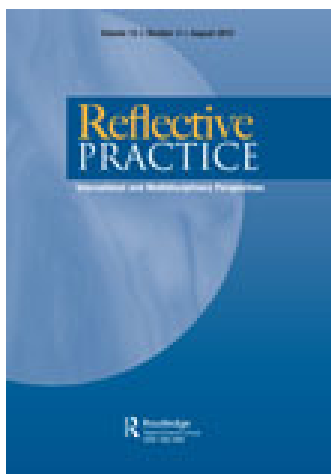


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### Insights into students, practice and self through engaging as learners in our own classrooms

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## Insights into students, practice and self through engaging as learners in our own classrooms

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We conducted this collaborative self-study to explore the consequences of completing course assignments which were required of our respective students. Students had communicated that these particular assignments were daunting or anxiety-inducing. We placed ourselves in the position of learners with the intended purpose of coming to more fully appreciate and understand our students' experiences. Data sources included our shared researcher journals and correspondence as well as student responses collected through discussion and anonymous written reflections. By using ourselves as primary examples, we endeavored to demonstrate the process of critical reflection, lessen student anxiety about experiences they view as uncomfortable, promote the co-construction of knowledge, model the teacher-researcher perspective, and improve our collective professional practice. This study has significance for other teacher educators, many of whom might require students to engage in tasks they have not done themselves or which they have not done in some time. Engaging in those tasks transparently and modeling critical reflection with students were beneficial to students' professional development and transformed the way we approach our roles as teacher educators.

**Keywords:** reflective practice; reflective learning; critical reflection; collaboration; teacher education

### Introduction

We met and became friends during our doctoral work. In 2008, Valerie began her tenure track position at a small, private liberal arts institution in the Northeast. Her students are elementary education undergraduates who are predominately female, white, upper middle class, of traditional college age, and from the Northeast. In 2009, Laurie became an assistant professor at a moderately large state institution in the Southeast. She works with undergraduate and master's level middle level education students, the majority of whom are also female and white. While nearly 85% of Laurie's students come from within the state, there is a wider range of socio-economic diversity and age, particularly among the graduate students.

Although we teach in different regions of the US, we have continually engaged in collaborative research because, like other teacher educator/researchers (e.g. Berry & Crowe, 2009; Taylor & Coia, 2009), mutual trust enables us to be honest with

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one another about inconsistencies between our ideals and actions as educators. We share a commitment to critical reflection, responsiveness and knowledge construction. We believe students should be active in constructing theirs and others' knowledge, including our evolving knowledge as teacher educators (Ramirez, Allison-Roan, Petersen, & Elliott-Johns, 2012). However, as we discussed our beliefs and practices, we came to see we had not been diligent in immersing ourselves in the learning opportunities we professed as worthwhile for students. Like others who study the process of teaching teachers, we came to realize the importance of making our teaching decisions explicit and modeling the practices we expect of prospective teachers (e.g. Hudson-Ross & Graham, 2000; Loughran & Berry, 2005). In fact, we assigned students tasks we had not completed, assignments we admit were daunting.

Valerie required student teachers she taught and supervised to videotape themselves teaching. She then met with each individually to view and reflect on his/her practice. She was repeatedly struck by students' comments that watching the video with her was anxiety-inducing. Laurie required students to place themselves in the position of a 'minority', finding a new or unfamiliar location, one where they felt somehow different. Students then wrote reflections summarizing their experiences. In writing and class discussion, they typically expressed feeling discomfort or anxiety.

Prior to engaging in this work, we discounted students' resistance to our assignments by framing it with our unexamined assumptions about college students and stereotypical views of their approach and commitment to their own learning. We rationalized that it is natural and unavoidable for students to push back against professors' expectations that move them out of their comfort zones. After all, recording oneself teaching and putting oneself in the position of a minority were outside their previous experiences as learners; it was acceptable for students to not initially embrace these tasks. It was only when we paused long enough to truly listen (Schultz, 2003) that we came to empathize with students in their angst and admit to ourselves we were asking them to complete tasks we had not done ourselves. Through our lack of action, we were not being true to the beliefs we espoused.

Through this inquiry we came together to support each other as we completed the assignments our respective students communicated they found the most intimidating. In addition to dialoging with one another through the process, our respective students were fundamental in helping us reflect on our experiences, allowing us to see our practices through their eyes. We embraced an opportunity for collaborative inquiry within a learning environment where we were all teachers and all learners (Walton, 2011). Students' voices and their discomfort with the assignments helped us realize expertise did not belong to us alone because of our relative positions of power, especially since we had only an abstract understanding of the tasks.

## Questions

- (1) What might we learn about ourselves and our teaching from completing the daunting tasks we require of our students?
- (2) What might students learn from our efforts to 'walk the talk' and model transparent practice?

## Framework

This study is grounded in Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) literature, which requires collaboration and reflection. Loughran and Northfield (1998) contended that collaboration is foundational to self-study research, as it enhances the integrity of research and researchers. These authors argue working with an important ‘other’ (or, in our case, important ‘others’) can lead to genuine transformation of practice, rather than simply rationalizing or justifying it. As we engaged in efforts to ‘walk our talk’, we collaborated with each other and our students, reflecting on our ideas and practices with the goal of reconciling the dissonance between thoughts and actions. Collaborative reflection on practice involves others in the process of interpreting, challenging and understanding data, creating the possibility of a multi-layered impact on teaching practice (Tidwell & Heston, 1998). This transparency of practice is an important component of self-study, allowing our students to engage with us in open, honest reflection as co-learners and co-constructors of knowledge (Samaras, 2011; Walton, 2011).

Likewise, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) promoted collaboration in self-study, suggesting research is enhanced by multiple, and sometimes alternative or oppositional, perspectives as we consider our practices, potential problems and positive aspects. Although no one wishes to seek ‘public failure’ (p. 84), we see value in making our work transparent to students, modeling the researcher-practitioner viewpoint. This requires dialogue and a process of ‘coming-to-know’ (p. 84), and yet goes beyond knowing to transforming practice. In seeking out others who might disagree and offer contradictory interpretations, we can begin to improve. Kosnik, Samaras, and Freese (2006) stated, ‘Collaboration does not mean harmony. Interactions may cause the individual to question his/her position or those of others as they develop new understanding’ (p. 159).

Finally, collaboration provides the important element of trustworthiness in our research. Working with others who can provide a range of perspectives also tests the validity or, in qualitative research, the trustworthiness of the data sources and analyses (Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Our research is trustworthy because it is conducted collaboratively with multiple researchers, including our students, with the shared goal of better understanding and improving teaching practices (Taylor & Coia, 2009).

Reflection, another essential component of S-STEP, has always been central to our work as teacher researchers, specifically critical reflection. Critical reflection, as Brookfield (2010) reminded us, is not an ‘unequivocal concept’ (p. 218), and we have, over time, operationalized the term as we understand it. Our conceptualization of what it means to be critically reflective is positioned among divergent interpretations (e.g. Brookfield, 1995; Loughran, 2002; Rodgers, 2002; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Reflection, in a broad sense, is a four-step process (Brookfield, 2010). We first experience a disorienting dilemma which causes us to become aware of assumptions that have gone unquestioned. After identifying these assumptions, we must assess them and challenge them, weighing their consequences. Third, we begin to examine alternative perspectives, seeing actions and possibilities through the eyes of others. Finally, we are able to take informed action and explain our process and rationale for change. While this description of the reflection process is helpful and pertinent, it does not necessarily equate to *critical reflection*. Reflection becomes *critical* when it is motivated by the desire to be just, fair and compassionate and

when it questions the criteria, power dynamics and socio-political structures that frame our practice (Brookfield, 1995, 2010).

As we have come to define critical reflection for our teaching and research, it is clear we have taken on a stance of deconstruction where we, with our students, are engaged in a ‘partnered practice of critical reflection’, a process of collaboratively (de)constructing knowledge about teaching and encouraging one another to critically reflect (Berry & Crowe, 2009, p. 86). Participating in the activities our students find most intimidating and ‘walking the talk’ opens us up to criticism and uncertainty. Berry (2008) also invited students to critique and provide feedback on her teaching, acknowledging this is a ‘risky business’ (p. 36) for the teacher educator, but one with potential to reframe our work. ‘In doing that which one advocates for ones’ students, insights into teaching and learning are apprehended in practice that might otherwise not be fully appreciated or understood if such learning was not genuinely experienced by oneself’ (Loughran & Berry, 2005, p. 194). Through this self-study we endeavored to listen to our students’ experiences and model the critically reflective practice we promote, questioning our authority and decisions and asking students to engage in that same process. Collaborative reflection allows us to see parallels of experience, good or bad, and know we are not alone in our thoughts, feelings and actions. This can be the difference between transformation and stagnation (Brookfield, 2010).

## Methods

During the 2011–2012 school year, as we completed our own assignments, we documented our journeys through bi-weekly journaling and email exchanges, allowing us to reflect and interrogate our experiences, serving as reciprocal critical friends (e.g. Ramirez et al., 2012; Taylor & Coia, 2009). Reading and responding to each other offered a more objective outsider perspective and pushed us to explore thoughts and actions that might have otherwise gone unquestioned or unexamined (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009).

Our journals and electronic exchanges were compiled as data sources, creating a type of ‘feedback loop’ from another perspective as we worked through the research questions and experienced what our students do (Samaras, 2011, p. 93). In addition, we shared portions of our journals with students, making decisions jointly so what we ‘held up for public examination ... would be useful and accessible for these prospective teachers’ (Berry, 2008, p. 71). We collected students’ responses made in class discussions and through anonymous feedback. When students completed the assignments themselves, they submitted written reflections and met with us individually to discuss themes and elaborate on their experiences. Those reflections and our discussion notes were used as data sources to more fully understand how they experienced our course assignments. In combination, these data sources allowed for public, transparent discussion of experiences as well as private, safe spaces for feedback and reflection.

Valerie videotaped herself teaching the first meeting of the semester with her Literacy II students ( $n = 15$ ). Shortly after, she viewed the recording with 18 student teachers (STs) during a meeting of her Seminar course. All but one ST who viewed the video had been class members in a previous Literacy II section taught by Valerie. Therefore, they shared an insider’s understanding of the course and the learning objectives and activities associated with it. Prior to sharing the video with

STs, Valerie provided some context including what she saw as her objectives for the class meeting. As STs viewed the recording, Valerie thought aloud about what she had been thinking and feeling during the teaching episode, as well as what she was thinking and feeling while viewing it with them. Valerie encouraged STs to interject their observations, questions and suggestions regarding her practice as they watched. Valerie's thoughts aloud, along with STs' contributions, were audio recorded as an additional data source.

After the video was shared and discussed, Valerie asked STs to complete a short anonymous questionnaire about the experience. Items included: What do you think Valerie learned about herself and her practice as a teacher educator? What was shared through her think aloud or students' comments that was most intriguing/interesting/surprising? What do you hope you will learn or experience through watching yourself teach? Valerie compiled the responses and shared them with Laurie. She also provided Laurie with entries from her teaching journal she wrote prior to and following the recording of her teaching and its viewing with STs.

Laurie asked students in a graduate level diversity course to place themselves in the position of a minority in any context ( $n = 11$ ). She allowed them to choose based on their comfort level, access and availability. Six of 11 in this class chose to attend religious services. In response to this common interest, Laurie also chose to attend a Baptist church, as it is the predominant religion of her students and most families in the geographic area. Although Laurie asked her students to do this experience alone, the overwhelming majority did not feel comfortable enough to do so, bringing a friend or family member along or choosing a place where they would likely know someone. To model and validate the experience, Laurie attended the Baptist service alone, refusing to employ a 'buddy system'. During the experience, she took brief, surreptitious notes which she used when writing her reflection. Laurie then sent that reflection to her 11 students, asking for their feedback, thoughts, and opinions. Questions included: Is this a typical Baptist service or does every church have its own culture determined by its members? How does my minority experience help you engage with this assignment yourself? Students also freely commented on the narrative of the experience, adding their own questions, providing insider knowledge, and comparing Laurie's experience to their own. Laurie shared her reflection and student feedback with Valerie, soliciting her perspective as a research partner and critical friend. Laurie used her notes and reflective narrative, the students' responses, and Valerie's responses as data sources, together with students' reflective narratives on their own minority experiences.

After compiling data from our experiences, our students and each other, we systematically immersed ourselves in our individual datasets in an iterative process, doing multiple line-by-line readings, identifying codes, emergent patterns and questions for consideration as they related to our initial research questions (Merriam, 1998; Samaras, 2011). During four week-long, face-to-face visits in 2012–2013, we engaged with the aggregate data, exchanged ideas, meaningfully discussed and reflected, and identified together the broader patterns and divergent themes (Samaras & Freese, 2006). We prepared summaries of our individual and shared analyses, using them as interim texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and tools for further reflection. The summaries were used to facilitate the writing process and outline our plans for extending this work beyond ourselves, adding to the knowledge base of the teaching and research community (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Samaras, 2011).

## Results

At the outset of this study we hoped to discover what students might learn from our efforts to make our practice more transparent. Likewise, we anticipated improving our practice and learning more about ourselves. Below, we share the results that emerged from the data collected. The voices of students and researchers represent the themes that emerged.

### *Consequences for our students*

Our efforts to complete the daunting assignments we required had consequences for students and their learning. While some outcomes were predictable, we experienced unexpected, transformative insights as well. Although our efforts did not completely alleviate students' anxiety, they did help to mediate some uneasiness and provided students with tangible models of how the tasks were structured and how a completed assignment might be presented.

It sort of breaks the ice. I now know someone with her experience still feels awkward when they expose themselves for criticism. (Valerie's ST)

Realizing we can talk through it and explain our rationale behind things helps ... I'm much less nervous now. (Valerie's ST)

This definitely helped me conquer some of my fears and made me realize what I might be missing out on. (Laurie's S3)

I can honestly say I had a very negative attitude about this from the beginning, but now I'm looking forward to it! (Laurie's S5)

By modeling, we were able to help our students consider how the tasks would provide them with an opportunity for self-discovery and learning.

I want to see what students see as I teach so I can improve each aspect. There are so many things to consider when you are up in front of the room, so I hope to make sure I am thinking about each one. (Valerie's ST)

My goal has always been to change the world, but maybe at the same time, I should have the goal of how can the world influence me? (Laurie's S1)

I don't ever want to forget this feeling ... I need to remember my students may feel the same way about my class. I hate that they may feel so alone and out of place. I hope by remembering how I felt, I will have more compassion and understanding. (Laurie's S2)

Thinking aloud and sharing excerpts from her journal, Valerie modeled what she meant when she described and encouraged her STs to be critically reflective. Laurie modeled this through the written narrative of her minority experience and through the in-class explanation of the process from start to finish. Modeling the process of critical reflection, along with our own apprehension when completing these tasks, helped students more fully engage in the tasks themselves and more openly, honestly question their own beliefs and practices.



For both student groups, they noted our efforts to ‘walk our talk’ reinforced/supported our espoused ideals of aspiring to be authentic and vulnerable in practice and students of our own teaching. Doing so enhanced our trustworthiness and, we believe, the likelihood students will choose/ be willing to ‘walk their talk’ as teachers.

☺ Thank you for experiencing this with us! (Valerie’s ST)

I hope I can put myself in the position of being a student with me as a teacher. I might think about how I would respond to my actions and teaching methods. (Valerie’s STs)

The experience has forced me to look at my classroom and my students with a different perspective and realize how much I can learn from them. (Laurie’s S4)

I understand more about diverse cultures and plan on continuing to foster relationships with my students while making my classroom a safe place to learn and discuss diversity. (Laurie’s S6)

### ***Consequences for our practices and our selves:***

Putting ourselves in the shoes of our students was as anxiety-filled experience, both in having the experiences we required of students and then inviting students to respond to us as learners. Just as we had observed our previous students doing, we found excuses for not completing the tasks promptly. The fear of engaging in the activities, of the unknown, seemed to turn minor obstacles into major roadblocks. Valerie found herself perseverating about selecting the *right* class session to record and the logistics of simultaneously orchestrating recording with conducting class. Laurie spent inordinate energy considering which congregation to visit and how to immerse herself as inconspicuously as possible. How does a Latina Catholic girl dress for a white Baptist service in the South if she wanted to go unnoticed?

*Valerie:* Beforehand, I firmly believed one or multiple STs would pounce on the opportunity to take me down. In hindsight, this was a wholly irrational fear and would have been completely out of character for the relationships we share. Where does that fear come from? I really had to do some soul searching to confront my propensity for anticipating the worst and imagining others see me in an unfavorable light. In the end, the experience, my students’ feedback, and Laurie’s perspectives contributed to me stepping out of my pattern of self-deprecation for two reasons: first, it is not a healthy or happy way to live and experience my professional work; second, it is an unhelpful model to provide to students. In this self-study, Laurie’s role as my critical friend was to remind me critical reflection is not a rally cry for beating oneself up. There is always room for growth, but the path to being an effective teacher educator is not through being flawless in my performance, it is through my willingness to seize opportunities to grow.

Not just in this experience but through all my interactions and self-talk, I am inclined to look for my shortcoming, and I find it nearly impossible to embrace and celebrate the good work I do. If I heard one of my student teachers running herself down the way I typically talk about myself, I would despair and probably shake her by the shoulders! What kind of a model am I being when I spend so much time throwing myself under the bus? That is definitely not what I want my student teachers to see as the goal for this assignment and not what I want them to see as healthy and helpful

reflection or the point of being a reflective practitioner. (Valerie's journal, January 23, 2012)

*Laurie:* Even though we had committed to this endeavor, I still managed to put it off. I knew the majority of my students and colleagues were Baptist, and I continually professed the importance of seeking knowledge about school communities and students to better understand them and meet their needs. I realized my fear stemmed mainly from a complete lack of information. I wondered, only to myself at first, if there would be extreme practices, although I had only media images to feed that concern. I also feared (and this was confirmed) I would be singled out and targeted as a visitor. I realized quickly why students feel this task is daunting and why they sometimes resist.

What happened next caused me to stammer and sweat, forcing me completely out of my comfort zone. At this time, the preacher stood up and asked everyone to greet their neighbors. Initially, congregation members turned to those nearby and shook hands, said "good morning", and chatted briefly. Then, one by one, they started coming toward me ... Each person was welcoming (is it possible to be TOO welcoming?) and kind, wishing me a good morning, a happy new year, and saying they were glad I was joining them. While this greeting time was welcoming and not unpleasant, it served to highlight my outsider status and made me feel very uncomfortable. (Laurie's reflection, January 18, 2012)

This experience produced great discomfort and helped me understand what I ask my students to do is no easy task. Like them, I felt anxious and out of place. After reflecting and writing my narrative, I actually looked forward to sharing it with them, knowing it would foster discussion about why we all have similar negative expectations and how those moments of disequilibrium are necessary for growth and learning. In our discussion, we highlighted the way many of our students must feel, increasing empathy and promoting advocacy for them. Our discussion also emphasized the idea that we all possess privileges, one of which is to choose to not participate in activities or communities where we feel unsafe or uncomfortable. These lessons were important for us all as teachers and as members of a diverse social world.

As researchers, we were challenged to consider how to structure the tasks' requirements so students' potential for learning was optimized without requiring them to engage in experiences so laden with fear their learning was impinged through affective filters. As teachers first and foremost, we must have the capacity to listen to students' anxiety and respond in a manner that helps them mediate their fear (Schultz, 2003). Having completed the tasks ourselves, we now are in a position to authentically empathize with students. However, it is important for us to remember our experience of the assignments is not the only way an individual might perceive them. We acknowledge that our students' experiences are fundamentally different than ours because of the power differential and the evaluative component for them in completing assignments. In addition, learners experience the challenge of the assignments uniquely given their social, emotional and intellectual composition and life histories.

Recognizing the need to legitimize and not discount students' trepidation for the assignments, this study demonstrated the need for greater clarity in articulating our rationales for the tasks, what we hope students will learn, and what criteria we will

employ for feedback and evaluation. As a result, we each made changes to these assignments (and others) that helped alleviate some of the discomfort and distress students experienced previously. For Valerie, students' comments conveyed misconceptions that were counterproductive to them benefiting from the experiences. As one student shared through anonymous feedback, 'I was expecting us to be watching it in silence and watching her body language to gauge how good of a teacher I was ☹'. She and other students viewed the video assignment as a form of summative assessment in which Valerie would pass judgment. Uncovering students' conceptualizations of the assignment allowed Valerie to more explicitly explain that she considered the video to be formative. As a result of students' reflections and feedback, Valerie also learned that students found the video assignment most useful when completed near the beginning of the student teaching semester, before they became acclimated to their teaching assignments and had developed habits for teaching and interacting with their pupils. Valerie noted students who put the assignment off until they were more comfortable were less able to think aloud about how they were experiencing their teaching or to consider alternatives to enactment of their pedagogy. Consequently, in the next semester, she moved the due date for the assignment to an earlier point. Likewise, Laurie's students communicated misconceptions about the purpose of her assignment and the nature of evaluation. Many expressed fear of judgment and significant discomfort sharing their fears, assumptions and experiences with her and their peers. Thus, their reflections often lacked depth and the desired criticality; they read as inauthentic and as if saying what they were 'supposed' to say. As Laurie challenged students to reflect openly and honestly, it became clear she needed to address their emotional responses to the assignment. This prompted the use of explicit examples, including her own, and a refinement of the explanation and rationale for the assignment. It had to be made clear that judgment was not the goal and growth was individual, not a means of comparison. Students also needed clarification that the assignment is intended to be a personal journey, not a uniform or identical destination. The development of a rubric with criteria for evaluation, including a clear definition of critical reflection, helped students better comprehend the purposes of the assignment and the expectations for successful completion. The next semester, many students expressed only minimal anxiety, some expressed a desire to really challenge themselves, and only one felt too uncomfortable to complete the assignment alone.

We believe the opportunities for open dialogue and honest feedback with students ultimately improved our practice and helped our students see and appreciate how these assignments were intended to enhance their learning and benefit their development as educators. Beyond the refinement of the two assignments we completed for this study, we have changed our teaching in other ways. We have both been proactive in modeling other learning activities for students and more carefully articulating our rationale for requiring students to complete them. Included in our explanations is space for students to ask questions, voice concerns and develop their own motivation for engaging in the tasks. Ultimately, in order for students to benefit fully from any learning activity we assign, they must be able to answer for themselves: How does what this professor has challenged me to do enhance my growth as a teacher?

Through this process, we have come to realize we are not the same people, teachers or researchers we once were. Every reflective experience with students and with each other, even the 'seemingly inconsequential interchanges', has

incrementally changed who we are and how we see ourselves and our roles as teacher educators (Taylor & Coia, 2012, p. 278). The relationship between our beliefs and our practices has subtly shifted, moving us forward to a place where we are more self-aware, less self-conscious and open to the benefits of co-constructing knowledge. More than ever, we see the importance of including others on our 'change journey' (Samaras, 2011, p. 81) as we engage in a continual cycle of questioning, challenging, discovering and reconstructing our various selves.

### Significance

This self-study endeavored to make critical reflection and knowledge construction transparent in partnership with students. We hoped to better understand our own practice and how students experience the curricular decisions we make, particularly those viewed as daunting. We initiated this study when we began to recognize that our students were trying to tell us something and we had not been actively listening, despite our expressed commitment to critical reflection and responsiveness in our teaching. McLaughlin, Allison-Roan, and Hayes (2012) have argued the importance of 'listening intently to students, as individuals and as a group ... in words, writing, gestures, and silence' (p. 212). When we did stop to listen, we realized our espoused beliefs were not manifest in our lived practices. This disorienting dilemma prompted us to begin the process of critically reflecting on our teaching and the consequences of what we had been doing, and not doing (Brookfield, 2010). Childs (2005) acknowledged, 'We are probably not born critical reflectors/reflective thinkers' (p. 144); rather, it is a skill we must teach, refine, and practice ourselves. This self-study is the result of our efforts to reassert our commitment to being critically reflective practitioners and to learn in concert with students (Hudson-Ross & Graham, 2000). With students, we developed learning communities where we all more closely examined our pedagogy to ensure its meaningfulness, relevance and appropriateness (Loughran & Berry, 2005). We simultaneously taught students and ourselves (Walton, 2011). The changes we have made in our practice have already shown that students are willing to be similarly vulnerable, challenging themselves and seeking feedback from others as they emerge in their practice.

In this study we have engaged in the 'critical exploration of experience, perceptions and positions; the insight gained into these can then be used as a starting point for engaging with others, and for starting to develop shared understandings' of our practice (Kirk, 2005; p. 240). 'Others' were key to the process, providing perspectives outside our own. Taken-for-granted assumptions and ideas about the tasks we ask students to do were laid open for examination and critique by these 'others' and forced us to question, articulate, clarify and reconstruct our practices. Sharing our journey and communicating our findings with the broader educational community is also an important process, allowing the conversation to continue so we, as a whole, might develop a greater knowledge of practice. We believe, as Loughran (2010) has suggested, 'professional knowledge of practice is developed in ways that, in the first instance, might be deeply personal, but through collaboration, critique, and inquiry, become more meaningful and useful to the work of others in similar practice settings' (p. 411). We hope other teacher educators see the potential of engaging in critical reflection in collaboration with colleagues and students and encourage them to examine what they ask students to do and why. Finally, we welcome other teacher educators to join us in our collaborative deconstruction and reconstruction efforts.

Self-study, because it is not just about the self in isolation, allows us to collaborate on a larger scale and produce ‘living educational theory’ that can lead to a reconceptualization of teacher education (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 242).

### Notes on contributors

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Laurie and Valerie both received their doctoral degrees from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, UT. Their shared research interests include the self-study of teacher education practices as well as critical reflection, narrative inquiry, and professional collaborative practices.

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