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FOREWORD

"Research is just like searching." That is what Angel said. He and other students from a middle school in the Bronx were reflecting on community studies they had been doing as student researchers led by their teacher, Marcelina. They were reporting their work at the Ethnography in Education Forum, which is held each year at the University of Pennsylvania.

Angel was even more on target in a formal sense than I had realized when I first heard his definition. Etymology shows us that *search* derives from the Latin *circum*. Hence, searching means not only to look intently for something we really want to find it so connotes *looking around* at things. To research, then, is to take a second look around; to pay attention in especially thorough ways. Because we are all so busy doing life we often don't take the time for careful scrutiny.

This book is about teachers taking second looks around their teaching, their students, and their schools. It is thus about searchings, re-searchings, and findings. In the first part of the book Cochran-Smith and Lytle tell of their searchings for what teacher researchers have been doing as such research becomes a movement within the profession of education. In the book's second part, elementary, secondary, and adult literacy teachers tell us of their own searchings and findings.

The volume is remarkable for the comprehensiveness of the connections it makes. In the first chapters, Lytle and Cochran-Smith provide the most complete survey and analysis of teacher research that is currently available. They have sketched the recent history of teacher research, the scope of teacher inquiry, and the range of genres and audiences within which this work is being shared. Their discussion of the field as a whole provides a framework for the approaches and findings of particular studies by the teachers whose contributions compose the second part of this volume.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle have not only provided here a fresh and incisive review of a developing field, they have been active in helping that field to develop. By creating preservice and continuing educational settings that center upon teacher inquiry, they have encouraged individual teachers to do research and have fostered networks of discourse within which teachers can share searchings and findings, encouraging one another in their work. This is tricky business. Lytle and Cochran-Smith challenge and provide support as teachers become active agents in research on their own practice; yet as scholars in the university, they must not upstage the teachers or appropriate their voice. The authenticity of this collaboration with teachers is evidenced by the

clarity and force of authorial voice in the essays the teacher researchers have contributed here.

This book is also comprehensive in that the teachers whose research is brought together are remarkable in their diversity. They vary in race, in gender, and in the grade levels and subjects they teach. Their practice takes place in inner city and suburban communities, in public and private schools, and in adult literacy centers. Thus, the comprehensiveness of the essays by Cochran-Smith and Lytle in this volume is matched by the range of teaching practice of their collaborators.

In the contributors' essays, the knowledge gained is about particularsa particular way of teaching writing, a particular child's discovery. The more common social research moves from the general to the specific, from principle or covering law to a particular instance and back again. But the contributors here do not present what they have found as instantiationmere examples of something else more fundamental and interesting. Their practice and their understanding of it are shown to us as a phenomenon of significance in its own right.

This is not because the contributors do not deal with abstraction, but because in their work *the concrete has an irreducible centrality and dignity*. I think this has to do with the vantage point from which their knowing develops. In research by a visiting outsider, knowledge about teaching is gained by observational records and reporting that, whether quantitative or qualitative, usually take the form of statements such as, "The teacher did/said/attempted. . . ." In the research reports by teachers in this volume, that kind of statement appears in reference to students. But when the teacher and teaching itself are in the foreground of research attention, then what is usual are statements of the form, I did . . . I wondered . . . I was trying to. . . ." This is to portray the teacher as agent in a way that cannot be portrayed in research conducted by intermittent visitors to the classroom, however sensitive they may be as observers and reporters. The teacher comes to know teaching from within the action of it, and a fundamentally important aspect of that action is the teacher's own intentionality.

Yet these studies also show compellingly that insiders' knowledge does not develop in isolation. Repeatedly, the teacher researchers have drawn on the views of others as they developed distinctively owned views from another teacher who visited their classroom, or from conceptual or empirical research literature, or from discussion in an oral inquiry group, or from a workshop with someone who inspires and guides reflection, such as Patricia Carini. Lytle and Cochran-Smith make a fundamental claim in saying that teacher research needs communities of discourse in order to thrive. The essays by the teacher researchers attest to that insight.

The book tells us that "outside" and "inside" are not related simply as opposites but as voices that engage one another in dialogue. In discovering

their own voices, teacher researchers take in the views of various outsiders and, in a Vygotskian sense, the voices of others become integrated in one's own. I do not mean to imply that appropriating outsider perspectives within a dialogue that becomes increasingly internal is done without any inner or outer conflict, as if it were only sweet singing with others in close harmony. There are unsettling discords as those voices engage and combined discrepancies between the stance of outsider and insider, of participant observer and observant participant.

Neither the outsider nor the insider is granted immaculate perception. In objectivist moments we may think of this as a curse, but it can be seen as a great blessing. Culture in the anthropological sense liberates us from the burden of nonselective attention. Through custom and routine we can learn to see and hear and not see and hear strategically, which is the only way we can do it. Plato complained of this, but his metaphor for the limits of common sense put the knower inside the cave all alone. The partiality of knowing need not limit us in the ways he feared if we bring companions along who see and hear differently from us. Through teacher research, then, in the development of external and internal reflective dialogue, teaching can become something profoundly other than a solitary profession whose practice is driven by unexamined routine.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle and their colleagues in this volume have become outsiders and insiders for each other. This book in all its parts is the result of the conversation they are creating together during their searchings and findings. As readers we are invited into their discourse, within which we can learn to hear teaching not only as insightful but as agentive. If we begin by listening carefully with them, we may come to hear and speak our own teaching in new ways. Their dialogue is already in progress. Let us join them in it now.

FREDERICK ERICKSON
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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PREFACE

For many years, we have been negotiating the uncertain borders of educational practice and scholarship, struggling to compose professional and personal lives that connect what has often been divided. Working with others to alter traditional relationships between practice and theory and between schools and universities has profoundly shaped our roles as university-based teachers and researchers and has compelled us to wrestle with the fundamental questions about teachers, research, and knowledge that this book explores. Here we have tried to question the common assumption that knowledge for teaching should be primarily "outside-in" generated at the university and then used in schools a position that suggests the unproblematic transmission of knowledge from a source to a destination. In contrast, this book is based on the notion that knowledge for teaching is "inside/outside," a juxtaposition intended to call attention to teachers as knowers and to the complex and distinctly nonlinear relationships of knowledge and teaching as they are embedded in the contexts and the relations of power that structure the daily work of teachers and learners in both the school and the university.

This book has emerged from the dialectic of our experiences as both practitioners and researchers and from our unwillingness to privilege one role over the other. In so doing, we have worked both inside and outside the culture of a large research university, acutely conscious of the ways that efforts to merge practice and research have sometimes made us marginal in both worlds. As efforts of this sort have accelerated in schools and universities across the country, we have come to understand even more deeply that the transformation of schools has far-reaching implications for and indeed requires the parallel and reciprocal transformation of universities. Our work with others over the years has taught us that legitimating the knowledge that comes from practitioners' research on their own practice whether in schools or universities is a critical dimension of change in both cultures.

Although we have been colleagues and friends for more than a decade, we mark the inception of this book with our concurrent efforts to create new school-university communities committed to collaborative inquiry into language, literacy, and learning. Some 6 years ago, we worked with Philadelphia-area teachers to invent both Project START (Student Teachers As Researching Teachers), a community of beginning elementary teachers and their school and university mentors, and the Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP), a community of experienced urban teachers and their university colleagues. From the beginning, we regarded these projects as strategic sites for both research

and practice, positioned to prompt the rethinking of fundamental assumptions about the intellectual project of teaching and to explore the prospects for reconstructing practice as inquiry across the professional life span. And from the beginning, these communities were rich sites for exploring language itself the ways that children, adolescents, and adults learn across classrooms, age groups, and cultures; the ways that communities of beginning and experienced teachers use writing, reading, and oral language to explore and rethink their theories of practice; and the ways that groups of teacher researchers come to function as literacy communities, drawing on diverse interpretive frameworks and discourses to construct their own distinctive ways of knowing.

The essays that compose Part 1 of this book are adaptations of presentations we have given at the University of Pennsylvania's Ethnography and Education Forum, a conference that promotes conversations about qualitative research among an unusually wide range of participants, both local and national, including graduate students, school- and program-based teachers and administrators, and university faculty. Because the conference brings together students, teachers, and academics, it has challenged us to talk across traditional boundaries that often seem to divide practitioners from researchers, doers from thinkers, and actors from analysts. Reframing our essays for presentation in more conventional academic settings such as the American Educational Research Association's annual meetings and for publication in a variety of journals, newsletters, and books (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, 1992a, 1992b; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990, 1992) has heightened our need to find a discourse about teacher inquiry that speaks to more than one audience. Over the years, the forum has become a place and an occasion for participants in our projects and for other teacher groups to present their work to one another, to deepen the conversation about teaching as research, and as a consequence to bolster the local culture of communities for teacher inquiry. Many of the pieces of teacher research that we include in Part 2 of this book came from work in our local communities and were originally presented at the forum. In taking their texts from classroom to local community to wider arenas, the teacher researchers whose work appears in this volume contribute to the ongoing national conversation about school reform, teacher professionalism, multicultural curriculum and pedagogy, and language and literacy education.

For us, writing essays over a period of 6 years has become the primary context in which we simultaneously wrestle with the daily dilemmas of practice and build conceptual frameworks for the emerging domain of teacher research. Although not a particularly efficient way to write, composing every sentence together at the keyboard has demanded close scrutiny of each assumption and idea. Over time, this way of writing collaboratively has exposed our vulnerabilities as both researchers and practitioners and has forced us to confront issues of participation and hierarchy, generation and imposition, and diversity and uniformity. In each essay we have tried to

address a particular question or set of questions that has been problematic in our daily work as teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. Thus, in a very real sense, the contradictions in our own practice oriented our research, while at the same time the distinctions we made in our writing have provided new lenses on our practice. Our essay on the genres of teacher research, for example, grew out of our extensive reading of the varied forms in which teachers write about their daily work and out of our participation with teachers in a range of structured oral inquiry processes. These experiences contributed to our growing discontent with the assumption that research by school-based teachers should be expected to follow the conventions of method and presentation developed in the university. In the working typology of teacher research that resulted from our deliberations, we tried to provide a framework that pushed the edges of what counts as research by teachers. We have also used the framework as a heuristic when we worked with our colleagues to design and redesign the social and organizational structures of Project START and PhilWP.

Throughout this volume, the examples of teachers' work and our projects' histories serve as illustrations of and sources for the broader conceptual frameworks we propose. These examples also reveal our stance as practitioner researchers whose daily work with teachers and student teachers is our primary source of knowledge about teaching. In drawing on teachers' work, however, we are not presuming to speak for or to represent the viewpoints of teachers and student teachers on teacher research. Rather, we write from our own perspectives as university teachers, teacher educators, and researchers committed to a view of teacher research as a radical alternative to traditional epistemologies of research on teaching and teacher education.

In the literature and in popular usage, terms such as "research," "action," "collaborative," "critical," and "inquiry" have been combined with one another and with the term "teacher" to signal a wide range of meanings and purposes. These terms and the various ways they are connected seem to us to reflect surface as well as deeper differences: contrasting paradigms for research, conflicting conceptions of professional development for beginning and experienced teachers, and different assumptions about the roles of teachers in the production and use of knowledge. They also reflect different emphases on individual and institutional growth and on the promotion of teacher research as a means to problem solving, to technical improvement, or to strategic social change. This admixture of terms is not surprising given the complex ideological, multinational, and sociocultural history of efforts by teachers and their school- and university-based colleagues to document, understand, and alter practice. Each participant in the work of teacher research is somewhat differently positioned in the power structures of schools and universities and thus becomes involved in teacher research to further different agendas or outcomes. Our own perspectives on teacher research emerge from our intellectual

histories in the fields of language, literacy, and learning and from commitments to activist scholarship and practice.

In this volume, we propose that as teacher research of various kinds accumulates and is more widely disseminated, it will present a radical challenge to current assumptions about the relationships of theory and practice, schools and universities, and inquiry and reform. As the pieces in Part 2 of this volume demonstrate, research by teachers represents a distinctive way of knowing about teaching and learning that we believe will alter not just add to what we know in the field. Because we see teacher research as both interpretive and critical, however, we do not mean to suggest that its contribution will be in the form of generalizations about teaching (this time from the "inside" perspective), nor do we mean that teacher research is benign and evolutionary, a process of accumulating "new knowledge" and gradually admitting "new knowers" to the fold. Rather, we have come to see teacher research as a challenge and as a critique, often emerging from but also causing conflict when the traditionally disenfranchised begin to play increasingly important roles in generating knowledge and in deciding how knowledge ought to be interpreted and used.

It is our intention in this book to argue that teacher research is a form of social change wherein individuals and groups labor to understand and alter classrooms, schools, and school communities and that this project has important implications for research on teaching, preservice and inservice teacher education, and language and literacy education. Because teacher research interrupts traditional assumptions about knowers, knowing, and what can be known about teaching, it has the potential to redefine the notion of a knowledge base for teaching and to challenge the university's hegemony in the generation of expert knowledge for the field. Because teacher research challenges the dominant views of staff development and preservice training as transmission and implementation of knowledge from outside to inside schools, it has the potential to reconstruct teacher development across the professional life span so that inquiry and reform are intrinsic to teaching. And finally, because teacher research makes visible the ways that teachers and students co-construct knowledge and curriculum, it has the potential to alter profoundly the ways that teachers use language and literacy to relate to their colleagues and their students, and it can support a more critical and democratic pedagogy.

The design of this book reflects the dialectic that is involved when school- and university-based professionals work to construct lives that connect practice and research. Part 1 includes five essays that build a conceptual framework for teacher research, considering its definition, its relationship to university-based research on teaching, its epistemology, its role in preservice and inservice teacher education, and the social and organizational structures that support teacher research communities. Part 2 includes 21 pieces written by teacher researchers who work in schools, colleges, and adult literacy programs

in the Philadelphia area. Originally written for a range of audiences and purposes, these address practice-centered issues related to language, learning, and literacy; the cultures of teaching; and teacher research as a mode of inquiry. It is our hope that taken together, the two parts of this volume will speak to some of the questions of teachers and student teachers, university-based researchers and teacher educators, administrators, and policymakers concerned with the relationships of inquiry and change.

In *Composing a Life*, Mary Catherine Bateson tells us, "Writing a book with someone is a curious kind of sharing in the creation of a new life, an intimacy that establishes a permanent link even when one moves on to other interests." The intimacy that we have come to share as we have worked together over the past 6 years has significantly shaped and sustained our intellectual and personal lives as women seeking connected ways of working and living in the world. We think that the bond and the energy that come from close collaborative work for us as coauthors, for teachers as members of communities, and for anyone who struggles along with others to bring about educational change make it possible to renegotiate the boundaries of research and practice and reconfigure relationships inside and outside schools and universities.

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PART I CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS FOR TEACHER RESEARCH

For much of the 50-year history of research on teaching, teachers and their work have been the topics of study. They have been the researched rather than the researchers. As subjects of research conducted by university-based scholars, teachers have been in effect the objects of study. Their classrooms have served as sites for the collection of data on classroom management and climate, patterns of classroom behavior, personality attributes, social interactions, and instruments of instruction. More recently, research on teaching has looked explicitly at teachers' thought processes and has begun to give prominence to the complex interplay of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and the ways that these are used in diverse classroom contexts. This movement toward recognizing teachers' knowledge and thinking as critical components in teaching, however, continues to objectify teaching and often ignores teachers' roles as theorizers, interpreters, and critics of their own practice. Although teachers have been regarded as decision makers in their own classrooms, they have rarely been included in decisions about research as knowledge generation.

Teachers are also expected to be the eventual recipients of the knowledge generated by professional researchers. That is, they are expected to acknowledge the value of researchers' work for their own professional practice and to accept its validity for their day-to-day decisions. Consequently beginning as well as in-service teacher education programs are typically organized to disseminate a knowledge base constructed almost exclusively by outside experts. This means that throughout their careers, teachers are expected to learn about their own profession not by studying their own experiences but by studying the findings of those who are not themselves school-based teachers.

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In the first part of this book, we question some of the conventional relationships of teachers, knowledge, and research. We argue that it is possible to imagine a different knowledge base for teaching one that is not drawn exclusively from university-based research but is also drawn from research conducted by teachers, one that is not designed so that teachers function simply as objects of study and recipients of knowledge but also function as architects of study and generators of knowledge. This radical shift from receivers to researchers, users to knowers, and subjects to participants transforms the current notion of research on teaching and makes necessary a redefinition of what we mean by a professional knowledge base.

In the five essays that follow, we argue for this shift by examining the nature of teacher research, its relationship to research on teaching by university-based scholars, its role in knowledge generation in the field, the prospects for reconstructing teacher education as inquiry across the professional life span, and the social and organizational structures that support communities for teacher research. In addressing these questions about teacher research and its definition, position, epistemology, role in professional development, and structure of communities, as listed in Figure I.1, it is our intention to explore the implications of altered relationships among knowers, knowing, and what can be known about teaching.

Chapter 1 argues that although several critical issues divide research on teaching from teacher research, it is best understood as its own genre with a number of distinctive features. In Chapter 2, we develop this idea, proposing a four-part working typology of teacher research that includes both empirical and conceptual work by teachers. In Chapter 3, we argue that teacher inquiry is a significant way of generating both local and public knowledge for teaching. Chapter 4 argues for a reconceptualization of teacher education at both preservice and in-service levels, suggesting that inquiry and reform ought to be regarded as integral parts of the activity and of the intellectual project of teaching. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a framework for considering the social and organizational structures that support and sustain communities for teacher research at all levels of professional development. Taken together, these five essays both provide an analytic framework for understanding teacher research and make the case that research by teachers in their own schools and classrooms represents a radical challenge to current assumptions about how teachers learn and about what constitutes a knowledge base for teaching.