

Improving Teacher Education Practices Through Self-study

Edited by John Loughran
and Tom Russell



London and New York

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Improving Teacher Education Practices Through Self-study

Self-study in teacher education is a growing field and a natural progression from the concept of reflective practice in shaping the nature of teaching and learning in teacher education. This book is designed to introduce teacher educators to the theory and practice of self-study, in order to explore, understand and improve their teaching about teaching.

With studies from an international range of contributors, this book illustrates a variety of approaches to self-study. It describes the issues that teacher educators have chosen to study, how they carried out their research and what the learning outcomes were. Throughout, the emphasis is on placing teacher educators' knowledge and practice at the center of their academic work. The book is divided into four sections:

- understanding teaching in teacher education
- studying teacher educators' roles and responsibilities
- fostering social justice in teaching about teaching
- exploring myths in teacher education.

This book will be of interest to all teacher educators wishing to improve their knowledge and practice.

John Loughran is a teacher educator at Monash University, Australia.

Tom Russell is Professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University, Canada. The authors have previously collaborated on *Teaching about Teaching* (RoutledgeFalmer, 1999).

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John Loughran works in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. He has been actively involved in teacher education for the past decade. His research interests include teacher-as-researcher, reflective practice, science education, and teaching and learning. Recent publications include *Developing Reflective Practice* and *Opening the Classroom Door* (Loughran and Northfield), *Teaching about Teaching* (Loughran and Russell), and *Researching Teaching* (all published by Falmer).

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Gilda Segal is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Technology, Sydney. In her Ph.D. in science education, Gilda studied the learning of both student teachers and early childhood children in gender-inclusive learning environments. She has recently been working with Sandy Schuck on a number of research projects that include mentoring and induction of beginning teachers, self-study, and integration of computer-mediated learning in schools. As co-convenor of the e-Change Faculty Development Project, Gilda has expanded her interest in computer-mediated learning. She will carry this interest into her imminent retirement.

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Introduction

1 Can self-study improve teacher education?

Tom Russell

Only a few teacher educators, often those most prominent at conferences, are situated in research-intensive universities where they are able to focus most of their attention on research. The vast majority of us work regularly with pre-service teachers in program or course structures that have many minor variations but probably share many common themes and assumptions. In the teacher education classroom, most teacher educators are aware that their students can read every teaching move we make for an implicit message about how to teach. Those of us who are acutely aware of the potential for contradiction between the content and the process of our teaching and who wish to minimize such contradictions seem to be drawn to the self-study of teacher education practices.

Schools for Thought: a science of learning in the classroom is just one of many publications offering advice such as:

If we want to improve Americans' schools, we will have to apply in the classroom what we know about humans as intelligent, learning, thinking creatures.

(Bruer, 1994, p. 1)

Similarly, many publications tell us that teacher education itself needs to change (Darling-Hammond, 1997). When the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) special interest group was formed in 1993, there was considerable interest in the fact that teacher educators, individually and collectively, would be studying their own teaching, going beyond the standard image of telling others how teaching should be done without necessarily following their own advice. S-STEP has held three international conferences (in 1996, 1998 and 2000) at Herstmonceux Castle, located in the south of England and the site of the International Study Centre of Queen's University (Canada). The papers in this collection have their roots in presentations made at the Third International Conference in 2000.

The title of this collection is an ambitious one: *Improving teacher education practices through self-study*. Often it is challenging enough to look critically at one's own teaching practices. While the obvious purpose of self-study is