

# Editorial

<http://dx.doi.org/10.14483/calj.v18n2.aa00>

## Self-study research in teacher education

Studies about teacher learning during the last twenty years have focused on the relationship between knowledge and practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), situate self-study in the category of knowledge-of-practice and propose a view of inquiry as stance to understand teaching and learning about practice as a process that occurs during the span of a teacher's career. Self-study research is a fairly new approach to teacher research that views teachers as reflective practitioners and focuses on the critical examination of one's own practice.

The literature on self-study research provides contributions from Dinkelman (2003), Loughran (2007), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Clandinin and Connelly (2007), and Percy (2014), among others. Loughran (2007) defends that a central purpose in self-study is uncovering deeper understandings of the relationship between teaching about teaching and learning about teaching. Connelly and Clandinin, (2007, p. 575) distinguish between teachers' knowledge as something they possess and a view of knowledge as coming from their practices. They consider that self-study is important because of its potential to reveal knowledge of the educational landscape. Dinkelman defines self-study as "intentional and systematic inquiry into one's own practice" (p. 8). Lastly, Percy (2014) uses self-study as a mechanism for innovation and change within a framework of practice-based education in teacher education.

From my experience as teacher educator learning from teachers and doing research with teachers, I see the value of self-study when teachers see what they know through reflections about their practice. In our latest collaborative project using community-based pedagogies with teachers in public schools in Bogotá, (Sharkey, Clavijo-Olarte, & Ramirez, 2016), we saw teachers surprised of what they knew and didn't know about their students' community in relation to their teaching in classrooms. This work showed a self-discovery feature of self-study that was important when engaging with others in inquiries in their own schools. Thus, teachers' rich stories emerged from 20 and 30 years of experience working in the same community and not knowing much about it. Our collaborative work between university and schools, teacher educators and practicing teachers, and between researchers to plan community inquiries using teachers' knowledge of practice, different content areas, the physical context, families, and the communities highlights the richness of teachers' narratives.

But the question remains of how to do self-study and what is used in self-study research? In self-study, researchers use teachers' autobiographies, personal-experience methods, teachers' narratives of their own practice, teachers' own teaching journals, and personal history-based beliefs relevant in teacher decision making to understand teachers' stories. The words of a teacher educator and experienced researcher, Theresa Austin (2016), help me better illustrate self-study research in teacher education. She defined self-study as "revolutionary in the sense that it includes the researcher as object of investigation and in so doing it helps him/her to be conscious about the process of research as well as the results. Self-study research is done with a critical lens, and in an equitable mode as it shares the power position of research with those participating in it. There is no way to become the invisible researcher neither the omnipotent one." (Personal communication, July, 2016).

All in all, and resorting to an ongoing conversation with my Chilean colleague Miguel Fariás, we believe that by focusing our awareness on our own teaching and learning practices and sharing the results of such observations in collaborative communities of interest, language educators are furnished with robust critical and contextualized views of the learning process. Such self-mirrorings may challenge inherited beliefs on the status of knowledge and practice in our disciplinary fields but, consequently, they open new avenues to our understanding of the marvelous world of language learning.

### References

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 249-305.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, M. (2007). Knowledge, narrative and self-study. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teacher and teacher education practices* (pp. 575-600). The Netherlands: Springer.
- Dinkleman, T. (2003). Self-study in teacher education: A means and ends tool for promoting reflective teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 54*(1), 6-18.
- Loughran, J. (2007) Researching teacher education practices: Responding to the challenges, demands, and expectations of self-study. *Journal of Teacher Education, (58)*1, 12-20.
- Peercy, M. (2014). Challenges in enacting core practices in language teacher education: A self-study. *Studying Teacher Education: A Journal of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices, 10*(2), 146-162.
- Samaras, A. P. (2002). *Self-study for teacher educators: Crafting a pedagogy for educational change*. NY: Peter Lang
- Sharkey, J., Clavijo-Olarte, A., & Ramirez, M. (2016). Developing a Deeper Understanding of Community-Based Pedagogies with Teachers. Learning With and From Teachers in Colombia. *Journal of Teacher Education, 67*(4), 1-14.

Amparo Clavijo Olarte PhD

Editor