research. We attempt to construct an accurate account of our practice, our action in it, and our understanding of it as it changes. What we are studying is always particular, particular to us, to a place, to a time, and to the specific people we are interacting with; therefore, context always contributes to what we experience and what we can and do come to understand. The larger society is always a part of our context. The issues of the society, the cultural norms, and the questions of particular conversations are present as features within our experience and act as constraints on it. Thus, as we design studies and engage in analysis and report our new understandings, we need to be aware that these constraints and contextual factors and fractures should be evident in the “so what?” statements that emerge in our final papers.

In designing S-STTEP research, just as we need to capture the voice of the other, we also need to capture the context in which we stand. As we determine what will count as evidence, what data we will collect, and when and how we will collect it, we need to make certain that we attend to context in our research design and allow the information from and about the context to be evident. When we turn to data analysis, we need to continually be aware of and seek out evidence of the constraint and influence of context on what we come to understand.

A clear example of this comes from the work Stefinee has conducted. She works at a private, faith-based institution – she, most of her students, and almost all of her colleagues share the same faith. Thus, the language of faith, characteristics of religious practice, and the cultural and historic practices of that religion are a shared and understood discourse that regularly emerges in any data she collects. While the ease her students have in expressing moral and religious views and their ability to discuss prayer, love, kindness, or sacrifice in rich and nuanced terms can help her

understand issues of ethics and the moral, this same ease and familiarity with the language can also obscure and constrain understandings of the same issues. In turn, in any S-STTEP research she conducts, she must attend to the impact of context on the practice and understandings she develops. Likewise, at Mary Lynn's institution, a public land-grant university considered the premier institution in the state, there are certain practices related to engagement (identified elsewhere [Hamilton, 2001] as the conspiracy of politeness) that she must account for and address as a part of her research. In any context, researchers must attend to the local expectations and actions as well as the larger socio-political context within which they live.

In S-STTEP research, context and collaboration are essential features. Because we take an ontological stance, study our own practice, and are thus located in a particular place, time, and setting, attention to and understanding of context is crucial. For these same reasons, it is also vital that S-STTEP researchers understand and take into account the researcher/researched position of a self-study research.

How and Why Is the Relationship of the Researcher and the Researched Important?

When we design S-STTEP research, the researcher and the researched stand in a different relationship to each other than they do in more traditional research epistemologies. Elsewhere we (Arizona Group, 2004) suggested that dialogue, a process of coming to know, moves self-study methodology from a modernist understanding of the researcher/researched relationship to one reflective of the relationship found in a self-study of practice. Within a modernist epistemology, the researcher and the researched are considered static, bounded, and atemporal. As a result the researcher can conceive of the relationship they have to each other as distanced, and any potential bias can be handled by attention to assumptions that lead to the production of research findings that are objective and generalizable. Each participant can be conceived of as static, because the assumption is that growth will not occur except in a controlled way during the research study. Participants are bounded in that they can be treated as if they are separate from each other. Finally, the assumption is that both can be considered outside of time or atemporal. When we attend to the prescriptions for designing research, we can maintain this distanced, controlled, and static relationship between the researcher and the researched during the research process.

In contrast, S-STTEP researchers recognize that the researcher/researched relationship is a drastically different one. We see the researcher and researched as dynamic, interactive, and temporal, and in most cases throughout a study, they can be the same person. The title S-STTEP captures this relationship. The self, acting as researcher, studies the practice of the researched. Thus, self-studies of practice include the self and the other. Depending on your conception of the self in the study, the researcher's relationship to the researched can be seen to position the researcher as the prime source of coming to know through acting and being in relation to others

in practice, or the researcher's relationship to the researched can be conceptualized as the fundamental and fatal source of bias to the trustworthiness of any knowing that emerges from such studies.

Understanding the fundamental contribution of the researcher/researched relationship to S-STTEP research helps us see more clearly that self-studies are conducted within a particular context, with particular people, at a particular place in time, and as the name of the methodology communicates, from a particular perspective. Part of the integrity of this research, as explored by Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), is that the title itself communicates the central, vital, and fundamental position and contribution of the self. However, it is also necessary to recognize that some of those who will stand in the position of the researched are not the self but the *other* participating in the practice. This dynamism in the researcher/researched relationship, where the researcher and the researched are potentially from moment-to-moment in a study both the same person and someone else – the other in practice – calls even more strongly for the use of collaboration and requires attention to strategies that support the development of trustworthiness in our use of other research methodologies. For example, when we use a case study we need to attend to issues of trustworthiness through strategies fundamental in that research approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

To our studies we bring multiple, alternative, and oppositional perspectives in consideration of design, data collection, and data analysis. Critical friends, educated response, participant perspectives, views of others, and findings from the wider research might serve as collaborators at every step in the process. S-STTEP research often targets wonderings that can be positive ways of looking at practice or problematic and unsettled aspects of our action and understanding. None of us seeks public failure and as S-STTEP researchers we grapple continually with sites of potential failure in our practice – places we are other than we claim to be as well as places of resistance. Thus, it helps to have others who are participating with us to both question our decisions and our understandings and support us in them. Sometimes our most difficult collaborator is our skeptical self who deliberately disagrees with every interpretation and insists that we seek out others who might potentially disagree to present and discuss our interpretations and understandings. As S-STTEP researchers we attend to the issues surrounding the researcher/researched relationship by embracing it and developing a clearer understanding of dialogue as a process of coming-to-know in these studies.

How Is Dialogue the Process for Coming to Know in S-STTEP Methodology?

The scientific method, with its steps of *hypothesis setting*, *observation*, *data collection* and *decision*, is a powerful tool for creating knowledge. When harnessed to statistical analysis, it provides not only a prescriptive process for coming to know but also a basis for making formal claims about what we know and a way to establish

surety about our knowing. While it is a helpful conceptual tool for guiding scientists in engaging in the research process, it is probably not an accurate description of the complete process of knowing we actually engage in when we try to make sense of our world, shape our ideas, and develop confidence in them. The process for coming to know is potentially more complex and interactive. This is especially true when what we are coming to know involves or is about other humans and human interaction.

In introductory research textbooks, we often find diagrams of the scientific method (see Fig. 4.1). The diagram represents the process for knowing we engage in when we are doing what Kuhn (1970) has labeled as “normal” science or research. This shared prescriptive method has helped us land men on the moon, develop weapons of mass destruction, and create amazing technology. As a shared prescriptive method, it provides authority for the researcher who can point to how she has completed and responded in developing knowledge. It is also an outline for reporting how we came to the assertions we make as findings and what they mean. It is based in an epistemology that, because it has foundational criteria for knowing (through statistical analysis), can be the basis upon which we can claim to establish true belief as knowledge.

When the scientific method is promoted as the way to do science, we forget that most of the coming-to-know process occurs in the place in the cycle labeled here “observation and formulation.” This is a space that Kuhn (1970) tells us is more like “inspired guessing” and often involves lots of thinking, discussion (internal and external), consideration of past research, and isolation of what appears to work and what does not from existing theories. In fact, in terms of the overall process it is potentially more fundamental to the process of coming-to-know than other phases of the cycle. Even when we, as researchers, quickly move forward because of a moment of intuition or insight, we still engage in this formulation process as we move from our insight or nascent theory to an operationalized articulation of the question that might guide us in our research. Indeed, Karl Popper (2002) reportedly suggested that the rest of the cycle is fairly pedestrian and rule governed. The devel-

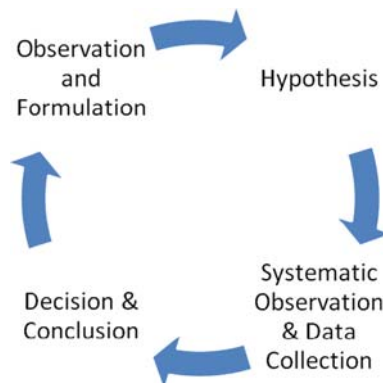


Fig. 4.1 The scientific method

opment of the “true belief” that is established through the use of the rest of the cycle occurs here.

When we individually consider the steps in the scientific method, each can involve discussion, argumentation, reformulation, and adjustment, and therefore the process is usually more complicated and conflicted than the straightforward, carefully controlled, and prescribed accounts of the scientific method might suggest. In fact, when we talk to scientists about their work, they often describe much of what they do – even once the hypothesis is set and the data collection instruments are defined, developed, or selected – as messy and full of in-flight decision-making sometimes guided by intuition and instinct.

Another process describing coming-to-know in research that is closer to self-study is the Action Research Cycle. A diagram of the action research cycle and that of the scientific method appear very similar to each other (see Fig. 4.2). This cycle begins in reflection (again a process like observation and formulation), moves to a stage called planning (what you are going to do, how you will keep track of the impact of what you are going to do, and what evidence will you collect), and then to a stage of action (where you try out what you had said you would do) followed by observation (which involves some form of systematic analysis of what you had determined you would watch) and then back again to reflection where you consider what you have learned and make assertions about it. McNiff (2002) has suggested that in the process the cycle may become more of a spiral or a series of cycles. However, note the prescriptive nature of the process that suggests that to establish what one is coming to know as “knowledge,” there is a very systematic and prescribed procedure. While action researchers, like S-STTEP researchers and other qualitative researchers, may constantly be called on to defend the accuracy or validity of their claims or assertions, the process that action researchers use to defend their coming to know is very similar to that of the scientific method. Again, S-STTEP researchers think about coming-to-know as a process, while the action research cycle can be a guide, like the scientific method, where each step in the cycle involves reflection, argumentation, formulation, reformulation, assertions, and intuition.

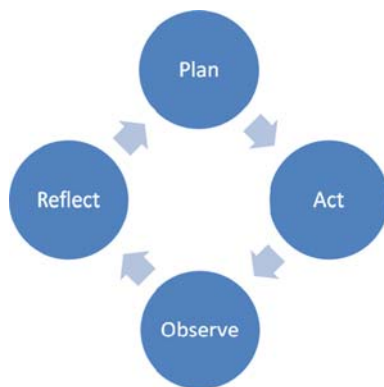


Fig. 4.2 Action research cycle

What underlies the practice of research, or a systematic investigation of ideas, is a process, for moving ideas that a researcher has about things and their relationships to establishing ideas about things and relationships as legitimized claims. A process for coming-to-know is a procedure for insuring the authenticity and veracity of data and claims of research. When a research community reaches an agreement that the process is authentic, appropriate, and valuable, and will be the basis for coming-to-know within this research community, the process for coming-to-know gains authority. Following the process gives researchers a basis upon which they can distinguish understanding and knowing from “lucky” guessing and provides power and standing for claims made by researchers in the community.

When we consider the process that underlies our coming-to-know in S-STTEP research, we conceptualize that process as a dialogue. While the scientific method or the action research cycle might be imposed upon it, we believe dialogue offers a more descriptive account for the process underlying meaning-making and the establishment of assertions for action and understanding that characterize a S-STTEP research. Dialogue provides a more descriptive account of the process of coming-to-know. In S-STTEP the process of coming-to-know begins in the expression of an idea within a conversation. We recognize that such a conversation can be internal, occurring within the self, where through interior dialogue we counter, shape, develop, define, and establish ideas. However, at some point in time in order for whatever is explored to be counted as research, it must enter the public arena and be put forward for critique. We also recognize that for a research project to be S-STTEP according to LaBoskey (2004a), it must be interactive – implying interaction with others as well as ideas. Furthermore, unlike many other research methodologies, in S-STTEP research, collaboration is considered a fundamental element (Bodone, Guðjónsdóttir, & Dalmau, 2004).

Once an idea is expressed and taken under investigation, a response is made. If we think of conversation as a metaphor for this process, we understand not only that the process might be complicated and complex, but also it provides a framework for considering how knowledge develops. An idea can be accepted and elaborated or rejected, rephrased, questioned, or ignored. Participants may provide evidence, examples, representations, metaphors, or analogies in support of or opposition to the idea or as a way to synthesize and integrate the idea with others already part of the discourse. The process can include trying out ideas against evidence or in guiding a practical application of the idea. Two ideas may be on the table simultaneously with discourse shifting between ideas through strategies of categorization, comparison, contrast, example, or argumentation. The process always includes assertions of ideas along with evidence, reflection, critique, inquiry, and response.

The process of dialogue exists in what Bakhtin (1981) has labeled the *zone of maximum contact* or the *zone of inconclusivity*. This zone is a space of uncertainty and tentativeness. Here through interaction with past and present understandings, contexts, and conditions along with projection into future contexts, the certainty of the future trajectory of an idea may be undermined. In a moment of insight, participants may become unsure where they previously felt certain. Projecting a course of action into a different context, situation, or time frame may destabilize or regenerate

a theory, an assertion, or an idea. This destabilization or regeneration is especially true in S-STTEP research, since the purpose of such a research is to uncover understandings of practice and improve the quality of the practice. Although S-STTEP is expressed in terms of the self, the study exists and is conducted in the spaces between the self and the *other* – the self and the practice. This is the zone of maximum contact wherein we bring together all we know from the past, what we conceive of in the present, and the projections or considerations of what might be in the future. The past–present–future ideas come in contact with our present-moment considerations of our actions or understandings of practice and the others in our practice. In terms of interpretation and understanding, this zone is unstable, yet as ideas survive and thrive in this zone, they become clearer and stronger as well as more valuable as assertions for action and understanding.

Bakhtin conceptualizes the forces within the zone of maximal contact as centripetal and centrifugal. The reason for proposing an idea or understanding in dialogue is to subject it to critique, which is not so much a matter of criticism as it is a matter of analysis and dissection. As we critique theories, frameworks, ideas, or assertions placed in dialogue, the forces of alternative interpretation, negotiation, argumentation, and disagreement have the potential to fragment and shatter them – these are centrifugal forces. However, as ideas are subjected to this kind of buffeting, there is also a harmonizing element in dialogue that binds ideas together, shores up disagreement, and promotes and uncovers relationships – these linking forces are centripetal ones. When we think of forcing concrete objects together under conditions of pressure, we realize that objects bind together, come apart, or disintegrate. Ideas introduced into conversation that includes reflection, reframing, analysis, and critique can be impacted in the same way.

Dialogue provides rigor for understandings because the ideas that emerge are strengthened, supported, transformed, and energized. This is the power of dialogue in establishing assertions for action and understanding and providing researchers the authority to insist on the authenticity, coherence, and trustworthiness of what they have come to understand about their experience through this process.

The process of dialogue includes relational, discursive, and cyclical characteristics. Certain relational characteristics of community (respect, caring, listening, and strong voices) are essential if dialogue is to be useful, functional, and legitimate in providing authority for assertions for action and understanding. Discourse in dialogue must of necessity include elements of inquiry, reflection, critique, evidence, and response to develop the rigor of the ideas submitted. Dialogue is cyclical, with cycles of agreement/disagreement, negotiation/argumentation, expansion, interrogation, and expressions of commonality and difference (see Arizona Group, 2004, 2005).

The process of dialogue requires community. The community can be found abstractly in the conversation of research either generally or in a specific field like teacher education research. The community is the public forum to which ideas are submitted for critique. While community can exist in an abstract space with dialogue about ideas existing internal to a single researcher in order to develop stronger resistance to and avoidance of bias, a community always includes other researchers and

practitioners interested in the project and ideas being investigated. The community is held together by both bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000). Bonding relationships are close relationships among people of like minds, and such relationships supply a human and nurturing basis for a community of scholars. The feelings that emerge with the building of bonding social capital lead to the development of a sense of belonging in and commitment to a particular group of people.

Bridging relationships are those that form through association and through sharing a commonality of purpose, but they develop across differences in assumptions, theoretical orientations, worldviews, and human characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Bridging relationships are essential to communities that rely on dialogue to develop knowledge, since it is through difference that we come-to-know what is similar. Appiah (2008) argues that identity can only exist in an arena where difference is a fundamental component. Thus, bridging and bonding relationships work together in creating a context where a process of knowing such as dialogue can exist. Community provides a context where shared understandings of ideas and process for knowing support the development of knowledge of practice and offer authority for that knowing. Because collaboration and interactivity are vital in and fundamental to S-STTEP research, the creation of a community of scholars and researchers is fundamental.

Since dialogue as a process of knowing needs community to flourish, respect among the members of the group is necessary. Members must esteem and allow space for everyone participating in the community to express ideas, which is not so much an assertion that all ideas and theories have equal value, but that whether ideas are valuable or not, the community initially, at least, withholds judgment, allowing all participants to express ideas. In an S-STTEP community of scholars, all community members have the right to be wrong, to have their ideas receive a fair hearing, and to be valued as humans regardless of the feelings one might have about the ideas. Part of a sign of this respect for hearing all ideas and all voices is demonstrated by participants in the community actually seeking critique and analysis, the expression of unconventional ways of thinking about ideas, multiple interpretations of evidence, as well as alternative voices. Every voice is valued and has a place within the community from the neophyte to the sage.

Another characteristic of the community that is evident in the phrase “critical friend,” and the value that is placed on such friends, is the idea that this community should be filled not just with critique but also with caring. While, of course, we care about those who are like us and share our ideas, this community must relate in caring ways to all members. Participants must be prepared to both receive and give care. Respect and valuing of difference lead to an environment where those who disagree, propose alternative interpretations, and take opposite positions are valued. Caring as a characteristic also describes the value the group places on the expression of ideas that oppose, contradict, reinterpret, or expand assertions for understanding, since the rigor of findings from the group resides in the level of analysis, opposition, and arguments applied during the consideration of those ideas. Thus, dialogue as a process of knowing requires that tender ideas be both nourished through support and agreement and strengthened

through opposition and resistance. This can occur best in contexts of respect and caring where both human beings and ideas are valued. Of course, listening is a basic requirement since knowledge is built through collaboration, interaction, and response. However, just as importantly, community members need to develop strong voices. This means they are able to articulate their thinking cogently, clearly, and complexly.

To become a dialogue, a conversation moves beyond talk to include specific characteristics: inquiry, critique, evidence, reflection, and response. The combination of discourse elements in dialogue is what distinguishes the dialogue as a dialogue. The discourse is fundamentally focused on inquiry. The inquiry interrogates the ideas expressed and the connection of the ideas to the evidence and to other theories and past research. Because of the inquiry stance, the participants provide counter-arguments, negotiations, and statements of support and develop alternative explanations for the ideas presented. They take up ideas positioning themselves to explore, wonder about, and imagine. Within the discourse of dialogue as a process for coming to know, proposed ideas are interrogated and analyzed.

In addition, the discourse includes thoughtful reflection within the dialogue. Participants express their thoughtful consideration of ideas. They provide synthesis and evaluation as well as develop and articulate links and interconnections between ideas and evidence by explicating experience, examples, or narratives. They provide commentary as well as intellectual and emotional response.

Dialogue always contains critique. More than any other factor, critique marks the movement from mere talk to dialogue. Participants provide a thorough analytic consideration of ideas, evidence, and the response of others. Evidence in the form of data, examples, reflections, research, and results from elsewhere are used to support, interrogate, expand, or examine the ideas presented in the discourse. Finally, a fruitful dialogue is always characterized by thoughtful responses that both interrogate and support the ideas expressed.

Dialogue occurs in cycles of agreement and disagreement, mediation and expansion, and commonality and difference (see Fig. 4.3). An idea is expressed and can be followed by any of the elements of dialogue: inquiry, reflection, critique, evidence, or response. The cycle flows like conversation, with conversational strategies that interrogate, explore, and reinforce the ideas expressed. Through the negotiation of the tensions created by the elements of dialogue, meaning is forged. Knowledge emerges in dialogue in these spaces between participants in conversation where, through processes of mediation, agreement, and disagreement, common and different understandings are explored, shaped, expanded, refined, transformed, abandoned, and established.

In conversation even when we agree with others about an idea, each person will have a slightly different or even unique understanding of the shared idea. When conversation moves to dialogue, critique and inquiry coupled with evidence, reflection, and response emerge. The dialogue moves through cycles of consideration of the idea, linking it with research, other ideas, and evidence. Knowledge emerges in the spaces between thought, talk, and participants.

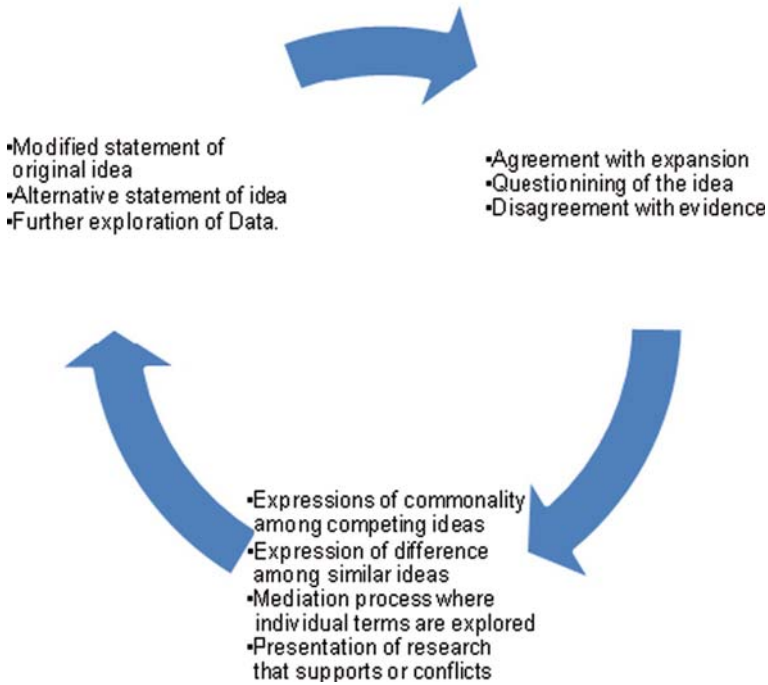


Fig. 4.3 Cycles of dialogue

What Is the Value of Naming and Describing Dialogue as a Process for Knowing

Of course, S-STTEP researchers can use other descriptions in articulating the process of how they come to know their experience. They can use the scientific method or the action research cycle to express the ways in which knowledge becomes shaped and formed, and linked to evidence through analysis, and results in assertions for understanding or action. However, a dialogue may be a better characterization of the process of coming-to-know in S-STTEP research. It provides a deeper and more complete understanding of the epistemology that underlies S-STTEP research. Since collaboration with others in the research process is usually fundamental, we also recognize that we can engage in internal dialogue in study. For example, Hamilton (2005) engaged with the painter Winslow Homer as a way to probe her practice when colleagues seemed absent. Tidwell (2002), in the examination of her work as a teacher educator, situated herself firmly in her previous experience as a public school teacher and the research literature she read to inform her coursework. In both examples as revealed in their studies, the researchers engaged in an internal dialogue that mirrors the critical edge of dialogue with others. Of course, when depending on internal dialogue in a study, researchers must provide evidence that supports their claim that they were vigilant in countering bias and privilege.

Dialogue can be a crucible in which knowledge is shaped, becomes linked to evidence, and gains authority. Through this crucible, findings from S-STTEP (assertions for action and understanding) can be contextualized and recontextualized, interpreted, and reinterpreted and in this way become more useful when transferred for examination in other contexts and situations. In fact, the authority for making assertions for action and understanding from S-STTEP research emerges from and within a dialogue. On the basis of a dialogue, research projects can be judged. The assertions that emerge can be judged trustworthy and can guide S-STTEP researchers to act in practice and to develop understandings of practice. Both through and within a dialogue, S-STTEP researchers can think further about practice and in this way develop knowledge of, in, and for practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004) that can be used by the researcher and considered by others for use in their practices.

How Do Understandings of Practice, Ontological Stance in Research, and Dialogue as a Process for Coming to Know Impact Research Design in S-STTEP Methodology?

The work of self-study falls *in the midst* (see Chapter 2), *between*, and *alongside* self-awareness and inquiry (Hamilton, 2004). In recognizing these uncertain spaces (Jackson, 2000) and bursting the “welds of modernity” (Bhadha, 1994, p. 238), this methodology challenges traditional understandings and meanings. In turn, this methodology fits the description of a third space that offers more than “a single set of discourse[s] about process and change” (Kanu, 2003, p. 77) or an integrated, uniform code for understanding (Bhadha, 1994). In this space – a third space – experience, practice, ontology, and theory interrogate the authority of reason, experience, and privilege that might be accepted. Here is the amorphous space where dialogue reveals ontological stance and supports the examination of practice.

When we design an S-STTEP research project, we recognize that self-study stands *between* in a contested terrain of shared human space. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) argue that S-STTEP research stands between history and biography. S-STTEP researchers seek to capture personal understandings of particular practice and, yet, relate it to the more general understandings that animate the larger research conversation in the field of interest. S-STTEP researchers are interested in uncovering understandings of and action in practice as they emerge in our experiencing of that practice. Thus, because the focus is always on knowledge of practice, what we explore and uncover can be described as tacit, implicit, nonconscious, personal, and practical. This space impacts conceptualization of research studies. As we design self-studies we need to position the work carefully so that context, process, and practical kinds of knowing are captured in the data we collect and related to the data analysis tools we use. Just as we believe that social constructivism is a way to account for how we learn, we also believe that a dialogue describes the process

of coming to know in S-STTEP research. Our research design must attend to the relational, discursive, and cyclical characteristics of dialogue.

At this point in the text we believe we have drawn together the mostly theoretical aspect of S-STTEP methodology in our discussions of self, experience, practice, ontology, and dialogue. Ontological stance affects how researchers view the *self and the other in practice* and the dialogue of the coming-to-know process within which they engage. Perhaps we have complicated these ideas, but we do so intentionally to activate what we see as a turn in the approach to research methodology. We have also placed S-STTEP methodology clearly in the realm of qualitative research methodology. Whereas previously authors have alluded to this placement, we do so intentionally and explicitly.

After Making connections we provide an exercise that asks, can you identify a self-study? We situated this activity at this point to underscore elements of self-study and prepare you for a shift in text. Thus far we have focused mostly on theoretical issues. Following the activity in Chapters 5 and 6, we examine the more practical aspects of S-STTEP research.

Making Connections

Critical to our understanding of our development as teachers of teachers is the way that experience played such a critical role in the process of our learning. Memory shaped our experience. Experience shaped our experience. Memory of our experience shaped our experience. Our biographies brought us to the arena of education. These, coupled with our current experiences and interpretation of them, led us to commit ourselves to a different kind of teacher education. We study our own practices. We examine both our successes and our failures, and we ask our students to join us in this examination. (Arizona Group, 1995, p. 53)

Connections to Consider

Experience plays a critical role in learning. When we design self-studies of practice, we do so from within the experience of practice. This quote, which records the authors' understanding of how they come to know, reminds us that designing an S-STTEP inquiry needs to attend to the ways in which memory and experience interact. Both can obscure, reveal, alter, and reframe the other. Indeed, memory and experience intertwine and interact within our current experience and our interpretation of them. This chapter has furthered our understanding of the ways in which research is conducted *in the midst* leaving us forever vulnerable and yet open to learning and change.

Wonderings and Questions

We wonder about designing studies that allow us to learn from experience as we act within it. We ask you to ask yourselves:

- How do I simultaneously attend to context and process?
- How does my practice obscure and reveal my understanding of experience?
- How do I design studies that interrogate my experience allowing me to learn from it?

ACTIVITY

Exploring Dialogue as a Foundation for Knowing

Directions

This activity explores the use of dialogue as a foundation for knowing. First, using the last chapter as a foundation along with this worksheet, create your own definitions for the list of potential elements of dialogue. Once you have developed your definitions, use the terms to examine the dialogue excerpts. Do you find the elements? Are there connections between the definitions, the chapters, and the excerpts? Once that’s done, create a graphic that represents the process of dialogue and how that leads to knowledge construction.

Potential Elements of Dialogue in Self-Study of Practice

This exercise affords the opportunity to construct your own definition of dialogue drawn from reading this chapter. Please take time to contemplate your own perspective on dialogue and which elements you feel define a dialogue.

Potential elements	Definitions
Community	
Respect	
Caring	
Strong voices/listening	
Zone of inconclusivity	
Mediation	
Difference	
Commonality	
Inquiry	
Critique	
Reflection	
Evidence	
Response	
Language/discourse	
Cycles	
Authority	
Alone/together	

Dialogue Excerpts

Excerpt One (Arizona Group, 2004, pp. 1119–1120)

January 31, 2002

ML: This is still a “she said”, then “she said” relation . . . Is that what dialogue is?

PP: I was thinking that dialogue happens every day, all the time, but what does cleaning it up and publishing it do to it? Did both the dialogue and that process help us grow? Reinterpret what we had written?

ML: Do we clean our dialogue?

SP: Dialogue is to me conversation . . . But then we have to think like Roland Tharp says, “What makes a good conversation?” It is inclusive, it is responsive . . .

KG: Peterson would say it that constructing meaning is a primary concern in dialogue: Thinking critically and using the knowledge to move forward . . . Dialogue is something like praxis to me.

[What follows in this space is a further discussion of praxis, dialogic, and dialectic.]

In a dialogue, people co-construct meaning. I see that being an important factor in my work with all of you. I got somewhere that I might not have been able to go by myself.

PP: Now we’re getting into the learning part. We did something, which we have not yet defined and we learned from it.

ML: Oh great!

SP: When Jack talks about the dialogic, he is talking about keeping the tension between the question and the answer.

PP: Did we ask each other hard questions?

ML: Well, I’m not sure I knew the question and I know I didn’t have the answer . . .

SP: I think actually that our lives were the statements and we asked ourselves the hard questions.

PP: I like that.

ML: So, lived experience?

KG: Yes, dialogue helped us to address our “hard questions” but not always answer.

Dialogue Excerpts

Excerpt Two (Arizona Group, 2004, pp. 1161–1162)

PP: Usually we aren’t thinking about all this; but in self-study you do. You say, “I will think about all the complexity of this context, my belief about it, what I am doing.”

KG: And why am I doing it?

SP: Yes, and how am I doing it? What impact does it have on the others around me? and how is their history affecting this? and that's the fourth move right there. It's when you recognize that that you're in a setting where's someone's acting back on you. Their history, their belief, their experience is coming back on you and changing you, just as you're trying to study what you're doing in that moment.

ML: So are we saying that in self-study there must be dialogue? Because then dialogue becomes – I'm not sure of a metaphor – but it becomes maybe a metaphor for all of life.

PP: Without being in dialogue with an other, how can you be certain of what you are doing?

SP: It seems to me that there's sort of a general meaning of dialogue, but you can take an everyday word and make it a technical word for a specific purpose. We might capitalize it. It seems to me that's what we're doing here. As soon as I read Vicki's note, I was willing to say yes, what we do collectively in our self study is a method of dialogue, I just had never thought of that, so if it is a Method of dialogue then what is it that we're doing that it would, that we would consider it a Method.

PP: Yes, so the dialogue is more of a big M. . .

SP: To me that's an essential character of self-study.

KG: Yes

PP: And that because we . . .

ML: Okay wait a second. What is it that we're doing? We would consider, why would we consider this something, and then we got into big D and little d and I'm afraid I got a little lost. I don't think we would have agreement in the self-study group that all of that we've said about self-study is true. So I have my own little subtext going. So let me just say that that's interfering.

PAUSE

Research Design: Can You Identify an S-STTEP?

Characteristics of Research Design Exercise

Thus far, we have addressed theory, practice, and experience in a variety of ways, inviting you, the reader, to consider S-STTEP as a methodology (in reality or in possibility). We intend for readers to consider S-STTEP at least in an imaginary context as they ponder the possibility of using S-STTEP methodology. Consequently, it seems fitting that we pause to ask, can you identify an S-STTEP? We also wonder if we need to clarify aspects of S-STTEP to help in this consideration. We ask, how can you best identify the characteristics of S-STTEP research design? This exercise explores the characteristics of S-STTEP research design and allows application of the characteristics in selected vignettes. In this exercise, proceed as follows:

- First, review the detailed excerpt of LaBoskey’s characteristics of S-STTEP methodology.
- Next, read each vignette. While reading, label the points where the characteristics appear – or do not. We provide a definitional reminder column to help with identification. We also include a characteristics column so you might connect those labels with points in the vignettes.
- Then, identify each characteristic and write suggestions about what is needed and why.
- Finally, recall your inquiry planner and consider the ways your own work fits the characteristics of research design. Does it fit? Does it meet the demands of characteristic? How can it be improved?

With the completion of this activity we believe you will be prepared to seriously consider S-STTEP methodology and the practical aspects involved in this work.

Five Characteristics of Self-Study Methodology

1. Self-Initiated and Focused: Self-study of practice aims to improve practice and the institutional contexts in which those practices take place. Professional practice is an embodiment of what the practitioner knows in, of, and about practice. Through cycles of critical reflection

on practice and the interaction and relationships with others in that practice, the researcher will uncover and produce knowledge of that practice. It is local, situated contextual but since practice is local, situated and contextual this is knowledge that will have value in improving the researcher's practice and in contributing to the improvement of the practice of others. An essential requirement of this kind of research is that it results in and provides evidence for reframed thinking in practice and the transformation of practice. In self study of practice then the answer to the questions "who" is doing the research and "who" is being studied is the *self*. However, since it is always the study of practice, the self is not the only thing being studied. In being self-initiated and self-focused the study should also include the other(s) in the practice being studied.

2. Improvement Aimed: The functional definition of self-study is that it is the study of one's practice in order to improve it. One assumption behind this definition is that an improved understanding of a practice as well as changing a practice can lead to improvement. A second assumption is that because of the dynamic quality of human relationships and the multidimensionality of practice potentially no professional practice will ever arrive at perfection, thus improvement is always a goal. A third assumption is that two kinds of knowledge will be produced in a self-study. One is embodied knowledge that resides in the practice of the researcher doing the study – that is in the understanding, transformation and reformation of the practices of the researcher. But in addition, a self-study should also produce public knowledge of practice that can contribute to the improvement of the practice of others. Self-study of practice is improvement aimed and through cycles of critical reflection, embodied knowledge becomes intellectually accessible.

3. Interactive: Self-study requires collaboration with others in the practice, with other researchers, and with the data sets produced. Self-study researchers collaborate directly with colleagues in an effort to better understand and improve their practice. Self-study researchers collaborate with colleagues near and far many of whom are working on different professional practice agendas. Self study of practice researchers always interact with the others who are the participants in their practice in the case of self-study of teacher education practices with future teachers. Self-study of practice researchers collaborate with a variety of "texts". At a minimum these will include the professional literature in their area and the accounts of practice they produce as part of their data sets, but can include any kind of "text" that helps the researcher expand and re-frame interpretations, challenge assumptions, reveal biases, and triangulate findings.

4. Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods: Self study of practice researchers use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding their practice. To develop an understanding of all aspects of self in practice and of the practice being studied multiple means for defining, discovering, developing, and articulating knowledge of practice must be employed. Thus, forms of quantitative research, action research, narrative inquiry, hermeneutics, phenomenology, as well as a variety of methods such as observations, interviews, surveys, artistic methods, journaling, field notes, ethnography, autobiography, and others might be utilized.

5. Exemplar-Based Validation: For the self-study of practice researcher the authority of their own experience provides a warrant for their knowing. Ultimately, for self-study as is true for any research, it is the "reader" who determines the validity of the research. Readers make that decision based on their judgment about the rigor of the research piece they are reading. At least one aspect of this practice means that since self-study uses a variety of methods, self-studies of practice should at a minimum utilize the guidelines for trustworthiness recommended by schol-

ars who use those methods. Self-study of practice research like other “inquiry-guided” research establishes the validity of its claims through an exemplar approach to validation articulated by Mishler. These exemplars are documentations of normal practice within a community. Validation is accomplished, according to Mishler (1990, see LaBoskey 2004), when “the results of a study come to be viewed as sufficiently trustworthy for other investigators to rely upon in their own work.” This means we make visible our data, our methods for transforming data into findings, and the linkages between data, findings, and interpretations. This requires that as scholars we much attend to the ways in which we represent our research on our professional practice to the research community as a whole.

From: LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teacher education practices* (pp. 817–869). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Definitional reminders	Vignette one	Characteristics
<p>Self-Initiated and Focused: Self-study of practice aims to improve practice and the institutional contexts in which those practices take place.</p>	<p>One of your colleagues stops by your office to talk about research. Someone in the department had mentioned to him that you did self-study research. He has read an article by Ken Zeichner about the promise of self-study as a new scholarship of teacher education. He brings with him a narrative he has written about a class he taught last year, in which as an outreach strategy, he invited local high school students to come to his adolescent course and teach his students about adolescent development. His students were then invited to shadow a high school student for a day (building on Bullough and Gitlin’s “Becoming a Student of Teaching”). He shares with you the narrative he has written based on his memory of that experience and what he learned about adolescence and the preparation of secondary students to work with adolescents from that experience. He has sent the article off for publication, but it was rejected. He is now interested in doing a study of his class. He asks you as an S-STTEP researcher what he should do to improve the piece and the study.</p>	<p><i>Self-Initiated and Focused</i></p>
<p>Improvement Aimed: The functional definition of self-study is that it is the study of one’s practice in order to improve it.</p>		<p><i>Improvement Aimed</i></p>
<p>Interactive: Self-study requires collaboration with others in the practice, with other researchers, and with the data sets produced.</p>		<p><i>Interactive</i></p>
<p>Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods: Self-study of practice researchers use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding their practice.</p>		<p><i>Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods</i></p>
<p>Exemplar-Based Validation: For the self-study of practice researcher the authority of their own experience provides a warrant for their knowing.</p>		<p><i>Exemplar-Based Validation</i></p>

Note: We deliberately offer no answer to this identification process, leaving it open to consideration.

Definitional reminders	Vignette two	Characteristics
<p>Self-Initiated and Focused: Self-study of practice aims to improve practice and the institutional contexts in which those practices take place.</p>	<p>Two of your former graduate students are now teaching at the university level. Both of them are teaching courses on technology in teaching. They have talked with each other across the fall semester as they have developed this course. In this conversation, they realized that although one teaches in the southeastern United States at State University with a large minority population and the other teaches in the midwest at a private college, their students' projects revealed that the students at very different places and with very different backgrounds had similar but shallow conceptions of what it means to utilize technology for teaching content at the secondary level. They have contacted you because they want to do a study of their attempt to redesign their course to respond to these conceptions and to better understand what it means to provide technology teacher education that will improve the quality of the practices of pre-service teacher educators. One of these former graduate students contacts you and asks if you would be willing to talk to them about their project and help them design it.</p>	<p><i>Self-Initiated and Focused</i></p>
<p>Improvement Aimed: The functional definition of self-study is that it is the study of one's practice in order to improve it.</p>		<p><i>Improvement Aimed</i></p>
<p>Interactive: Self-study requires collaboration with others in the practice, with other researchers, and with the data sets produced.</p>		<p><i>Interactive</i></p>
<p>Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods: Self-study of practice researchers use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding their practice.</p>		<p><i>Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods</i></p>
<p>Exemplar-Based Validation: For the self-study of practice researcher the authority of their own experience provides a warrant for their knowing.</p>		<p><i>Exemplar-Based Validation</i></p>

Note: We deliberately offer no answer to this identification process, leaving it open to consideration.

Definitional reminders	Vignette three	Characteristics
<p>Self-Initiated and Focused: Self-study of practice aims to improve practice and the institutional contexts in which those practices take place.</p>	<p>Your university recently underwent a radical reform of its teacher education program for elementary education students. One of the goals of the department was to involve public school teachers as more active partners in the field experience (appropriate monetary considerations have been addressed as well as other symbols of position, power, and status) and help them gain an identity as a teacher educator to support their work with pre-service teachers. You have been given a role in this part of the teacher education reconstruction. You have always been interested in development of identity as a teacher educator. You do a self-study of gaining identity as a teacher educator. You invite teachers to join you in a study on this topic. You will follow the pre-service teachers into the school working side by side with the teachers taking on these new roles as a teacher educator. You write fieldnotes that focus on the learning and narratives of the in-service teachers. In your meetings with the teachers you ask teachers to share what they felt were key moments when they saw themselves as acting in teacher educators' roles. You then did a narrative analysis that explored and examined the emergence of these teachers as teacher educators.</p>	<p><i>Self-Initiated and Focused</i></p>
<p>Improvement Aimed: The functional definition of self-study is that it is the study of one's practice in order to improve it.</p>		<p><i>Improvement Aimed</i></p>
<p>Interactive: Self-study requires collaboration with others in the practice, with other researchers, and with the data sets produced.</p>		<p><i>Interactive</i></p>
<p>Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods: Self-study of practice researchers use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding their practice.</p>		<p><i>Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods</i></p>
<p>Exemplar-Based Validation: For the self-study of practice researcher the authority of their own experience provides a warrant for their knowing.</p>		<p><i>Exemplar-Based Validation</i></p>

Note: We deliberately offer no answers this identification process, leaving it open to your consideration discussion.

Chapter 5

Data Collection Methods in S-STTEP Research

Questions

- *What Is S-STTEP Methodology?*
- *How Might S-STTEP Researchers Position Themselves in Their Work?*
- *What Components Might Guide Good Research?*
- *How Do I Move from Questions to Design in S-STTEP Research?*
- *How Will I Gather and Store the Data?*
- *When Will I Collect the Data?*
- *What Data Will I Collect?*
- *What Evidence Could I Collect to Capture the Voice of My Practice?*
- *What Evidence Could Be Collected to Capture my Voice?*
- *What Could Count as Evidence?*
- *What Research Strategies Might Work Best with S-STTEP?*

Thus far in this text we have theorized about self-study methodology, except in our momentary PAUSES as we have explored practice, ontology, and context. We have situated ourselves within the realm of qualitative methodologies. At this point, then, we turn toward more practical descriptions of self-study methodology as we ask a series of questions: Once we recognize that we want to engage in self-study, how do we select our data collection strategies? How do we know which strategies might work? What might we use to address our desire to undertake good research? In this chapter we address these questions along with the questions which guide the structure of the chapter.

What Is S-STTEP Methodology?

S-STTEP is a systematic (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998a) research methodology that attempts to examine and improve professional practice settings. Those settings can be individual, collaborative, and/or programmatic. While most often individual or collaborative, more recently S-STTEP scholars have looked toward their teacher education programs with desire to collectively examine and improve them. From LaBoskey we know that the most critical characteristics of this methodology suggest

that the work is “. . . self-initiated and focused; . . . improvement-aimed; . . . interactive; . . . [that it uses] multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; . . . [and has] a validation process based in trustworthiness” (LaBoskey, 2004a, p. 817), but how are those methodological characteristics enacted?

How Might S-STTEP Researchers Position Themselves in Their Work?

In self-study, the self has a part in the work, but the focus occurs where self, practice, and context (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004) intertwine a third space (Bhadha, 1994) that serves to diminish the gap between theory and practice (Bullough, 1997; Hamilton, 2004). Teacher educators (for the most part) thoughtfully consider their practice and understand that taking a static approach to teaching and practice confounds the uncertainties of classroom and context. However, the teacher educator’s situation becomes more confounded amidst the pressures and demands of the academic environment. There are few times when teacher educators are *only* researchers or *only* practitioners. We wonder, if self-study research can be seen as a trend away from a modernist approach to research and toward a broadening of what counts as research (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001), methodologically how can we present our work?

What Components Might Guide Good Research?

As LaBoskey (2004a, p. 817) recognizes, the work of self-study is mostly qualitative in nature. Given that, we believe there are certain components that must guide all S-STTEP research. Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) offer a list of elements that guide narrative research:

- *Justification* – reasons for a study’s importance including aspects of the personal, practical, and social;
- *Naming the phenomenon* – identification of that which will be studied;
- *Description of methods* – details the methods used to better understand the phenomenon in question;
- *Description of analysis and interpretive processes* – moves from the field texts to the research texts highlighting the contextual and relational;
- *Positions work in relation* – positions current research in relation to other research literature;
- *Uniqueness of the work* – explores why the selected methodology best addresses the issues explored;
- *Ethical consideration* – the ways that integrity and trustworthiness exist in the work; and,
- *Representation* – the ways of presenting and re-presenting the research strengthen the work (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007, pp. 24–33).

While these elements provide a good summary of points to be considered when engaging in good research practice, we propose a slightly different set of components for S-STTEP research: Provocation, exploration, refinement, identify focus, design of the study, reconsideration process, ethical action, and presentation. We embed further explanation about them within a description of the S-STTEP research process.

S-STTEP methodology includes the following components to guide research: **Provocation:** Provocation can be a living contradiction or a puzzle or a wondering about where we want to be, what we know, and how we know it. Perhaps, at this point, something bumps up against our *ontological stance*, gently or jarringly, causing pause as well as an opening for the opportunity to consider and reconsider our ontological commitment.

We may be provoked by the reading we do. We may be provoked by what we consider an issue and why. There may be many issues about a wide range of things, for example, about the nature of certain experiences or the interactions of particular ideas, or current issues may commingle with on-going interests. Eventually we prioritize our interests. We start with a *so what* query, a *why would someone care* wondering, and a consideration of that wondering. Although this may not always be the process, a self-study progresses something like this where researchers bounce ideas off their knowledge. At some point, then, we recognize not only that we have interest but also that others have questions, taken opposing views, or have thought very little, if at all, about the idea that provokes us.

Exploration: The next component is exploration. At this point we investigate our resources, our ideas, and our knowledge. Here we do general pondering, and at this moment in our work, we begin to connect our ideas with the larger [related] literature.

Refinement: As we proceed, a refinement occurs as we bring together background and experience to decide what is worthy of study. We ask, does this issue have merit?

Identify focus: This is a decision point where we identify focus. Here we ask, is the idea worthy of further study? Will we pursue further study or let it be? Here another *so what* question emerges, and we consider how this study might contribute to our own work, to the work of others, and to the larger research literature?

Design of the study: Once we identify our focus, we ask ourselves, how will we study that? In this question we reflect the questions found in the Framework-for-Inquiry Planner in our initial PAUSE. We bring to bear our readings and theoretical perspectives, experience, and practice as we select a question and decide how to study it. We consider if we will look simply or deeply upon our selected focus. If experiencing a living contradiction, we ask whether we can bring it to consciousness. We continue to explore the ways this selected focus might fit into the broader, related literature.

In the (consideration of our) design of the study we use the Framework-for-Inquiry and the Framework-for-Analysis discussed in the initial PAUSE to forward our research process. With the focus identified, we design an open-ended and malleable study. In some ways we play the *what if* game. We ask ourselves, what if we did x or y or z? We question how we might best address the issues and/or answer

the questions. In our internal discussions we bring our background as researchers to the forefront, pondering the who and how of our exploration, particular approaches, methods, and so on.

We seek to select methods that help us better understand what we hope to examine and to reveal for readers where we looked, how we looked, along with the evidence from which we will develop our analysis. These methods, discussed in detail later in this chapter, include interviews, observations, and field-notes/journaling.

We need to underscore that our ontological stance drives our choices about methods. Our choice of methods enables us to capture our ontology and bring into our inquiry issues of context and process. When we carefully select methods and strategically identify how we will use them (what data we will collect), we ultimately bring into the data the opportunity to acknowledge and interrogate the often hidden contributions and constraints for our reality such as context, process, worldview, history, or relationships. In decisions about data collection, S-STTEP researchers begin to blend strategies and methods and negotiate traditional boundaries of general qualitative research. As we move across these boundaries, two fundamentals of S-STTEP as a methodology are made visible: the ontological rather than the epistemological orientation of the research and the use of dialogue as a process of coming-to-know. In the decisions made here we seek to represent our ontological stance based on our data collection, evidence, and analysis.

Reconsideration process. Once the data collection process begins, we engage in a reconsideration process as we move from the field to the texts and back again. Within these processes we employ ways to strengthen our understandings as we bring understandings of the data collected alongside our ontological stance, next to dialogue with others, in concert (or not) with what be both come to see as exemplars. We identify textual or visual evidence that establishes them yet simultaneously questions the work. (We elaborate on data analysis in Chapter 6.) In the process we insure that our evidence represents the research undertaken and the assertions for action and understanding for which they provide evidence. As we do throughout our work, we again situate our ideas in relation to the theoretical and practical work of others.

Ethical action. When engaged in any form of research, researchers are expected to behave with integrity. In S-STTEP methodology, with self in relation to other as a primary focus, attending to this requires more vigilance because the work seems more intimately connected to the researcher and more vulnerable to question. Moreover, S-STTEP methodology requires attention to ethical action. By this we mean taking actions in which we operate from a position of humility and love. We agree with Murphy, Pinnegar, & Pinnegar's (2008) description of ethics taken from Putnam (2004) when they say, "[We] consider ethics to be an imaginative and protective response "as concerned with the solution of *practical* problems" (p. 28). Ethics is pragmatic, relational, and based on experience. Appiah (2008) distinguishes between ethics – the Aristotelian notion of attention to individual human flourishing – and moral – the rules that guide appropriate human interaction. How the researcher behaves with integrity and trustworthiness and the transparency of

the work lends itself to whether readers find this work trustworthy. Engaging in research with attention to these issues and how one represents this on the page is a key component.

How a researcher positions their work in relation to others' work and how they presents their work to the public is a part of this. In turn, how researchers position their work in relation to the broader literature and their explanation for the use of this particular methodology becomes important. Along with that comes the way the researcher presents the study publicly. These choices all underscore the integrity and trustworthiness of the researcher.

Presentation. The presentation of our work becomes the final component in self-study methodology. How we present our work publicly situates it and invites colleagues into a shared conversation to strengthen and build professional knowledge. In each step along a study's path, researchers can use these components to question their process and their progress.

As we address in the next section of this chapter, S-STTEP methodology extends general qualitative research methodology in a variety of ways. This is so because S-STTEP researchers orient themselves to capturing as clear a record of practice as possible and in doing so both blend and cross boundaries of other qualitative research methods and strategies. This is visible in S-STTEP research conducted from a narrative inquiry position (see Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Kitchen, 2005). While not dramatically different, researchers engaged in self-study methodology do emphasize and extend certain aspects in ways that differ from other methodologies. Note, for example, the primacy of the use of collaboration in S-STTEP (Bodone, Guðjónsdóttir, & Dalmau, 2004) and the multiple iterations in the process of coming to design a S-STTEP study beginning with provocation and ending with refinement. In order to capture practice in a way that allows researchers to interrogate and build understanding as they alter practice, they must make certain that the study they design will capture a clear, coherent, complex, and comprehensive account of the practice they are studying. It is only through careful internal and external conversation that self-study researchers arrive at the focal point for their study and carve out a research question and design.

Through internal conversation and dialogues with others, self-study researchers arrive at their focus point. The emphasis here is on self in relation to other. While narrative inquirers tend to consider reasons for a study's importance within the spheres of the personal, practical, and social (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007), self-study researchers tend to situate self in a primary place within the study. That is not to say that the practical and social areas are neglected. However, these issues do have a different place when self-study researchers consider their work. More importantly, S-STTEP research fits alongside narrative inquiry and other qualitative research methodologies. We have provided this discussion comparing and contrasting elements of narrative inquiry and S-STTEP research in order to illustrate that regardless of the strategies or techniques borrowed from other research methods, S-STTEP situates self in relation to other as a primary part of the work in ways that differ from other methodologies. Understanding those blends and borders can only serve to strengthen the work of the S-STTEP researcher.

From the practical position, then, how do S-STTEP researchers engage in their research? In the next few paragraphs we address a series of questions that explore that process. At that point we describe the strategies most often used to collect data when doing a S-STTEP research.

How Do I Move from Questions to Design in S-STTEP Research?

Once we have moved through provocation, exploration, refinement, and the identification of a focus about which we ask a question or set an inquiry pathway, we want to design a powerful study. In answering the question above, we return to the initial forays of the Arizona Group into S-STTEP research and use that work as a guide to probe research design. We also return to the Framework-for-Inquiry planner described in the first PAUSE for a set of questions to guide design development.

Back in the day when we, as the Arizona Group, began our S-STTEP research, we raised concerns about how we might move from the conduct of our studies to the presentation of our ideas as research. Each member of the Arizona Group considered herself a qualitative researcher. While our methodological commitments and training ranged from cultural anthropology, ethnography, and policy analysis to symbolic interactionism, we shared several basic assumptions about what counted as scholarship and rigor in research. Initially, we concerned ourselves with questions of bias such as those articulated by Miles and Huberman (1984) and others regarding our research findings and how to understand them. However, as we moved from analysis to representation, we became aware of the ways in which our commitment to ways to account for understandings emerge in the process as well as in relationship to the qualitative research tradition in which we had been trained. We attended to issues of bias and self-deception as we collected, analyzed, and interpreted our data. In each step of the way in our study we asked questions to temper the bias and issues of self that emerged along the way. But how did we ask questions to strengthen our self-study research design?

Indeed we believed in (and still do) the need to provide evidence that appropriately supports findings and documents experiences. We think others should be able to review our data and findings, data collection and analysis processes, to determine for themselves the value, rigor, and trustworthiness of what we have done and how we have represented what we came to understand. Even then, in the early days of S-STTEP research, we recognized the tentative grounds for making claims to know on which we stood, yet we felt that our research design and representation needed to reveal that. We, along with other self-study researchers, had a deep commitment to engage in projects addressing significant questions for teacher education and teacher educators, using rigorous strategies and tools that attended carefully to the issues of trustworthiness that others might raise. In other words, we feel that in doing S-STTEP research, the questions we ask and the inquiry paths we follow must reveal clearly the study we plan to undertake.

Using these ideas as a foundation, we begin our discussion of how to design S-STTEP research studies with a suggestion that researchers must attend to design

tools that promote trustworthiness in the research findings based on the research methods or strategies they select. We recommend that when designing an S-STTEP study, researchers begin with the following considerations:

- use what you already know and understand;
- make a commitment to practice and use selected research strategies and tools rigorously;
- connect already established findings and theories from social science or educational research to your project;
- use them to help design, conduct, and analyze the work; and finally,
- seek out, wherever possible, opportunities to consult and collaborate with other more experienced researchers.

We also recommend using several questions from the Framework-for-Inquiry planner as a guide in the development of an S-STTEP research design. Once through the first (one or two) categories of questions, continue to ask questions about data collection, like the following: How will I gather and store evidence? When will I collect it? What data will I collect? Then, ask questions focused on evidence as follows: What evidence could I collect to capture the voice of my practice? What evidence could be collected to capture my voice? What could count as evidence? More importantly, the process, presented in a linear fashion, may not actually occur so systemically. However, all questions should be addressed at one point or another in the process of designing a self-study.

How Will I Gather and Store the Data?

When formulating the data collection processes for a study, consider ease of gathering as well as comfort in gathering information to facilitate the search for evidence to answer your questions. Electronic data collection for ease of storage or analysis might be a preference for data-gathering tools, or hard copy versions or drawings or post-it notes or handwritten notes might better fit your research process. For example, Russell (Martin & Russell, 2005) uses *tickets-out-of-class*, note cards that his students give him at the end of each class on which they write their ideas and perceptions about the class. Keys to selecting tools include whether they help answer the researcher's question and address the researcher's comfort when using the tool(s).

One of the delights of technological advancement is the impact it can have on both the kinds of data we collect as well as management and storage. We can create databases, use e-mail, and have students or others send documents and assignments in electronic forms. We can use features of classroom management course software like digital drop boxes, chat, and discussion groups (to mention a few ancient examples). Several recent self-studies have used blogs where one researcher posts a story and others in the group respond to it (e.g., Murphy, Pinnegar, & Pinnegar, 2008).

For a study she conducted, Clare Kosnik (personal communication, 2000) used planning software to keep track of her schedule including the meetings she attended, the people she talked to, the events she attended, the places she traveled, and the time spent doing each part of her assignment. She kept short notes in the calendar and other parts of the software where she articulated the purpose for the meeting, insights she gained, the work completed, assignments made, and reports given. She also kept track of to-do lists, project progress, and so on. Scheduling her life, making lists, and keeping track of travel were all tasks she had been doing, while using the planning software became a holistic noninvasive strategy for collecting data that provided a detailed account of all aspects of her life as the director of a teacher education program.

When Will I Collect the Data?

Just as in any research study, S-STTEP research design includes careful scheduling for data collection. Before interviewing students about their experience, the researcher must think carefully about optimum times for those interviews as well as consider the life and schedule of the students. Arranging observations of students or having a colleague make observations involves strategic planning as to the when and where of observations and how the timing will help or hinder the study of practice. Here the consideration of context factors fit into decisions about the timing of data collection. The design of the data collection process should mesh with the natural rhythm and flow of practice. In addition, since the researcher fills the roles of both the researcher and the researched, consideration of personal capacity to attend simultaneously to data collection and the demands from practice must occur. Consequently, the design and timing for data collection should adhere as seamlessly as possible to the practice being studied. Thus, as much as possible, if gathering data from students, seek to embed data collection tools into the student assignments. These data should be a purposeful part of the students' educational experiences in the class.

When designing a schedule for times to collect data, remember to fold this work neatly, efficiently, and easily into the demands already placed on your time. In other words, as much as possible the data collection process should be either a slight adjustment or an addition to something already planned. For example, when Northfield (Loughran & Northfield, 1996) studied his practice in a return to teach students maths and science in public school, he determined that he wanted to reflect each day on his practice. However, he knew that he had heavy demands on his time from his university commitments and his teaching in the public school. He felt it would be foolhardy for him to commit to write everything he could every day. Therefore, he determined that while he would write about his practice every day, he committed himself to only 15 minutes. When the 15 minutes passed, he stopped. This meant that while he would not have a complete account of his daily experience, he would be more likely to write across the entire experience.

When the Arizona Group (1994b) committed to write letters to each other about our experience, we knew we might not write every week, and so we committed to

write bi-weekly letters. In this way, we attended to the ways in which we could construct a record of our practice that would be built in the moments of practice and would include records of that practice across time.

What Data Will I Collect?

The activity of identifying the data to be collected requires that researchers consider what will count as evidence. Usually when determining what counts as evidence that allows for the study of practice and provides a basis from which to make claims, researchers simply name the data to be collected. However, we encourage researchers to review statements about evidence to be collected to ascertain whether the data they hope to collect are identifiable as data and applicable to their concern.

As researchers we may decide to collect student assignments that reveal our students' learning, but we may need to specify further which assignments and what information exactly we expect them to provide. We may also decide that rather than focusing on the assignments of all students, responses of particular students who resist our teaching or are confused by it may be the focal point of our work. When we decide exactly what data to collect, that can be a good time to consult or collaborate with a colleague to make certain that the data we collect will indeed be good evidence of the claims we want to make and will actually allow us to answer the questions posed. Of course, whatever we decide to do, when we use student assignments as data, we must make certain that our use of assignments for research does not have a negative impact on student grades or our interactions with them.

What Evidence Could I Collect to Capture the Voice of My Practice?

Just as troubling as studies that fail to capture evidence of the voice of the self in S-STTEP research are those studies that fail to capture evidence of the voice of the other or the practice being explored. When designing S-STTEP research, researchers need to think carefully about the kind of evidence we need to collect to represent the practice being studied. As the headings in Placier's (1995) study of her teaching clearly document (Fiasco #1, Fiasco #2), often when we study practices we examine less-than-successful practices. We study what is problematic, selecting points where we deny our values and beliefs in our practice or places where our beliefs and actions do not match. Thus, actively seeking to capture the voice of our practice may require that we listen to uncomfortable and even unkind things. Yet if we want to improve our practice and if we truly want to understand it, we cannot silence the voice of the other who can provide us with that kind of understanding. Thus, if we seek to understand teacher education practice, we cannot flinch away from details, descriptions, and accounts of our practice.

As Loughran and Northfield (1998) remind us "... surprise and curiosity spring from self-study and shape it, but are drawn from unresolved situations" (p. 15). As we design S-STTEP research, we must actively seek not only the voice of the other,

but also a representative accounting of that voice. We need to make certain that we design our studies in ways that elicit both problematic and supportive feedback. When we seek too much of one or the other, we will not be able to provide a potentially balanced understanding of our experience. Again, involving colleagues in collecting data concerning our practice is often both helpful and essential in S-STTEP research. Northfield's study (Loughran & Northfield, 1996) of his experience when he returned to public schools to teach a combination math–science course is a good example. He intentionally sought help from Carol Jones who engaged with him in critical reflection on his practice and interviewed students to provide a student perspective gathered by someone other than the researcher. This provided a setting in which they could speak more freely. (We also address the issue of capturing the voice of practice in Chapter 4.)

What Evidence Could Be Collected to Capture My Voice?

As LaBoskey (2004a) reminds us, S-STTEP research is self-initiated and self-focused. Further, one of the fundamental expectations of S-STTEP researchers when they read a self-study is that the researcher will answer the *so what* question: S-STTEP research studies examine issues of significance both to the “self” that is conducting the study and to the larger research community. Thus, part of what readers expect in an S-STTEP research study is an account of the learning of the person who conducted the study.

As a result, when we design a self-study, we need to make certain that we capture our own voice and that the record of that voice is not a simple reflection constructed from memory after the completion of the project. Rather, strategies often used in self-study include interviews, fieldnotes/journaling, observation, collage, focus groups, case study, videotape, and technology. These will be addressed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.

Of course, our voice, our understandings, and our assumptions pervade our self-study. We need to ponder ways to collect data as evidence that allows us to make claims, in the voice of the researcher and the researched (the self conducting the study/the self being studied) about the question, issue, and/or practice being explored to insure more authentic claims about our own thinking and understanding. Sometimes researchers believe they have done a *self-study of teaching and teacher education practice* if they simply create a narrative record of their reflection on their practice after the semester is over or because they are suddenly struck by an insight into their practice that they reach at the end of a semester. However, this is neither S-STTEP research nor evidence. We assert that researchers are not in a strong position to make claims about their learning if they do not capture their learning in the process of that learning. Loughran and Northfield (1998) assert:

... self-study may best be regarded as a sequence of reflective instances as the problematic situation is not only reframed and redefined, but is also changed as a result of the intended action designed to resolve the problem. (p. 15)

As the works of Donna Phillips (e.g., Phillips & Carr 2006; Phillips, 2007) demonstrate, reflections captured during the process of a study can be reframed and reconsidered later in terms of new inquiries or new understandings from research. We (Arizona Group, 1994a & b; 2007) engaged in a study whereby we engaged in new dialogues about our development as teachers and scholars over time. In doing this study, we reanalyzed the data we collected earlier about our experience as beginning professors of teacher education terms of current accounts of our later experience. Whenever designing an S-STTEP study, researchers need to make certain that they include data collection strategies that provide evidence of their knowledge in and about the practice they study.

What Could Count as Evidence?

When doing S-STTEP research, researchers like to explore issues in response to selected questions and issues they want to investigate. Therefore, an initial question becomes what evidence would support claims from a study that explored this practice. Sometimes the answer is obvious and the kind of data you need to collect is straightforward; however, even when the answer seems obvious, careful deliberation must occur. The claims may rest on the quality and veracity of the evidence collected. Therefore, researchers want to collect data that not only provides evidence of the claims made, but also answers questions others might raise either about the data or about the claim.

As researchers probe their questions and work out the forms of evidence they hope to find, the use of critical others can support this process. These critical others might be skeptical colleagues or colleagues with whom you work. However, as you select collaborators remember that involving others as consultants can be tricky work. Interactions with critical others can cause the sharpening, reshaping, and refocusing of questions in unpredictable ways that make for a more interesting, more significant, or stronger study. But, the questions of collaborators may be tangential and serve only to obfuscate issues.

Engaging with critical others does not obligate the researcher to use their recommendations, but engagement with them and their ideas forces the researcher to think more deeply about the research study. These examples all share a common underlying purpose. When seeking advice about a study the researcher decides how to use the responses provided. Yet, Bodone, Gujonsdottir & Dalmau (2004) also suggest that consulting with others helps rethink questions, develop stronger strategies for data collection, develop a clearer understanding of research focus selected, and, finally, develops the researcher's commitment to a study and strength as a researcher.

As an example, we offer the work of one of us – Stefinee. She decided to explore how she used stories in her teaching and how the evidence she collected was fairly straightforward, or so she thought at the time. In a description of her work, she writes:

I simply needed a record of the stories I told, when I told stories, what prompted me to tell stories, what kind of stories I told and in response to what kinds of situations. I needed a record of my practice that captured my use of storytelling in that practice. As a result, I decided to audio tape my classroom talk. The transcripts of my class sessions provided data for analysis and evidence of my practice upon which I could make claims about how I used stories in my teaching of teacher candidates. However, as I reconsider this study, I realize there are other kinds of data collection strategies I might have used that would have given me both richer, as well as stronger evidence, to support my claims about the use of storytelling in teaching teacher candidates.

First, I wonder now why I didn't videotape my teaching and both provide a transcript of the tape and do a careful analysis of the interactions within the teaching episodes including gestures, nonverbal cues and body language. I also realize I might have decided that in conjunction with the audio taping (or in place of it) I would use a classroom log or construct field notes. For the log, I could determine a series of questions to ask myself after each class or a build a table with blank slots like this:

Write the story told	What happened just before?	When did I tell the story?	How did it relate to the content?	How did students respond?

Once I constructed the log, I could consult with a colleague to see if I had included all the questions I wanted answers to or that someone else might wonder about in order to determine the strength of this record as evidence. If I decided to construct field notes I might have used a strategy from narrative inquiry. After a class session, I would create a narrative account of the class including my record of the discussion, the participants. As part of my design, I might then have determined that I would ask students to read the narrative account and make suggestions regarding the accuracy of the account. I might also have invited a colleague to be a participant observer and create a record of their experience of the session.

At this point in time, I realize it might also have been helpful to elicit student accounts of their experience. I could have distributed 3x5 cards and asked students to record any story they remembered from the day and how they thought the story was used in relationship to teaching. Notice as I consider each of these variations on the strategy I chose, audio taping of class sessions, transcribing the tapes and analyzing them, the variations in decisions about what evidence to collect shapes in subtle ways the question asked. At each step of the study I used critical friends to help me develop my thinking and strengthen my pursuit of information.

In this example, if I had asked students to record their observations about my use of story in teaching them, I would only be positioned to make claims about teacher candidates understanding of the use of story in my teaching. If I had chosen to only construct a log, readers of my study may have questioned the accuracy of the record and therefore the strength of the claims I made. If I had video taped my class, kept a log, and asked student to provide responses, I would not only had stronger evidence to support the claims I wanted to make, but I would also have been able to make claims about other aspects such as how it contributed to student learning or how nonverbal expression or gestures supported or deterred teachers in sharing stories in teaching. (See Pinnegar, 1996)

From this example, we can see that decisions about what evidence to collect can appear to be fairly straightforward and simple. On the contrary, if we choose to use fewer and fairly simple, straightforward strategies we may fail to collect evidence that allows us to make fuller and more authentic claims about our understanding and action within our practice.

We can also see how consulting with others in determining what evidence we need can be helpful. We also notice that engaging in the process of deciding what evidence to collect shapes our question and indeed may transform or reframe the study we planned to do. Further, we notice that we need to always be mindful of whether the evidence we choose to collect will actually provide evidence from which we can respond to the question we asked. For these reasons, answering the question “what will count as evidence?” requires thoughtful and careful deliberation and can ultimately impact the trustworthiness, rigor, and strength of the study.

What Research Strategies Might Work Best with S-STTEP?

In the next few pages we present a summary of each of the methods or strategies most often used in S-STTEP methodology. To establish the most frequently used methods or strategies, we reviewed published S-STTEP works in books, journals, and proceedings, noting the use and frequency of methods. As a result, we highlight the most frequently used methods, like interview, observation, and field-notes/journaling, but we include a general summary for others. To provide consistency for each method we include a general description, a description of the ways self-study methodology expands the use of the particular method, and a list of suggested additional readings for more information and as examples.

Interview

Interviews, sometimes called purposeful conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006), are often employed to establish peoples’ views about issues through questions that can be open ended and informal or formal and structured depending on the intent of the researcher. Interviews can elicit personal opinions, knowledge, and feelings. Usually, prior to the interview, the researcher generates questions, but that depends on the researcher’s approach to research. Once completed, the information produced is often coded and analyzed to create a portrait of the interviewee around the focus of the questions or through identified themes.

In educational research, some researchers employ a semiformal interviewing to engender confidence (and truthfulness) in their interviewee (e.g., from Bussis, Chittenden, & Amarel, 1976, through Paris & Combs, 2006). Some researchers (e.g., from Kleine & Smith, 1987, to Smith, 2005) utilize in-depth interviews to gather life history information, while others (e.g., from Hollon & Anderson, 1987, to Yerrick & Hoving, 2003) used interviews to establish personal knowledge and examine self-reinforcing beliefs.

In the interviewing process, researchers hope to capture the words, language, and context of the interviewee as a part of the evidence-gathering process. Often researchers ask questions and then attempt to verify terms. This strategy can be used in an attempt to describe beliefs, contexts, and/or ideas that researchers explore more deeply as they ask subsequent questions. Within the interview, the researchers

formulate questions in language familiar to the interviewee to generate comfort and ease in the hope that the interviewee will honestly engage in the interview.

Informal interviews, natural ways of getting information, usually take place in a more relaxed social context, help clarify issues, and create a more complete picture of what occurs within the setting. This strategy also provides an opportunity to question things seen and heard as well as explore issues and ideas with colleagues and other people participating in the study. Informal interviewing helps support observations made by researchers and delineates ideas developed by the researchers about what they think they see. These interviews serve as a check on inferences made and add new information to the data collected. Furthermore, informal interviews and conversations support the triangulation process.

Formal interviews help establish the participants' specific views about selected topics. These interviews can be used to detail perceptions, meanings, and thoughts from various participants on specific issues that have influence on the study. Often formal interviews occur at an appointed time, take a prolonged amount of time, and cover a series of questions designed previously by the researchers. Whether formal or informal, interviews are often transcribed by the researchers or recorded in some way to facilitate the evidence collection as well as the analysis and interpretation process. In analysis, the interviews are reviewed, coded, classified, and examined to generate at least part of the picture of people involved in the study.

Significant in this postmodern age of interviews is the positioning of interviewer next to the interviewee to indicate what the listener might be hearing as the speaker is speaking. Whereas there were dictates with regard to interviews in the earlier works of qualitative research, it is now the researcher's job to tell her or his story against the story revealed by the interviewee. This is done to decenter the exchange and to avoid the domination of the researcher's view of the interviewee.

When planning to do an interview (Creswell, 2006):

- Consider the setting – what will you do if you are not in a quiet room? How will you situate yourself – in front of or to the side of the interviewee?
- Consider whether to tape record the interview – will it be too distracting? Do you have the proper equipment?
- Whether recording or not, the interviewer should also take notes.
- Consider the order of questions. While the questions may be open ended, the interviewer may want to guide the direction of the questioning. For example, will you start with a general question and build into specifics from there?
- Avoid leading questions.
- Insure that you ask the interviewee to define terms used. Don't assume a shared understanding.
- Be conscious of verbal and nonverbal actions as they can influence the interviewee.
- Consider the pause and the punctuation used in the transcription of the interview. In the transcription, will the interviewer include pauses and sounds (like "ummm") or the simple intake of air?

Self-Study Expansions

In self-study methodology, interviewing is an often-used method. We interview colleagues, students, and selves. For the most part, as we do this interviewing, we do follow the aforementioned considerations in general qualitative research including identification of interviewee, design of questions, use of technology to record events, detailed note taking, review of notes by the interviewer, careful analysis of interview, and review of interpretation by the interviewee. Expansion of this method by self-study researchers comes in the ways that researchers position themselves. In a self-study research researchers carefully situate self, explore positionality, and attempt to walk alongside the interviewee, even if the interviewee is the self. Queries to the interviewee are countered with queries to self about understanding, bias, and perspective although those queries most often occur after the interview, not simultaneously. The label of self-study brings an additional responsibility to the recognition in qualitative research of the researcher as instrument. In S-STTEP research, the researchers make explicit their position as researcher and participant in the study.

How does one interview self? The interview format might be written in the form of a journal or spoken into a tape recorder. The format choice would be the prerogative of the researcher. Whatever the format, the interviewer (self) must be vigilant to guide the interviewee (self) toward a trustworthy accounting of experience.

Additional Readings

Rarely are details about the interview process included in any S-STTEP. However, references about the use of interviews in S-STTEP methodology can be found in Brandenburg (2006, 2008), Eldridge and Bennett (2004), Loughran and Northfield (1998), and Perselli (1998) as well as in many other texts identified as S-STTEP texts.

Observation

Spradley (1980) continues to be the most often cited text regarding participant observation. In this text, he describes three types of participation with degrees of involvement for use in the collection of data. He sets a continuum for degrees of participation from active to passive: (1) *active participation*, where the researcher attempts to participate as fully as possible in the setting, hoping not just for acceptance, but also for full engagement at the site and learning the nuance of action and the subtlety of word; (2) *moderate participation*, where the researcher attempts to maintain a balance between the inside and the outside of the group, between participation and observation; and (3) *passive participation*, where the researcher

may be visible at the setting but do not interact with others to any great extent. Spradley (1980, p. 78) also describes the nine dimensions of social situations to help researchers better detail the observation of sites and people: space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal, and feeling. While each dimension may not be addressed at every moment, recognition of these dimensions helps the researcher in better depicting what they observe.

Evertson and Green (1986) describe observation as an approach to the study of educational processes. In their work they describe phases of observation that occur as an everyday event and part of human perception. They also use a continuum of observation types spanning from tacit observation to a very formal process. Recognizing that researchers attempt to represent reality, they offer strategies for best representation and detail the influence of context on observation.

In later qualitative research methodology texts, some authors rely heavily on Spradley's description of participant observation; others (e.g. Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Creswell, 2006) distinguish between observation and participant observation, recognizing that either strategy involves detailed notes and recording of events. For example, according to Marshall and Rossman, observation "is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry" (2006, p. 99) where planning becomes critical and the act of observation is more than just hanging out with people. Furthermore, the notes taken while observing must include rich details of the context. (See the next section for information about note taking.) When Marshall and Rossman use the term participant observation, they imply some level of participation on the part of the researcher. For them, this data-gathering method is "basic to all qualitative studies and forces a consideration of the role or stance of the researchers as a participant observer – her positionality" (2006, p. 101).

Self-Study Expansions

In self-study methodology, researchers make few changes in the aforementioned approach to observation. Recognizing the tenuous research condition when focused on self, researchers take care to write notes, collect documents, and engage others to observe their practice because usually the focus of the researchers is on the self as a practitioner. Technological tools, including video- and audio-tape, may be employed. (For more information about that, see the section in this chapter on technology.) When researchers observe students as a part of their study, they follow the observational strategies found in general qualitative research. More importantly, though, S-STTEP researchers generally link the observation back to the self and practice in some way.

Additional Readings

References to the use of observation in S-STTEP methodology can be found in Clift, Brady, Mora, Stegemoller, and Choi (2006), McGinn and Boote (2003), Loughran

and Berry (2005), Placier et al. (2006), and Selley (1998) as well as in many other texts identified as self-study texts.

Notes in the Field

In this category of methods we include fieldnotes and journaling. These are the two most often described methods in S-STTEP methodology. For us, these methods are distinct as evidence in the descriptions that follow. Further, we believe excellent fieldnotes to be a crucial element of quality S-STTEP. Continuing to use our method format, we describe the method used in general qualitative research following its self-study expansion.

Fieldnotes

The term fieldnotes describes a broad category that covers any form of note taking that occurs in relation to the *field* as defined by the researcher. Consequently, there are many references to fieldnotes in studies, yet fewer references that include specific details about how to engage in the writing of fieldnotes. However, we know that fieldnotes serve as a record of time engaged in a study. Notes taken during a moment of time in a study serve as an abbreviated version of what actually occurs and may be written in a researcher-created code that includes phrases, single words, and unconnected sentences. Researchers generate a more detailed version after leaving that moment of time in a study when more time can be taken to add details and recollect occurrences that might not have been recorded in that moment of time. Often researchers keep notes with various sections. Overall the notes recount a record of experiences, ideas, successes, mistakes, and problems that arise during fieldwork, and they usually begin with a clear statement of the questions under investigation, the data sources to be used, and the way the site and persons, including the researchers, are situated in the setting. Another section of the notes includes more intimate details about the issues and questions that emerge for the researcher in relation to the study. As the study evolves, understanding comes through the detailed description and analysis of happenings in everyday life (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Some researchers (e.g., Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005) recommend that the fieldnotes be divided into two parts: descriptive and reflective. Qualitative researchers systematically record their interpretive and analytical comments along with, but distinct from, fieldnotes so that reference points concerning time and place as well as the prompts for specific conclusions can be interrogated as a part of the analysis process. The reflective record entails the researcher's notes of her own speculations, feelings, ideas, hunches, and/or impressions. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) recommend the following categories for fieldnotes: *on-the-fly* notes dashed off while on-site; *thick descriptions* notes that depict persons, places, and events in as much detail as possible; *data analysis* notes that connect *on-the-fly* notes and

thick descriptions notes; and personal matters and reflexivity that explore feelings, emotion, and other issues that emerge for the researcher.

Patton (2001) suggests that reflective notes be kept separately because while the researchers' interpretive comments are essential for data analysis and interpretation, it becomes important to distinguish between what the researcher thinks she sees and what the researcher thinks she feels as ideas and information are processed to present evidence from the study. In short, the fieldnotes collected contain a mix of concrete accounts of what people say and do along with reflective perspectives of the researchers (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Self-Study Expansions

In self-study methodology, the fieldnote component might not vary greatly from the aforementioned description in that the notes should be detailed to create a rich description of the study's context and characters. Where the self-study researcher might vary from the description is in the intimacy of the information revealed. This is not to say that fieldnotes would become a therapeutic opportunity. Rather, the researcher must situate self against the context to explore and explain the practice being studied and the knowledge being generated (if that occurs). So, for a researcher engaged in S-STTEP, fieldnotes might depict details about the setting (say a classroom or group) and about the students or teachers or others involved. These notes would also always include a description of the self in relation to other as a part of the self-study. And, because self is also the researched, the reflexive aspects of fieldnotes would be intertwined. Additionally, because critical others are often a part of S-STTEP research fieldnotes may include a section dedicated to that relations and the exchanges that occur. This section of the research journal details the interactions that occur among colleagues as those interactions potentially forward thinking about the study. Fieldnotes can serve as an echo of researchers' development as they progress through their study.

An example of fieldnotes:

Fieldnotes excerpt – from #15

November 19, 2007

Classroom Notes, right after class – after two classes

JRPearson Hall, in classroom

Discussion of text used in class

I have been working hard all semester to bring together good texts and good ideas so that I can feel confident that my students are well prepared to become teachers. And I feel . . . well, felt . . . that I was laying down a good foundation. On this particular day we were going to discuss *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire*. Yes, the author is arrogant and cocky and sure in ways that

beginning teachers are not. He also offers great ideas and strategies for teachers to consider. Further, he makes specific links between theory and practice.

Although this day was the last day before vacation for many students, I was looking forward to hearing what they had to say. How might they critique Rafe E.?, I wondered. What might they see as useful? How might my male students respond?

My 9am class came in excited and ready to talk. They were full of opinions about which strategies they liked, which they might use, and whether or not Rafe was a person of authority (my words, not theirs). Their interest ignited my interest. Throughout the class they seemed attentive, engaged, and on-track. And in their groups, as I circulated, when I listened that a group was off-track, I asked – is that an on-topic conversation? They responded, no, but now it is. So even though they were excited about vacation, they were engaged with the text. They wanted to know how and why and where about the text. They connected the text with issues we had addressed in class.

For the class I had made them a form to write out four points about the text and a question. As they were writing I had one group member select a topic from the six I had identified – Curriculum, NCLB/Standards, Planning, Esme, Done, Reflection. I asked them to address their comments about the text in relation to the selected topic. The 9 am students did an excellent job. And when I mentioned that there was a film on the topic, they were delighted. I left class quite excited and looking forward to hearing what the 2 pm students had to say. At that moment, leaving the 9 am class, I felt that I had been successful in work as a teacher. The students had demonstrated in talk and action their learning process. I could see specific connections in their language to the ideas we had discussed and experiences we had had in class.

Then I had my 2 pm class. On this particular day, this was the worst classroom moment of my teaching career. I mark it as that because by the end of class I felt like a complete failure. That once again, I had failed. I wanted to yell and scream and through a fit. I didn't. I did express myself, but truly I was too shocked to say much.

What happened? I had a number of absences – about 5 students. So there were about 18 students in class. Of those students, 4 had read some number of chapters in the text. And those students who had read, had little interest, let alone excitement, about the text. The others hadn't read it. Here were adults who made a choice, in a class, not to do the work. I don't get it and I am offended by it. I suppose some of it has to do with feeling as though the students are disrespecting me. I feel disrespected because they didn't do the assignment and they think that's ok. Shocking? Why are they in the program? Why select a career when they will not engage in the preparation for it? I am glad they didn't lie and I see that as a positive, but I am shocked that they didn't read the schedule or look at the PowerPoint from the 16th or listen to me when I said we would talk about the book. How does this fit with Fenstermacher's (1986) notion of studenting?

From a physical standpoint, I could tell that my face was bright red. It felt so humiliated and angry and hurt. I could have cried. I didn't. I did feel as though my head might explode. I asked them to think about a case situation. In this situation they were 3rd grade teachers who had to deal with this situation – students hadn't done their homework – and I asked them what they would do. I found that [one student] was her negative, blaming self. She said I should come up with plan B. I didn't take her bait during the class. I could sense that she wanted to blame me for this . . . even though it turned out that she had done the reading. And I did say to the class that if they wanted to blame me, that was fine, that I might be given as much as 50% of the blame, but in the end, they were at least 50% responsible for their actions. Other

students suggested that a 3rd grade teacher should consider the students' backgrounds or I might give credit to those that did the work. I can do all of that. But, can I get them to take responsibility for becoming professional teachers? Can I help them improve their practice? How is this professional behavior? I think that their desire to be serious teachers must come from within themselves. And I worry that isn't happening. Can I instill that? Well, I just know that I don't care to go to that class again. I feel betrayed and I don't care. And, what's more, I do not feel lenient toward them and see advocating mercy on their assignment grades.

We did create an alternative assignment – the students who read became group leaders who talked to small groups about their reading in the text. They received credit for their work. The students listened as the leaders talked and then participated in the discussion afterward. By the end of class my disappointment did not dissipate. I wonder if I am suffering from the bursting of my idealism balloon.

For reconsideration: I said the students were on-task or off-task, what were my clues? What were the specific connections I saw in the words and experiences of the students? How do I talking about the responsibility of a student to learn? How does studenting fit here?

In this fieldnote excerpt, taken from the study described in the PAUSES within this text, several points addressed earlier can be seen. An important aspect to taking fieldnotes is the return to them as a part of the iterative research process. Wolcott (2004) recommends that researchers even record this iterative process to establish the growth of ideas throughout the study.

Critical to whatever note-taking format adopted is the connection of data collected to interpretations drawn. There is the clear need to situate the notes in place and time. These notes also combine descriptive and reflexive elements since this particular excerpt focuses on the researcher/self. The tensions between the self in relation to other becomes apparent when reading the excerpt. At the end of the entry there are notes to address in the reconsideration process. Notes of this type serve as reminders when the researcher turns toward the analysis and interpretation process.

Additional Readings

We find many examples of the use of fieldnotes within S-STTEP research, including Coia and Taylor (2004) and Cockrell, Cockrell, Placier and Donaldson (2004).

Journaling

From our review of the literature we see journaling as the data-gathering method that is most often used by teacher education researchers. Whether as an adaptation of a pedagogical tool used with students or a logical progression from the fieldnotes taken by qualitative researchers in other disciplines, use of journaling emerged in the literature in the late 1980s. Curiously, there are few studies that define journaling. Instead, there are assumed definitions. King and LaRocco (2006) define a journal as an individual's permanent evidence of their thinking as processed through writing.

Whether a virtual journal or a hard copy version, a journal is transportable (Killion, 1999) and personal.

Because journaling may have originated as a pedagogical tool, there are few methodological pieces written about what it means to journal as an evidence-gathering tool. Interestingly, although researchers claim to journal, there seems to be a tacit assumption that everyone knows what journaling means. Or is the use of the word journal a simple evolution from note taking to diary to journal? Consequently, we ask, what does journaling mean? Is it the same as keeping fieldnotes?

If we accept the King and LaRocco definition of journal, the answer is no because a field journal or fieldnotes focus on observations in terms of the elements of a study. Fieldnotes serve to record and/or recollect what is happening in the study. There may be aspects of fieldnotes that record personal interpretations, but that does not fully fit the definition offered of a journal. A journal seems to be more free flowing about feelings, interpretations, and judgments. As a writing tool, a journal offers a place for writers to expose their personal feelings and perspectives. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) see writing as an encompassing aspect of qualitative research that allows the writer to reveal a deep exploration of self situated in society. Further, they suggest that writing is a source of data gathering and data analysis.

That researchers assume there is a shared understanding of journaling when there is none, raises question. Again, what does it mean to engage in journaling? When, as teachers, we ask students to journal, what are we asking? If we have not defined it, how can we consistently read through student work? As Killion (1999, p. 36) does, when we say students engage in dialogue journals and we describe that process as sharing “a single journal, reading and responding to each other’s ideas,” what does that tell us? Maybe it tells us that we make certain assumptions about our students’ and our own understandings and we need to take heed to question those assumptions.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) address the journals that teachers keep. These journals record pedagogical processes and classroom experiences. Journals, they say, “are accounts of classroom life in which teachers record observations, analyze their experiences and reflect on and interpret their practices over time. Journals intermingle description, record keeping commentary and analysis” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 26). Cochran-Smith and Lytle go on to compare journal writing with ethnographic fieldnotes suggesting that “journals capture the immediacy of teaching: teachers’ evolving perceptions of what is happening with the students in their classrooms and what this means for their continued practice” (p. 26). As we stated at the beginning, it would seem that journaling is a method (more or less) unique, at least in title identifier, to educational research.

Rager (2005) outlines journal writing as a data collection tool that expresses emotion and captures feelings that support reflexivity. She offers a description of how she engaged in the journaling process. She writes that her journal entries “chronicled my research experience and documented my physical and emotional reactions. After each interview, I would describe the setting, the participant, her nonverbal behavior, and any thoughts, feelings, or reactions I was having” (p. 25). For Rager, the quality of her study was enhanced by the information revealed in her journals.

Self-Study Expansions

In S-STTEP literature, journaling represents a frequent method used in research. We might assume that the researchers are following the descriptions used by Cochran-Smith and Lytle or by Rager, but what a researcher includes in the journaling process is rarely, if ever, defined with specificity. As pointed out by Lighthall (2004), it is “as if [S-STTEP] scholars believe that one . . . journal . . . is as good as another, and that the only methods necessary are those we all, students and teachers, already possess by virtue of our ability to write anything” (p. 216). Certainly S-STTEP researchers see journaling as a way to provide story and narration to experience (Wilcox, Watson, & Paterson, 2004).

If we attempt to make explicit the implicit elements of journaling, we see that journaling is writing with a purpose in the ways described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) and Rager (2005). It includes the details of the day and the events of teaching, along with the reflection upon and the interpretations of practice. As Strieb (1985) wrote in her journal, the “more I wrote, the more I observed in my classroom and the more I wanted to write” (p. 5). This is the draw of journaling. We could have identified the fieldnotes example in the previous section as a journal entry, particularly given the emotional quality of it. The aspects of keeping a journal might include elements of an individual’s life as it pertains to the practice and the teaching. What would make journaling a research method would be the ways in which the author used the tool to forward thinking and to document action occurring during the study. It would follow, then, that the author would include references to literature read as well as individuals used to develop ideas. Sometimes in S-STTEP literature these aspects of studies are more apparent than others.

Additional Readings

We find many examples of the use of journaling within S-STTEP research, including Badali (2008), Lay, Pinnegar, Delude, and Bigham (2006), Mitchell (2006), and Schuck and Russell (2005).

Focus Groups

Focus groups emerged mostly as a marketing strategy as a way to investigate who purchased which product and why (Morgan, 1996). Generally the groups comprise 7–10 people who are unfamiliar with each other but have been selected because of shared characteristics related to study questions or issues. To facilitate the group, the researcher provides an open environment where he or she asks focused questions that encourage discussion and the sharing of potential different opinions and viewpoints. Sometimes, because of the nature of the issue to be addressed, the researcher

asks an appropriate other to lead the group. Usually it takes three or four focus groups to ascertain a saturation of ideas. Saturation occurs at the point where no new issues are added into the conversation.

When creating groups it is important to attend to issues of age, power, and experience as failure to consider that can affect group interaction (Madriz, 2003). These conversations occur several times with different people in order for the researchers to identify trends in perceptions and opinions. The questions are predetermined and phrased to facilitate understanding and allow an open-ended response. Usually attention is paid to elicit feelings and definitions as well as descriptions of how the participants arrived at their answers. These trends are revealed through careful, systematic analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). With focus groups, the “trick is to promote the participants’ self-disclosure through the creation of a permissive environment” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 84).

Use of this strategy recognizes the limitations of the individual interview because people sometimes need to hear others’ ideas to recognize their own. A disadvantage can be the lack of control that the researcher has over the process and this can sometimes lead to lost time and energy. Use of focus groups becomes valuable if you want to pilot ideas or gather information about different perspectives. If you want ideas to emerge from conversation, focus groups may work. On the other hand, focus groups might not work to seek consensus or if you hope to educate a group about a particular issue. A standard in good research, the questions or issues you hope to examine should guide choice of method and methodology. This would, of course, be a part of choosing focus groups as a method – does the use of focus groups help you answer your questions or address your research issues? The technical aspect of the focus group method involves the recording of events and careful note-taking. Often if the researcher leads the group, someone else has the role of scribe.

Self-Study Expansions

Focus groups are not often used in S-STTEP methodology because of the focus of self in relation to other. If undertaken, they follow the format described above. Given the relationship aspect of self-study, the lack of familiarity expected in focus groups cannot occur. However, in S-STTEP some researchers do use groups of colleagues or students or others to help them engage in the study of practice. In group work, S-STTEP researchers tend to combine focus group and interview design guidelines. When using focus groups or groups in S-STTEP methodology, the technical aspects remain the same with added attention to self in relation to other.

Additional Readings

References to the use of focus groups or groups in S-STTEP methodology can be found in Freidus, Feldman, Sgouros, and Wiles-Kettenmann (2005), Johnston,

Anderson, and DeMeulle (1998), Martin and Russell (2005) and Squire (1998) as well as many other texts identified as self-study texts.

Case Study

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a case study includes a description of the problem, of the setting and of the situation observed, and of the importance of aspects involved, plus a discussion of the outcomes. Stake (1995) defines a case as a system with boundaries, purpose, and “even having a ‘self’” (p. 2) or central, specific focus. This may be a system that runs smoothly or not, but there is something that about it that seems to make it coherent. In later writing Stake (2003) suggests that a case study can be simple or complex but warns that not everything is a case. He makes a distinction that a case study has a specific focus on the “specific One” (p. 135) where that One is understood within a specific context. The One may be a teacher, a student, or a school, but the focus has a boundedness and a specificity.

Yin (2006) takes these ideas one step further, asserting that the case study method has become routine in educational research. When listing of summary points about case study, he attributes case study with the “ability to examine, in-depth, a ‘case’ within its ‘real-life’ context” (p. 111). He identifies aspects of case study that fit precisely with the aforementioned elements of good research described by Clandinin, Pushor and Orr (2007).

When working on a case study, while almost all data are worthwhile, it should be stressed that the data collected and the conclusions drawn from the data are qualified by the researcher’s role within the research site. Generally speaking, the better the rapport developed and the relevance of the role assumed by the researcher, the greater the understanding of the data gleaned about the participants’ perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). Researchers engaged in case study select roles for themselves in which the participants can come to value and trust them enough to be willing to act as they typically do, share intimate thoughts, and/or answer the questions asked by the researcher (Yin, 2006).

Self-Study Expansions

Here we identify case study as a method or strategy rather than a methodology, because that is how it is most often identified within S-STTEP methodology. Often researchers assert they are doing a case study using self-study methodology. Consequently we place it here in our text. For us, the distinction between traditional qualitative case studies is very slight yet important. Those researchers engaged in S-STTEP methodology center on the self in relation to practice or an *other* whether the case study focuses on an individual, a classroom or a program. The case study, then, focuses on the individual or students who become the focus of the research.

Once researchers decide to use case study as a method or approach (Creswell, 2006), they include research components as suggested earlier in this chapter for S-STTEP methodology.

Additional Readings

We find many examples of case study work within S-STTEP research including Freese (2006), Ham and Davey (2006) and Gordon (2006).

Arts-Based Methods

This broad category serves as an umbrella for many methods used in qualitative and self-study research. In the first section of this category of methods, we talk generally about arts-based methods and their contributions to research. Then, because there are so many possibilities, we select two specific arts-based strategies – collage and found poetry – to address in more detail. We do this because these two strategies appeared recently in S-STTEP related publications. As with other strategies we have discussed in this chapter, we situate this work within general qualitative research and then address the ways that self-study expands upon these strategies. We follow these discussions with suggested readings.

General Discussion of Arts-Based Methods

Art and arts-based research strategies bring a nonlinearity to the sense-making process, often decentering ideas and encouraging a different look at a setting, place, or person (Weber & Mitchell, 2004). When this happens research can facilitate a deeper examination of cultural models that drive individuals and institutions. Viewers and creators of arts-based data must think beyond traditional borders. Often non-verbal, these creations offer alternative views and provide other ways to examine our experience in the world (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999).

Eisner (1997, 2002) views art as a way of knowing that captures imagery within a culture. Others, like Butler-Kisber (2002a), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), and Richardson (2000) view art as a contrast to more modern approaches to methodology. Arts-based strategies have also been recognized as part of postmodern epistemology (Vaughan, 2005) that nudges boundaries around ideas. According to Schwandt (2007), arts-based inquiry, “explores the arts as performance and mode of persuasion, as a means of self-exploration, as a form of pedagogy, and as a mode of representing knowledge” (p. 9). The works of Finley (2005, 2001) bring a reality to Schwandt’s description and highlight the relationship of art and scholarship.

Jones (2003) suggests that art can be a symbolic narrative. Echoing that idea, Abbey (2004) asserts that “words. . .lose their power to represent subtle variations

of meaning” (p. 12) where art can transport the viewer away from routine ideas. Some of the arts-based methods include photography, dance, and music.

Self-Study Expansions

Alternative representation has always been a part of S-STTEP research. From its earliest days researchers involved in S-STTEP have used a variety of strategies based in the arts to represent the tensions of self in relation to other. Whether asking students to represent experience artistically (Richards, 1998) or capturing collaboration in a play (Austin, Gaborik, Keep-Barnes, McCracken, & Smith, 1996; Weber & Mitchell, 2000) or expressing practice through dance (Cole & McIntyre, 1998) researchers engaged in self-study have seen the value in pushing the boundaries of representation. While their actions may be similar to those researchers engaged in general qualitative research methodology using arts-based strategies to collect data, the focus on the tensions of self in relation sets the work of the S-STTEP researcher apart from those engaged in general qualitative research.

Additional Readings

We suggest that turning to the texts written by Childs (2004) and Richards (1998) demonstrate a range of possible uses of arts-based strategies in the work of S-STTEP research.

Collage

Generally, in qualitative research, collage unsettles expected views of culture and perspectives (Weber & Mitchell, 2004) in ways that push against accepted norms. Always symbolic and metaphoric, collage portrays understandings of the world. Although collage has been used to re-present cultural metaphors, it has also been used as a tool to interrogate positivist approaches to research. Identified as a post-modern epistemology (Vaughan, 2005), use of collage can push against ideas. In fact, collage can offer opportunities to broaden traditional ways of knowing (Harding, 1996; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2006, 2008). Furthermore, Davis and Butler-Kisber (1999) assert that collage enhances data analysis and representation when undertaking research.

For Mullen (1999, 2003) the role of artist/researcher requires an active role in cultural critique and critical practice. When using collage the artist/scholar attempts to interrogate cultural notions as they come up against situations seen and observed. To engage in collage work the creator must be open-minded, intuitive (Abbey, 2004; Butler-Kisber, 2002a, 2002b) willing to re-present understandings and actions in the world (Stern, 2004) and ready to interrogate those understandings (McDermott, 2002). More than symbols glued on a surface, collage can instigate dialogue with self and others to consider, perhaps, decenter established ways of seeing.

A collage can be defined as a collection of found images that re-present in some way an idea, an experience and/or a conceptual frame (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2009). There are many ways to construct a collage—creating the metaphoric/symbolic imagery first, then finding the images to properly illustrate ideas, or sorting through images guided more by intuitive than deliberate thought. As this is, at least in part, an artistic endeavor, the creator must discern for her/his self how best to approach the creation. Questions like – what do I hope to express? how does this image help me convey my ideas? – might guide the process.

As a methodological tool, the use of collage can come at any time during a study. Collage could come at the beginning of a study to unearth ideas, biases, and notions that exist within the tacit realm of thinking. As artist/scholars select images, the reflexive nature of good research practice asserts itself. As this happens artist/scholars question beliefs and the premises upon which the study might be based. Each image selected is selected with deliberation. Once completed the collage takes complete form in the writing of the experience: the process and the thinking. At this moment the scholar-self asserts priority over the artist-self weaving the story of the experience and the thinking that has occurred.

Use of collage can also occur during analysis. Of course, in qualitative research the collection-analysis process is cyclical in nature, so distinct boundaries do not exist, but the researcher can deliberately use collage as a tool to push forward thinking as the study has moved into its final stages. Questions about portrayal of evidence in assertions or expansion of ideas over time might be asked at this point.

Self-Study Expansions

In self-study research collage has been used both as a data collection and an analytic tool to prod our thinking. For example, Hamilton and Pinnegar (2006) used collage to re-present their experiences as academics and their survival as teacher educators within the academy. Using triptych and nested creations we interrogated our experiences as we addressed both the structure and the content of our creations. Moreover, we found that our analytic process went beyond reflexive as we felt transformed by the materials and ideas that we used in the construction process.

Most often collage involves a reflexive internal dialogue. During the selection of images the artist/scholar must engage self in a questioning process about why a particular image represents a particular idea. This steady internal conversation calls upon the texts and the people and the experiences from one's life and helps draw out the self that becomes represented in the collage. Whereas many other methods can be done in collaboration of others, collage, until the final writing and sharing, is most often done individually. Collage taps into the inner world or ontological view of the S-STTEP researcher, the artist-scholar. In an effort to portray metaphor and symbolic representations of ideas, the researcher becomes more conscious of those tacit ideas that influence their work.

Additional Readings

We suggest that turning to the texts written by Heaps (2008), Hamilton and Pin-negar (2006), and the Arizona Group (1994) demonstrate a range of possible uses of collage in the work of S-STTEP research.

Found Poetry

In the early 1990s, around the time that S-STTEP emerged onto the research landscape, auto-ethnography in its early forms appeared in the works of Ellis (1991), Bochner (1994), and others. This emergence fits within the historical moments presented by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), spanning the Crisis of Representation (third moment) to the postmodern period (fifth moment) where representation of ideas becomes a key aspect. Into this time came the work of Richardson who, in 1992, sought to push the boundaries of how data and evidence were represented in text. In a chapter on poetic representation, she took as, “subject matter the lived experience of the researcher” (p. 125) and explored ways that self and the other might be seen if she constructed a poem to represent an interview in its completed form. She titled her interview as “Louisa May’s Story of Her Life,” and she described it as “a transcript masquerading as a poem/a poem masquerading as a transcript” (p. 127). In this chapter Richardson brought to life ideas that must have been in the thought worlds of others because so much good work followed. The various works of auto-ethnographers serve as examples, including Bochner (2002), Ellis (2004), and Holman-Jones (2005), where poems are used to push forward the ways we think about people, places, ourselves, and how they connect with ideas.

Found poetry surfaces from the data collected. Rather than a simple action of creation from a poet’s head and heart, the researcher interacts with the words spoken and/or the scenes observed during the study. More importantly though, found poetry is not constructed by the researcher-poet alone. Once the poems are constructed, those words are taken back to the participants involved to insure a co-constructed process. Every research text that uses found poetry speaks specifically about the number of drafts involved and the intimate process of construction. Richardson (1992) then and Holman-Jones (2005) now affirm that an important aspect of found poetry as a method comes in its ability to decenter the self as a knower and constructor of ideas. The participants must look within themselves to insure authentic representation. The researcher must look within her/him self to present the ideas, not tripping over personal or societal stereotypes and biases along the way.

According to Ely (2007), poetry, “allows for maximum input in and between the lines” (p. 575). When using poetry, each word can capture cultural nuances and ideas that may be tacit in nature, requiring the researcher to be vigilant about word selection and insuring that the co-constructed nature of the work must be explicitly expressed and addressed in the study. In poetry, the ummm’s and pauses in an interview (as mentioned in the section on interviews) can be incorporated into the poem, if appropriate.

Creating found poetry occurs during or after the data analysis process. Using computer software or old-fashioned techniques, researchers identify themes and important ideas from the transcripts, notes and other text gathered in the study. Those themes or nodal moments (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001) serve as organizers for the analysis process. If sounds, in the form of audio/video/digital recordings, complement the data gathered they, too, may be drawn into the poetry. Depending on the research study design, the researchers may generate a poem draft from the data, or invite the participants to generate a first draft. What gets presented and what remains a more implicit part of the study becomes a negotiated decision between researchers and participants.

Self-Study Expansions

Poetry and found poetry have been used often in the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices research. Hamilton (1998) and Pinnegar (1998) created poems to represent their experiences as young academics seeking tenure. While these poems described their experiences and came generally from their notes and other data, these creations were experiential rather than *found* themes within the data. True, they were related to the study themes, but the poems were not drawn from their data.

Hopper and Sanford (2008), on the other hand, used found poetry as a method to push on themes that emerged from their work with students in an S-STTEP research project focused on the learning-to-teach process. Making a distinction between poetry and found poetry, Butler-Kisber (2005) suggests that found poetry, “emerges from the data gathered and can be used to unearth the subtexts within a study” (p. 97). Huber and Clandinin (2005) use found poetry as a strategy that quickly captures the essence of multiple interviews and experiences with three children. They are then able to raise wonderings about the children and educational experience that invite the reader into the dilemmas of educating diverse children of poverty. When the researcher uses found poetry to distill the themes and main ideas as poetry, then it allows hidden, more tacit, themes to emerge in data analysis as much from the construction of the poetry as in the distillation of the elements from which it is constructed.

The works of S-STTEP researchers and those researchers from the social sciences who use found poetry have many similarities in their alternative representations and their data analysis strategies. Whether auto-ethnographic, life history, or self-study research, the focus of found poetry can be described as self-in-relation-to-other. Consequently, any differences in the use of the method would come in the theoretical or ontological stance of the researcher.

Additional Readings

We suggest that texts written by Butler-Kisber (2005), Hopper and Sanford (2008), and Leitch (2006) offer examples of the use of found poetry in S-STTEP research.

Technology

In this category of methods we include both computer-assisted technology and use of videotape/audio/digital recording. In each case these elements of technology can enhance the data collection process. As we have done with previous methods, we present each method followed by a short discussion of the ways that S-STTEP methodology expands its usage. In this category we first present computer-assisted technology followed by comments about expansions and recommended readings and then turn to the use of videotape/audio/digital recordings.

Computer-Assisted Technology

Computer-assisted data gathering tools and computer-assisted data analysis software has been a part of qualitative research since the 1980s. As computer capabilities advance so do the technological contributions to research endeavors. The works of Tesch (1990), Johns, Chen, and Hall (2004), Jones (1999), Mann and Stewart (2000), and Markham (1998) are excellent sources for both the data collection and the analytic aspects of qualitative research. Other qualitative research texts, including Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Fielding, Lee, and Blank (2008) address the ways that researchers can enhance their research through technology. Technology has contributed to increased focus on trustworthiness for qualitative researchers.

Qualitative researchers also use aspects of technology and the internet to facilitate the ways they access information. For example, use of blogs, e-mail, websites, and so on has become common research practice in qualitative research. These tools are used to collect assignments, perspectives and other information to capture aspects of the study.

Self-Study Expansions

Since the first text written about S-STTEP methodology, technology has been included as a method to gather evidence of practice. Johnston, Anderson and DeMeulle (1998) established a multiple dimensional environment for themselves in which to communicate about their reflections about their teaching. Others, like Thompson (2004) and Badali (2006) have built on the tools of the internet to capture their own and their students' thinking about teaching. Hoban (2004) makes a distinction between technology as a tool and technology as a social and cultural practice. He offers a detailed examination of those perspectives as they relate to self-study. Here, however, we describe technology as it serves as a research method that enhances self-study methodology as one of the ways self-study researchers access and present teachers' and their own constructions of knowledge. In the form of chat, blog, e-mail, website, and more, technology enhances the use of other methods and/or serves as a tool to facilitate the research process.

Additional Readings

We suggest that turning to the texts written by the Arizona Group (2005), Badali (2006), James (2008), Johnston, Anderson, and DeMeulle (1998), and Murphy, Pinnegar and Pinnegar (2008) demonstrate a range of possible uses of technology in the work of S-STTEP research.

Videotape/Digital Recording

In an attempt to overcome shortcomings in conventional field studies, audiovisual equipment has been utilized since the early 1970s to preserve research experiences in a close to *real time* format. While not equivalent to the real events, use of videotape/digital recording does preserve events in close to their original form (Mehan, 1979; Elderkin-Thompson, & Waitzkin, 1999). Usually researchers' transcriptions of the information on videotapes or digital recording serve as evidence as well as a support in the analysis and interpretation stages of the study. Additionally videotape can serve as an external memory that allows researchers to examine materials extensively and repeatedly, often frame by frame. Of course, videotape/digital recording is one element of data collection not *the* data collection element of a study, but this record can enhance the examination of the data. Consequently, attention to the recording process becomes critical.

A videotaped/digital record provides an exhaustive record that permits careful analysis of what happened. Continuous aspect recording does not emphasize any specific aspects of life. More importantly, some researchers (e.g., Erickson & Wilson, 1982; Erickson, 1992) warn that audiovisual documents of everyday life should be minimally edited because editing affects the analytic and interpretive processes.

Often recording can help clarify the basis for research decisions. Usually the camera is set up in full view of the participants, after receiving appropriate permission, so that camera presence is explicit and becomes a routine part of the activities. Exposing the camera and/or voice recorder limits the amount of settings that can be captured, depending on the focus of research. Further, locating and recognizing speakers in a group session can involve difficult camera maneuvers, while individual voices can go unidentified if the camera is focused on another part of the room. While problems of selective attention in researcher observations and notes are not eliminated, the recording equipment enables researchers to focus on interactive details that might be missed when those tools are not used.

There can be difficulties in transcribing from recorded events because of the disjuncture between what can be seen and what is heard. Participating in the original videotaped session means that the observer can continually add information from her memory of the setting to enhance or alter the impression possible from the transcript. It is difficult to separate the materials presented or analyzed from the remembered experience. Hence the researcher must be vigilant so as to remain trustworthy in the representation of information.

Although audio/video/digital recordings capture the fine details of the setting and allow researchers to return to the recorded scene, the best way to use recordings is

in conjunction with other research methods. In so doing, insights about the setting that might be overlooked because of their subtlety and/or the familiarity of those involved can be uncovered.

The main criterion for a video/digital record is that it contain as complete a record as possible of the continuous sequence of action as it occurs in real time (Erickson & Wilson, 1982; Erickson, 1992; McGrath, 2007). To achieve this Erickson and Wilson (1982) recommend using a wide angle setting that records events from just prior to the event to a time just after the event to document continuous action. They also recommend keeping the camera stationary and mounted on a tripod. Of course, how the researcher proceeds with the use of the camera is predicated on the level of comfort and familiarity with camera, with the setting, and with the individuals involved in the study.

Self-Study Expansions

In self-study methodology, video/audio/digital recordings are often employed, usually to record teaching practice or particular events. In these circumstances the camera centers on the instructor (the self) and records the experience. Some researchers (e.g., Berry, 2007 – video; Brandenburg, 2008 – audio) have recorded class sessions with students to capture all elements – verbal and nonverbal – of the conversation. Others, like the Arizona Group (2004) make recordings (in this case, audio) to document conversation. In S-STTEP methodology, the use of video/audio/digital recording allows the researcher in real time to expose living contradictions. The analysis of the recordings allows the researcher to interrogate self and setting to explore both practice and the knowledge around which the practice emerges. These records can be used as springboards for practice-focused conversations, because when self-study researchers view their practice in action, living contradictions surface.

Additional Readings

We suggest that turning to the texts written by Kroll (2004), Tidwell and Heston (1996), Whitehead (2008) and Zwart, De Heer, Lunenberg, and Korthagen (2008) demonstrate a range of possible uses of video/audio/digital recordings in the work of S-STTEP research.

Making Connections

Research on teaching practice by teachers holds invaluable promise for developing new understandings and producing new knowledge about teaching and learning. Formalizing such study of practice through self-study is imperative . . . The value of self-study depends on the researcher/teacher providing convincing evidence that they know what they claim to know. (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998b, p. 243)

Connections to Consider

S-SSTEP research has the potential to inform, alter and, perhaps, even transform research in applied fields like teaching and teacher education. As this quote reminds us, the potential to reframe research hinges on researchers formalizing their studies, collecting appropriate data, engaging in careful analysis and presenting convincing arguments to document with persuasive evidence. Dialogue is our process in coming-to-know. In this chapter we proposed that the multilayered interactive quality of our research undertaken from our place within a stream of experience will always impact the strategies we use to gain understanding and make sense of our practice.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about what kinds of strategies can be utilized with self-study of practice, research, and how we can guarantee the quality of the evidence we collect. We ask you to ask yourselves:

- What research strategies are most likely to provide opportunities to gain understanding and convincing evidence?
- How can I make certain that I collect the kinds of evidence that will document and promote understanding?
- What would count as evidence of the practice in which I engage?

ACTIVITY

Knowledge In-Of-For Practice

Directions

We include this activity to explore issues related to practice because that is the focus of researchers involved in the work of self-study. Recognize practice in the variety of forms will be helpful in the design of your study.

Individually:

- Read through the definitions list of In-Of-For practice.
- Create your own definitions for these relationships of practice.
- Select one paper from the abstract description and read through it.
- When finished reading, identify, if possible, knowledge in practice, knowledge of practice, and knowledge for practice within the selected text.

With a Colleague:

- How and when do these elements arise, if they do, in the texts?
- What clues did you use to identify the in-of-for in the text?
- What does that tell you about S-STTEP methodology?

Definitions

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, 2004) differentiate three sorts of relationships among inquiry and knowledge and practice. They suggest that each relationship has its own tensions and characteristics. In S-STTEP research recognizing the distinctions among these relationships seems critical.

Knowledge-for-Practice

Often when an inquiry attempts to generate rules or implement some knowledge-for-practice, the focus is on creation of “formal knowledge” or a contribution to the knowledge base. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004), the idea

is that the work of competent practitioners reflects the state of the art – that is, that highly skilled practitioners have deep knowledge of their content areas and of the most effective strategies for implementing that knowledge to solve problems of practice. In much of the literature of research on teaching, it is assumed that formal knowledge is generated through, “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. (Fenstermacher, 1994a, p. 611)

Knowledge-in-Practice

In contrast, when an inquiry hopes to reveal or develop one’s knowledge in the practice of something, the focus is considered to be practical knowledge. Here the work centers on the practice as the practitioner engages in it. For Cochran-Smith and Lytle,

practice is to a great extent an uncertain and spontaneous activity, situated and constructed in response to the particularities of everyday life in schools, classrooms, and the contexts of teacher education programs. What practitioners need to know to teach well under these conditions is acquired through experience and through considered and deliberative reflection about, or inquiry into, professional and personal knowledge and experience. (2004, p. 612)

Knowledge-of-Practice

When engaged in an inquiry of knowledge-of-practice, the teachers or teacher educators develop their own understandings of practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004) suggest

the assumption is not that practitioners are generating a new or supplementary kind of formal knowledge about practice in teaching and teacher education that can be removed from the context of its development and passed around to others. Rather, implicit in the idea of knowledge-of-practice is the assumption that through inquiry, practitioners across the professional life span can make problematic their own knowledge and practice as well as the knowledge and practice of others and thus stand in a different relationship to knowledge and action. (p. 614)

Examples of Knowledge in Practice, Knowledge of Practice, and Knowledge for Practice from readings

Read the short summaries about selections for Castle Proceedings. Select one of the readings to complete. After you have completed your readings, write a quick summary about content of selected text from Castle Proceedings. *Choose one.* You will find your selected reading in Appendix A.

The effect of an inquiry-oriented teacher education program on a faculty member: Critical incidents and my journey – by Clare Kosnik

In this paper, I describe how working in an inquiry-focused teacher education program had an unexpected impact on me. Not all changes were positive and some, while neither positive nor negative, were puzzling and occasionally frustrating. That said, the experience helped me to grow as a professor; it led to insights into working in an inquiry-focused program; and it helped me to develop questions related to innovations in the field.

A balancing act: self-study in valuing the individual student – by Deborah Tidwell

This self-study follows my work with three university students, each involved in a different level and program of study at my university. This self-study examines how “valuing” a student is operationalized in teaching actions and reactions, and chronicles the issues and struggles involved in such a process.

Theater of the oppressed as a self-study process: Understanding ourselves as actors. . . – by Karen Cockrell, Peggy Placier, Suzanne Burgoyne, Sharon Welch, and Can Cockrell

This self-study examines a collaboration designed to engage pre-service teachers in the social reconstructionist approach to multicultural education (Grant & Sleeter, 1994) through Theater of the Oppressed (ToO). We wanted to know if ToO might help us achieve the desired outcomes of a course on teaching for democracy and social justice. We also wanted to understand how our experience with ToO might influence our teaching practices.

Revising the task: The genre of assignment-making – by Diane Holt-Reynolds and Sandy Johnson

In order to better understand the intellectual work we – Sandy and Diane – do as teacher educators, we’ve gathered and examined assignments we’ve drafted, used and revised over almost 15 years of doing teacher education . . . Because we believe assignments are central to our practices and because they act as artifacts representing our own learning across time, we want to explore them as data.

PAUSE

Reconsideration of Frameworks for Inquiry and Analysis

Since our last discussion of the frameworks, we have discussed ontological stance and dialogue as critical issues in self-study of teaching and teacher education practices. We have also looked at research design and data collection along with how we might design research that looks at work in, of, and for practice. That means we have presented a fair number of ideas, and now we PAUSE to integrate those ideas into the Framework-for-Inquiry and the Framework-for-Analysis. At this point we return to the questions and offer more information regarding Mary Lynn’s responses to them. Here we come to that point in all good research where researchers engage in the reconsideration process to examine their design and ideas. We return momentarily to the S-STTEP research process that includes provocation, exploration, refinement, identify focus, design of study, reconsideration process, the ethical action, and presentation to situate ourselves. In the earlier PAUSE, we worked through the process as far as the design of the study. In the next few pages, we focus on the reconsideration process and ethical action. We return in the final PAUSE to presentation.

We include information included earlier – marked as *Beginning*. Below that, within the table, we inserted notes from Mary Lynn’s reconsideration process as an example of how thinking and research progress in the self-study research process. We also embedded the analytic frame within the planner to give a sense of how Mary Lynn progressed analytically as she engaged in her study. We follow the discussion of Mary Lynn’s use of the frameworks with an example of how the analytic frame might be used to examine the work of others.

- (1) **What am I interested in exploring?** What are my living contradictions? What issues do I want to further understand? What do I want to learn about these interests, issues, and concerns?

Beginning

I am interested in exploring my experience as a teacher of the curriculum and the elementary learner class. As a result of reading my student evaluations from my Fall classes, I felt in a quandary about my teaching practice and my ability to bring students into the profession of teaching. The harsh critique of one class took me

up short since I felt the class had been so productive, well organized, and well executed. My students had identified my living contradiction. After dismissing my initial desires to dismiss and discount their comments, I forced myself to consider how best to explore my practice.

Given that I want to prepare the best students possible to reach the unseen children, what could I do to examine my practice? How could I inform myself about ways to improve my practice? How could I improve what needed improvement? To complicate matters, the students in one class offered harsh critique, but the students in the other class offered strong praise. What is a teacher educator to do?

I examined their comments. Unfortunately, most of their comments seemed to center on me as a person rather than any particular teaching strategy or idea. After reviewing their comments and categorizing their comments, the negative ones, the issues seem to focus on issues of organization and usefulness. That is, could I have presented the information differently or could I have presented more useful information? Or could I have done something that created a “need to know” within the students?

Reconsideration

In the reconsideration of this study, about a month after initiating it, I return for the first time to ask myself questions from the analytic frame. I return several times throughout the semester to ponder (not always at great length) those questions, my ideas, and my developing understanding. Each time I return, I focus on improvement of my teaching practice in my classroom. Each time I query myself about contradictions and tacit assumptions within my actions.

Analytic Frame

Purpose: My purpose here is to improve my practice as an instructor of students who want to teach. I also want to align my practice (action) with my beliefs. I plan to situate my understandings of theory next to my understanding of my practice to reveal my living contradictions. I plan to present the study through my own eyes and situate my practice within the classroom context. The purpose of my study is to explore the tensions between my theoretical perspective, my methodological choices, and my pedagogical approach. (See the Chapter 5 fieldnotes section for an example of my fieldnotes.)

Story of self: I notice in my first reconsideration that I seem heavy on the “I” of the study and light on the student input. What about how the students or context of this class differed? Do you want to change things in a vacuum or find out more about them? I ask myself each time, am I reframing issues? Am I engaged in responsive practice? Where are my living contradictions? . . . grappling with issues?

- (2) **How could I explore these concerns and issues?** What contexts might be most fitting? Who are the most appropriate participants – me or my students?

Beginning

Since I believe that my materials are most current, I began to formulate a plan to begin in the Fall. In the spring, I will work with willing students who have taken the class already to discuss possible improvements for the course – in style, in design, and in content. I will open the discussion to all students who have taken the course. My current idea is to focus the course in a narrative direction, encouraging the creation of narratives that will help the students develop a “book of understandings” about curriculum and learning and so on.

The context will be my Fall classes. I will engage my students in the work as well as invite a graduate student to participate with me.

Reconsideration

My design focuses on me and my students. I planned to record my actions with video, collect student work, keep close records on actions, establish critical friends for dialogue, and keep documents, like lessons. I maintained this design except for video. For some reason I am dumbstruck by its presence in class and abandon it as a distraction. Eventually the coursework becomes so time consuming I forget about the element of the data collection process. I do attempt, over time, to amend this by writing detailed notes. The *Book of Understandings* became a semester’s end assignment – and could be defined as a portfolio. I engaged with self and critical others as I engaged in the reconsideration process. Often I asked my critical friends for recommendations and support. I am always (as much as possible) vigilant with regard to my overly idealistic views.

Analytic Frame

Self-study definition: I defined self-study using the works of Hamilton and Pinnegar 1998a and LaBoskey, 2004a. That is self-study is, “a methodology for studying professional practice settings (LaBoskey, 2004a, p. 817; Pinnegar, 1998) and identify its most salient characteristics as ‘self-initiated and focused; . . . improvement-aimed; . . . interactive; . . . [that uses] multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; . . . a validation process based in trustworthiness’ (LaBoskey, 2004a, p. 817). Moreover, I recognize self-study as a methodology with more attention on the stance one takes than on specific strategies involved in the undertaking” (Berry, 2007). As I engage in my study, I attempt to stay steady in the self-study and I think I stay true to these definitions as my work progresses.

(3) **What methods might I use?** What would count as evidence?

Beginning

We will write about our experience; I will write about my experience, and the graduate student, an experienced teacher, will write about her experience . . . watching me and watching the students. The graduate student and I will work together to create an exploration of the course, the teaching, the content, and more. I will also invite the students to write. In other words, the methods will include fieldnotes, observation, ticket-out-of-class activity used at strategic times (after the firsts in class), student/teacher narratives, dialogue, and informal interviews.

Evidence: Plans, journals, dialogue transcripts, student/teacher narratives, interview transcripts, and results of participation form activity.

Reconsideration

In my initial reconsideration, I affirm most of the methods listed. I had the original tapes of events, and as mentioned, I eliminated that strategy because it became too complicated. The ticket-out-of-class became a participation form where students detailed their participation in class that they completed each week. As I returned to reconsider my work, I asked if the data I collected provided evidence for the understandings I started to have about teaching and studenting. I want to insure against my work looking less than rigorous. The participation form seems to work well as a tool to document student participation in class.

Analytic Frame

Self-study methodology: My methodology includes traditional qualitative research strategies like interviews, videos, and observations. Plus, I include detailed journal entries that detail my own experiences. I keep those notes daily, keeping as descriptive a note set as possible.

Research practice: To insure the strength of my research practice, I established a critical friend network to monitor my work. I contact former students, close colleagues, and distant colleagues for a dialogue. I will make my work public via my critical friends and the sharing of writings with colleagues.

Evidence: My evidence comes from the materials and notes and videos collected during the study. (I kept all videos I had at the beginning of class.) I intend to include strong excerpts from data to demonstrate connections between data collected and data analyzed. At my points of reconsideration I question my data collection and data analysis process.

(4) **What work in teacher education research (or other research fields) will guide my inquiry?** What beliefs are embedded in my questions? What values do I embody in my practice and research? How will I hold myself accountable? What do I expect to contribute to the knowledge base?

Beginning

Schwab, constructivist teacher education . . . curriculum theory, stuff about beginners, and so on. Narrative.

Knowledge base: an understanding of the struggles . . . both ends of the spectrum . . . of the learning-to-teach process; role of narrative in constructing a need to know; the use of and development of personal practical knowledge;

Maybe using narrative as a strategy . . . will allow me to test if narrative is a fundamental way to “see” in the learning-to-teach process.

Reconsideration

At the initial reconsideration, I know I need to return to Fenstermacher (1986) and Greene (1995). I also want to return to Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007). While I am not doing narrative inquiry, the scholars in narrative inquiry offer powerful ways to look at text. In my reconsideration process over time I come to believe more strongly in the power of narrative to help student explore their knowledge about teaching.

Analytic Frame

Authority of experience: As I analyze and consider my experience, I connect my assumptions with prior experience along with data collected.

Literature: I situate that information alongside literature from previously completed teacher education research that I continue to complete. Further, I insure that I situate my own practice and ideas within this context. As a researcher, I set my authority as an experienced teacher educator against my experience as a teacher. Sometimes I use my authority of my years of experience to obfuscate the questions about my teaching. Just because I have experience as a teacher doesn’t make me a good teacher, and I must attend to that possible bias.

Ethical action: Most important at this point is the query into my actions and whether or not they are ethical. I believe I have acted with integrity and in a trustworthy manner as I have interacted with my students and my critical friends. I believe I will present my work as true to my experience. While I cannot insure that others will find my work trustworthy, I plan to present my research, my

findings, and my processes in a way that supports readers in the believability of findings.

Story of self: In my reconsiderations I attempt, each time I return to reconsider my study, to insure that I see my self in the midst of the work, but more my self in relation to others than a self that seems center stage to the action. I want my experience to be alongside the practice and my students and so on.

Using the inquiry/analytic frameworks we have presented a practical look at Mary Lynn's study. Looking at the reconsideration of the inquiry process and presentation of the analytic process, we think you can see her progress through her work. In each step of the way, she engaged in reflexive questioning about sufficiency and conspiracies and strategies and more to insure – to the best of her ability – that she related honestly the expectations of her practice. She also used these frameworks as tools to prod her thinking about the data collection and analysis process. In so doing she attempted to make transparent her own ethical action in her research.

One other tool Mary Lynn used was the analytic frame for review of others' work (see Fig. 5.1). The tool served to focus her thinking when examining the works of others to judge whether or not a study was a self-study as well as whether or not the student could push forward her thinking regarding her research. While this framework asks questions that may not serve for the reading of all studies, it works to probe questions relevant to the research process. Here we provide an example of three studies identified by their authors as self-study and present an analysis of them using our framework.

Framework for Analysis – Part Two Example for use to explore the work of other researchers

Authors	Purpose	Definition of self study	Definition of self study methodology	Rigorous Research Practice	Explicit Evidence	Authority of experience	Story of self	Situate in larger literature	Questions raised in study
Gockell, K., Placier, P., Cockrell, D. & Middleton, J. (1999)	To develop ways of categorizing preservice teachers' positions on diversity and multicultural education from forms of "resistance"... (p. 353)	"Our study is located with the growing body of self-studies of teacher educators"	Calling their work self-study, action research frames of McVey and Whitehead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection Questionnaire Position paper Interview Case assignment Focus groups 	Used excerpts from data collected. Not much "talking for the sake of talking" is occurring. Seems very traditional in the presentation of data collected.	Not addressed	Not a part of this piece except as a backdrop for the researcher.	They situated their work in the context of research on teacher education and multicultural education.	Why did they situate this piece within the context of self-study?
Dinkelmann, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006	This piece reports on the questions that guide this study – the emergence of teacher education from classroom teachers	S-STEEP honors the knowledge and understandings teacher educators have about their own practices, and their own practices, and operates under an epistemology that validates the knowledge generated by the practice of teacher education.	Hybrid qual. methodology combining case study and S-STEEP Stake for case study Interpretivist theoretical framework... Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals as by each Did semi-formal interviews (log: field notes) Notes during field observations Artifacts of practices (assignments, observations) Journals 	Used some elements of story within text...but some clear examples seem to be missing.	Todd seems to have a louder voice.	There seems to be on story for the better and is not the voice of the two people who did the self-studies	Situated in larger context of the research and that of a teacher educator	How do we make sense of the work of researchers?
Berry, 2007	Xviii... I focus on the shared teaching and learning, sense of teacher preparation through investigation of the experiences of preservice teachers. I use Bloch's method-class learning about teaching, and myself, their teacher educator, learning to teach about biology teaching. Through a self-study approach (Brown, 1998), the development of my understanding of the importance of the relationship between learning and that of the teacher educator is explored, so that an articulation of my growing knowledge of teacher education practices begins to emerge.	Self-study is an approach to researching teacher education practice that is driven primarily by the experiences of the teacher educator, development of knowledge about practice and the development of research, self-study is the vehicle through which the nature of the relationship between teaching and prospective teachers' learning about teaching is explored and developed. This approach leads to personal and professional growth. (p. 6)	SS as a methodological frame...this research focuses primarily on the development of my self-identity as a teacher educator. (p.21) Uses Prinegar 1998, p. 33. ...self-study as a methodology defines the focus of this study and not the way it is carried out (L&N, 98). Instead, self-study draws on data sources that are appropriate to examining the nature of the relationship that are of concern to teacher educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autobiography 2 semesters of videotape public/private journals field notes interviews conversations (5 purposes for critical conversations...) Brooksfield 2 observations data analysis 	Offered examples of the data described	Defined 14 – the perceived privilege of traditional research knowledge is moderated, as it becomes only one part of the professional knowledge required for understanding practice.	Her study situates her work at the heart of the research with her students as participants in the examination of teaching practice.	Situated her writings in self-study and larger teacher ed lit.	What are the roles of the authority of experience in the authority of the position in the self-study?

Fig. 5.1 Framework-for-Analysis: Part Two-Example of using it to explore the work of others researchers

Chapter 6

Data Analysis and Interpretation in S-STTEP Research

Questions

- *What Is the Relationship of Data Collection and Data Analysis?*
- *What Are Possible Approaches to the Data Analysis Process?*
- *What Are Possible Traditions or Approaches to Data Analysis?*
- *In What Ways Does the Notion of Transparency Fit with Triangulation?*
- *How Does the Authority of Experience Fit into Data Analysis and Interpretation?*
- *In What Ways Might Self-Study Data Analysis Vary from General Qualitative Research Data Analysis?*

What Is the Relationship of Data Collection and Data Analysis?

Data collection–data analysis–data interpretation occur in a recursive process from the onset of a study’s research design. Whether a general qualitative research study or more specifically a self-study, these processes may be difficult to distinguish when in the midst of the work. As a glance at any edition of the *Handbooks of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2005) would substantiate, much has been written about ways to analyze and interpret qualitative research work. However, fewer details exist regarding these processes within S-STTEP research. With this chapter we hope to address this in our discussion of analysis and interpretation in self-study research within the realm of qualitative research.

What Are Possible Approaches to the Data Analysis Process?

Thinking about analysis in qualitative research has evolved as paradigms have shifted from modern to postmodern. Whereas researchers with a modern view formerly attended to understanding something with a desire to express that understanding in their analysis, the multifaceted reality of the postmodern view complicated approaches and perspectives taken in the analytic process. We can define the term

analysis as a process of breaking down something with a desire to make sense of it. In its most simple sense, that is what researchers do; they break down the data collected to build meaning from what they find. According to Schwandt (2007), to analyze is to break down and then reassemble the data collected in ways that help readers understand what the researchers thought they saw. We might say that researchers deconstruct data to reconstruct them in ways that make meaning from what we think we see and what others seem to say.

While issues of integrity and trustworthiness certainly are a part of this process, we address those issues in more detail in the next chapter. Here we describe qualitative data analysis as generally involving the organization, classification, and categorization along with a search for patterns and a synthesis of patterns in the recursive research process. As researchers progress, determining missing information may extend exploration in the study. Making meaning from findings develops as each piece of information is gathered. This iterative activity occurs from data collection to a study's conclusion.

Creswell (2006) suggests a spiral pattern to the collection–analysis–interpretation process. In each moment of the spiral, the researchers look to identify next steps. Marshall and Rossman (2006) recommend a more linear set of phases to follow. Most importantly, a researcher's ontological stance drives decisions about approaches to analysis and interpretation. While grounding research theoretically is important, the choice about analysis and interpretation depend on the researcher's stance.

What Are Possible Traditions or Approaches to Data Analysis?

And there are many choices from which to select. For example, Ryan and Bernard (2000) suggest that there are two traditions in analysis. There is the linguistic tradition that treats text as an object of analysis, where the researcher uses the word as a unit of analysis, and the sociological tradition that sees text as a window to human experience where the systematic elicitation (e.g., interview) or freeflow (e.g., journals) of texts is analyzed. They suggest that in either tradition, analysis involves sampling of texts, coding, finding themes, and building contextual models. The steps followed to do this depends on the tradition followed.

Ryan and Bernard (2000) suggest that when coding, the researcher must make sense of/make judgments about blocks of information. To begin, the researcher identifies and selects the units of analysis from the data (e.g., from observations, interviews, and journals) as a beginning to the analysis process. Then, as they read through this selected work, the researchers find themes by looking at metaphors, concepts, and/or repetitions of words, dependent on the tradition followed.

To build conceptual models, researchers identify themes, and then use documentation of the occurrence and interrelationships among the themes that are explicit and implicit in the data to develop models. If using grounded theory, the researchers base their understandings of the studied world in relation to the understandings of

others in the context. This iterative process is grounded in the collected data where they look carefully at the texts to uncover how the phenomenon being studied really works. Using an inductive process, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that once themes have been identified, researchers move toward the development of possible conceptual models. Again, how researchers make choices here depends on their theoretical frame – it might be grounded theory or schema analysis or something else.

Along with suggestions for data analysis and interpretation from Ryan and Bernard, other possible choices include the following: Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2002), who suggest a naturalistic approach to analysis; Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz (2005), and Strauss and Corbin (1990), who all take a grounded theory approach (each recommending a different view); Spradley (1980), who suggests a cultural approach situated in language; and Mishler (1990), who suggests an exemplar approach to analysis. Each offers a way among many to think about these approaches. Key to this choice is matching the question to the ontological stance to the data collection–analysis–interpretation processes.

The recursive nature of data collection–analysis–interpretation enlivens the research process and pushes toward the evolution of ideas to uncover possible insights and oversights. Moreover, this process generates questions and points to new directions as well as inspires continued reading by researchers in related literature to shape ideas over time. Completion of the data-gathering portion of the work brings the organization of completed transcripts, fieldnotes, and other collected materials into manageable units to be examined for conceivable patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Generally the analysis involves:

- the labeling of the parts of materials that contain pertinent information,
- coding those parts, and
- categorizing those portions grounded in the data and the language of the study participants.

This is done in an attempt to identify the recurring patterns of data, and how it is done depends on the researcher's choice.

Beyond general suggestions and the suggestions of Ryan and Bernard briefly addressed earlier, there are many other possibilities. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2002) present a naturalistic approach that addresses dimensions of data analysis, including strategies that encourage a careful examination of data and ways to construct analyses. These dimensions include deductive/inductive, verification/generation, and enumeration/construction analysis, and objective/subjective aspects of thinking about analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) support the creation of theory from data. They suggest that researchers must engage in continuous data analysis, so that every new aspect of their research considers what has been previously learned.

Those researchers interested in grounded theory might turn to the works of Glaser and Strauss (1967) or Charmaz (2005) or Strauss and Corbin (1990) who suggest ways to generate theory from data collected. Each researcher/set of researchers suggests ways to move inductively to develop tentative theories that modify and expand

as researchers sift through their data. In a constant-comparative strategy, data are examined and analyzed for patterns and categories, building a pattern of relationships that evolves into the formation and refinement of theory. The generation of theory emerges from the data.

Spradley (1979, 1980) offers an alternative to grounded theory and naturalistic inquiry, with a look to language and culture. His approach to analysis addresses domain, taxonomic, componential, and thematic analyses that fit together to explore cultural scenes. For Spradley a cultural theme is any principle that recurs in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serves as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meanings. Most cultural themes are tacit.

Mishler (1990) calls for the use of exemplars as a way to construct and consider trustworthiness of researchers. As LaBoskey (2004a, p. 852) points out, Mishler avoids rules or criteria and promotes the collection of exemplars that strengthen our understanding of practices as the exemplars connect to ideas and to each other. LaBoskey (2004a) asserts that attention to this will “advance our understanding and practice of teacher education” (p. 853).

The point of Mishler’s work should not be overshadowed by the ways he attempts to respond to those with a focus on scientific inquiry. While some might advocate a rejection of modern terms or suggest we no longer need to take a defensive stance with regard to our research, putting aside Mishler’s work for that reason might lead researchers to miss important considerations. Rather, we find that Mishler’s ideas encourage researchers to “move towards this goal, those of us engaged in inquiry-guided and interpretive forms of research have the task of articulating and clarifying the features and methods of our studies” (p. 423). This move toward exemplars – which the S-STTEP community has done with its loosely connected/collected works thus far in our Castle proceedings and related works – seems fitting.

Mishler sees the “visibility of the work” (p. 429) through explicit examples of and discussions about data – observation and/or interviews – as critical to the creation of exemplars. This is where the researchers develop their trustworthiness in the ways, since readers/community members can *see* the study and the links and leaps made by the researchers. More importantly, readers must be able to see the excerpts *and* understand the perspectives taken by the researchers in the study. Hence, excerpts plus literature plus data must be connected. We are not attempting nor do we desire to adopt a principle of generalizability that allows our work to be exported to any context. Indeed, we recognize that our work is situated in particular places and times. However, we expect that in constructing exemplars S-STTEP researchers develop insights and descriptive actions that can be used as tools for thinking and acting with adjustment by others to their situations and contexts. In developing exemplars, we add contextualized knowledge of practice to understandings of it. In doing so, we require our work to provide an accurate account of our practice as well as clear, insightful, and appropriate connections to the broader literature base.

Each of the authors referenced above provides an alternative in qualitative research for analysis. There are more still. One key point to remember here is that your stance affects your choices about analytic processes and how you

operationalize them. Thus, S-STTEP researchers seek data analysis techniques that allow them to capture accurate accounts of their practice and the ways in which their actions transform it. Another key point is that analytic tools must enable the researchers to carefully look at, consider, and reconcile the data collected.

Particularly important to the research of those engaged in self-study is the vigilance given to the analysis process with attention to rigor. This means that whichever analytic processes are used, the choice and process should be transparent.

More detail about general data analysis can be found about how to enact data analysis in qualitative research methodology texts like Creswell (2006, particularly pp. 156–157) and Marshall and Rossman (2006, particularly pp. 151–176). Creswell, for example, offers a plan for analysis and representation that includes descriptions of data managing, memoing, classification, interpretation and representation. Marshall and Rossman write that the “process of beginning order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating” (p. 154). They offer seven phases for analysis, including organizing the data, immersing in the data, generating categories and themes, coding the data, offering interpretations through analytic memos, searching for alternative understandings, and writing the report (p. 156).

Interpretation has fundamentally to do with taking an ontological stance which is made transparent by the theoretical frame used to interpret data. Schwandt (2007) suggests that interpretation can be clarifying and explicating, so that contributing to the broadening of ideas or interpretation can also lead researchers to focus on an interpretation that is more narrow and more targeted on understanding. Interpretation has much to do with the researcher’s world view, walking the lines between stated perspectives and living contradictions. An interpretation offers a layered account (Ronai, 1992) of the study. Clearly, there is no one path to or through data analysis or interpretation, but we encourage staying true to your theoretical framework and being explicit about what you do and how it fits in the broader literature and understanding of the research undertaken.

In What Ways Does the Notion of Transparency Fit with Triangulation?

Early in qualitative research, attention to transparency had many names. Researchers defined triangulation as a variety of data collection procedures used in a study with the desire to eliminate bias (Mathison, 1988) by supporting, “a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or at least, don’t contradict it” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 235). In fact, Miles and Huberman (1984) suggested that “... triangulation is a state of mind. If you self-consciously set out to collect and double-check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the verification process will largely be built into the data gathering process, and little more need be done than to report on one’s procedures” (p. 235).

Each triangulated action strengthens the credibility of the findings of a study and the research. Researchers connect ideas with evidence in ways that eliminate questions about their work. To that end, Denzin (1978, pp. 294–307) identified three types of triangulation: data, investigator, and methodological. Mathison (1988), who pushed on these definitions by expressing her concerns with Denzin's and others' definitions of triangulation, asserted that triangulation provided rich pictures of studies, and suggested that no singular view of what was observed could be used in a study. Simply put, researchers wanted to present clear moments in the lives and settings they observed in ways that seemed authentic.

In the 21st century, triangulation evolved into crystallization (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Using crystallization as a metaphor, some, like Richardson (2000), suggest that any given approach to studying the social world has many facets and that moving beyond the triangle (triangulation) to the crystal "combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionality, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change and alter, but are not amorphous" (Richardson, 2000, p. 934). Approaching qualitative research from the perspective of crystallization adds complex, intricate, and deep, although partial, understanding of the research focus (Richardson, 2000, p. 934).

Whatever term used, the point is to critically consider the questions asked and the strategies used in data gathering, examining the interpretations that emerge from analysis from as many angles and perspectives as possible. Here researchers must interrogate with alacrity the bias they bring – looking under and around the lives they think they lead for disconfirming evidence. Using crystallization as a metaphoric guide, living contradictions, notions of marginalization, and false consciousness can be made explicit and researchers should demonstrate that such attempts have been undertaken. This image of a crystal growing can be lived on paper by using our Framework-for-Analysis addressed in earlier PAUSES within this text. Questions in that framework can expand a researcher's thinking.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, here is where the *Third Space* fits as a place where, as researchers, we see "a space between public and private spheres, secular and religious duties, male and female roles, and between socioeconomic locations among the classes" (Walter, 2002, p. 15). Within this space, questions arise as we analyze our data as S-STTEP researchers. Dualities become barriers to understanding the contents of our collected data. In this third space, as the crystals of data form and grow, we question ourselves and what we think we see. Recognizing our subjective view does not mean we must relinquish it. Rather, that realization requires us to be vigilant in our questions and representation of it. Bhadha (1994) advocates the opening of the "welds of modernity" (Bhadha, 1994, p. 238) that capture us as researchers because no single perspective exists (Kanu, 2003). In this space we challenge modernist understandings to trouble the categories (Lather, 2001), question meaning, and negotiate identity (English, 2002).

How Does the Authority of Experience Fit into Data Analysis and Interpretation?

In this space we can also raise questions about the authority of experience. As researchers whose work has been questioned or doubted or discounted, we want to recognize the power of the authority of experience. Pinnegar (1998) asserts that S-STTEP researchers “always present evidence of meaning and relationship among phenomenon from the authority of their own experience and as a warrant for knowing” (p. 32). We understand practice, we do good research – and we bring that experience to bear on the work we do. As Munby and Russell (1994) assert, the authority of experience emanates from the “knowledge that resides in action” (p. 92). Here they distinguish between authority of experience, position, and reason. Authority of position comes from the rank or standing of the position held – so a teacher or an academic or a scientist might be a position that has authority or doesn’t. The authority of reason describes the power of the argument and the evidence offered. For Munby and Russell too often the authority of experience around the thinking and action in the work of teaching gets discounted. Berry (2007) suggests that authority of experience captures “the status of knowledge derived through personal experience, compared with other, traditional forms of authority such as the ‘authority of position’ or the ‘authority of scholarly argument’ ” (p. 12).

In her work, Brandenburg (2008) focuses on the development of the authority of experience as she examines the ways that she and her students examine their collective learning in the development of their authority of experience as co-learners (p. 127). For Brandenburg, as her students gained experience and developed their comfort with it, their authority of experience grew. In turn, she realized that her authority of position affected the ways that students listened to her and worked with her.

We advocate the recognition of the authority of experience as we illustrate with our inclusion of a question about it in the Framework-for-Analysis. However, in the third space the authority of experience can be challenged (Hamilton, 2004). In her writings, hooks (1994) explores the relation of essentialism and experience, where the one may be asked (or implicitly expected) to represent the many. She critiques the ways experience might silence others with less experience. Yet she writes,

I am troubled by the term “authority of experience,” acutely aware of the way it is used to silence and exclude. Yet I want to have a phrase that affirms the specialness of those ways of knowing rooted in experience. I know that experience can be a way to know and can inform how we know what we know. (p. 90)

As she questions her position as a black professor teaching a college-level black history class, hooks recognizes, “to me this privileged standpoint does not emerge from the ‘authority of experience’ but rather from the passion of experience, the passion of remembrance” (p. 90). The use of the term authority seems at question here. As teacher educators, as self-study scholars, we cannot easily discount our use of the term authority of experience, nor is that our purpose here. Furthermore, it

is not our purpose here to take issue with hooks' perspective. Instead, looking at hooks' work in relation to our own can provide a third space to consider alternative views.

Subjectivity in S-STTEP research rests in part on who take responsibility for their own subjectivity and in part on readers who read and respond to the work. In some ways, it is the reader who decides about the quality of the evidence gathering and the value of the work. The self-study scholar can do good work, present good information in a reasonable way, and offer a compelling interpretation, but the reader decides whether to accept it. That is the nature of self-study research; it is more than practice and more than thinking about practice.

The insistence of S-STTEP researchers that collaboration and interaction are essential features rests not just in the understanding that engaging others will help us more accurately develop and uncover the practice in which we participate, but also on our understanding that dialogue is the process of coming-to-know that underlies S-STTEP research. As we engage in research design, data collection, and analysis we consistently seek the voice of the other both in real people and in the research literature we read. We do this because we recognize that engaging in dialogue across every aspect of our studies will lead to the development of rigorous understandings and trustworthy representations. Since we recognize that we focus on ontology as the foundation of our work, we also understand that we will develop more coherent, rigorous, and trustworthy accounts if we understand, attend to, and use dialogue as our process for knowing.

In What Ways Might Self-Study Data Analysis Vary from General Qualitative Research Data Analysis?

Thus far we have focused on data analysis and interpretation in general qualitative research. Now we turn toward qualitative research with a question – how does analysis in S-STTEP vary from analysis in general qualitative research? As self-study is a genre of qualitative research, there are necessary similarities in the data analysis process of general qualitative research and self-study. The key distinction is the focus on the practice and the self in relation to other and how that relation is positioned in the study. Additionally S-STTEP researchers recognize that their ontological stance guides their analytic decisions and their interpretation. For the best results in the process of analysis and interpretation, we recommend the use of our Framework-for-Analysis along with whatever analysis and interpretation strategies particular S-STTEP researchers prefer. The questions in the framework about the authority of experience, the story of self, and explicit evidence help self-study researchers think about the research in which they are engaged. Asking these questions as a guide for thinking about the analyses of collected data will enhance the analysis.

As S-STTEP researchers we take an ontological stance – we seek to understand and improve practice. We are also determined to produce authentic, rigorous, and

trustworthy accounts of situations that are problematic, troubling, and curious. As a result, we need to attend carefully to the accounts of practice we capture. Our design should make certain that voices from the self and the other are both present in the data and that we have identified ways in which we will engage others to provide alternative interpretations and multiple perspectives. Participants, collaborators, and voices from the field should be utilized to constantly challenge the personal interpretations we construct. Such attention will allow us to use exemplar-based validation (LaBoskey, 2004a) as a tool for establishing the credibility of our findings.

Choices about the data analysis process depend on our personal ontological stand and our background in general qualitative research. Familiarity with any number of good qualitative research methodologies and approaches would influence choices about analysis. Although there is no one right way to do data analysis when doing S-TTEP research, there are certain issues that must be addressed and considered.

Dialogue is an important facet of analysis in S-STTEP research. Whether engaged in formal collaborative S-STTEP research or working with critical others to support an individual S-STTEP, dialogue is part of the work. Even when S-STTEP researchers, because their environments limit access, have only themselves as a critical other, dialogues holds a central role in the analysis process.

As described in Chapter 4, dialogue is the process that underlies our coming-to-know process in S-STTEP research. When ideas enter into conversation the dialogue includes reflection, reframe, analysis, and critique. We assert that the relational aspect of the dialogue process depends on community. In S-STTEP this dialogue occurs within a larger community in the ways we bring our work forward and publicly examine ideas. The relationship aspects require of the S-STTEP community openness, respect, and care.

In the dialogue – internal and/or with colleagues – tensions regarding agreement, negotiation, and comparison exist and move researchers through their analytic process. Questioning our Framework-for-Analysis can foster dialogue. We must also keep in mind the suggestions of Dalmau and Gudjónsdóttir (2002):

We are interested in the flow between the local, the practice and reflexive dialogue. Knowledge is tested at two levels, both the rigorous demands of practice and the questions from the broader field work together . . . that keeps knowledge alive and growing rather than stagnant and repetitive. (p. 117)

While we assert the importance of dialogue in the analytic process, we believe that the exact steps taken by the researcher in this process depends on the background and interest of the researcher. For us the exact steps are secondary to the commitment for dialogue and the transparency of the work. In this process we must turn to questions related to social justice as well as related questions of how we do what we do and why. Readers and community members must be able to see the progression of our ideas, the support provided by the data and the processes we employed to establish trustworthiness.

Our interpretation follows/simultaneously develops in the data collection–data analysis–data interpretation spiral. If we connect a piece of data with an assertion in analysis, the reader should be able to see in the presented interpretation how

the researcher arrived at that point. The significant difference between the general qualitative research and the self-study approach to data analysis and interpretation centers on the self in relation to other. As S-STTEP researchers we complicate the self and situate the self in relation to the other. As S-STTEP researchers we expand upon general qualitative researcher practice in data collection; we also extend that into analysis–interpretation. Here dialogue extends through the iterative collection–analysis–interpretation process.

In the third space, questions of authenticity, validity, and trustworthiness collide. While we address these questions in more detail in the next chapter, the question of what makes a researcher trustworthy turns toward the authority of experience and evidence represented in the analytic and interpretive processes. Consequently, in S-STTEP research, careful attention to the analytic process must be paid. That means that when colleagues peripheral to the S-STTEP community read S-STTEP research, they must be able to see the ways in which the researcher moves from data collection to data analysis to data interpretation and back again and make the link between that collection–analysis–interpretation process. Using the data analysis processes offered by general qualitative research works here, and the presentation of findings must visibly exhibit those connections. Use of the Framework-for-Analysis also supports this process.

Making Connections

If I can return to the quilter metaphor once again, consider a room filled with materials, threads, colours, and ideas. As a quilter, I select how I will use those items and where I will use them. Importantly, though my quilting teachers, my friends, my comrades, have affected my understanding of my art and my skill. They have influenced me at a very deep level – I could not be creating my quilt without them! If they had not been here to help me develop, I would not be working on this particular quilt. I would not be teaching how and what and why I am teaching without the influence and the effect of those teachers, and colleagues and comrades. (Arizona Group, 1995, p. 52)

Connections to Consider

Constructing a quilt has much in common with developing an insightful analysis of data. When we view a beautiful quilt, we are constantly aware of the tension between the beauty of the whole and the unique, particular, idiosyncratic, individual elements of the quilt. Insightful research findings juxtapose understandings and themes against the examples and details from the data that represent them. What this quote highlights is how doing research centered in dialogue as a process of knowing includes collaboration with present and absent others. In this chapter we suggested that these others guide, disrupt, interrogate, and confirm our interpretations, and this collaboration requires a willingness to continually question our actions.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about how S-SSTEP researchers can deepen their data analysis by introducing dialogue as a way of knowing. We ask you to ask yourselves:

- What interpretation of this data have I overlooked?
- How do the disparate findings coalesce into holistic themes and patterns?
- How might others interrogate, deny, or support my findings?
- How do the data provide evidence of the insights reported?

Chapter 7

Developing Value for S-STTEP Research by Establishing Trustworthiness and Being Trustworthy

Questions

- *What Does It Mean to Be and Become an S-STTEP Researcher?*
- *What Are the Roles of Integrity and Trustworthiness Within This Form of Research?*
- *What Does the Community of S-STTEP Researchers Value, and Why Does This Work Have Value?*

One of the enduring questions for qualitative researchers has to do with establishing their research accounts as trustworthy and rigorous scholarship. This presents unique challenges for S-STTEP researchers since for us the issue is not just establishing trustworthiness but also being trustworthy – in our practice and in our research on it. This is not to argue that other qualitative researchers are not trustworthy or that they do not act with integrity. Instead, the point is that since our practice is our research and our research is our practice, acting with integrity and establishing ourselves as trustworthy is necessary for us both in our practice and in our research accounts of it. This chapter explores this dilemma and the issues around establishing trustworthiness and acting in ethical ways within the research and the practice that emerges in this kind of research.

What Does It Mean to Be and Become an S-STTEP Researcher?

From the beginning, S-STTEP researchers have worked to create a community where people are cared for and caring. When people participate in our research sessions at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association, attend our business meetings, or join us at the biennial conference at Herstmonceux, they usually (but not always) comment on the caring we express toward others and the ways in which they feel welcome and welcomed by the community (see Allender & Allender, 2008). Mary Manke speaks of how we have “SIGly” ways of doing things. By this she refers to unwritten rules for response and interaction in the group: commentary on the work of others should be characterized as honest,

genuine, and caring; activities should be more inclusive than exclusive; participants should feel welcome and accepted; and every voice should not only be raised but listened to (personal communication, Manke, August 2008). Allender and Allender (2008), in their discussion of becoming humanist teachers, provide narratives of their experiences within this community that captures these qualities.

In this community, we care about the scholarship of our colleagues as much as we care about our own scholarship. The publication patterns of the community reveal a commitment to finding ways not only for our individual voices and our personal research to enter into the public discourse, but also for the work and voices of colleagues within the community (e.g., the creation of a journal outlet for this kind of research account, *Studying Teacher Education* by John Loughran and Tom Russell in 2005).

As S-STTEP researchers, we have high expectations for ourselves as inquirers. The simple phrase, we study our practice in order to improve it, masks the deep humility and integrity demanded of these researchers. These self-study researchers attempt to act on their beliefs in their practice, create a public record of that attempt, and carefully analyze the record in order to think differently, reframe understanding, and change practice and present their assertions for action and understanding, based on the evidence drawn from the tensions, successes, and/or issues within their practice in a forum of public critique.

In presenting the assertions for understanding and action from our research, we often find ourselves revealing understandings about ourselves and our actions that we might rather have kept secret. Our favorite example is the headings “Fiasco #1” and “Fiasco #2” in one of the early published self-studies (Placier, 1995). The fiascos are the actions she took in her practice and from which the author learned about teaching for social justice and enacting democratic practices in university classrooms. In retrospect, given her students’ possibly predictable responses, she realized that perhaps her actions were stumbling and naive (Placier, 1995). Yet to present her understandings so that they have credibility and authenticity, the design of the study required revealing that action. In one of Stefinee’s studies of the tenure process, *Wise as a Serpent and Tender as a Dove* (1995b), she reveals that like her older colleagues’ unkindness to her, she too had been unkind. She provides this revelation, not as an inappropriate confession, but to support the articulation of her understanding of the role of humility in being part of a faculty of teacher education. Alan Feldman (2006) reveals similar experiences:

Part of my struggle at UMass is to develop a cohort of preservice science teachers working together. I struggle with my colleagues over such issues. We are like one dysfunctional family . . . [Prof. X] is clear about how he wants to have things done and he kills the ideas of others . . . My interaction with my colleagues is problematic. I dread STEP faculty meetings (p.39).

Feldman (2005) presents this quote from an interview he conducted with himself to provide evidence of the ways in which he used data from his understandings of a situation in order to explore how his existentialism could be a lens for understanding development as teacher educators. It is not that S-STTEP research requires negative or humiliating examples, but simply that as we explore our experience in order to

better understand it, as good researchers we require ourselves to provide evidence that supports our assertions for action and understanding. Sometimes this evidence does not offer a flattering portrait of us. This is particularly true when our studies focus on an exploration of an attempt to change practice or on a living contradiction. (See first PAUSE, p. 38).

Jeff Northfield (personal communication, 1995) often said of his account of his study of his own practices in returning to a public school classroom (Loughran & Northfield, 1996) that he thought he was a better teacher than the account revealed, but in order to explore the themes he valued and the situations from which he learned the most, he reported more of his failures than his successes. It is not that S-STTEP researchers must make confessions about themselves as poor practitioners, but merely that as good researchers studying themselves they must be willing to honestly account for and provide descriptions of situations that provide the strongest evidence for an effort to act on their beliefs or of a living contradiction that they study. Indeed, to establish trustworthiness, S-STTEP researchers need to provide the examples, details, and illustrations that interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions and push forward the understanding in the field regardless of how such accounts may make them appear as human beings.

S-STTEP is not a form of research that can be taken up with laughter and ease. It requires careful, consistent, and honest accounting of experiences. It requires that we question within the third space between who we are, who we think we are, and who we might hope to be. It asks us to invite others both as collaborators and as readers into explorations of our practice when we may appear less than we would like and in situations where we are working toward refining our practice. Appiah (2008), in discussing situational ethics, argues that consistently exhibiting a trait like integrity is hard work and a constant process of questioning our behavior and demanding more of ourselves. These are not just in moments when pleasant experiences, good food, and pleasant sounds seduce us into acting more kindly or more honestly than we might on other occasions, but in mundane and difficult situations as well. When we engage in S-STTEP research, we continually question our thinking, beliefs, and assumptions and the ways they connect to our action. We continually question the relationships we develop within our practice, looking first to ourselves and our own behavior as we attempt to grapple with situations that end up being problematic or when things turn out less than we had hoped. We make public much of what other researchers keep private or present as the experience and action of some unspecified person.

What Are the Roles of Integrity and Trustworthiness Within This Form of Research?

While not all self-studies emerge from living contradictions, S-STTEP research grows up in the space where our identity and integrity come together. These are dangerous places to explore. While they are potentially the most productive spaces for

gaining insight and understanding in ways that might answer the “so what” questions that make research valuable, they are also the spaces about which we care deeply. Parker Palmer (2004) suggests that in order to develop deeper understanding of ourselves, we should seek out those points where our identity and integrity coalesce; however, embracing these sites as self-studies has the potential to reveal to us disruptions in those spaces, gaps, or fissures. If we embrace these points of insight and try to construct more of them in our practice (building exemplars suggested by Mishler as addressed in Chapter 6), we open ourselves to the possibility of revealing our cover stories (Olson & Craig, 2005). When we embrace these sites of practice as sites for S-STTEP research, what we discover may be powerful, but it may also be difficult to share our understandings with other researchers. We need to reveal the experiences that resulted in our development of understanding – but not provide inappropriate confession.

In *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (1998) argues that the experiences in teaching that are most sustaining for teachers are those moments when our identity and integrity are simultaneously present. As S-STTEP researchers we seek to understand these moments. But in doing this we often explore moments when both our identity and our integrity in our practice could be questioned. As Feldman (2006) suggested, we attempt to stand in a place of being (how we are) and study ourselves as we become different, often conducting our final account from a space of having become different (which he labels “becoming”). Thus, our research is usually conducted in the space that Bakhtin (1981) labels the zone of maximal contact – the moment when past, present, and future are in greatest contact with each other. This is a zone of inconclusivity. Study in this uncertain inconclusive space changes our understanding and thus our experience of our past, and alters the trajectory and experiences in the future as well as in the present moment in which we stand. Methods for conducting narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) require researchers to place narratives they are analyzing in such a space. They label this space the three-dimensional narrative space. Within this space, researchers interrogate an account of their experience by looking inward (to the personal) or outward (to the social) and moving it backward (into the past) and forward (through the present into the future) while attending carefully to place. Most educational researchers are highly aware of the impact of context and its importance to educational research. As S-STTEP researchers we often attempt to simultaneously study our context and our processes in the midst of our experience. This means that as we conduct our studies, we attempt to collect data that will make visible our ontology – the context we stand in and the explicit and implicit processes embedded in our practice.

S-STTEP researchers understand that our research can be characterized as highly subjective, since most of our research is conducted in the midst and seeks to understand spaces between. We conduct research on our practice in the midst of experience. While we engage in such a research, we are exploring that space between the self and the others in practice in the midst of our construction of practice in order to understand and/or improve. If we seek to understand, we are often looking not only to our thoughts present in our mind but also to the understanding that resides in our actions themselves or our body knowledge, and if we seek to improve, we are

also studying our practice as we seek to change and alter it. In our study, S-STTEP researchers seek to make clear how process and context constrain each other and our practices. We use dialogue (see Chapter 4) as the process that makes visible our knowing about context and process. Our collaborators in dialogue allow us to make visible hidden elements in our practice and their connection to and influence on our practice.

Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) argue that self-study is conducted in the space between biography and history, since the research attempts to articulate the understanding of specific practices in specific context in the lives of specific people and links those understandings to the larger conversation of research in the social or human sciences. As this discussion implies, S-STTEP researchers make assertions for action and understanding about their practice from a position that traditional research paradigms would label hopelessly subjective. This is the research space identified by Putnam (2004) as the third enlightenment. As S-STTEP researchers who are fundamentally interested in and committed to unveiling and improving the space of practice, we often wish to find a way to assert the validity of the claims we make about this space. We feel that whenever we assert a right to claim *validity*, we in some way demean the fundamental power and generativity of the research we conduct since the term validity has come to mean that research claims asserted rest on and draw power from foundational criteria for knowing shored up by inferential statistics and rules of probability: claims for validity rely on objectivity, reliability, and generalizability. As S-STTEP researchers we do not embrace these conceptions as the highest form of knowing and being, and we recognize that their assertion immediately inserts a space between us and the quandaries and questions and knowledge we actually value and pursue.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Munby and Russell (1994) introduced three concepts of authority upon which practitioners might potentially establish claims to knowing as teachers: authority of position, authority of reason, and authority of experience, and then continued by arguing for the power of the concept of the authority of experience as a position from which teachers actually make claims about practice since it contains the other two. Pre-service teachers are poised to move from being subject to their own teachers' authority of position to taking charge and, as student-turned teachers, assuming the authority of position over those they teach.

Unfortunately, preoccupation with the authority of reason and of position can cause academics, teachers, and students to ignore a type of authority lying at the heart of action and performance: the authority of experience. Emphasizing the contrast between school knowledge and action knowledge (Barnes, 1976) marks how the experience of school can conceal the differences between the authority of reason and other forms of authority. Munby and Russell (1994) label validity practices from more traditional research as the authority of reason which they contrast with the authority of experience. In this discussion, they argue that the authority of experience lies at the heart of the action and performance that constitute knowing about practice. Further, they suggest that attention to this authority of experience blinds teachers to the ways in which the authority of reason, upon which the knowledge about teaching that they learned in their content courses at their university is based,

hides from their view the authority of their experience, which underlies their knowledge and action in teaching practice.

Fenstermacher (1994), in exploring the relationship between the kinds of claims that traditional research makes and the claims of research conducted within practice from the subjective perspective of those engaged in the practice, asserts that more traditional research findings are warrantable, and thus he believes they have more power. This is because these claims stand on an authority of reason. Toulmin (2001) argues that such claims are centrally concerned with being rational rather than irrational. He argues further that the over-commitment to the rational in social science research has led to an abandonment of the concept of *reasonableness* and its paired concern with not being *unreasonable*. Through the use of dialogue as a process of knowing, a careful attention to ontology, and a focus on articulating the research process and the ways in which the findings of a study were established, S-STTEP researchers can establish reasonableness. As Toulmin suggests, it is somewhat weird to seek to establish a claim to rationality since being without rationality or being irrational is a sign of mental illness. Whereas in seeking to establish reasonableness, we seek to avoid arguments that are without reason or that are unreasonable.

Since S-STTEP researchers see their work as developing *living educational theory* – theory that lives because it changes and grows as our experience deepens and our practices change and because that growth becomes evident in our practice – therefore as Whitehead (2008) suggests, this *living theory* is established in part through standards of *living logic*. Munby and Russell (1994) argue that we establish our research on the *authority of experience* (our living theory and the living logic underlying it within our accounts of our learning). When we present our inquiries as S-STTEP researchers, we have experienced, examined, and interrogated the pertinent aspects of our practice and experience. These aspects of our practice and experience, as Stern (2004) argues, are not the whole but merely a part of it. Stern further explains that when we extract pieces from our larger experience and practice, they are shadows of our experience and lose some of the nuances, integration, connectedness, and potential authority they share with the whole. Therefore, it is not just from the segment of experience and practice we study that we assert our claims, but from the whole of the authority of our experience. This is a deeper, more integrated, holistic, and powerful source upon which to found the individual assertions we make about practice within a particular study. We provide viability to our claims to an “authority of experience through the rigor of our scholarship evident in a study and based on the strategies we have used to demonstrate trustworthiness” (see Chapter 6).

Rather than making *valid* claims about practice, S-STTEP researchers make assertions for action or understanding (Berry & Loughran, 2002). In conducting and articulating the assertions from S-STTEP, researchers work to demonstrate scholarly rigor and integrity through the research processes and practices they engage in and in their articulation of those processes and practices within the physical (written, media, or verbal) account of their study (see Chapters 5 and 6).

While S-STTEP researchers use traditional tools shared with other forms of qualitative research to demonstrate coherence, resonance, and trustworthiness, they also

understand that establishing their assertions requires that they act with integrity and honor. As S-STTEP researchers, we attempt to create spaces where our identity and our integrity overlap, and we act with integrity in creating such accounts (see Bullough & Pinnegar, in press) demonstrating in our accounts our integrity as researchers we try to be trustworthy (see Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2001, for further discussion). However, we also recognize that the audience, our community, or the reader of a particular study will be the ultimate judge of the trustworthiness and rigor of the research account we present.

Establishing trustworthiness then is a tricky business. On our side as S-STTEP researchers, we must use the tools of research that establish credibility, rigor, and coherence – that provide the kinds of evidence and descriptions of research processes that allow readers of our work to judge its quality and the accuracy of our data and its interpretation. As we have argued elsewhere (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2006), this is why attention to ontology, rather than only to epistemology, is so important in establishing the trustworthiness of an S-STTEP research.

Dialogue as the process of knowing in S-STTEP research, explained in Chapters 4 and 6, and LaBoskey's (2004a) conception of exemplar validity are important tools in establishing the trustworthiness of our accounts. Dialogue as the process of coming-to-know used in S-STTEP research asks that across the process of imagining, designing, conducting, and reporting of an inquiry, researchers engage in this process. Living in a research space of dialogue means that researchers are constantly asserting ideas and interrogating them, inviting alternative interpretations and seeking multiple perspectives. This process is continual across an inquiry and not just a strategy applied to the final interpretations. That is why collaboration with peers, with a skeptical self, with participants in our work, and with the research literature is a vital aspect of S-STTEP research (see Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2008).

What Does the Community of S-STTEP Researchers Value and Why Does This Work Have Value?

The community of S-STTEP researchers asserts their obligation to unseen children (Guilfoyle, Hamilton, & Pinnegar 1997) and their commitment to improving the understanding and development of educational theory that leads to better educational experience for teacher educators, the teacher candidates they educate, and the students they will educate. Bullough and Pinnegar (in press) argue that more important than a concern for the acceptance of the academy of teacher education specifically or education in general as a discipline is the development of settings that provide sustenance to teachers and teacher educators and conditions in which they flourish. As this chapter began, we articulated the conditions of acceptance, support, and kindness that are valued within the S-STTEP community. These conditions are valued because in order to interrogate, improve, and inquire deeply into our practices and provide honest, trustworthy, and rigorous accounts of that inquiry, such communities are not just vital but a fundamental necessity.

For at least the last 50 years, teachers and teacher education have been subjected to one wave of criticism after another. They have been threatened by wave after wave of assessment specialists, educational researchers, and policy makers who want to control and manipulate educational practice from the sidelines. Such people provide checklists or rubrics for external evaluation of practice with accompanying punishment for those who fall short. Ball (2003) labels it a culture of performativity. Often such groups seek to control practice without ever truly embedding themselves enough in the experience to truly understand and innovate. In this day and place, Putnam (2004) argues that we live in a time of intractable problems that are resistant to general solutions. As a result, particular solutions in particular places at particular times are needed, since we can take careful accounts of such solutions and use them to consider approaches to resolving these intractable problems in other places, with other people, and at other times. As S-STTEP researchers, we do not deny the value or insight that can be gained from the research of others. Like Greene (1995) argues, studies that see small (large, quantitative studies focused on overarching issues) as well as those that see big (studies that attend carefully to the particular and local) can in concert lead to promising responses to the difficulties of this time and place. However, as S-STTEP researchers we believe that studies of our own experience and deepened understanding of our own practice and our attempts to change and improve it when connected to the wider discourse in research on teaching and teacher education have the most potential for informing and impacting not only teacher education practice, but the practice of our students. In this way, we can meet our obligation to unseen children as well as their teachers with whom we work.

Making Connections

Drawing on William James (1907), rather than seeking truth the aim is to locate the good and express it in right action. The good takes multiple forms for educators from better questioning techniques to more empathetic relationships. Self-study, understood as a matter of ontology, a stance, rather than a settling on a truth, requires of its practitioners involvement in an on-going quest for greater goods, more productive ideas, more interesting and enlivening relationships, better forms of communication, a purer sense of one's obligations and a richer sense of one's own and others' possibilities. And, there is a moral imperative – to become increasingly open to contrary data. (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004, p. 328)

Connections to Consider

A formulaic statement among S-STTEP researchers is “we study our practice to improve it.” This statement is a potentially hollow expression of the commitment of researchers to their on-going development. The Bullough and Pinnegar quote reminds us that, as researchers, our purpose is to locate the good from theory and practice and create that goodness in our own experience. As we commit to on-going improvement in our practice, we simultaneously commit to producing rigorous research accounts of our experience. As a result, our assertions for action and understanding have integrity because of the careful attention we bring to both our practice and our research. In this chapter we claimed that researchers engaged in S-STTEP seek to benefit the lives and education of others through their commitment to ethical research practices.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about our ethical commitments and moral obligations as self-study of practice researchers and invite you to do the same.

PAUSE

Reexamination of the Frameworks and Presentation of Study

At this point we invite you to return to Mary Lynn’s Framework-for-Inquiry and the Framework-for-Analysis and put them alongside Mary Lynn’s proceedings submission for the 2008 Castle Conference. We present this selection from the Castle Proceedings as the final turn in our discussion of the Planner–Analytic frameworks. We believe the development of ideas and pursuit of questions addressed in the earlier discussions of the frameworks emerge when reading this Castle Proceedings. And the publication of the Castle represents the final step for S-STTEP research – making the work public. As a proceeding, some detail may be missing. However, we believe this work offers an opportunity to look backward through our discussion of the frameworks to see connections among the beginning, middle, and end of the study.

Studying My Practice: Exploring Tensions in My Teaching, My Methodology, and My Theory

Hamilton, M. L. (2008). Studying my practice: Exploring tensions in my teaching, my methodology and my theory. In M. Heston, D. Tidwell, K. East, & L. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Proceedings of the seventh international conference of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices*, Queen’s University, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England.

Proceedings Context

Here I investigate my understandings about my teaching process as they emerge when I question my grounding as a teacher. As a consequence of harsh critique from students in 2006, I revised my undergraduate teacher education course in 2007. Throughout this 2007 semester, I studied my experience and understandings about teaching, learning, and the learning-to-teach process along with student participation and involvement. Along the way tensions surfaced in my teaching, my theory, and my methodology, which pushed forward my inquiry. I discovered that for a self-study researcher, tensions can develop between the theoretical perspectives one holds, the methodological choices one makes, and the pedagogical turns one takes

when examining teaching practice. While critical friends may aid the process, walking the line of belief–action–practice–theory with a steady gait can prove difficult.

Ontological Context

I am a white, middle-class academic woman who has been a teacher educator for 19 years and a teacher longer than that. I bring a commitment to integrity, trustworthiness and compassion to the work I do, particularly in my teaching. I find myself guided by the strength of my beliefs in the relation of *I* to *other*, in social justice and in community. These beliefs guide the practice of my teaching and my research.

Student Context

The elementary education students at the University of Kansas (KU) are typically white, female, and middle class, with after-class jobs related to education and after-hour public service commitments. Most students come from towns (usually small) in the surrounding region. In their university work, these students have an average 3.5 grade point average (GPA) on a 4-point scale. For many of our students, attending KU is a life-long dream.

Class Context

I teach Curriculum and the Learner in Elementary School in the KU teacher education program. In this initial course in the professional program for students interested in teaching elementary students, it is my task to support students as they begin to find their identities as teachers. As a general curriculum course I focus on definitions of curriculum and elements involved in the creation of curriculum, not on specific strategies and models or content areas. We meet three times a week for an hour in a tiny, bland, technologically enriched classroom.

Study Context

After teaching this course for a number of years, I received a particularly harsh student critique at the end of Fall 2006 that raised questions for me about my approach to teaching and to the content, as well as pointed sharply at potential personal living contradictions. After a thorough review of the student evaluations, I returned to the teacher education literature, to colleagues, and to broad range of resources to revise the course. Simultaneously, I returned to my personal beliefs and notions about teaching to see how I could best serve my students, learn from my experiences, and generally examine my thinking about teaching.

In the next few paragraphs I situate my study with the broader context of research on teacher education, present my methodology, summarize my experience, and finally describe what I came to know as a result of this study. As I present my study, I attempt to unravel the tensions and discomforts that arise while I engaged in practice.

Literature Context

Currently in teacher preparation if I want to prepare stronger teachers I must explore and expand their beliefs (Grossman, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Richardson & Placier, 2001). I also know that the structure of the curriculum in teacher education programs matters (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). Alongside this information are the tales of resistance told by teacher educators about valiant efforts to confront the beliefs of students about diverse learners, teaching as transmission, or the role and purposes of schooling (Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell, & Middleton, 1999). In a constructivist environment, the struggles to bring students to better true beliefs through confrontation with those beliefs can reveal teacher educators as living contradictions (Whitehead, 1993). Such confrontation communicates to pre-service teachers and reveals to us that I perceive a wrongness about my students' beliefs and a rightness about my own. In turn, this suggests that unlike my assertions about multiple perspectives and co-constructed knowledge, I actually require agreement about a unitary view of the reality of teaching and learning (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2007b). In essence, such a stance insists that my students must believe differently if they are to become good teachers. This collision with contradictions occurred for me as I prepared to revise my classroom curriculum and practice.

Based on my understanding of Sandra Harding's (1991) notion of standpoint theory and Rom Harré's (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1998) positioning theory, I wondered how to support pre-service students' development as teachers. What if I invited my students to reposition themselves in their plotlines of teaching in the settings and situations of teacher rather than their student-based perspectives of themselves? How would my pre-service students respond? Furthermore, I wondered if I viewed my pre-service students' often "transmission models of teaching" as a skeletal plotline of teaching rather than as a fundamental belief about teaching, what might stand under or behind that skeletal plotline and what promise for expansions of their understandings about teaching, learning, and schooling could be uncovered. As I revised my course I synthesized these ideas to help guide the fall class.

Methodology

For this study I define self-study as "a methodology for studying professional practice settings" (LaBoskey, 2004b, p. 817; Pinnegar, 1998) and identify its most salient characteristics as "self-initiated and focused; . . . improvement-aimed; . . .

interactive; . . . [that uses] multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; . . . a validation process based in trustworthiness” (LaBoskey, 2004b, p. 817). Moreover, I recognize self-study as a methodology with more attention on the stance one takes than on specific strategies involved in the undertaking (Berry, 2007).

For this self-study, I collected classroom materials, videotaped class sessions, and gathered weekly evaluations (Dinkelman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006). I engaged in face-to-face and e-mail conversations with my students. I kept a personal journal and documented all activities, plans, and assignments. In each step of the way I asked questions and queried my own ideas and the conceptions revealed by my students in their stories and my own stories of this experience. My wonderings developed more questions than answers. I invited a network of critical friends to press my experiences and deconstruct assumptions. I engaged with them to test my ideas and check my perspectives and situated my understandings in relation to my students and the teacher education research. Periodically I also contacted my former students for insights. All of those in my critical friend network listened to my stories plus reviewed other artifacts to establish their own views of my teaching.

What I Came to Know as a Result of This Study

Over the course of a semester, Fall 2007, in two class sections I explored the space created by my students’ accounts of the learning-to-teach process and the spaces between their accounts, my accounts, and interactions of the critical friends to explore my teaching, my desires to support students’ learning processes, and the methodological and theoretical intrusions into the experience. I collected a series of narratives along with other materials from students engaged in their first class upon entry in the School of Education. While not their first professional course, it was the first course where they declared themselves as committed to teaching as a profession. During the course the students created a *Book of Understandings* that required the students to explore and write about a variety of elements to initiate the development of their professional knowledge. These narratives focused on their understandings of teaching, teachers, students, and the contexts of school. I created a *book* along with them.

This study burgeoned throughout the semester. So many twists and turns occurred that I cannot briefly do justice to the entire experience. Consequently, I offer three excerpts from my journals: an initial piece written at the time I realized I wanted to study my practice, a piece written about the beginning of class in August, and an entry written at the end of the semester. Following the excerpts I present three juxtapositions that emerged during the semester inviting me to push further the living contradictions that seem ever present in my teaching.

Initially (March 1, 2007) I wrote: “As a result of reading my student evaluations from my Fall 2006 classes, I felt in a quandary about my teaching practice and my ability to bring students into the profession of teaching. The harsh critique of one class took me up short since I felt the class had been so productive, well-organized

and well-executed. My students had identified my living contradiction. After rejecting my initial desires to dismiss and discount their comments I forced myself to consider how best to explore my practice.”

At the course beginning (August 18, 2007) I wrote: “So during the summer I read texts, talked with critical friends, chatted about teaching, reviewed web sites and explored how I might best teach a course entitled Curriculum and the Learner in Elementary School. Before I focused on a re-examination of the class or the activities or the plan itself, I started reading. I read some Schwab (1978) and some critique of Schwab (Clarke & Erickson, 2004a, 2004b), Nussbaum’s (1998) *Cultivating Humanity*, other texts related to cosmopolitanism, and texts related to narrative. I wanted to get a sense of what others said about ideas that were swimming in my head.

What was swimming? Well, I was trying to figure out how to push students’ thinking forward, how to cut through some of the issues students had, and understand issues about thinking and learning. I wanted to include social justice issues. I realized that at KU we had only one course about social justice issues and I did not think that was enough to cut through the issues of bias that we all have.

Notes on the texts themselves are located elsewhere. Once I finished contemplating these issues, I began to consider each element of the 2006 course to prepare for the 2007 course. Would I use Schwab? . . . Yes, I would use Schwab because I don’t believe in giving too much theory to novices. I feel that hanging theory onto the experience is critical. And so, I felt that Schwab provided a good start to thinking about curriculum because I would use the commonplaces . . . I focus on the commonplaces and I talk about what they see and how they see it and how the commonplaces will appear no matter what sort of curriculum they might be expected to navigate.”

At the course end (December 8, 2007) I wrote: “I hate grades . . . I hate never knowing for sure the impact I have. I also feel resentful because after all of the work I have done, I do not think the students think they have learned anything. More than that, I am sure that they are cranky because they think they deserve “A’s.”

For the actual class I took the students’ mind map from Monday and I brought them around to a final spiral asking them to consider what they have learned and how they have learned it. I introduced new ideas for them to ponder for their future classes.

I found their dwindling interest to be upsetting. However, in the past I have assumed this dwindling interest was my fault. Now, I am not so sure. Now, I am thinking about Fenstermacher’s (1986) notion of studenting. Once I have done my work, put forward my energy, made strong intellectual connections . . . at what point is it their responsibility to learn it – or not? At what point can I let go of it as if I am not the person in charge of everything?

For me, I think this is an important issue. Always in the past I have assumed total responsibility and I just don’t think that’s really an appropriate approach. It also disempowers the student, I think. As if I am the one in charge of learning. I wonder where Paulo Freire falls into this? I resist banking education; students seek banking education – who knows which world? And how does this fit with the notion of

studenting? Where is the student's responsibility? When does the teacher step aside and allow the student to learn for himself or herself? How far open must the teacher hold open the door before the teacher stands aside?"

Juxtaposition One: Did I Do Something Wrong?

If the point of teaching is student learning and students have as much responsibility to learn as I have for teaching (Fenstermacher, 1990), did I fail as a teacher in Fall 2006 or Fall 2007? That my students focused on my perceived failings or their lack of interest, is that about my teaching? Here I juxtapose student notions and teacher notions of learning. The students in 2006 critiqued me as a teacher who asked too many questions and did not inform them about the profession. The students in 2007 responded better to me as a person, but I learned that teaching is particular. Both sets of students seemed interested in positioning themselves as powerless, as if, from a Freirean perspective (Freire, 1970), they were the bank and I was the depositor. Like last year, each class had individual responses to experiences as well as group response. Some responses were surprising. For example, students did not like to engage in self-revelation. They did not want to reveal themselves or their ideas. They wanted me to transmit knowledge. We clashed. Also I found it was difficult to identify what worked in practice because on different days in different classes, responses seemed to change.

Students may be able to address whether they liked me as a teacher or whether they think I am a good person, but what can they tell me about my practice? From my perspective, they can weigh in on the workability of a strategy, but I am not sure about their views of my practice. If I ask myself, did I improve my practice during Fall 2007, I must answer affirmatively. Between 2006 and 2007 my teaching strategies, my theories about teaching, and my approaches to teaching shifted enormously. I can see connections and organize ideas to present to students in ways I had not previously been able to access. My organization meshed tightly with the development of critical thinking skills, but I now wonder whether at the embryonic stage of their professional knowledge they could see that. And how could I address that? Will they return to me in their first year of teaching to thank me? Did I do something wrong with my students? I don't think so. Will I please all students? I don't think so. Will they be better prepared as teachers because of their interactions with me? I think so.

Juxtaposition Two: Methodology Versus Pedagogy

Methodologically speaking, having as many data sources as possible to examine teaching is critical, necessary in fact, for a researcher who intends to be trustworthy. If I study my practice, it seems important to videotape that practice to document and view successes and discrepancies. Juxtapose that against the documented stammers,

stutters, and discomforts I had in the early days of class. I followed the suggestions of good researchers – set up the technology before class with a wide lens, and keep it rolling – but nothing helped my muddled delivery. I wondered what my problem was because I had never had these problems in previous classes. I had planned to film every class. Then, one day I left the camera behind. To my surprise, the flow of class seemed so smooth that even the students commented. They appreciated that I examined my practice, yet they saw that I was visually more comfortable. And so, a methodological quandary arose – do I continue filming or put it aside to facilitate the learning process in the class? I left the camera behind.

Juxtaposition Three: The Moral Nature of My Work

Teaching is a moral endeavor. For my students I want a socially just world where they see themselves as active citizens. I wrote my curriculum around that idea. Juxtapose that against the writings of my students that seemed exclusionary and thoughtless. I understand that by living in rural places they may not have contact with difference, but my desire to cultivate humanity overwhelmed my desire to draw out student thinking and promote critical conversation. More than once I wanted to explode into the room. My critical friends offered suggestions that went nowhere. My conversations with students pointed to their naiveté, but no matter what, I wanted to change them. This experience echoes the aforementioned struggle about the rightness and wrongness of views. While working with Schwab (1978) suited them, this more potentially volatile issue generated tension, more for me than for them as they seemed content in their thinking.

During the semester I came to recognize the moral nature of my work. While others may know this about me and I may have written about it, I did not *know* it until this semester. My personal resistance to the term “moral” had something to do with upbringing and definitional misunderstanding. My resistance interfered with how I defined my views. In the realm of “turn-about is fair play,” my realization came as I pushed my students to explore the cosmopolitan nature of the world. I pushed them to accept the concept; they pushed me to see that I was attempting to change their views.

Conclusion

This brief description of my study serves as a tantalizing appetizer to the main course. So much happened – in my thinking, my pedagogy, and my practice – that I am still working to unravel it all. Certainly I can see the value of self-study methodology as a tool to examine practice. As I struggled with the tensions around what happened in the classroom and what I thought should be happening in the classroom and the differences in conceptions of learning to teach and teacher education, I understood better the possibilities for my teaching practice and the boundless questions yet to be answered.

Chapter 8

Pragmatic and Theoretic Conclusions for Conducting S-STTEP Research

Questions

- *What Am I Interested in Exploring? What Are Your Living Contradictions? What Issues Do I Want to Further Understand? What Do I Want to Learn About These Interests, Issues, and Concerns?*
- *How Could I Explore These Concerns and Issues? What Contexts Might Be Most Fitting? Who Are the Most Appropriate Participants?*
- *What Methods Might I Use? What Would Count as Evidence?*
- *What Work in Teacher Education Research (or Other Research Fields) Will Guide My Inquiry? What Beliefs Are Embedded in My Questions? What Values Do I Embody in My Practice and Research? How Will I Hold Myself Accountable? What Do I Expect to Contribute to the Knowledge Base?*

Across this text, we have provided PAUSES where we review tools to help in the design and analysis of S-STTEP research projects. In presenting and explaining these PAUSES, our focus has been consistently on the practical. We have tried to make clear *how to begin, conduct, and evaluate* your research. In the chapters that frame these PAUSES, we have been more theoretic in our exploration of the processes and theories that guide and support this kind of research. We have theoretically discussed practice as the focus of our research, ontology as the space and commitment, and dialogue as the process. We have considered the difficulty of being trustworthy and establishing claims from this research as trustworthy. Here in this final chapter, we re-explore the theoretic themes of S-STTEP work by connecting it pragmatically to the questions from the inquiry planner presented in the initial PAUSE; we consider the questions exploring them in terms of their connection to the larger theoretic issues that underscore S-STTEP research.

What Am I Interested in Exploring? What Are Your Living Contradictions? What Issues Do I Want to Further Understand? What Do I Want to Learn About These Interests, Issues, and Concerns?

Inquiry in S-STTEP research emerges from two converging sources: our interest and our experience. Our interest may be sparked through our experience of a living contradiction or a puzzling event or our reading or thinking about teaching and teacher education. What we choose to focus on as the source of our inquiry has differing implications for how we move from a decision or desire to inquire further into our practice. When we have experienced a living contradiction – we believe ourselves to be acting one way and response from others, analysis of a troubling event in our practice, or reflection on our experience reveals us or names us as being opposite to the way we believe we are – we often feel compelled to look deeper. From this perspective, our first step is to uncover our belief and reflect on the situations or experiences that identify us as acting in opposition to that belief. The inquiry planner we have been unpacking in this book is an example of such research (Hamilton, 2008).

Sometimes we become interested in studying an issue in our practice, because an experience we have refuses to go away. We might replay the same experience over and over in our minds. We might simply find ourselves talking or thinking about an event or a comment repeatedly across a long period. In this case, we often have to uncover how the event or comment reveals us to be acting in opposition to our belief or the value we are denying in our practice. In this case, we might need to create a written record of the event or our defensive reflection on our practice. An example of a study motivated by this kind of concern comes from Leslie Coia (2008), in which a particular event in a classroom motivated her further exploration of an intuition she gained about herself in the middle of teaching a course. Her exploration into the event led her to new understandings of self-trust, which led her to engage in new practices as a teacher educator.

Sometimes we read or listen to research accounts or reports or policy statements about teacher education practice, and we wonder about the research in relationship to our practice. We become curious about how we construct or understand our own practice in light of the research. When these kinds of wonderings underlie our thinking about practice, we often spend time becoming clearer about exactly what the issue we want to study is. Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2008) conducted such a study when they became interested in the differences between narrative, self-study, and autoethnography. Berry's (2007) interest in what we had collectively learned from self-study of teacher education practices research in relationship to what she was learning from her own practice as a teacher educator led her to uncover a series of tensions experienced by teacher educators as they attempted to improve their practice.

Sometimes we are caught in a memory of our own experience, and we wonder what that experience reveals to us about our practice. An example of this kind of

study can be found in the work by the Arizona Group (1995) where we became bothered about our private claim that we had educated ourselves as teacher educators alongside our students' continual claims that they educated themselves as teachers. This led us to explore our paths in becoming teacher educators and what studying our claim could reveal to us about better supporting teacher candidates in the learning-to-teach process. Lomax, Evans, and Parker (1996) explore their practice in doing research on their work with special-needs children, interrogating former data and their own memories of their experience in working together. Another example is provided by O'Reilly-Scanlon (2002) where she uses photographs from her childhood to support her exploration of her practices as a teacher educator.

In each case, notice that S-STTEP research always begins with the self, but the study fairly quickly moves into consideration of that space between the self and the other. Sometimes S-STTEP researchers studying their practice forget that while they are uncovering new understandings about themselves or their actions, the understandings and the actions are embedded in their practice. Their accounts of their research may more explicitly record growth in their understanding with the self, but a careful reading of their textual account reveals that what they learned emerged from an experience in practice or has been translated into actions within their practice. When skeptics about S-STTEP who question the value of a focus on self interact with the community of researchers, they are startled by the fact that the research that is valued in the community is always grounded in that space between the self and the other – in the space of practice, which we explored in Chapter 3. In S-STTEP research, the research is never exclusively about the self it is always in tension with or leads to understandings of practice. What this point reveals is the theoretic grounding of S-STTEP research in concern with ontology, which we have explored more completely in Chapter 4.

Furthermore, rigorous S-STTEP research – while it begins in experience and practice and concerns of the self, usually even as researchers begin to engage in formulating a question – connects with the larger research conversation about practice. Thus, as we begin to answer the question of what questions, issues, and concerns do I want to study, part of the articulation of that question usually connects to the larger research conversation about teacher education. This occurs because our practice and our programs grow up within the policy and research concerns about teacher education that are part of our lived experience. The political and social context of our time and place both constrains and shapes our conceptions of teacher education.

This also occurs because as we begin to articulate what it is we want to study, we reflect on the things we have read about the situation we are interested in or we seek out research on the issue to make it clearer to us and to guide us in clarifying the focus of our study – the issue of interest. In other words, as scholars of S-STTEP, we intentionally explore our concern about our experience in terms of what scholarly work in the area has taught us. Indeed, when we find ourselves acting in our practice in opposition to our beliefs, this opposition emerges either from our reading and study of the theories of teaching and teacher education or from evidence that has emerged in our practice. This pushes us to recognize that we are not enacting our best practices or, because we recognize as we enact our best practices, they are in

opposition to our beliefs about what makes good teacher education (e.g., Pinnegar, 1995a).

Quality work in self-study seldom, if ever, moves forward without attention to others in our practice, scholarly work that focuses on what we are concerned about, and a careful examination of our experience from our perspective. We are constantly interweaving the practical, the theoretic, and the experiential. S-STTEP that does not connect with and illuminate the larger research conversation is not helpful, since it does not draw on sources that can push the researcher to reframe nor is it positioned in a way to move the research conversation forward if the author intentionally positions himself or herself outside of that conversation (Zeichner, 2007).

How Could I Explore These Concerns and Issues? What Contexts Might Be Most Fitting? Who Are the Most Appropriate Participants: You or Your Students?

When S-STTEP researchers move to formalize a statement of what exactly we want to inquire about, we begin to articulate a concrete plan of action for our study. As we design a study that will support the inquiry we want to conduct, we inventory our practices. In this inventory of our practices, dialogue as a process of inquiry becomes more visible. We identify what it is we want to study, and we begin to assert it against our memory of what our practice consists of, how we act in practice, and the environments and settings where we act in certain ways. It is at this point, as the questions in this section of the inquiry planner reveal, that we begin to collaborate internally or publicly with others. We begin identifying potential private or public collaborators.

When Stefinee (Pinnegar, 1995a) wanted to examine whether or not what she was teaching in her courses was of use in practice, she began by wondering if she might simply ask teachers she was working with how they used a definitional list of teaching practices and processes she taught in her pre-service courses. However, as she explored this possibility with colleagues, they began to ask how honest students would be or just as importantly whether they might use practices but not recognize how they were embedded in their action and thus not recognize their helpfulness. From this interaction with others, she determined that she needed to attempt to enact the practices herself in a K-12 teaching experience. Russell (1995) reports a similar process as he began wondering about the viability of the things he was teaching his pre-service physics teachers for guiding their practice in teaching high school physics.

While many might think of *dialogue* as a process of coming-to-know that only becomes useful in data analysis, what our consideration of the inquiry planner reveals is that dialogue underlies the entire inquiry process in S-STTEP research and that attention to it can help sharpen consideration of our questions, our design, our data collection, our data analysis, and our representation of inquiry results. The interrogation through testing our question with others, engaging in internal dialogue,

or perusing the research literature to winnow our ideas and focus the question and data collection more tightly are evidence of our engagement in dialogue as a process for coming to know. Hamilton and Pinnegar (2009) articulate the ways in which their construction of a collage is a visual enactment of dialogue and provides an explicit visual image of dialogue as a process for coming to know. This process is explained more completely in both Chapters 4 and 6.

Once we articulate what we want to study, we need to carefully consider our practice. We need to consider whether attention to practice from an overarching sense of our personal practical knowledge, a focus on what our tacit knowledge embedded in our action, or a careful attention to a single moment of practice would be the best way to engage with and explore the question we posed (see Chapter 3 for a further explanation of these differences). As we design the study, we need to engage in an honest assessment of the ontology of our practice so that our design will lead us to examine our self and our practice in the events, practice, or settings that will most likely allow us to not only study but also interrogate the concern we want to explore and collect data most likely to capture what might otherwise remain obscured.

What Methods Might I Use? What Would Count as Evidence?

As S-STTEP researchers, we recognize that self-study of practice research is a methodology, but it is not a specific strategy for data collection or analysis. S-STTEP researchers use a wide range of methods and strategies in their research. Lassonde, Galman, and Kosnik (2009) Tidwell, Heston, and Fitzgerald (2009) provide excellent sources for exploring particular methods and strategies that have been used successfully by S-STTEP researchers. The chapters in these books can serve as guides for researchers who want to use particular data strategies and want to ensure that they use those strategies with panache and rigor. The fact that we use general qualitative approaches places two demands on S-STTEP researchers. These demands are explored further in Chapter 5, but we summarize them here. The first is that as we embrace a strategy for our research, we must embrace it with fidelity. We should meet the demands of that research strategy with rigor and skill. We engage in the participant selection, data gathering, and trustworthiness requirements of that strategy. While we hold ourselves to the demands of the strategy that lead to rigorous research within that sphere, we are confronted by a second source of demand. That is the demand placed on S-STTEP researchers because the self is the researcher and the researched within which we engage any study. As a result of our recognition of this fact, we make appropriate and disciplined adjustments. Almost always, strategies used by S-STTEP researchers to engage in an S-STTEP study require additional rather than fewer demands on the researcher.

The use of methodologies, strategies, and methods from other paradigms within S-STTEP reifies another aspect of ontology as the undergirding philosophic concern. This concern is that we stand in integrity. We own our practice, and we publicly

assert ourselves as the researcher and the researched – we assert our responsibility for the ontology we study and the study we conduct (see Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004, for additional discussion).

The second question of concern in this segment of the planner, attention to evidence, focuses again on both dialogue and ontology. Concerns with evidence are concerns about both what we will capture in the context, our practice, and our knowledge in thinking and action – our ontology – and what account can we collect that will be the most fruitful venues for interrogating our practice and our understanding of it – the use of dialogue in analysis. As we question – what would count as evidence that we have changed our practice or that the understanding we have come to about our practice is trustworthy – we must carefully identify sites, people, events, and accounts that are viable and trustworthy and have analytic depth or richness. The data we collect must be seen by others as capable of establishing the veracity of the claims we want to make. We want those who examine our studies to feel that our data can be trusted.

The data we collect must not only be judged to be capable of providing a viable account of our context and practice, but must also have enough depth and dimensionality to both be and be perceived as an adequate venue for uncovering the understandings we seek to interrogate. Thus, there is a positive and fruitful tension between collecting accounts that reveal *what is* (the ontology of our practice) and allowing for interrogation (the process of dialogue) both in its strength as data and in its potential to allow for uncovering implicit understandings in analysis. Again, we must act with integrity when choosing sites of data collection that will reveal our failures and our successes. As we identify places for data collection and strategies for analysis, we must ourselves be particularly skeptical and we must engage others who will be honest and skeptical around the same issues.

What Work in Teacher Education Research (or Other Research Fields) Will Guide My Inquiry? What Beliefs Are Embedded in My Questions? What Values Do I Embody in My Practice and Research? How Will I Hold Myself Accountable? What Do I Expect to Contribute to the Knowledge Base?

This final set of questions highlights, more than the others, what is valued and valuable in S-STTEP research for the community of S-STTEP scholars. We desire to contribute to teacher education practice research in two ways: first in creating places where the practices we find most valuable, sustaining, and useful can be demonstrated to live in particular practice spaces. Second, we want our research to connect to, inform, and be informed by the debates, wonderings, questions, disputes, and conversations (the discourse) that exist in the area of research on teaching and teacher education. We expect S-STTEP research to be informed by social science and educational research.

In order for S-STTEP research to be used by others, both to produce research and to guide the development of practice in other settings, we must be able to articulate the beliefs that animate our practice and the contexts that constrain it. Dialogue is our most helpful tool for guiding us in this work. We must be able to make explicit the implicit that our inquiry investigates. Our concern with developing improved arenas for practice is again a commitment to taking an ontological stance in our research practice similar to the one articulated by Clandinin and Rosiek (2007). We have dual concerns in S-STTEP research. One concern is with understanding teaching and teacher education practice and the second is with improving it. Both of these concerns front ontology over epistemology for this research (see Chapter 4 for an articulation of the relationship between these). While the first targets the focus of our research, the second – the desire to improve educational experience – represents our stance to improve: a commitment to an improved ontology.

Rigorous scholarly work in S-STTEP research involves identifying productive, provocative, and significant inquiries; connecting them to the larger fields of inquiry that they can inform and be informed by; and finally using what we learn to develop better teaching and teacher education programs and practices. We do this by taking seriously LaBoskey's (2004a) five characteristics of self-study research and by attending carefully to developing new and deeper understandings of practice. We use dialogue as a process for coming to know engaging collaborators including humans, texts, and our own skeptical self in interrogation of our formulation of our question, our selection of participants, specification of data to be collected, and our analysis of the data. In this work we embrace ontology rather than epistemology as the major orientation of our research and as having the greatest potential to establish the value of this work. S-STTEP researchers make a fundamental commitment to interrogating and changing their practice in order to develop understandings of teaching and teacher education that can transform the conversation of teacher education in ways that lead to improved educational conditions for all students.

Making Connections

Know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues and in terms of the problems of history-making. Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of the individual life. Know that the problems of social science, when adequately formulated, must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations. (Mills, 1959, p. 226)

Connections to Consider

Attention to the parallelism in this quote from C. Wright Mills, where he articulates the interconnectedness of understanding and knowing across the public and private, leads us to deeper insights into the power and potential of S-STTEP research. In the first pairing, he argues that we resolve personal crises when we frame them in terms of history. For S-STTEP researchers this suggests that insightful practice and research will develop particular and practical applications from public theory, traditional approaches, and cultural norms.

The second pairing asks researchers to imbue historical knowledge with private meaning. Infusing theory with the idiosyncrasy and humanness of particular life and experience can lead S-STTEP researchers to insightful and powerful reframings of both public knowledge and private action.

The final pairings of biography and history suggests that S-STTEP research methodology positions us between biography and history, self and other, and theory and practice. In this final chapter we have asserted that positioning ourselves *in the midst* of biography, history, self, other, theory, and practice is the greatest challenge and the greatest promise of S-STTEP research.

Wonderings and Questions

Here we wonder about the power and potential of self-study of practice researchers to bridge public and private theory. We ask you to ask yourselves:

- As I enact theories in my practice, what do I learn about the theory and my practice?
- How can personal troubles be examined, interrogated, and explored, in ways that informs public issues?

PAUSE

Comparison of General Qualitative Research and S-STTEP Methodologies

In this PAUSE, we situate S-STTEP research explicitly within general qualitative research perspectives. Understanding that relationship is a key to this comparison. On the left we include a list of general categories with points to remember that span both the general qualitative and S-STTEP research. The rows labeled **REMEMBER**: capture ideas that spread across qualitative research and self-study research. The next column includes essential aspects of general qualitative research. In the right-hand column we highlight particular extensions that an S-STTEP research brings to qualitative research and/or differences found between general qualitative and S-STTEP research.

Comparison of Qualitative and S-STTEP Research

	Qualitative Research	S-STTEP Research
<p>NEED TO UNDERSTAND: Your purpose guides the structure and design of study, your focus evolves, your methods can shift to accomplish your purpose, your design is flexible and on-going, your literature review and critique relates to your purpose and focus, and your research process includes discussions and interactions with colleagues.</p>		
<p>Determine purpose of study</p>	<p>Select concerns, issues, and/or interests important to your study. Consider: Why do I want to study this interest? What am I interested in learning? What is important to know?</p>	<p>In S-STTEP research, the purpose usually finds self as central, but not the <i>only</i> focus.</p>
<p>Literature review</p>	<p>Consider the significance and substance of your study – how and why is your study important? What is its potential contribution? How will it contribute to promoting a just and equitable world? What assumptions are depicted in the literature? What is known? What questions need to be explored? How has your topic been addressed? What are the limitations? How do these assumptions match your assumptions?</p>	<p>Situating our research in the broader context of our area of interest sharpens our ability to examine our practices and enables us to contribute more to the larger research conversations we wish to participate in our work.</p>
<p>REMEMBER: Your initial review of the literature informs you of others’ thinking on your topic, how the issues have been explored, and the relationship between the literature and your assumptions; it provides and supports the framework used to explore your focus and purpose. The literature review builds throughout the study and during final analysis.</p>		
<p>Site selection and entry to site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine the context needed to explore your interests and conduct your study. ● Gain entry into a site that meets your criteria (as fully as possible). 	<p>Often, since we work in our own classrooms, site selection and entry appear to be givens but we need to consider which courses, which aspects of practice, and what occasions carefully when thinking about our research.</p>
<p>REMEMBER: The site you choose depends on who you are, what you want to study, and what you hope to accomplish. The level of entry you gain influences the kind of data generated.</p>		

(continued)

	Qualitative Research	S-STEP Research
<p>Organization of study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select focus for exploring your interest and questions. ● Determine kinds of data needed and organize methods to generate data needed. ● Choose methods: observation, interview, audio/videotaping, and so on. ● Consider which documents and artifacts (if any) to collect. ● Determine frequency, time of day, length of study, and so on needed to understand issues. 	<p>We know that the research process is not a linear one. However, the organization and the choice of methods are crucial to a careful study.</p>
<p>REMEMBER: Questions concerning how much, with whom, and how you participate are clarified as your study progresses.</p>	<p>Generating data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus shifts from general to specific and back to general. ● Data are documented in fieldnotes which are: time-dated and time-noted; a detailed, specific cut into the world you are observing; reflect actual language, language usage, quotes; recorded on the scene or soon afterward; expanded and analyzed to inform further data collection ● Maintain Researcher Journal (a self reflective account of methods, procedures, evolving analysis, speculation, feelings, problems, diemmas, ideas, etc.) 	<p>As with a qualitative study, the documentation of evidence supports the progress in our research from data collection to data analysis.</p>
<p>REMEMBER: Flexibility is needed as questions and methods evolve within the study. Throughout the study researchers consciously consider the process and the people.</p>		

(continued)

Qualitative Research		S-STTEP Research
On-going analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct on-going analysis, asking: What does this mean? What am I learning? What patterns are evolving? What questions are developing? Use your analysis to guide and inform the study. 	<p>The points raised for qualitative research are the same for the S-STTEP research, with the addition of attention to the “self” in the study and the “self-in-relation.”</p>
Summative analysis and interpretation	<p>At this point, review and interpret your analysis while asking, How have I interpreted my data? Why do I believe my interpretation is accurate?</p>	<p>At this point in the study, the researcher must carefully present analysis and interpretation in ways that the readers can situate themselves in the study as well as accept the researcher as a trustworthy authority regarding the work presented.</p>
Writing study narrative and findings	<p>Provide a detailed narrative of your study, findings, and interpretations, asking, How do I want the public to view my work?</p>	

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Appendix A

Readings for Knowledge In-Of-For Practice Activity

Castle Conference Proceedings Readings

The Effect of an Inquiry-Oriented Teacher Education Program on a Faculty Member: Critical Incidents and My Journey

Kosnik, C. (1998). The effect of an inquiry-oriented teacher education program on a faculty member: Critical incidents and my journey. In A. Cole & S. Finley (Eds.), *Conversations in community proceedings of the second international conference of the self-study of teacher education practices* (pp. 135–139), Queen’s University, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England.

So often we, in teacher education, see ourselves as agents for our student teachers: motivating them, informing them, guiding them, preparing them. We do not think of it as a process that will also change and enrich us. However, we must be enriched by it if we are to prosper in this demanding profession. If we are to help our students develop, we too must develop. In this paper, I describe how working in an inquiry-focused teacher education program had an unexpected impact on me. Not all changes were positive and some, while neither positive nor negative, were puzzling and occasionally frustrating. That said, the experience helped me to grow as a professor; it led to insights into working in an inquiry-focused program, and it helped me to develop questions related to innovations in the field.

Background and Setting

I have read extensively on action research and teacher education, and have been a proponent of the philosophy, believing that it can lead to enriched educational programs. In 1995, I was given the chance to put theory into action, so to speak, when I spearheaded the restructuring of our one-year, post-baccalaureate teacher education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. Our program requires that all students have completed at least a four-year university degree and have some prior teaching experience, at least on a volunteer

basis. For the past three years, working with a team of university staff, I have helped redesign our program so that theory and practice would be connected. Initially, I focused on improving student's learning and gave little or no thought to the impact the redesign and implementation process would have on me. Although I recognized I would have to make significant adjustments to my curriculum, I did not consider that my growth would extend beyond changing my course syllabus.

Our program has an inquiry orientation; we "believe in" the approach to teaching and teacher education that is inherent in action research. However, as is well known, innovations often have unexpected or "anomalous" consequence; they can give rise to critical incidents. As Judith Newman states, these incidents are events that "reveal a surprising gap between what we said we believed about learning and teaching (our espoused beliefs) and what our actions are conveying" (1990, p. 18). I have drawn on critical incidents and on systematic self-reflection, analysis of our practice, and interviews with student teachers and associate teachers.

Working as Part of a Team

In order to offer a strong program and model a collaborative style of action research, the faculty had to work as a team. We connected all assignments, taught in teams, developed evaluation rubrics for integrated assignments, and planned modules that spanned courses. Although working as part of a team was exhilarating and supportive, it was time consuming and raised issues that normally would not have been of concern. Some were simply structural, for example, coordinating due dates for assignments. Others, such as the direction of a program, led all of us to examine our beliefs. Our plan to develop a coherent program required us to go beyond simply developing a few common activities and joint lessons. Negotiating actual classes was fairly easy; the deeper issues regarding the goals of teacher education were more difficult. Solutions were elusive and at times we struggled to define what we meant. This constant questioning and discussing helped me to identify tensions within the framework. On the one hand, I began to realize that for teacher education to be a truly valuable experience, it must help students develop an approach to teaching. Through the inquiry process, we examine the taken-for-granted practices of teachers and focus on the needs of students. This can help develop a philosophy of education to guide curriculum decisions while providing an opportunity to acquire the skills of program development and reflection.

On the other hand, I felt an equally strong opposing force. Was I being realistic about the place of action research in teacher education? Can classroom teachers, with all the demands placed on them, conduct sound research? Am I out of touch with class practice? While grappling with these questions, one came to the forefront – was the program feasible? From this, two additional questions arose. Would we meet the needs of our students? Could we cope with the workload?

As I continued my internal debate, a critical incident occurred. I was conducting a research project with six graduates who were now working as teachers. As

I analyzed the interviews and observations, I realized that all six believed action research had been the most valuable part of our teacher education program. It helped them develop an approach to teaching, gain assessment and evaluation skills, learn to respond to students' needs, and feel confident in developing programs. All six were using an action research approach to teaching. Although not as formal as the research conducted in our program, the influence of the inquiry framework was apparent in their practice. This incident temporarily put to rest the debate, but the tension continued. Today, I realize that working in an innovative program requires one to live with such tensions.

The process of making the program coherent was a valuable learning experience. I became familiar with the content of other courses, became better acquainted with my colleagues on both personal and professional levels, and began to appreciate that each member of the team had uncertainties about our teaching. Sharing our concerns and challenges helped us to connect and strengthened our team; the traditional bravado of academics was lowered as we revealed our fears about working in an innovative program, handled students' anxieties and complaints, and redefined ourselves as teacher educators. As expected, there were also some difficulties that stemmed from adopting a team approach to teaching. While I enjoyed the collaboration, I sometimes felt that I lost some of my individuality and ownership of my courses. Since the team had to reach consensus, I had to compromise my preferences and/or justify my practice. For example, when students completed the second stage of the action research process, the staff had to develop a common marking scheme for papers. I felt the papers I marked were poorly done; others thought they were good. We had to negotiate our interpretation of the rubrics' criteria and reach consensus on how we would grade the papers. In order to make the marking consistent, I acquiesced to the majority's opinion. In hindsight, I realize that I had unrealistic expectations, and although I was the driving force behind the initial program redesign, I did not own it and did not understand it completely. While letting go of "my" project was difficult, it allowed others to own and shape it.

Changing My Teaching Methods

A pure inquiry or action research approach to teacher education is impossible in contemporary society, with its expectations of faculty responsibility, authority, and control. Accordingly, I encountered many stresses, ambiguities, and dilemmas as I implemented action research in the program. The most obvious paradox was that I had to "lead" the students into action research by a series of detailed steps. It did not come naturally to them, and each year they had difficulty with the concept for the first two or three months. Dilemmas in teacher education, identified by Katz and Rath (1992), required that I make compromises on inquiry principles, foregoing student self-discovery in order to lessen their anxiety about teaching by providing them with "quick fixes," such as detailed lesson plans and simple classroom management strategies. Given my many years' experience in education, I had always given students countless activities, lessons, and books. This process, although faulty, pro-

vided me with an acceptable approach to teacher education. The numerous handouts and lists, while providing a sense of comfort for the students, were filed away because they did not own them and did not understand their significance in the larger scheme of education. The many hours spent going through these activities became central to the program, but as we moved to an inquiry approach, I realized that this style of teaching was unacceptable. If I did not spend significant time going through units and activities, what would I do with the students? On many occasions, I was apprehensive before and during class – I worried there would not be enough to do, there would be painful silences, and I would not be preparing students adequately. By the third year, I began to trust the inquiry process and accepted that there would always be awkward moments as we work through the process. Students will struggle and I will continually have to modify classes. By the end of the program, however, most students will have acquired a depth and breadth of knowledge. This was evident in my follow-up study and in their presentations at the Action Research Conference.

My previous style of dispensing activities had another effect of which I had been unaware. It established a barrier between me and the students; I was the conveyor of knowledge, an expert to whom they looked when needing guidance and approval. Repeatedly, students would come to me for affirmation, not trusting themselves and not searching for activities that were appropriate for themselves and their students. I had been a teacher, so I wanted to impart my knowledge to the students. In many ways, I felt I knew best. In an inquiry community, I could not be the undisputed expert (although at times I had to be), so I had to find another role for myself. At times, it was difficult to refrain from telling the students what to do, to allow them to make mistakes, and to hear alternatives to my beliefs. A fine balance was required because I had to provide some activities to help the students with their practice teaching placements, yet I could not let them continually rely on me. I had to lessen my prominence in the program, redefine my role, and often answer questions with questions. Some students, not surprisingly, did not accept this as “real” teaching or university work, and resented the fact that I would not instruct them on the “right” way to teach. At times, it was difficult to deal with their hostility.

Negotiating My Role

Since action research projects were the framework for our experiences, my work activities, self-image, and relationships with students and staff changed significantly. Previously, I had seen myself as “training” teachers. Now, I began to think of myself as a facilitator for their growth. This shift, much more than semantics, altered the way I saw myself.

Closer Relationships with Students

As the students and I worked on their research projects, our relationship shifted from that of traditional student-professor to one of collaborators. Although this led

to a richer dialogue, a more natural working relationship, and increased learning, it did have its difficulties. The boundaries between staff and students that are well entrenched in university began to blur. Initially, I was not sure if I should be so relaxed with the students – would I lose credibility? In the majority of cases, my relationships with students were stronger and deeper: we learned together. Many graduates still keep in touch, and some have become friends. I have even co-authored papers with some former students. A few students, though, felt uncomfortable in the setting and wished for the return of the traditional model. I wonder about my responsibility to these types of learners. As we became a community, we still had to deal with typical academic requirements. With respect to deadlines, attendance, and the like, some students took advantage of the more collegial approach that is part of such a program. I felt betrayed, and more conscientious students were disturbed by the unfairness of the situation. I knew, however, that returning to the traditional model of control would undermine the principles of an inquiry community and ultimately harm those responsible students. I had to accept that there is seldom a perfect approach and that one has to find the best possible compromise. While I still wrestle with the issue of attendance and late submission of assignments, I now realize that most students flourish in this untraditional community and a small minority will always take advantage of the situation.

Co-researcher Versus Professor

Working collaboratively with students, for the most part, was a positive experience. In some instances, however, it was challenging to work with students who wanted to do action research projects that were not truly action research, or who were committed to inappropriate teaching practices. For example, the modifications Kyle wanted to implement initially were not sound curriculum strategies. I had to discourage him from following this line of action and help him understand the inappropriateness of his choices while still encouraging his budding sense of self as a teacher. I was simultaneously trying to be both co-researcher and professor. Playing two roles led to some confusing times: students were not sure how to work with me as I moved between roles, and I did not fully understand how to manage these positions. As students became more confident and knowledgeable, the need to shift roles became less common.

Field Work and Academic Endeavours

The action research process required me to provide extensive support to students while in their field placements. As I helped them, I wondered if I was taking too much ownership. Were the students deferring to me because of my extensive work in curriculum development? Was I acting like a professor or a classroom teacher? In theory, I believed I should support students, but there is a fine line between sup-

port and overtaking work. I now recognize the telltale signs of taking control of students' research. In addition to the issue of ownership, I began to question the wisdom of my commitment to the action research process. If the university system did not recognize the value of this fieldwork, should I jeopardize my career? Was I becoming "soft" on theory because of my preoccupation with practical work? How could I have time for research when I was spending so much time in schools and with school-related issues? When I attended a session on tenure review, I realized that I would have to find an ingenious means of combining my fieldwork with respectable research and publication if I was to remain true to myself. It also became important that I find a group of teacher educators facing similar challenges. At AERA in 1997, I attended Self-Study SIG and found that many in this group understood my dilemma. The extensive work in schools led me to question my place in an academic institution. I had been a curriculum consultant and had written a language arts series. I began to experience some role confusion. Was I a consultant, a teacher, a professor, or a co-researcher? At times, I was all of these, yet there was tension in performing so many roles. In order to work on a collegial basis with associate teachers, I had to draw on my experience as a teacher. Most of the discussion centred on curriculum practice and classroom management. I spent the majority of my time with field personnel and had little time left to develop connections at the university.

I wondered if I had made the right choice to leave a school board and become a professor. My talent for teaching and curriculum development seemed to match the expectations and rewards of the school system better than those of the university. One day, a famous academic passed me in the hall. He is a world-class scholar; I wondered about my place in the institution. After a long talk with my program chair, I realized that I was hired by the university, yet I behaved like an outsider. I began to understand that I had to take steps to see myself as a professor. I needed to move my office from our off-site location to the university and spend more time on campus.

Accepting Resistance

As mentioned earlier, all students did not subscribe to an inquiry-oriented program. A critical incident sharpened my understanding of the difficulties of what we were trying to do. In the second week of the program this past year, we introduced the concept of action research in a formal presentation. Immediately a student, Michael, responded to the concept and practice of action research so negatively that we were stunned by his vehemence. He wanted empirical proof that action research would improve the learning of student teachers and then demanded that the component be removed from the program. He complained to the associate dean and the superintendent in our partner school board. Given the initial apprehension most students have toward any type of research and their anxiety about practice teaching, this fuelled their misgivings.

With hindsight, I can see the ramifications of this incident. First, Michael's opposition forced me to assume a defensive position, rather than allowing the process

to unfold. Having to argue strongly for its value I often sounded evangelical in my pursuit, an uncomfortable position for an advocate of an inquiry approach. The extreme position I had to adopt created barriers – students did not feel comfortable voicing their concerns to me because of my stand. Secondly, the framework for the program included sharing decision-making with students, yet I could not practice this in relation to Michael and action research. I insisted it be done. Michael's opposition climaxed in a letter he distributed to staff and students, which served to alienate many students and all staff. As we dealt with this disruptive student, we began to wonder about our philosophy.

If we say that we are a learning community, should we allow a student to opt out of action research if she or he is disinterested or hostile? Should we review our vision statement and delete terms about shared decision-making if, in reality, we will not compromise? Are we undermining the philosophy of action research if we prescribe action research projects? How do we deal with a student who wants a teacher education program that provides recipes, an ultra-conservative approach to teaching? Should we grant a teaching certificate to someone who is close minded and disruptive? How do we accommodate a student whose philosophy and views are diametrically opposed to that of the department? We wondered if our enthusiasm for action research was clouding our judgment regarding the needs of our student teachers. Did we have less respect for those who did not fully embrace action research? While we have no answers to these questions, they reveal the complexity of action research, a learning community, and an inquiry focus.

Conclusion

Asking the students to reflect on their growth, past experiences, and future goals was an on-going part of the program. It became apparent that I too had to reflect on these and other questions. I identified mentors, kept a journal that I shared with students, examined my professional growth, asked my colleagues to give me feedback on my teaching, and set goals for myself.

Revelations about working in an inquiry focus were many. I shared some of the same apprehensions students had about action research. I talked about a democratic community, but did not fully comprehend it. I became nervous if I did not have enough plans for a class. I felt much more comfortable with some students than others and had to work on including the latter. My high-energy style alienated some quieter students. Students entrenched in conservative views of education are not going to change significantly, despite my best efforts. Finally, it took me a long time to realize that students had much more difficulty living with the uncertainty that comes from working in an inquiry program than I do. The inquiry focus raised many questions, changed my practice, and helped me to understand myself as a teacher, researcher, and professor. Working in our program has enriched me and given me the motivation to continue to contribute to the changing face of teacher education and school practice.

A Balancing Act: Self-Study In Valuing The Individual Student

Tidwell, D. (2000). A balancing act: self-study in valuing the individual student. In J. Loughran & T. Russell (Eds.), *Exploring myths and legends of teacher education proceedings of the third international conference of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices* (pp. 238–242), Queen’s University, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England.

Abstract

This self-study follows my work with three university students, each involved in a different level and program of study at my university (Martin, an African American undergraduate in elementary education; Kathy, a European American graduate in a masters program in reading and early childhood; and Ruby, a Chinese graduate student in a doctoral program in curriculum and instruction). This self-study examines how “valuing” a student is operationalized in teaching actions and reactions, and chronicles the issues and struggles involved in such a process. Patterns and categories derived from journaling and instructional documentation are embedded within the story of my work with each student. Key categories were instructional guidance, facilitation for student success, perceived student effort, student independence, student voice, and need (both of myself and of the student). The notion of valuing each student is best realized through context, where the teacher comes to know each student through the context of the student’s previous experiences, current life experiences, and academic/professional goals. Student academic performance is a negotiated premise derived from the expectations of the instructor/profession and the needs and understanding of the student.

Context

As a professor of literacy education with an interest in second language learners, I have been influenced in my own teaching from works by Collier (1995), Freeman and Freeman (1997), Ovando and Collier (1998), Sleeter and Grant (1994), and Faltis (1997). These authors highlight the cultural and social contexts of education, where students must negotiate the learning environment. Successful learning includes the student’s own experiences and realities. An effective teacher creates a learning environment that values students’ differences. Instruction in such an environment provides for student choice, creates opportunities for students to connect their own experiences and knowledge with content to be learned, and requires the teacher to understand the role and context of each student’s personal life (family culture) in the learning process. It has been my on-going goal to embrace these ideas within my university teaching practice. This notion of valuing students seems to butt against the very premise of higher education, where participation is defined by

institutional standards, institutional cultural norms. As a member of the institutional culture, I was interested in studying my own attempts at valuing students through specific case studies of individuals involved in different program level courses.

Method

Each of the three cases studied tells a story of my interactions with a student, chronicled through journaling and instructional documentation. Working with all three students on a near-daily basis provided on-going face-to-face contact, which helped insure the validity of my data gathering (Kirk & Miller, 1987). Data were examined for patterns and categories, which were then embedded within the story of each student and my work with that student. The completed stories were then shared with a colleague for feedback and were revised to reflect the colleague's insights (McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 1996).

The three students involved in this self-study represented different program levels my university. Martin was an African American undergraduate student taking his first methods course in reading and language arts. Karen, a European American graduate student in a master of education program in reading, was enrolled in a practicum course. Ruby was a Chinese graduate student in a doctoral program in curriculum and instruction writing her dissertation proposal. (Student names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.)

The Stories: Martin, Martin, Where Have You Gone?

Martin arrived in my class late the first day. I have never been one to focus on time, or what I call the mid-west obsession with tardiness. However, I noticed that he shuffled into class in almost a glassy-eyed daze and sat in the far corner at the back of the room. None of the students in class acknowledged his entrance nor paid much attention to him throughout the class period. This lack of attention to his presence continued throughout the semester. Martin was the only African American in a class of 28 students, and only one of three males. The remaining students in the class were European Americans. I was concerned about making this class a place where Martin would feel safe and welcome; I saw this as an educational equity issue (Davidman & Davidman, 1997). Since I organized the course around group interactions, each student chose a group to join. Martin chose a group that sat near him.

In an initial survey of interests, Martin stated that he had experience working with pre-school children for three summers and wanted to teach in Florida or Texas working with kindergarten through third-grade levels. Under the category "something unique about you," he stated, "I never give up on any one." He explained that in his life experiences, people had given up on him when he knew he could do things. He had trouble following directions, but if people took the time to explain things to him, he did "alright." Martin worked a night shift at a local factory, and

got off work at 7:30 AM, with class beginning at 8:00 AM. Understandably, Martin consistently had difficulty arriving to class on time. I had offered to arrange for him to take a later class, but Martin insisted this class time worked best for him.

At the onset of the semester, Martin experienced difficulty in completing assignments on time. The work he did submit was often not matching the assigned task (e.g., he was assigned to write about the teaching he had observed in a third-grade classroom, and he wrote about his impressions of the physical room). I set up regular meeting times with Martin to discuss assignments and his understanding of the class lectures, activities, and readings. I had hoped these meetings would facilitate his success in my class. Because of his work schedule, I tried to arrange times that he agreed would accommodate him. However, he began missing a number of classes, and missing meetings with me as well. I asked for a more formal arrangement that involved the Student Support Services on campus. By meeting with me, with a Student Support Service advisor about his coursework, and through on-going progress reporting, I thought the different perspectives and the concrete reporting would help Martin make sense of the course and of his progress. It did not.

My instructional guidance had focused on preparing Martin to succeed in college rather than on specific content about literacy. While class meetings focused on content and literacy processes, our one-to-one meetings and individualized attention during class time focused on student strategies (such as how to follow class directions, or how to confirm his understanding of assignments). My underlying assumption was that he was not able to function successfully as a student. All my attempts to facilitate his success focused on external guidance. While some internal guidance was nurtured through providing student strategies he could implement himself, this was superseded by external guidance measures when I perceived he was ineffective in using these strategies.

My sense of frustration was realized in my journal notes discussing his “lack of effort” to come talk with me, complete assignments, or attend class/meetings. Group participation was an important part of the class, and with his constant absences, Martin was unable to develop any sense of community with his group. In fact, when he attended class he rarely participated in group activities, preferring to listen and observe. I wrote conflicting journal entries that reflected my struggle with the notion of providing a classroom sensitive to cultural and knowledge differences: “creating an environment for all students to learn,” versus the more exclusive notion that some students are simply “not college material.” I perceived Martin as dependent on me for his success and not as an independent learner. However, Martin felt he was an independent learner, stating he preferred to work alone. He recognized that he was not keeping up with assignments, but believed most of his work was of good quality. He believed his late assignments related to misunderstandings about what was to be done. As the semester progressed, I began to shift the responsibility for Martin’s participation in class from myself as the instructor to Martin as the student.

I constantly questioned in my journal whether Martin’s voice could be heard since my perception of him as a student may have clouded my view of what he did and how he performed. For the most part, Martin’s voice came through in defense of his work and his attendance or in explanation of his performance. There were

few events where his voice was initiated outside those contexts. By the middle of the semester, Martin had missed 5 out of 16 class meetings, and 4 out of 7 personal meetings with me. Martin withdrew from class at mid-term.

Wait for Me, Karen, I Have More to Teach You

Karen came to the reading practicum course from a background in early childhood. This experience had given her a sense of confidence in working with children, and from the beginning Karen approached her practicum in reading tutoring supervision with enthusiasm. If anything, Karen reinforced the notion of higher education working best when students already fit the prescribed knowledge base. She knew how to be a student, how to take notes, follow directions, and complete tasks that had been assigned. In fact, she was so adept at being a student, at participating, that I found myself asking her to do less, to be less. She seemed to already know what to do with supervision. My role as the mentor/instructor in her practicum evolved into more of an observer and occasional sounding board. Rather than being pleased with her ability to supervise well and to become independent quickly, I found myself questioning whether I was providing appropriate instruction for her learning. If she appeared to have “nothing to learn,” was this even considered a valued learning experience?

To my chagrin, I found myself abandoning the tenets for valuing a student (student choice, connecting to previous experiences, and understanding the student’s own culture). Karen’s success as an effective supervisor was related directly to her previous experiences in supervision of young children, the tight mesh between her own culture and the culture of higher education, and her choices and decision-making (which led to very effective supervision). The very nature of this practicum (set within a tutorial program, working with pre-service teachers) suited Karen well. But I felt a need to provide instructional guidance (perhaps to prove the course was a valued component to her program of study; in essence, to prove to this student that she needed me). My weekly observations confirmed her effective work. In addition, I required her to meet with me regularly to discuss her weekly supervision in the tutorial program. During those meetings I would ask her to “tell the story of her week” only to interrupt her story and her voice, and to provide my own thoughts and suggestions. Rather than facilitating her success, in a way I was renouncing it. I definitely was attempting to impede her independence and to limit her voice. Karen completed the semester practicum with high marks from the pre-service teachers she supervised (from mid-term and final supervisor evaluations by her students).

Ruby’s Passionate Proposal

A strong advocate of bilingual education and second language acquisition, Ruby had worked with me for two years as a doctoral graduate assistant. Throughout those two years she had developed a literature base for teacher preparation of bilingual

learners. In the process of developing this literature base, Ruby had become a strong advocate of bilingual education. With a masters in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), she worked off campus as an ESL instructor for new Chinese immigrants to the United States.

As Ruby described it, her personal connection to ESL students' life experiences led her to appreciate the importance of maintaining the family culture and language in order to successfully acculturate to the United States. By maintaining children's family culture and language while learning a new language and culture, she believed families were better able to stay intact. She saw the need for language maintenance as integral to family survival. Ruby was enrolled in her first semester of her dissertation, where she would develop her proposal for study. From the onset, Ruby was passionate about her dissertation topic, studying the beliefs of parents who send their children to heritage language schools. As a Chinese national who was raised by parents involved in Christian ministry in China, Ruby brought to her study a strong desire to "do the morally correct thing" for learners. Her interest in bilingual education came from a belief that family heritage and language heritage related closely to moral development, an appreciation of one's heritage and culture. Journal entries of my work with Ruby reflect my desire to have Ruby develop a study that tied her own cultural experiences and beliefs to content studied in her doctoral program. However, I felt a need to provide instructional guidance to help Ruby balance her passion for her topic with academic rigor. This translated into on-going discussions with Ruby about the reasoning behind her study, the narrowing of her topic, and maintaining a focus on that topic in her research design.

Over the semester I saw Ruby move from a student dependent on my confirmation of her work to an independent researcher who felt a real ownership and connection (expertise) with her area of study. I saw my role evolve from instructor to facilitator. Ruby and I developed a network with her committee members, to help facilitate her successful defense of her proposal. Because of her passion for her topic, Ruby's voice came through in her proposal writing and in her discussions with me of her proposal process. The success of her dissertation proposal was the culmination of study in content related to her own life experiences and culture, a connection to her own moral purpose to education, a forum that provided structure but encouraged student voice, and a relationship that developed over two years of working together, where I came to know about Ruby and Ruby came to know about me.

So What?

My focus on examining how I value students helped me better understand my own premises about what I believe to be effective teaching. My desire to create a successful learning fulfilled. Martin elicited conflicting views within my own thinking about the broader question of the purpose of higher education: is it an environment that should be shaped for all students, or is it a unique environment for students possessing institutionally preferred knowledge? Is this a cultural issue or a quality issue?

While I attempted to provide Martin with many opportunities to succeed in my class, he was unable to be successful. For Karen, I resisted her desire to be independent, insisting my role as an instructor be realized. Karen's story raised questions about when and how I value students in my class. Does my need to provide instructional support to my students override my desire to provide an instructional environment that values students? With Ruby, my desire to create a successful learning environment was most closely realized. I do not attribute this to involvement with a doctoral-level student, as the doctoral program level has never been my preference for instruction. Rather, I provided a successful learning environment for Ruby because I knew her really well. I knew the context of her previous experiences, her current life experiences, and her academic/professional goals.

Each of these student's academic performances was derived from my negotiation of my own expectations (derived from expectations of the profession and from my role as an instructor), and the understandings and needs I perceived being demonstrated by the student (through my own observations and from student feedback). How well I knew students helped me understand their actions, and influenced my actions and reactions. How well a student knew me no doubt influenced his or her actions and reactions to me as well. My next step in self-study will be to investigate ways of getting to know students that will help me to develop a learning environment that recognizes their previous experiences, incorporates their current life experiences, and relates to their academic and professional goals.

Theater of the Oppressed as a Self-Study Process: Understanding Ourselves as Actors in Teacher Education Classrooms

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Abstract

This self-study examines a collaboration designed to engage pre-service teachers in the social reconstructionist approach to multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 1994) through Theater of the Oppressed (ToO). We wanted to know if ToO might help us achieve the desired outcomes of a course on teaching for democracy and social justice. We also wanted to understand how our experience with ToO might influence our teaching practices. In this account, Peggy is the teacher educator/researcher. Other authors studied the process from an “outside” perspective,

but Karen and Dan are teacher educators who have taught the same course and understand it well.

Conceptual Framework

“(Theatre is) an important means of communication that, in one way or another, has always been associated with the daily activities of human beings ... (and) has served the function of bringing a community together for celebration, entertainment, and dialogue” (Blanco, 2000, p. 8). For Augusto Boal, theater, like most human activities, is political. Because theater’s tradition of monologue silences popular audiences, he created a form of popular theater called ToO that breaks down the separation between stage and audience (Boal, 1985). The spectator becomes spect-actor. Audience members are invited on stage to demonstrate ways of resolving problems portrayed by the actors. This empowers audience members to imagine change, practice change, and reflect on action. ToO develops knowledge and skills requisite to social and political action in communities, in an environment of support and safety.

The work of Paulo Freire intersected with that of Augusto Boal. They both worked toward liberation of oppressed and laboring people in Brazil. Freire (1998b) argued that typically education serves the interests of the privileged and imposes an ideology that sustains the status quo. Still, education has the power to liberate. Liberation education attempts to make visible the assumptions embedded in an imposed ideology in order to challenge them (Shor & Freire, 1987; Freire, 1998b). ToO creates visual imagery from which learners may explore those assumptions and problematize the conditions of their lives.

Design of the Study

“Those involved in self-study systematically collect evidence from their practice, allowing them to rethink and potentially open themselves to new interpretations and to create different strategies” (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998b, pp. 1–2). We used McNiff’s (1993) and Whitehead’s (1989) action research strategies to guide our inquiry. Action research is “a way of improving personal practice, where practice takes the form of critical ‘reflection in action’ . . . a form of educational enquiry that empowers practitioners to generate and control their own process of change” (McNiff, 1993, p. 37). As described by McNiff and Whitehead, action research incorporates five sequential steps, four of which are represented in this study.

The first step involved recognizing a problem. We recognized a problem when our educational values were denied in our practice. Karen and Peggy’s course - Inquiry into School, Community and Society (ISCS) - includes themes of reflection, inquiry, professionalism, and diversity. Through course evaluations and written comments, students have voiced objections to our focus on student diversity and

multicultural theory. Almost all of our students are Anglo-American and middle class, many of whom have difficulty understanding racial or ethnic identities and have limited experience with anyone very different from them (Cockrell et al., 1999).

The second step involved imagining a solution to the problem. Augusto Boal visited our campus in 2000. Shortly thereafter, the Theater Department announced that it would sponsor a campus ToO workshop. Our positive experiences at this event stimulated discussions about classroom applications of ToO. Suzanne, a Theater faculty member, received a grant to study college teaching and proposed a study pairing her class on ToO with Peggy's upcoming ISCS class. We allocated 5 of Peggy's 16 class periods to ToO. Theater students would demonstrate ToO and collaborate outside of class with education students to create performances. Two sessions would involve Image Theater, in which actors portray situations or concepts nonverbally, and three sessions would involve Forum Theater, scenes in which a protagonist confronts a problem and spect-actors step in to solve the problem.

The third and fourth steps involved implementing a solution to the problem and evaluating the solution. Early in Fall 2000, we discussed our research plan with the students in their respective classes and invited them to participate. Of 16 enrolled in Peggy's class, 11 agreed to participate. Twenty of the 21 students enrolled in Suzanne's class agreed. We collected the following data:

- (1) Demographic survey – Personal (gender, ethnicity), academic (program of study, placement), background (home community), and experience (education, cross-cultural).
- (2) Journals – Student reflections on readings, group projects, ToO projects, panel presentations, and field experiences.
- (3) Observations – Researchers observed performances and recorded fieldnotes, and all Forum Theater performances were videotaped. The researchers used qualitative methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to analyze the data into the following themes. In addition, Peggy wrote a narrative of her experience as a teacher educator. For this paper, we wove the two perspectives together.

Searching for Value

What Peggy experienced: At the first class session, I merely mentioned ToO and promised that more details would be forthcoming. Over the next few class sessions a few students voiced two familiar complaints about the class. One was the amount of work required. Our program is supposed to emphasize “reflection,” but some students profess to see little value in time spent on written reflections. Another, related complaint was about the practical value of the course. Rather than reading about and discussing issues in ethics, politics, and culture of schooling, some students said they would rather be learning “how to teach.” In the third week, Suzanne and

her students came to introduce ToO. Without introduction, they plunged us into games that required movement, spontaneity, and some risk-taking. For the most part, students seemed to enjoy this. But at the next class the same vocal students who had complained about workload and impractical content complained that ToO was a poor use of their time. Scheduling outside of class rehearsal times with the Theater class was difficult; there was resistance to meeting outside of class at all.

I felt that I was coercing participation, which was against my philosophy. Was I being oppressive? My impulse was to say, “Okay, I hear you, let’s just cancel it.” I also felt an urge to give up because I was embarrassed in research team meetings, in which my students were described as conventional people who rejected anything innovative or challenging. On the other hand, I felt that if they would just give ToO a chance, something extraordinary could happen. Moreover, I did not want to sabotage Suzanne, whose research project hinged on the outcomes. When the groups presented their Image Theater pieces, their performances and interpretations of them were very interesting. But at the next class, I heard the same complaints. When I read the first journals, I saw that a number of people, not the majority but those who made the most aggressive classroom comments, saw no value in the activity and urged me to scrap it.

What the Researchers Found?

In their early journals, students explained their negative responses to ToO. Some felt it had limited or no practical value. Some conceded that they enjoyed the activities, but enjoyment was not enough. Some were confused about the relevance of ToO to the curriculum. Others felt uncomfortable with acting; Tess explained, “I have never been much of a theater person. I have never felt very outgoing and these activities put me out of my skin.” Students also cited a preference for “traditional” or “structured” teaching/learning methods as more time efficient and effective. They particularly resented spending time outside of class with the Theater students. The word “time” recurred constantly; Jan described a rehearsal as “sacrific(ing) precious time.”

Some students reacted negatively to “oppression.” As Ron said, “I don’t feel oppressed. I don’t really think teachers are oppressed and I don’t think most students are oppressed either. I guess this method might be very effective in dealing with severely oppressive situations, but I still don’t understand how that would relate to us and why we would be learning about it in our class.” Clearly, he would have difficulty understanding the life circumstances of many students and their families. This lack of experience was related to naive or negative statements on the relevance of culture and community to teaching in other journal entries. However, some saw the relevance to teaching practice. Ron admitted, “One of our biggest challenges that we face as teachers is to adapt our teaching skills and strategies to the needs of our students and theater may be one way some students can really relate to the material. We may have to teach in ways that we are not comfortable in order to adapt for some students’ learning.”

Tracey realized that “we each carry certain objectives and beliefs with us into the classroom. Each individual can relate to each moment differently from the next ... I think this relates directly to the audience of students that view each teacher’s performance. Consideration of the audience is important in writing and teaching. I never considered this fully before this assignment ... I feel that if we spent more time trying to relate to the possible oppressions that we impose upon our prospective students, then we would be able to produce better results.” Tess said, “I think our group did a good job of trying to transition our negative image into an ideal image. Things can’t just happen like magic. It takes a lot of time and effort to change things in a classroom. I think this exercise really helped to put that into perspective for me.” In observations, we found a thought-provoking paradox. Although in journals many students stated a preference for traditional pedagogy, this was not evident in their transitions from oppressive to ideal scenes. As Stacy observed, “all of our groups went from teacher centered to more student centered or community ideal situations.” We speculated that pre-service teachers have integrated the ideal (which, presumably, they have been taught) of collaborative pedagogy, but may not have enough experience to appropriate it as an approach to their own learning.

Discovering Links to Practice

What Peggy experienced: When Suzanne and her students introduced Forum Theater, this time she talked briefly about ToO, its history, and value. Theater students performed a scene in which an evil efficiency expert harassed a teacher while at the same time her students misbehaved. My students at first hesitated, then jumped in to play the teacher. They were frustrated at not being able to “control” the children (the Theater students made this impossible). It was very entertaining, and I thought my class was attracted to this activity. However, once again the amount of time Theater students wanted for rehearsals was anathema. The Theater students told Suzanne that some of my students were uncooperative. What would happen? We scheduled the little theater for the performances, a dramatic setting that took my students out of their usual environment. The performances were terrific. My students astounded me. They selected four serious teacher dilemmas to dramatize: standardized testing and its effects on students, the teacher’s obligations in cases of child abuse, religious and other objections to curriculum decisions, and textbook censorship. It was hard to imagine that anyone would *not* see value in this, but I still dreaded hearing the students’ responses.

What the Researchers Found?

Forum Theater was a turning point in reactions to ToO. Valerie, who “didn’t see the point” of Image Theater, said of Forum Theater that she “actually viewed it as a tool for learning.” Sarah, who responded to Image Theater with, “I hated the theater

project and every aspect of it,” said, “I think that a Forum Theater type format could actually be used effectively within my classroom as a means to deal with issues of intolerance and lack of perspective.” Others felt more comfortable. Tess observed, “The first project seemed vague and uncomfortable, but this time I felt more at ease ... I really enjoyed this project and I hope our next one is just as fun!” Alicia, who described herself as “a shy, quiet student,” said in an early journal entry: “I am not an actress and have no desire to be one, furthermore, I have no skill whatsoever in this area. I am just . . . hoping it will not be too painful or humiliating.” After Forum Theater, she noted, “having had this experience I can see the thrill (of acting) and have had a lot of fun. This is much more enjoyable than actually doing a written project and presenting it. I have definitely benefited from this.”

Some journal responses discussed Forum Theater as a way to learn problem-solving. Josh explained that “being able to look at the situation from the outside” provided helpful objectivity; he could analyze the situation critically, taking time to consider and evaluate alternate solutions. The process “made me open my mind to other possible solutions,” and he “gained experience in dealing with” classroom problems related to diversity. While Carlie suggested that case study videos might provide similar learning about problem-solving, Alicia noted that Forum Theater promotes empathy, “gives us that sense of being in the situation. Especially as the protagonist, I honestly felt the frustration that I know teachers feel on a daily basis!” Nancy pointed out, “I do feel that Forum Theater may be a more effective way to generate solutions than simple discussion. Solutions always sound so easy. By actually ‘trying them out’ through Forum Theater, we got a much better idea of how the situation might actually play out.” Other students appreciated the spect-actor concept. Valerie observed that “allowing us to ‘sub-in’ for the protagonist gave us the opportunity to apply what we’ve learned . . . it also prepared us for the unexpected. For instance, when I ‘subbed-in’ many people assumed the counselor would support me. However, when he didn’t, it was an eye-opening experience for all of us. This exercise made us question our decisions as well as our values. Although case studies and Forum Theater aim for the same effect, the simple addition of performative participation by the audience has a greater impact. I wish that we could do it again.”

Forum Theater could be adopted into their teaching practice. Valerie said, “I can easily see myself using this strategy in my classroom. As an English teacher, I could have my students act out a story or scene and then have people ‘sub-in’ and act out the way in which they would have handled the situation. This will develop critical thinking skills.” Others talked about more awareness of oppression or diversity and power in the classroom. As Tracey observed, “when we were asked to create a situation that was oppressive culturally, I did not know the results would be so far reaching and prevalent in modern day education. The forum theater really opened my eyes to the phenomenon of several types of cultural bias in the classroom.” The journals showed a growing awareness of diversity. Of course, students knew instructors would read the journals, and those who volunteered for the study may have been more open-minded than those who declined. Nevertheless, responses were encouraging. Pre-service teachers expanded their thinking about their responsibility to teach all students and communicate with all families. Tess stated, “By providing our

students with a variety of perspectives, we are enriching their learning environment and possibly decreasing the amount of racism and prejudice in our schools.”

What Did We Learn?

Interdisciplinary collaboration presented logistical and cultural dilemmas. Theater students are accustomed to working many hours outside of class, while the education students considered this unreasonable. Theater students saw the need for rehearsals to perfect the technical and artistic aspects of performances, aspects which were not as important to pre-service teachers. There was never enough time to both perform and process activities. More class time should have been allocated to ToO.

The interplay between a teacher educator and other researchers was more valuable than previous self-studies in which Peggy was the lone teacher researcher. Even though Peggy had read the journals, she was so discouraged by strong negative comments about ToO that she did not recognize the positive trends the researchers identified. She was more pessimistic and anxious about the experience than she should have been, due to the negativity of 2–3 students. Many students did make the links between ToO, teaching practice, and social justice.

Resistance to ToO could have been a “teachable moment.” Peggy might have scrapped the planned curriculum, in part, in favor of discussing coercion, resistance, discomfort with acting, and conflicting curriculum theories. Some students noted that resistance of other class members put a damper on their enthusiasm. Future teachers need to consider what to do if a few students resist something they believe is valuable. Peggy said, “Sometimes I should not back off in the face of student negativity toward something new. But for the skeptics I need to make more explicit connections between ToO and the curriculum, so that it does not seem to be a disconnected ‘add-on,’ ‘loony experiment,’ or ‘waste of time.’ ToO is obviously related to ethical decision-making, professionalism, and teacher-family relationships. I instead gave my students the impression that it was an external intervention.”

Some students rejected “oppression,” perhaps because they believed it was “politically correct.” Some rejected the idea that schools or teachers could be “oppressive.” But would that not be true in any professional education? Would law students want to participate in activities designed to reveal their oppressiveness? People want to be inspired about their profession and the investment they make in it. Would we want to take a course on teacher educators as oppressors? (Maybe.) These are the kinds of provocative questions that ToO raised for us. Given that, it was a very productive self-study method.

Revising the Task: The Genre of Assignment-Making

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Walter Doyle (1983) framed teaching as, in large part, the act of designing academic work. As teacher educators with a high school teaching past, we agree. Much of our work as classroom teachers and now as university teacher educators revolved/s around drafting, editing, and revising academic work – assignments. This should not be a surprising way of thinking about our work. Even as young children in playing school, we knew that the fun of the game rested heavily on the skill of the child picked as “teacher.” Unless that child had some ideas about written “work” for the rest of us to do, the game would not get started or continue for long.

For better or worse, assignments or tasks seem to lie at the core of a teaching/learning exchange. Unstructured conversations with and among students in a seminar, requests for students’ responses to an assigned reading/text, and written work with parameters described by the teacher are examples of what David Hawkins (1967) would call the “It” of an educational triangle. Hawkins argues that two people, an “I” and a “Thou,” or two groups, a teacher and students, find they have no venue for building a conversation minus an “It,” a topic, artifact, curriculum, or task/assignment. It is the agreement to join together around this “It” that, Hawkins argues, allows teachers and students to work together to create a shared understanding. We – Sandy and Diane – have chosen to look closely at the “It” around which much of our teaching finds its intellectual interest.

In order to better understand the intellectual work we – Sandy and Diane – do as teacher educators, we’ve gathered and examined assignments we’ve drafted, used, and revised over almost 15 years of doing teacher education. Our assignments represent our knowledge in action (Schön, 1987). Because we believe assignments are central to our practices and because they act as artifacts representing our own learning across time, we want to explore them as data. By examining assignments we have edited, revised, and continued to use across multiple semesters, we hope to learn more about what we value enough to repeatedly try to teach. By consciously exploring the feedback we have received in the form of students’ responses to assignments, we hope to identify the strategies we use to know whether and how we need to revise a particular assignment further or toss it altogether. What follows here are two vignettes. Each is based on journal notes, unit planning notes, samples of students’ work – particularly work that is unsatisfying to us – and analyses of assignments we’ve used across multiple semesters, but in different forms or revisions across time. Sandy’s vignette describes expectations in teaching activities in math education. Diane’s describes how students’ responses to assignments teach her about revision.

Sandy Thinks About Assignment Making

As I plan activities for my mathematics teacher candidates, there are many areas of need to consider. We scrutinize textbooks, discuss scenarios for classroom

management, analyze ways students think through problem-solving, investigate misconceptions in students' work, and many other meaningful, timely activities. One of the activities I value most is an activity where each of my students design, develop, present, and reflect upon a 20-minute lesson. Many times, students desiring to teach secondary mathematics have not developed the ability to determine when a lesson can be presented using a discovery, inquiry, or cooperative learning approach, nor has the teacher candidate been exposed to such teaching strategies in the learning experience in mathematics during his/her higher education experience. Too often the teaching strategy in the university content classroom is lecture based or direct instruction. Lecture-based and direct instruction strategies do not generally provide opportunities for interactive engagement. These strategies may be efficient for the higher education content classroom, but they are not what is desired by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) for students at the K-12 level nor for this teacher educator.

As a way to advocate alternative instructional choices, I modeled lessons, some of which are purely discovery and inquiry based, and some that work well in cooperative learning environments. During class sessions, I purposefully modeled lessons for my students that would engage them in hands-on activities and force them to learn by discovery. Reactions varied. One student was very reluctant to abandon his pencil and calculator. But most of my students were profoundly impressed as they expressed, "This is so much fun," or "I never thought of this like that." It was obvious to me that they were experiencing something foreign and exciting. One student even pressed another to try to discover her way of visualizing patterns rather than calculating with symbols. I was fairly confident that they understood what was expected, and what the aspects of a discovery lesson involved now that they had experienced it themselves. We also discussed issues such as questioning techniques and responses to student inquiry. I would say, "Notice that I answered your question with another question to allow you time to figure this out yourself." Or I would draw attention to the process by which I was directing someone's activities on the board. For this assignment, the group developed a rubric to determine what aspects of this teaching activity were important for critical analysis. We agreed that accuracy in content, preparation of detailed lesson plan, student interaction, implementation of the plan, and reflection would be major components of the assessment. I believed the teacher candidates were ready to demonstrate their learning by teaching model discovery lessons themselves. All students developed discovery lessons on paper, but during the actual teaching activities, two of five teacher candidates reverted back to direct instruction using symbol manipulation rather than allowing participants time to engage in the activities planned. These two students actually taught after the two others who did engage everyone in learning by discovery. While these two wrote in their lesson reflections that they realized that most, if not all, of their activities used a direct instruction format, they were comfortable about that.

I had thought students would be excited about using a discovery approach to instruction because they were excited about learning by discovery in my simulations. Instead, they appeared to revert back to what seemed to be the easiest, most comfortable method of instruction for them – direct instruction. I was further discouraged

to see that one student didn't even build a detailed lesson plan, but rather had bits and pieces of activities jotted down to jog her memory. The teacher candidates helped develop the rubric we used for assessing their planning and presentation of the lesson. Therefore, they were aware of the assessment criteria. Yet as they presented and then reflected upon their lessons, it became apparent to me that some of the students were just checking the boxes in the rubric. It seemed that they were more interested in fulfilling the requirements of the rubric than developing creative, innovative lessons.

As I analyzed these activities and reflections, I was concerned that these students perceived time constraints as an issue because learning or teaching by discovery is time consuming. I wonder if they were inhibited because of their prior experiences and how I can revise this assignment in order to help them feel comfortable experimenting with various instructional strategies. To empower teacher candidates with a variety of ways to present content is a critical part of my objectives for this course. For most of these teacher candidates, internship is next in their plan of study. Therefore, I believe it is critical for them to be able to analyze lessons to determine which ones can be presented in a nondirective format, and which ones cannot be done so. Then, they should be able to design, develop, present, and assess instruction that varies. The students who produce lessons that are nondirective do not cause me to notice, much less reconsider, my own instructional strategies. It is the other 40% who force me to re-evaluate my methods of assignment making. Is there something else I could do in the activities I present that would help them focus more on creative activities in their own instruction? Is a detailed rubric necessary? Would they tend to be in a "check the box" mode if a more subjective rubric were provided? These are some of the issues I consider as I think about how to refine an assignment that I think is valuable for them to master.

Diane Thinks About Assignment Revision

When I write an assignment for students, I get feedback of a unique kind. Students do not directly respond to my assignment as a piece of text that might be made better; they simply enact the assignment. They produce a counter-piece of text.

As I read their responses to my assignment, my request for a text, I often learn as much about how to revise and better craft my assignment as I learn about my students' understanding of our coursework. I also find myself face to face with what I only tacitly knew that I "wanted" from students. Once I get over feeling embarrassed at my own lack of consciousness, I find I have an opportunity to consciously revise my assignment so that it asks for exactly what it is I had not so consciously hoped students would learn, master, explore, or critique. I have the opportunity to see what I value enough to insist that students address.

Curiously, I seldom learn very much from students whose responses to my assignment or prompt are exactly what I expected to read. Those papers never wake me up or shake me in any way. I do wake up and learn from those responses that exceed what I thought I had requested. And when I encounter a student's response

that technically fulfills the assignment's parameters but seems to me to have missed the point altogether, I not only wake up, but also lose sleep trying to say to myself how that happened. I'd like to share a few examples.

The “I Thought They’d Know . . .” Case

It was a beautiful Michigan fall. I was a new assistant professor finally teaching a course for a second time. I had spent several class sessions in a workshop format guiding prospective secondary teachers as they examined textbooks in their respective areas of subject matter expertise. Students had been engaged; they had expressed surprise over features they liked in textbooks even though they had been predisposed to reject them. They were appropriately appalled at the theory behind reading levels, and they had dutifully submitted several texts to full analysis using what were then state-of-the-art checklists for readability, usability, and understandability. They were to go home and pull together their findings, present their data, and analyze those data to produce a recommendation for an imaginary school board about the viability of one textbook of choice. I was pretty pleased with my assignment. It modeled writing for an audience other than the teacher; I had more than supported the assignment with workshop time in class; students had done verbal rehearsals with peers. I expected great things. I got very mediocre work. Few students reported their data. Most simply described the textbook, appended the checklists, and went straight with a letter to the school board. These letters summarized the contents of the textbook under review and asserted that students would like it. Very few projects used the data we'd developed in class in any way.

I was honestly surprised – and wide awake. I thought students would know how to synthesize what we'd done together in class. I thought they would know the difference between reporting data, analyzing it, and drawing a conclusion. After all, I knew how to do these things. I'd been regularly modeling these actions in class. As simple minded as it may sound, my assignment gave me an opportunity to learn two very important new ideas. First, I learned that students in that particular university saw every class session as discrete. They had no experience understanding university class sessions as connected, as building one on the next. They had no idea how to use class time as prewriting for an impending assignment. Nor had I made that obvious for them. Second, I learned that I truly valued the process of looking at data, analyzing it, and then drawing a data-based conclusion. I valued it enough to revise that textbook analysis assignment steadily across the next four iterations of that particular course. It would have been easier to abandon the assignment, do the in-class workshop sessions, and let it go at that. We could have drawn oral conclusions in a whole class discussion. But I rejected that solution. At the time, I was not very aware of pursuing my values as a teacher educator. Consciously, I simply knew that I wanted to make this assignment work. It is only in retrospect that I see how much I valued initiating prospective teachers into an analytical way of making decisions about curriculum. This value appears as a theme running through several

assignments I have carefully revised for use in other courses. Through successive revisions I have learned to include explicit opportunities for prospective teachers to identify data and separate that from analyzing those data. I have learned how to help them pause and separate analysis from conclusion drawing. Are we perfectly in harmony with this? Of course not. What does flow like a well-tuned orchestra, however, is my own awareness of what I value as the teacher educator in the room and what I've chosen as a pedagogical goal.

The “I Had No Idea I Wanted That” Case

This past semester, I ran a first draft of a new assignment. Based on Tom Romano's work, *Writing with Passion* (1995), I invited a group of 16 prospective English teachers to write a research report in a multigenre format rather than in traditional expository text. I shared with them my goal. I wanted them to be positioned to decide whether Romano is right. Can multigenre writing substitute for the traditional research report? We had read about it. I wanted us to actually experience the strategy before passing judgment. I asked students to select any topic, to research it, and then to recast that research as poetry, narrative, news articles, diaries, advertisement, letters, and so on. I required five genres. The report was to culminate in an essay arguing the merits and limitations of multigenre research reporting.

I cannot begin to share in writing the wonder of these multigenre reports. Students committed to them fully. They laminated and bound their reports, decorated covers, added genres, aged paper, and included computer graphics. They far exceeded the assignment's parameters. Until I read the end-of-report essays, I was thrilled with this first draft of this assignment. It was the essays that surprised me, woke me up. Of the 16 I read, only two actually analyzed the process of writing the report and compared the learning with what might be learned by writing a traditional report. However, all 16 technically wrote the essay I had requested. What made these two so much better? The two students whose essays satisfied me fully both wrote their essay as a narrative. Each carefully reported the tale of how s/he made choices while compiling the multigenre report.

Each explained how s/he had thought about transforming research notes into a genre, why each had chosen a specific genre, and how that choice had either expanded or limited what was learned. These two students also asked themselves directly whether the multigenre format created a need for either more or less research than normal. And each wrote about the goals s/he assumed lie behind assigning a traditional research report. Again, it looks almost naïve to see that I did not anticipate well the elements a prospective teacher would need to include in order to be positioned to answer my question. The fact is, I didn't see need for instructions beyond those I wrote. But when I read those two strong essays, I was able to learn what the authors had done to make their work so strong. I was able to learn how to revise my assignment.

Conclusion

Our studies treat assignments as both a type of writing genre and an element of tacit teacher knowledge. How and why do we alter our designs? What informs our revisions? A good novelist relies heavily on readers to help her shape her revisions. Her editor's comments help her locate omissions and curb excesses. Who helps a teacher educator shape, trim, and craft her work as an author of assignments? Do teachers have editors? One of the most disappointing things that can happen in the classroom is for an instructor to carefully develop an assignment, students to work attentively to meet the criteria, but the end results miss the mark in the instructor's expectations. As teacher educators, we draft an assignment and, instead of getting in return a close and helpful reading by an editor or a trusted friend, we get 25 responses from our students. As we read through these, we see our assignment come back to us in 25 different forms. We learn what any author learns from listening to her work come back to her from another – how our assignment was ambiguous, how it omitted invitation 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.

Appendix B

Working with Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)

Every IRB is different, so it will be important for all researchers to contact the IRB on their campus. Rather than attempt to write globally, we situated the information below within the University of Kansas (KU) as an example of what can be expected at an institution if a researcher hopes to engage in self-study research. (We can say that Brigham Young University would address these issues in a similar fashion.) To prepare information for this appendix, we gathered our information from David Hann and Mary Denning, the coordinator and the associate coordinator of the Human Subjects Committee at the KU. Once we wrote this short document, they approved the information contained here prior to inclusion in this text.

In what follows we present the definitions used in a discussion with Hann and Denning along with an interpretation of the response. We also offer a plan for new faculty members and a general sense of expectations at one institution to help researchers consider the expectations in their own institutions.

As a Form of Research

We (1998) define a self-study research as “the study of one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas, as well as the ‘not self’ . It is autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political . . . it draws on one’s life, but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known and ideas considered” (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998b, p. 236). Like most qualitative research, self-study research is not generalizable. Yet there are many outlets for publication. We analyze our own teaching practice for the purpose of discerning issues of learning and practice. This is systematic research sometimes done with a co-investigator with a distinctive format of data collection and analysis strategies.

Interpretation of response: When engaging in self-study at the KU, a researcher would not need to submit a form to our IRB because the work, the

research, is done on self and personal practice. When working in collaboration with a faculty member, each doing a self-study, a researcher *probably* would not have to submit a form to IRB, but the researcher should send an inquiry to the IRB director for assurance. When the researcher works with students as a part of a self-study where the focus includes students, the researcher needs to submit forms to the IRB as a part of the expedited review process (explained in the expectations section).

For a New Faculty Member

As a **new faculty member** engaged in self-study, the IRB coordinator at KU recommends:

- Regarding issues of consent, know how to work *with* the system at your institution.
- If possible, question your colleagues about the best contacts within the IRB.
- Set up a meeting with that person (or a person) at your IRB.
- Look at the requirements and the application beforehand, and do your homework prior to the meeting.
- Check out your institution's IRB website.

When working with a district, talk with the district first. (In Lawrence the researcher must have approval from the IRB first, and then get the approval of the Lawrence Unified School District.) Still, checking out the district and investigating entrée into the site as you plan your work is important.

Remember, there are differences from one IRB to another, so check out your IRB when you arrive at your institution.

To give a sense of the expectations at the KU, we have excerpted important points from the IRB website to provide context. At the KU, the term "research" means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities that meet this definition may be funded or unfunded, or may be conducted as a component of another program not usually considered research.

At the KU, our **Human Subjects Committee – Lawrence Campus (HSCL)** protects those who volunteer to be participants in research studies. If you plan to use human participants in your research, you are required to receive permission from HSCL *before* the project commences. HSCL's primary mission is to protect research participants' rights and privacy. In addition, it protects investigators from legal and ethical missteps and safeguards them from the repercussions of such missteps.

For all IRBs, the Belmont Report serves as a golden rule for research. The rights of research participants are summarized in this report's (9-30-1978) three principles: **respect for persons** – participants must understand and voluntarily agree to take part in a research project, **beneficence** – people are treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, but also by making efforts to secure their well-being, and **justice** – those who bear the burdens of research should share its benefits.

Must you work through HSCL? The answer is "yes" if your project involves interviews, observations, surveys, or any other form of information gathering about humans, either as individuals or as members of groups . . . and if your project is sponsored in any way by KU, conducted by someone connected with KU (this includes all students, faculty, administrators, and other employees), uses any KU property or facility, or involves KU non-public information to identify or contact subjects.

Who is responsible? Every researcher is ultimately responsible for the ethical conduct of his or her research. In addition, faculty advisers are responsible for reading student applications to the HSCL before they are submitted. Each investigator should keep records relating to his or her research. All written or oral consents should be documented and filed. Should subjects complain about how they were treated in a project, a well-documented record is the investigator's best defense.

IRBs determine the status of research. KU does not use exempt category; they use *expedited* as a category. In this situation IRBs are not required to undertake a full board review. For expedited review, there is a review by one person with a quick turnaround time.

Here we include website resources. At KU these web sources are clear and specific. We also recommend that you check the resources offered at your home institution

Human Subjects Committee – Lawrence Campus http://www.rcr.ku.edu/hsc/hsc_handbook/
Human Subjects Protection Tutorial for Lawrence Campus http://www.rcr.ku.edu/hsc/hsp_tutorial/000.shtml

Appendix C

Glossary of Some Terms

Term	Definition
Action Research	Action research is fundamentally practical research that applies social science research practices within programs of social action with the specific purposes of addressing social problems and bringing about change. Those who apply it to schools and classrooms focus most clearly on producing evidence of student learning that can be attributed to the action of the researcher. There are several different formulaic approaches. Action research has shifted across time and various forms exist; however, all share the fundamental commitment to using research to effect change. Participatory action research is based on liberation theology where researchers working in groups attempt to address social issues and inequalities.
Autoethnography	Considered an autobiographical genre of writing and research that reveals multiple layers of experience. It was originally used to describe cultural studies of one's own people (Hayano, 1979), but it now refers to stories that feature the self or includes the researcher as a character (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000, 2003) and reveals aspects of self and experiences in a broader social context and cultural understanding.
Bonding Social Capital	A kind of social capital available for use in tightly knit often familial or close intimate friendship groups within a society.
Bridging Social Capital	A kind of social capital available for use within a society across differences in class, ethnicity, or other group distinctions.
Characteristics of Dialogue	To become dialogue, a conversation moves beyond talk to include inquiry, critique, evidence, reflection, and response. This combination of discourse elements is what distinguishes dialogue from simple conversation. The discourse is fundamentally focused on inquiry and interrogates the ideas and the connection of ideas to evidence, and to theories and research. Participants take an inquiry stance in order to explore, evaluate, wonder, and imagine. They provide counter-arguments, augment, and expand support for the ideas presented, and develop alternative explanations.

Term	Definition
Designing an S-STTEP Study	Recommendations to guide this process: use what you already know, make a commitment to practice and use research tools rigorously, connect with established findings and theories from social science or education research, use research and theory to help design, conduct the research, and analyze the data; seek out opportunities to consult with experienced others.
Dialogue	Like the scientific method it is a process for coming to know. It characterizes the inquiry process in self-study of practice methodology and thus supports the assertions for action and understanding developed. Dialogue represents a space of interaction that allows more than one way of representing a state of being or way of thinking to confront, interrogate, and support that representation. Ideas presented in dialogue endure questioning, analysis, alternative interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis.
Ethics	We consider ethics to be an imaginative and protective response "as concerned with the solution of <i>practical</i> problems" (Putnam, 2004, p. 28). Ethics is pragmatic, relational, and based on experience. Appiah (2008) distinguishes between ethics, the Aristotelian notion of attention to individual human flourishing, and moral, the rules that guide appropriate human interaction.
Exemplar-Based Validity	One of the characteristics of S-STTEP identified by LaBoskey (2004a). It refers to a claim to validity wherein the researcher demonstrates the trustworthiness of the understandings that emerge from a qualitative study as representing a paradigmatic, prototypical, or archetypal interpretation of the data.
Exploration	The point in initiation of an S-STTEP research project when we investigate our resources, our ideas, and our knowledge.
Found Poetry	This is a poetry-writing and data construction technique where researchers select key phrases from the data and arrange them using blank verse and other poetic forms to capture the essence of the data. Repetition, synecdoche, onomatopoeia, imagery, metaphor, symbolism, and other literacy elements are evident in the interpreted research text presented by the poetry.
Foundational Criteria for Knowing	This refers to the use of statistical analysis and probability tables wherein researchers are able to pinpoint the degree to which they can assert their hypothesis.
Framework-for-Analysis	This research tool supports researcher both in analyzing their own evolving writing research account and in reading self-study research from others. It attends to the five characteristics of S-STTEP research and facilitates researcher in utilizing studies by others in the formulation and interpretation of their own self-studies.

Term	Definition
Framework-for-Inquiry	This is the portion of the inquiry planner, provided in this text that supports the researcher in conducting an S-STTEP project. It helps the researcher identify issues and then refine the issue as a manageable research question or focus that could be pursued in a self-study project.
Implicit Knowing	This term from Daniel Stern's (2004) work is similar to Polanyi's (1967) tacit knowing. He insists that implicit knowing because it is expressed in action rather than speaking is nonsymbolic, nonverbal, procedural, and nonconscious. By nonconscious he means that it is not suppressed but simply unavailable to our conscious self. Implicit knowing is holistic and interconnected, and when we cut it apart to study more carefully what we know, some of that wholeness is lost.
Improvement Aimed	One of the characteristics of S-STTEP identified by LaBoskey (2004a). The functional definition of self-study relates to this characteristic, which is that we study our practice to improve it. Further, this characteristic is connected to the ontological stance and commitment made in self-study methodology.
Inquiry Planner	A series of questions that supports the development of a self-study of teacher education practice research project. It helps researchers identify a site for the research, refine the question, make connections to the larger research conversation, and develop ideas about data collection and analysis. It supports the researcher in evaluating the study being conducted and connecting the current study to other self-study research. It includes two parts: a Framework-for-Inquiry and a Framework-for-Analysis.
Interactive	One of the characteristics of S-STTEP identified by LaBoskey (2004a). It refers to the ways in which S-STTEP research is always collaborative because it always involves practice (even if the collaborator is minimally the skeptical self), and the process of coming to know is dialogue.
Knowledge-for-Practice	Often when an inquiry attempts to generate rules or implement some knowledge for practice, the focus is on creation of "formal knowledge" or a contribution to the knowledge base (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004).
Knowledge-in-Practice	In contrast, when an inquiry hopes to reveal or develop one's knowledge in the practice of something, the focus is considered to be practical knowledge. Here the work centers on the practice as the practitioner engages in it (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004).
Knowledge-of-Practice	When engaged in an inquiry of knowledge of practice, the teachers or teacher educators develop their own understandings of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004).

Term	Definition
Life History	Life history was originally a tool of ethnographer used to collect the life story of a participant(s) in an ethnography. The author/researcher remained distanced. It has been defined as biography (Schwandt, 1997), an account of a life in part or full (Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985), located in an historical context (Goodson, 1992), situated in context (Cole & Knowles, 2001), and as narrative (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). It blends historiography and autobiography. Drawing on an individual's experiences, the researcher makes meaning of a broader social context by relating that context to the life experiences of a person within it. More recently, researchers in life history have focused on the researcher/researched connection or produced life history focused on the self identified as testimonio (Tierney, 2003).
Legitimization Crisis	Faced with the crisis of representation, qualitative researchers are forced to rethink the issues of validity. The central focus of this issue is – can qualitative research be evaluated in terms of trustworthiness and accuracy.
Living Contradiction	This refers to a life experience where our beliefs and our actions contradict each other. These occur when we recognize in an experience that how we are acting does not align with our beliefs. They also occur when we are labeled one thing but we believe ourselves to be something completely different.
Living Educational Theory	Theories about education that are considered living because they live in the practice of the researcher and because they are being explored within practice they change and grow. The concept comes from McNiff and Whitehead (2006).
Multiple, Primarily Qualitative, Methods	One of the characteristics of S-STTEP identified by LaBoskey (2004a). Refers to the fact that S-STTEP researchers use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding their practice. Forms of quantitative research, action research, narrative inquiry, hermeneutics, phenomenology, as well as a variety of methods such as observations, interviews, surveys, artistic methods, journaling, fieldnotes, ethnography, autobiography, and others might be utilized.
Narrative Research	Linked to but distinct from narrative inquiry, since narrative research uses story in some way in the research process. Story collection can be the method of data collection but not reporting of findings. Story can capture data analysis of data that did not begin as story. Loosely, it refers to the use of story in research.
Obligation to Unseen Children	The responsibility teacher educators have to the education of the public school students that will be taught by the teacher candidates they educate from work by the Guilfoyle, Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1997.

Term	Definition
Ontological Stance	An orientation in doing research whereby the researcher feels an obligation to improve the quality of the lived experience of others and is interested in using research as a tool for creating environments that reflect the researchers' beliefs about what the ideal situation or experiences would be.
Personal Practical Knowledge	The knowledge a practitioner uses to guide practice. For teachers it includes their knowledge in their role as curriculum maker. It emerges from our narrative history and names the things we have learned and that have become intuitive and instinctive. It guides teachers in making decisions. Personal practical knowledge captures the ways in which the many kinds of knowledge a practitioner holds coalesce and become a foundation for the decisions made and the actions taken in practice. This comes from the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1992).
Phenomenology	Methodologically, phenomenology asks – What is the meaning of one's lived experience? Researchers using this research methodology study lived experience, exploring how individuals experience in their lives a concept or phenomenon. Originally its basic purpose was to capture individual experiences in order to develop a description that captures the universal essence of a phenomenon. In this research, the person is integral to the environment that challenges the scientific notion of objectivity.
Practice	This is the activity or activities engaged in by a person in a particular profession or as an artist or craftsman. Practice refers to all the activities of a person engaged in that role. It includes the responsibilities, beliefs, and knowledge that informs and shapes practice. As teacher educators it includes all the activities we engage in as researchers, as faculty, and as teachers. This means practice includes our engagement in committee work as well as the strategies, routines, techniques, or assignments we use in our teaching.
Present Moment	Our lived experience is made up of small momentary events or <i>nows</i> which have duration and thickness. It is a moving point in time that eats up the future and lays the past behind it. In any moment, a person can bring the past, present, and future together in their thinking, impacting all three. Daniel Stern works on this concept.
Presentation	A decision point in S-STTEP research when we make decisions about how we will both represent our findings and present them to others.
Professional Knowledge Landscape	This is the constellation of human and power relationships, written and unwritten rules, and the positioning and juxtapositioning of the people who interact together in the practice space(s) of a professional. This term comes from Clandinin and Connelly (1995).
Provocation	The thing that prompts the researcher to focus on a particular topic for an S-STTEP research project. It can be a living contradiction, discernment, or professional curiosity.

Term	Definition
Refinement	The point in identifying an S-STTEP research question when we bring together background and experience to determine what is worthy of study.
Representational Crisis	A difficulty confronted by qualitative researchers; it is based on the understanding that researchers, even qualitative researchers, cannot capture lived experience. It is the understanding that it is problematic to present a direct link between text and experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).
Researcher as Research Tool	This is an understanding that data are filtered through the eyes of the researcher and decisions about the data are made as a result of the way the researcher views it. The researcher interprets the data and is not detached from interpretation, which requires of the researcher self-conscious rigorous examination of bias and evidence in each step of the research process.
Self-Initiated and Focused	One of the characteristics of S-STTEP identified by LaBoskey (2004a). S-STTEP research is undertaken by the person whose practice is being studied and not as a result of external mandate or requirement. The focus of the research is on practice from the perspective of the person conducting the study.
Social Capital	This refers to the amount of social goodwill and knowledge of culture and cultural systems that is available for use by an individual or within a society.
Tacit Knowledge	The knowledge we have of practice revealed not so much in our articulation of our knowledge as in our action in our practice.
Three-Dimensional Narrative Space	A tool for supporting narrative analysis wherein the researcher interrogates a narrative considering the personal and the social moving inward and outward in a consideration of the story, moving forward and backward from the past, through the present, into the future, and contemplating the impact of context or place.
Zone of Inconclusivity	This is another term for the Zone of Maximal Contact. This term references the instability of those moments where interpretation of and insight into experience are highest because of the bringing together of past, present, and future into a moment of reframing and reconsideration. The term comes from Bakhtin.
Zone of Maximum Contact	Bakhtin used this term to label the point in reading literary works where the past, present, and future are most intimately interconnected. This term is important for considering the evolution and development of practical knowledge and our exploration of it.

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