

SELF-STUDY THROUGH PERSONAL HISTORY

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The International Handbook on Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices is of interest to teacher educators, teacher researchers and practitioner researchers. The two volumes offer an encyclopedic review of the field of self-study; examines in detail self-study in a range of teaching and teacher education contexts; outlines a full understanding of the nature and development of self-study; explores the development of a professional knowledge base for teaching through self-study; purposefully represents self-study through research and practice; illustrates examples of self-study in teaching and teacher education.

Abstract

The profession of teaching, historically, has struggled with the degree to which the personal experiences of the teacher can or should influence classroom practice. This chapter explores the benefits of including “the personal” both for the teacher and student. Personal history – the formative, contextualized experiences of our lives that influence how we think about and practice our teaching – provides a powerful mechanism for teachers wanting to discern how their lived lives impact their ability to teach or learn. In this chapter, the authors explore the historical evolution of personal history self-study, the misconceptions that often limit its potential, and the multiple ways in which it can promote deeper learning. Specifically, this form of self-study can be used to: know and better understand one’s professional identity, model and test forms of reflection, and finally, push the boundaries of what

we know by creating alternative interpretations of reality. The benefits of this method are further illustrated through a case study of the lived experiences of a teacher educator surfacing her own struggle to unpack how her identity impacts her teaching and her quest for modeling self-study as she reshapes a preservice teacher education program.

To know the past is to know oneself as an individual *and* as a representative of a socio-historical moment in time; like others each person is a victim, vehicle, and ultimately a resolution of a culture's dilemmas. (Bullough and Gitlin, 1995, p. 25)

Personal history self-study is increasingly becoming an essential methodology towards teacher educators' personal and professional growth and especially to improving their teaching practice and impacting their students' learning. Through a personal history self-study approach, professors and their students are able to reconstruct significant life events to inform them of their professional identity formation and to help them make meaning of their pedagogy and the connections of their practice to theory. In that process, teacher educators are finding a need to model to show and not just tell, that life-long learning is vital for the teachers' professional development. In collaborative teaching and research circles, teacher educators are using critical reflection on their practice with feedback from their students on their perceptions of the changed teaching practices. This work is nestled in the institutional contexts that both challenge and support teacher educators as they experiment with diverse and non-traditional pedagogical and research methodologies. This chapter on personal history self-study is informed by the widely shared belief that teaching is a fundamentally autobiographical act (Finley, 1998; Goodson, 1998; Jersild, 1955; Knowles, 1998; Pinar and Grumet, 1976). Most importantly, personal history self-study researchers are providing support

for the notion that who we are as people, affects who we are as teachers and consequently our students' learning.

The teacher's day is filled with individual complexities, dilemmas, and choices that are too improvisational to be scripted with rational guidelines and processes (Greene, 1986; Pinar, 1980), although many have attempted to create such scripts. Because of this improvisational nature, the connections between external processes or theories and actual action in the classroom are not always linear (Clark & Yinger, 1979; Clark & Peterson, 1986); instead, beginning with Dewey (1933;1938) in the 1930s and continuing especially in the last several decades, the work of many researchers has been to find the genesis for teacher action deep in the personal histories of teachers (e.g., Goodson, 1980; Knowles and Reynolds, 1994). These teacher educators in whose number we count ourselves believe that an examination of the personal history of teachers and teacher educators is a key piece in transforming teacher action and ultimately transforming the educational experiences of schoolchildren everywhere. These teacher educators also study their teaching while exploring the sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978) milieu that has impacted their practice.

As we write this chapter on personal history self-study, our own context too plays an enormous role in our view of the field and our belief in the necessity of personal history self-study for teachers and teacher educators alike. For the three of us who circulate drafts of this chapter at coffeehouses, faculty meetings, and through e-mail, unpacking our own personal history through self-study is not an option or luxury but a necessity. Unlike many who find their work in the academy to be isolating, we find our work to be filled with talk and collaboration. The intensity of our collaboration comes

form the structure of Initiatives in Educational Transformation (IET) ¹an innovative professional development program for practicing K-12 teachers designed to encourage teachers to rethink their professional role and to transform through active reflection and self-study. In this non-traditional program, we co-create every piece of curriculum and co-teach every class. Together, we question our everyday taken-for-granted practice as we reconceptualize the practice of teachers' professional development. We have witnessed first-hand how personal history self-study enhances teachers' personal and professional development and contributes to professional renewal for teachers as well as ourselves. In this chapter we are most concerned with how teacher educators are making a difference in teacher education through their personal history self-studies.

We open our chapter with earlier research which has influenced and intersected with personal history self-study research. We then turn our discussion to three major reasons why teacher educators find personal history self-study a necessary and generative form of research. While these categories are certainly neither exclusive nor singular, they have helped us name some of the ways self-study can help transform teaching and learning. In these loose, overlapping categories, which emerged from a review of the literature, personal history self-study is used for:

1. self-knowing and forming and reforming a professional identity
2. modeling and testing effective reflection
3. pushing the boundaries of teaching.

¹ See: Sockett, H., DeMulder, E. K., LePage, P., & Wood, D. (Eds.). (2001). *Transforming teacher education: Lessons in professional development*. New York: Bergin and Garvey. Also see www.gmu.edu/iet

These three section reviews are offered to illustrate and elucidate the valuable ways personal history self-study can help change teacher action and contribute to the teacher knowledge base. After the section reviews, we share a case study that highlights each of these very purposes. We invite our readers to do what we ask our students to do to consider the “so what” of research, its practical applications to their teaching so that they might better know their teaching selves. We close the chapter by raising questions about the future of personal history self-study.

Historical Outgrowth of Personal History Self-Study

The interaction between teachers’ thinking and beliefs and their actions in the classroom is not a new subject. In his examination of thinking, John Dewey (1933) claimed that reflective thinking, “converts action that is merely appetitive, blind and impulsive into *intelligent action* (p. 17) [italics added]”. His premise, that unexamined thinking leads to acts based in random or irrational beliefs or ideas, has been trumpeted by many who wish for more purposeful action on the part of teachers and others (Perrone and Traver, 1996; Sprinthall, Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall, 1996; Zeichner, 1996; Zeichner and Liston, 1987). Dewey’s early interest in thinking (and its relationship to belief) was not taken up by those who studied teacher practice, however. In fact, Sprinthall et al. (1996) claim that, “Not until relatively recently has the importance of *the teacher* (p. 666) [italics added] in the process of education received adequate theoretical and research attention”.

Sprinthall et al. (1996) trace research on teacher practice through examinations of earlier paradigms of research on teaching. They discuss the “trait and factor model,”

which focused on “studies of fixed personality characteristics”; the “dynamic model from the psychoanalytic tradition,” which saw “current behavior as an overdetermined function of very early experience”; and the “process-product model,” which tried to link student outcomes to specific, measurable teacher practices (p. 666). They conclude that “the paradigms were insufficiently robust to provide adequate understanding for program development” (p. 666).

After years of looking for other factors that might influence the way teachers teach, researchers and teacher educators have returned to studying in more complex ways the connection between what teachers think and believe and the way they teach (Carter and Doyle, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Unlike those who enter professions such as law or medicine, teachers begin their work with vast amounts of personal history in their future workplaces (Pajares, 1992). These past experiences create hidden personal narratives about education, school, and schooling that have a profound and sometimes intractable impact on the way teachers teach their students.

Teacher educators sought in many different ways to uncover or explore these hidden narratives which are so central to teacher practice. Early work in personal knowledge and the nature of knowing (e.g., Polanyi, 1958), teachers’ socialization (e.g., Lortie, 1975), changes in teachers’ lives and careers (e.g., Ball and Goodson, 1985), teacher beliefs (e.g., Munby, 1983), teachers’ practical knowledge (e.g., Elbaz, 1981; van Manen, 1977, 1994), the development of teachers’ self-concepts (e.g., Nias, 1989), teachers’ stories (e.g., Ashton-Warner, 1963; Bullough, 1989), and more recent work in teacher educators’ life-histories (e.g., Ayers, 1993; Foster, 1997; hooks, 1996; Miller,

1998; Neuman and Peterson, 1997) all laid a foundation for understanding the role of personal narrative in demystifying teaching and its political and social constraints. Theories on adult development (e.g., Kegan, 1982; Kitchener and King, 1981) and women's development (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule; Bateson, 1990) broadened the knowledge base about the ways adults grow and change over time and also emphasized the importance of self-reflection for the growth of consciousness and increasing capacity for abstraction and perspective-taking.

The connection between personal reflection and action was also a vital ingredient in the growth of personal history self-study. Schön's (1983) early work on reflective practice was extended by Russell and Munby (1991) to examine the authority of experience in learning to teach. An outpouring of work in action research (e.g., Carson and Sumara, 1997; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982; Wells, 1994; Whitehead, 1995) and teacher reflectivity (e.g., Bullough, 1989; Calderhead and Gates, 1993; Clift, Houston, and Pugach, 1990; Cruickshank and Applegate, 1981; Goodman, 1984; LaBoskey, 1994; Tom, 1985; Valli, 1992; Zeichner and Teitelbaum, 1982) all played a role in teachers' thinking critically about how their actions might be interpreted from multiple perspectives, although not necessarily drawing the connections from the personal experiences that led them towards those actions.

Similarly, the growing awareness of the political nature of all forms of research led to studies that explicitly derived from feminist methodologies and worked towards including alternative pedagogical viewpoints and issues of social justice (e.g., Haug, et al., 1987; Hulsebosh and Koerner, 1994; Reinharz, 1992; Weiler, 1988, 1991). Researchers began to address the role of authority in teachers' lives and a need to

examine personal experience as both a source of knowledge and as a political commitment to oppressed groups. Clandinin and Connelly's (1994) use of story narratives to awaken and educate the self and others highlighted the power of telling and retelling a component of much of personal history research as did the work on narratives by Casey (1995), Florio-Ruane (2001), Witherell and Noddings (1991) and Jalongo and Isenberg (1995).

What most distinguishes personal history research from other research on education is that the researcher is not simply the one with the Ph.D. who works in the university; instead, researchers are all people, in the academy or in K-12 schools, who study themselves and the relationship between their own stories and their current teaching practice. Arguing for *insider knowledge* or the experiential knowledge of teachers as valuable and legitimate research, personal history self-study researchers make the case that knowledge does not reside only in academia or outside of teachers' lives (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Gitlin, Peck, Aposhian, Hadley, and Porter, 2002). Rather, life histories legitimize the personal voice of the writer and also require teachers to be critically reflective, authentic, and attuned to outside interpretation promoted through discourse with others (Fendler, 2003, p. 22).

Perhaps because so many previous forms of educational research inform personal history self-study, defining its boundaries is a tricky task. Wary of Kennedy's (1989) warning that reflection is variable and subject to idiosyncratic and self-interested interpretation, Loughran and Northfield (1998) clarify the intersection of reflection and self-study and note:

Reflection is a personal process of thinking, refining, reframing, and developing actions. Self-study takes these processes and makes them public, thus leading to another series of processes that need to reside outside the individual. Self-study can be considered as an extension of reflection on practice, with aspirations that go beyond reflection and even professional development and move to wider communication and consideration of ideas, i.e., the generation and communication of new knowledge and understanding. Reflection is important in self-study but it alone is not self-study. Self-study involves reflection on practice.

(p. 15)

Still, even with Loughran and Northfield's helpful explanation, the many-pronged histories and purposes of personal history self-study have made the field open to misinterpretations and misconceptions from many different fronts. In the next section, we clarify what self-study is and the nature of this methodology. Afterwards, we provide research examples to demonstrate these definitional components set within a discussion of the major contributions of personal history self-study to the field of teacher education.

What is Personal History Self-Study?

We refer to personal history as those formative, contextualized experiences that have influenced teachers' thinking about teaching and their own practice. Personal history research is reviewed as the historical or life experiences related to personal and professional meaning making for teachers and researchers. This includes both the autobiographical and life-history research of teacher educators' personal history work about themselves as well as teacher educators' work in using a personal history approach

with their teacher-students towards improving teaching practice at both K-12 and university levels.

Holt-Reynolds (1991) notes that a major purpose of personal history self-study is to move away from generalizability and towards real learning, and explains:

It is not reasonable to expect that every conclusion based on the personal experiences of one individual will be appropriate to generalize to all students. Some of the beliefs that preservice teachers bring to their study of teaching will, in fact, be based on insufficient data and will, therefore, be invalid for generalizing to larger groups of students Changing, challenging, enlarging, informing, and reforming the premises upon which preservice teachers base their arguments become our primary and legitimate concerns. (p. 21)

A review of the research reveals that personal history self-study serves this very purpose and especially because of the nature of this methodology as: (1) collaborative, (2) contextualized, and (3) conducted through diverse methodologies of qualitative research that have sometimes led to misconceptions about its usefulness. This confusion led to a clearer articulation of its components and purposes.

The Collaborative Nature of Personal History Self-Study

Personal history self-study is about self-knowing towards personal and professional growth that is necessarily enriched through conversation and critique within a self-study community of scholars. Eisner (1991) talks about how personal biographies make it possible for individuals to experience and interpret the world from multiple perspectives as they recognize and alter their frames of reference. But the self-studier

does not travel the road alone. Though the term “personal” here would suggest that singularity, one of the hallmarks of personal history self-study is its collaborative nature. Personal history self-study entails the opportunity to disrobe, unveil, and engage in a soul-searching truth about the self *while also* engaging in critical conversations, and most importantly, continuing to discover the alternative viewpoints of others. For example, it was through critiquing each other’s personal history writing that Gitlin, Bringhurst, Burns, Cooley, Myers, Price, Russell, and Tiess (1992) came to realize that the personal histories their students brought to the classroom created a curriculum of difference. Teachers are finding that personal history self-study is part of the fabric of what it means to be a teacher and that a dialogue with others enhances that process. Westerhoff (1987) explains:

We are at our best when we make our lives and our search for meaning available as a resource for another’s learning. To be a teacher means more than to be a professional who possesses knowledge and skills. It is to have the courage to enter into a common search with others. (p. 193)

Neilsen (1994) explains its threatening nature threatening to perhaps ourselves most: “Looking at ourselves up close, we risk exposing our insecurities, revealing bad habits and dangerous biases, recognizing our own mediocrity, immaturity, or obsessive need to control. In some cases, we find the price of growth is simply too high” (p. 35). This taking the autobiographical public is a bold, yet critical research undertaking for teachers’ personal and professional development which is supported through collaborative efforts. Perhaps no one better exemplifies the power of longitudinal collaborative interpretation in personal history research than Knowles and Cole (1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995; Cole and

Knowles, 1995; 2000b) who have used personal history self-study to challenge and deepen their work for more than a decade. Cole and Knowles (1996) view personal history self-study towards the purpose of self-understanding and professional development as essentially being thoughtful about one's work. Their personal history self-study is courageously discussed within the geo-political climates and institutional contexts which have situated their work.

The Contextualized Nature of Personal History Self-Study

Personal history self-study is about the self *in relation to others* in historical and social contexts that facilitate the educative experience. The individual “uncovers biography” by situating herself/himself within history. Britzman (1986) writes that the connection between self and history,

allows the individual critical insight into both the nature of her/his relationship to individuals, institutions, cultural values, and political events, and the ways in which these social relationships contribute to the individuals' identity, values, and ideological perspectives. In this way, individuals do have the capacity to participate in shaping and responding to the social forces which directly affect their lives. (p. 452)

One of the difficulties that may arise when teacher educators encourage their students to write a personal history self-study, arises when they say, “just tell your story”. Miller (1998) discusses why “telling your story” cannot be an end in itself and explains,

Many (teacher stories) do not explore and theorize social, historical, or cultural contexts and influences, including language and discourse, on constructions of the

“selves” who have those “experiences.” Such autobiographical work does not incorporate situated analyses of specific contexts that influence the constructions and representations of selves and others. (p. 150)

Personal history self-study stories should avoid the problems of simple story telling by addressing the multiple selves, the never-ending, complex, and incomplete self. The stories should deal with the surprises, failings, contradictions, and a desire to know relevant to a particular space and time. Within their settings, self-studiers also raise alternative interpretations and visions of their teaching realities and show their lived contradictions and failings. It is not a seamless, transparent story with a beginning, middle, and end but an ongoing story, which speaks of a process and highlights mistakes, understandings, tensions, and insights. It is honest and specific to the context and time in which it is placed. For example, Macgillivray (1997) and Schulte (2002) each explore how their life history biases their interpretation of their pedagogy and how they reconstruct their teaching realities in the contexts in which they work through self-study.

Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), two major pioneers in the self-study of teaching practices movement, speak of this necessity of contextualization in autobiographical writing and the need to show how the issue of quality and validity are represented in personal history self-study. They developed “guidelines” for conducting autobiographical research because “determining just what it means to be involved in self-study research has proven very difficult” (p. 14). They emphasize the need for attention to context so that the story is grounded. As with other qualitative research, the reader gains insights into the person under study when placed within a rich, in-depth description of the scene, situation, and action. Particularly because of its context specific nature, Bullough and

Pinnegar (2001) emphasize that the aim of a personal history self-study approach is to “provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle” (p. 20). The different forms that personal history self-study has taken affirms this effect.

The Diverse Methodological Nature of Personal History Self-Study

Although we speak of a methodology or approach in personal history self-study, there are a wide variety of qualitative methods that have been employed in personal history research e.g., narratives, journaling, correspondence, electronic mail exchanges, audiotaped discussions, videotapes of one’s teaching, story telling, memory work, emotion work, education-related life-histories, interviews, and multiple forms of artistic expression such as drawing, photography, poetry, and artistic installations. For example, Richards (1998) sketched self-portraits of her teaching to ask questions about the origins of her pedagogical style and how she might teach differently. Muchmore (2000) and Gabriel (2000) engaged themselves and their students in personal history literacy experiences using poetry. Archibald, Chamberlain, and Gerrits (2000) used mask-making as a medium for their students’ self-knowing as teachers.

Cole and Knowles (1996) view the various forms they employ in their personal history self-study work as a form of their professional development. They use writing about their personal histories as a means for understanding themselves and also as the data collection method. Their personal histories, as well as those of their students, have been represented through various formats such as case study, narrative, or life history representation and more recently through arts-based inquiries. For example, Cole (1999) and Knowles (1999) used artistic expression in their representations of self in art

installation formats at an international conference to showcase their inquiries of how personal history influenced their professional lives. Finley and Knowles (1995) considered how their aesthetic and artistic experiences shaped who they are as researchers and their views on what they consider research to be.

Cole and Knowles (1998a) explain how the diverse methodological, subjective, and practical nature of personal history is antithetical to scientifically based research and doctrines of positivism, measurement, quantification, and predictability, which are highly valued in conservative-minded institutions (p. 47). Consequently, it faces challenges similar to those encountered by other qualitative educational researchers. In response to this dilemma, Feldman (2003) presents concrete suggestions to self-study researchers for increasing the validity of self-study through: (1) more explicit description and identification of how data was collected; (2) a discussion of how the researcher constructed the representation of data; (3) an exploration of multiple ways of representing the same self-study; and (4) evidence of the value of the changes that were promoted through the self-study (pp. 27-28). Indeed, the literature in personal history self-study gives credence to the fact that personal history, in its many forms, serves key functions in furthering the knowledge base of teaching and prompts significant changes in teacher education. We turn to that next.

To What End Do Teachers and Researchers Use Personal History?

In this section, we discuss how personal history self-study research is aimed at the production and advancement of knowledge to improve education, to expand the knowledge base of teacher education, to explore programmatic reform, to construct

personal and professional knowledge, and to model complexities of education. Personal history self-study is a setting within which teachers and researchers struggle to make sense of their work and ultimately transform the educational experience. In other words, personal history self-study is useful for,

1. self-knowing and forming and reforming a professional identity
2. modeling and testing effective reflection
3. pushing the boundaries of teaching.

Self-knowing and Forming and Reforming a Professional Identity

One of the major reasons teachers and researchers have engaged in personal history self-study is for self-knowing and a search for their professional identity. There has been an abundance of research on *what* teachers do and less on *why* they do what they do. Research about teacher beliefs first began to focus on the *whys* of teaching and the personal history approach extended this focus by having teachers ask *themselves* where their beliefs were generated. While teachers may focus on many different elements in their personal history work, the two most central areas of focus are 1) exploring personal history connections to teaching and learning and subsequently transforming curricula, and 2) understanding their home culture and its influence on who they have become as teachers.

Exploring Connections of Personal History to Teaching and Learning.

Pinar (1980) speaks of the need for autobiographical study as a “voyage out” where teachers can examine the taken-for-granted everydayness of their teaching lives

and make them conscious by exploring autobiographical issues (p. 91). Pinar and Grumet (1976) have worked extensively with preservice teachers using autobiography as a form of curriculum theorizing in order to “create dissonance, to dislodge the comfortable fit of self-as-object, self-as-place, self-as-agent, for where there is a neat complicity between these three there is no movement, personal, or professional” (p. 79). In her many thoughtful writings about her work with teachers, Grumet (1981; 1987; 1988; 1990a; 1990b) provides a rationale for the use of autobiography as a form of curriculum inquiry. Addressing the potential concern that a retrospective look will only affirm what we already value, Grumet states:

I would be naïve if I refuse to admit influence in what we notice, what we choose to tell, and in how and why we tell what we do. Nevertheless, autobiographical method invites us to struggle with all those determinations. It is that struggle and its resolve to develop ourselves in ways that transcend the identities that others have constructed for us that bonds the projects of autobiography and education. (1990b, p. 324)

Similarly, Bullough and Gitlin (1995) note that autobiography is a means not simply for reflecting on the past but a vehicle for shaping the future. In their research with beginning teachers, they found:

The writing of autobiographies does not free teachers from their histories but rather enables them to take charge of those histories, to assert ownership, and to recognize their place as actors who can shape contexts and as authors who have before them choices that matter. (p. 25)

In reflecting on his teacher self, Bullough (1997), recalls his need to know about the principles that underlie his teaching while he questions if his teaching makes any difference in his students' learning. He recollects the early influences of his father and several teachers "whose lives testified that ideas matter and have social consequences" (p. 15). With his own principles in hand, he then attempts to educate beginning teachers into the habit of mind that self-knowledge is crucial to their professional growth.

Bullough, along with his colleagues, collects data through student assignments such as education-related life histories, personal metaphor analyses, and personal teaching texts, and discovers how personal history profoundly influences their teaching experiences, especially in the first year of teaching (Bullough, Knowles, and Crow, 1992). Bullough and Stokes (1994), basing their analysis of preservice teachers' work completed with a focus on the self in teaching, found that as their students progressed throughout the year, they developed more sophisticated conceptions of the complexities of teaching and their students' learning.

Patti Canzoneri, who teaches grades 7 and 8, supports Bullough's contention that a personal history self-study approach enhances professional growth, writing:

The power of personal history inquiry is that it has allowed me to explore my implicit theories those ideas that shape my notions of what teaching and learning are really all about. The project even took the process one step further and allowed me to deeply examine what had come before and how that had shaped what was now. My hope, of course, is that this new understanding will continue to shape and influence what is yet to come (Cole, Knowles with Canzoneri and Diakiv 2000, p. 39).

Researchers have noticed what happens when personal history self-study with reflection is absent in teacher education programs. Since preservice teachers come into the profession with notions of what “good” teaching entails (Lortie, 1975), if their teacher education program has only a training or technical teaching skills model without any vehicle for exploring their past experiences with education, they will enter into the process of role negotiation without reflection on the pedagogical and moral implications of their actions (Bullough, Knowles, and Crow, 1992). Feminist poststructural theories raise further questions about teachers’ shifting identities, discourse, power, and agency in teacher training modules (e.g., Youngblood Jackson, 2001).

Greene (1978; 1995) also writes about how being conscious to one’s self and teaching encourages teachers to examine and explore the unexamined reasons for their everyday actions. She asks teachers to consider what is not obvious and what is yet to become because a grounding in personal experiences encourages consciousness and being awake to themselves and to the contexts in which they are embedded.

Collaborative personal history exploration also helps them see that others have a sense of reality that is different from their own. Being wide-awake encourages an inquiry about the forces that appear to dominate them. A personal history approach has enabled teachers to see themselves as knowers and producers of knowledge or as Hamilton (1995) explains, “I had always been looking outside to find which person or theory matched my ideas I never looked inside to see what fit with myself” (p. 32). Making sense of their own taken-for-granted position helps to name and demystify a “false consciousness” in order to see that there are many points of view.

Personal history self-study is not simply a way to reflect upon and record issues of personal and professional identity, however. It is also a way to put that identity on the line and risk needing to reform and recreate the self while also attempting to transform curricula. For example, Louie, Stackman, Drevdahl, and Purdy (2002) an interdisciplinary team of university faculty, wrote of their personal teaching success and failures over a six-month period with weekly meetings to collect and analyze their taken-for-granted assumptions learned from their experiences when they were students themselves. The process led them to a discussion of socialization processes and an identification of their beliefs, and subsequently changed their viewpoints about myths of teacher control of learning, preparation, and approaches to teaching.

Similarly, Lomax, Evans, and Parker (1998) use collective memory work where they write and then share memories of their identities as learners while asking teachers who work with special needs students to do the same, so that they might come to know, live, and practice their educational values more fully. In this process Lomax, Evans, and Parker become vulnerable as they show themselves as learners to their students and discover that when they do so, they liberate themselves and others. They reflect:

Our self-studies is not intended to be comfortable but to demonstrate a dialectic between orders of meaning that are signified by different types of text. We have punctured our original narrative with insights that we have come to through discussing our texts with different groups of teachers and academics, and this has been a source of enrichment. (p. 175)

Teacher educators engaged in personal history self-study do not consider their identities in isolation. They also have to consider their institutional contexts and learn to mediate

among a variety of complex forces as they create and re-create their own professional identities. Teachers' collective personal stories speak not only of their pasts but also of their current values, beliefs, and morality in terms of what they challenge, what they lay aside, and what they model for others.

A good example is the work of Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, and Placier (1995; 1998) known also as the "Arizona Group" who speak out about their difficulty as women entering academia as they worked against academic socialization and towards educational reform. They explore their professional biographies to inquire about their experiences as new professors at their respective institutions. Their work explores the struggle to meet the demands of being tenured while trying to hold on to who they are as people. Using the tools of metaphors, images, and memories, they consider the impact of the personal on their professional roles. In the process, they rediscover their individual commitments to students and find support in their risk taking to reshape the educational experiences for students. They assert: "We have become and are becoming teacher educators" (1995, p. 53). Through their personal history self-studies they analyze how they respond to those in power. They utilize a "walking our talk" frame to model a commitment to their students, teaching beliefs, and hopes. In correspondence, one writes:

Our personal histories and away-from-academic lives determine our responses to, our analyses of our academic work. It is not just our College of Education and the people in it that we are attempting to understand, but ourselves in relation to that institution and those people. (1998, p. 186)

In step with the Arizona Group's findings, there is much research to support that teachers are influenced by their pasts and by the broader and current social sphere, the sometimes

invisible forces that shape their teaching lives. For example, in their study of seven community college teachers who were career changers with no formal teacher preparation, Goodson and Cole (1994) find that these teachers' developing professional identities were contextually dependent on their developing notions of professional community and on their access to the micro-political realities of school life. Based on their research of teachers' life histories and discussions over a two-year period, Goodson and Cole note that teachers' understandings of professional identity changed over time. In the first year teachers' professional identities were bounded by the classroom walls but as they progressed, they gained a clearer understanding of contextual factors that impinged on their development. There was a re-identification process of what teaching entails, nourished through critical reflection in personal history self-study. They became interested in the politics and constraints of their institutions while they developed a concept of professional community. Also in the second year, teachers thought more deeply about how they represented the self within a specific context and system and how they were affected by the privileges and status the institution granted or did not grant them. In a similar light, Russell (1995), through the discoveries he has made in a personal history self-study examining his pedagogy, calls for support systems to facilitate the professional development and identities of both beginning and experienced teacher educators.

Berger (1999) affirms Russell's call for such support systems for professional development yet views them through the lens of adult developmentalists. She explores the connections between the self-study hopes of teacher educators like Zeichner and Liston (1987) and Bullough and Stokes (1994) and the research on the way adult

capacities grow and change over time (Kegan 1982; 1994). She comes to the paradoxical conclusion that some kinds of self-study reflection may be beyond the current capacities of many preservice teachers, yet it is exactly this kind of self-study that may lead towards increasing their capacities.

Also with a focus on adult development and teachers' shifting conceptions of self, Trumbull (1998), in a five-year longitudinal study, reflects upon the levels of support and challenge that she provides for her secondary education science students. She interviews her students during their progress in the program and later during their beginning years of teaching. Through the lens of Kegan's (1982, 1994) theory of adult development, Trumbull explores her students' notions of "self" based in their own histories and then as they develop and "evolve" as secondary science teachers. As she investigates their histories and begins to understand their relationships within the cultural rules that operate in their schools, she begins to question her role as a teacher educator and the role of her perspective and history in guiding and supporting the growing perspectives of her students.

This work portrays that personal history self-study for self-knowing and professional identity is a continuous and evolving process constructed throughout teacher educators' careers. It can include looking at one's teaching self, looking at issues of teaching and learning in one's classroom, and looking at self-knowing and professional identity from a developmental perspective. Personal history self-study researchers have also examined self-knowing and professional identity through a particular cultural lens to consider how their teaching has been shaped by their cultural pasts.

Exploring the Connections of Culture and Home to Teaching and Learning.

Research in personal history with the goal of self-knowing also explores key, and often hidden, explorations about the influences of culture, race, and gender in teaching and learning. Butler, Herndon, Kumar, Oda, and Wong (1998) examined their immigrant/emigrant pasts to discover how those life experiences, particularly motivational factors of migration, manifested themselves in their teaching. As immigrants from various generations, they each sought to trace back and investigate their families' emigration to the United States. They conducted interviews with family members and researched historical journals and diaries and other documents related to the time period and immigrant experiences of their families. Their personal history documentation helped raise their consciousness and helped them connect with emotions of their pasts and, in so doing, connected their families' stories to the stories of others. Butler et al. (1998) found collaborative personal history self-study particularly useful to explore how they might think differently about their teaching with immigrant children in public schools. The impetus of their research was to model for preservice teachers how to use and connect personal narratives to their own teaching and to better relate and interact with immigrant children in public schools. Their students in turn, were able to learn about the significance of "otherness" embedded in their stories.

Oda's (1998) quest was more personal. As a Japanese American growing up in a lower socio-economic, multicultural neighborhood, she remembers that the fight to survive, which characterized her youth, ran counter to her cultural upbringing of seeking harmony and dignity. As she traces her process of becoming a teacher in her former elementary school, her personal history self-study shows her that her curriculum and

pedagogy centered on her original quest for harmony and dignity. She comes to a better understanding of why she teaches the way she does and what effect that has on her students. Through her personal history self-study she is better able to articulate, and thus understand the implications of, this connection. She reflects:

My childhood experiences influenced how I responded to my students with harmony and dignity. I tried diligently to create an atmosphere where students were winners, not losers. I created plays where everyone participated in cooperating with each other. In my classroom, cooperation was more coveted than competition. Conflict was dealt with honestly and openly. (p. 115)

Whereas ethnicity helps demystify professional identity for some, others have centered their study on race and gender. For example, Brown (2002) examines the issue of race as she searches for the connections between her curriculum and its match, or mismatch, with the lives of her students. She was bothered by the fact that the European American preservice teachers in her human development course did not acknowledge their racelessness in their personal essays. Instead of looking for what was wrong with her students, however, she searched her own history to understand her relationship to race. As she examined the social roots of her identity as an African American woman, she saw how her connection to her own history compelled her to reorganize her course with race as an explicit identificatory dimension. and as significant to the identity formation process. She exclaims:

Why is race not addressed in the autobiographies of European American students? Why did I expect it to be? Having grown up in a middle-class, integrated community, [for me] race consciousness was a daily reality. It was a social

marker determining my rights, others' reactions to me, and the meanings attributed to my personhood, my experiences in school, church, and other public institutions, and the familial guidance that prepared me for life as an African American woman. (p. 146 & 155)

Also exploring issues of race, Givens Generett (2003) interviews an elderly black woman about her personal history experiences as related to education. After exploring the life history of this older African American educator, Generett decides to look at her own relationship to schooling and education and her role as an African American woman in the academy. As Generett investigates the myth of black inferiority, she notes: "The construction of Mrs. Lacewell's story forced me to consider who I am as an African-American female student-educator and how my lived experiences are similar to, yet different from hers" (p. 91).

But personal history self-study as memory work is not limited to explorations of culture, race, or gender. Any element of the past that is a shaping force of the present, or future, is worthy of exploration. For example, Mitchener (2000) realizes that the wonder of science which embraced her as a child came from her home culture and her fond memories of her father as a gardener. She uses it to inform her work as a science teacher educator and explains: "From such personal knowing, the kind that optimally comes from self-study, I find myself in a new relationship with science teacher education, one that fuels my future work as both scholar and practitioner" (p. 186).

When the home *is* the school, understanding the history of the parent/instructors is doubly important. To this end, Knowles (1998) explores the life histories of parents who have made the decision to home-school their children. He discovers that their personal

histories, particularly related to conflicts in their schooling pasts, played a major role in their reasons for home schooling and in their educative practice. Muchmore and Sayre (2002) write of their own biographical and dissimilar underpinnings and consequent disagreement about home schooling their daughter Grace. Through his autobiographical writing, Muchmore reflects on his negative schooling experiences in a small private school where he recalls, "I hated the regimentation; I hated the control; I hated not being able to talk. And I hated being yelled at, and sometimes hit, for not paying attention (p. 54). Sayre, who was schooled through in her home surroundings, notes gaps in her knowledge. Ultimately, they come to a better understanding of their rationales and beliefs about teaching their daughter and contribute to the existing research literature on home schooling through personal history self-study.

These studies illustrate how personal history aimed at self-knowing contribute to the field of self-study in ways that have informed curriculum, teachers' understanding and subsequent reshaping of their teaching. It has given power to their knowing and to their process of becoming teacher educators. As researchers examine the connections of their cultural pasts to their teaching, they gain a clearer vantage point from which to consider the consequences of their students' perspectives on learning. These examples also highlight that personal history self-study is one that marks teachers' journeys and their development as they struggle to improve their practice through self-knowledge and understanding, which, in turn, models that evolving process for their students.

Modeling and Testing Effective Reflection

Future teachers are exposed to thousands of images of teaching before they ever stand at the front of their first class. In these images, teachers of greater or lesser skill create examples of what teaching is that are inscribed into young minds and take shape both in the make-believe school games children play and in real classrooms once those children grow up to be teachers. This cycle of teachers teaching as they were once taught must be interrupted so that teachers can make more thoughtful decisions about how and why they teach. In the previous section, we explored how the *surfacing* and *examination* of those past histories can change the way teachers practice in the present and the future. In this section, we explore the importance of having teacher educators create new, intentional models of teacher reflection and how personal history can contribute to that effort.

Teacher educators and researchers have been trained to preach, but not necessarily practice, professional habits such as reflection and self-study. Teacher educators talk about the need for teachers to critically analyze theoretical connections to their teaching, to write about critical incidents and people who have influenced their decision to become a teacher, or to keep a journal on their meta-conversations of teaching as related to personal experiences, which might have impacted their teaching today. Yet many teacher educators, when asked, will admit that the complexities of the negotiation between the academy and the practicum site, the on-going pressure to publish (or perish), and the higher number of students and classes which typify a teacher educator's schedule leave little time for personal reflection (Elijah, 1996; Olson, 1996). The growth of personal history self-study as a legitimate form of research and writing may encourage teacher

educators to see reflection itself as a necessary part of their work, as teachers and as scholars.

Indeed, Hamilton (1995) argues that the focus of teacher education research be rethought as teacher educators become models of self-study to their peers and students. She writes: “It is time to start looking inward, instead of outward...we can examine ourselves in our own acts of teaching” (p. 39). Even when teacher educators want to practice what they preach, personal history self-study is no simple undertaking. Because historically good teaching has been viewed as impersonal and objective, taking the plunge into the murky water we ask our students to explore puts our “objectivity” at risk and exposes us in all our human frailty to our students and ourselves. Grimmet (1997) recognizes the “sweet poison of searching” of self-disclosure as he shares personal experiences that have shaped him as a teacher educator and his attempts at reshaping his pedagogy. He writes:

Such learning is as profound as it is painful. However, it is crucially important that scholars who write about “reflection” and “teacher research” actually do it with their own teaching and students. Only when professors act in these inquiring ways can the traditional, oracular university mold of didacticism be broken. (pp. 133-134)

In a similar way, Clandinin (1995), who found herself dissatisfied with “living the same story” of how to teach, models a restructuring of her pedagogy. From her dissatisfaction, she created an alternative program for teacher education that encouraged a questioning of hierarchical arrangements between teacher and student and a re-storying of what teaching

should look like. She reminds us that modeling reflection and self-study is not something that ends. It takes courage, imagination, and a willingness to always be a learner:

Without imagining, living and telling new competing stories that question the plot line of the sacred story, little in my lived story as a teacher educator and little in the professional knowledge landscape can change. Without opening up to the many possible visions that serve as possible storylines, I may find myself no longer still learning to teach. (p. 31)

Bullough (1994) also finds a new story line through his re-storying but only after sorting through a period of indifference and distance from his students. He writes about how his later experiences and interest in teachers' professional development led him towards a personal history approach and reshaping of his teaching. Now he strives to model that approach for his students. Before asking his students to write education-related life histories and analyze personal teaching metaphors, he first shares his own with them. On his continuing search of the truth of who he is as teacher, he shares:

For me, authenticity in teaching requires that I be able to articulate for my students my own teaching metaphors as they arise from my life history and that I be actively exploring myself as a teacher, just as I require that they engage in such exploration. (p. 110)

Bullough explains that this modeling and usage of a life history approach scaffolds his students towards greater control of their professional development and towards their goals of who they seek to become as teachers.

In a similar effort to encourage her students to gain the confidence to willingly scrutinize, analyze, and communicate their own personal histories, Middleton (1992)

models the interplay between her biography, history, and social structure. She makes her private life public when she writes her autobiography and shares it in her “Women and Education” course. Retracing her early experiences in a girls’ boarding school where she was constantly surveyed and monitored under the watchful eyes of teachers and matrons and burned her diaries in fear that her notions of self-support and independence would be discovered, she now pronounces to her students that, “change in women’s lives (and education) is both desirable and possible” (p. 45).

Cole and Knowles (2000a), who have modeled personal history self-study for much of their professional lives, assert that becoming a teacher is a lifelong process of development rooted in the personal. Knowles (1998) sees his personal self-study as a necessary extension of his teaching explaining, “Believing in the importance of a personal history pedagogy in teacher preparation programs I am only doing what I have long asked others to do” (p. 22). Cole and Knowles suggest and use a “reflexive” inquiry stance where teachers attempt to make sense of who they are as people and how their formative and continuing experiences have influenced and continue to influence their professional practice. The reflexive inquiry they require for their teachers is their own stance as well:

Because we see the practice of teaching as an expression of who we are as individuals that is, an autobiographical expression we assert that to understand teaching in its complex, dynamic, and multidimensional forms, we need to engage in ongoing autobiographical inquiry. (Cole and Knowles, 2000a, p. 15)

Many have begun to follow Cole and Knowles’ example to hold themselves to the same standard as their students. As she considers the research-based practice of building on

students' prior learning and identifying the misconceptions they hold, Holt-Reynolds (1991) wonders if she is modeling and practicing what she teaches:

I am keenly aware often uncomfortably aware of the recursive nature inherent to my argument as I broach this principle with preservice teachers. Like a woman who stands between parallel mirrors and sees her reflection reflected back on itself in an infinity of progressively diminishing images, I ask myself whether I have acted according to the principle I am advocating "Do not the principles we are discussing apply to us as well?" (p. 6)

Subsequently, Holt-Reynolds (1998) used personal history-based teacher education classroom activities to elicit preservice teachers' tacit beliefs about a course-specific concept and to construct a window into her students' as well as her own understanding of teaching.

Kaplan (2000) comes to a similar conclusion as he changes his stance as a teacher who stands on the side while he guides students in writing about their personal experiences. He writes:

More and more, I found myself responding with my own stories - stories that have made a difference in my teaching and living and how these experiences have shaped my teaching philosophy. Where before I was reluctant to write along with my students, I found, in time, to be writing with them. Where before I was resistant to share my life stories, I found myself talking more about myself. My letting down my guard has made me a better teacher and added a spontaneous instructional style that has emboldened my teaching practices and personal development. (2000, p. 129)

In making their self-studies public like this, teacher educators have modeled and demonstrated the importance of collaboration to reflection to their students. Getting multiple perspectives, including their students', is a necessary component for reflection which they also model during this process.

A good example of modeling practice with the incorporation of critical friends in personal history self-study was conducted by Bass, Anderson-Patton, and Allender (2002). They developed their own self-study teaching portfolios while mentoring students to do the same. Their students worked in collaborative groups where they wrote personal narratives, discussed their values, shared samples of work, and conducted peer observations. In a similar fashion, Bass invited Allender to observe her teaching for a semester and notes that she openly shared her vulnerabilities while she gained confidence, agency, and learned to hear multiple perspectives. Anderson-Patton learned to recognize her own biases, -isms, and entitlements in this collective personal history self-study but admits that she was at first uncomfortable with focusing on the self because as she states, "my personal history and culture taught me that this is indulgent" (p. 65). She finds that her collaborative research circle helps her to overcome this misconception as she comes to a better understanding of herself in the context of her teaching. Afterwards, she learns to provide more time for her students to develop their voices through collaborative forums.

These examples of personal history self-study, demonstrate how teacher educators and researchers are finding ways to question, reframe, and reformulate their understandings about their teaching innovations while also modeling that process for others. While teacher educators move through these new these discoveries of self within a

specific context and share their stories in larger circles, they model the process and approach of personal history for others, and especially for their students. The teacher educators and researchers discussed here represent a growing number of people who also insist that this modeling supports their ecology of living and enhances their learning as well as their students'. Thus, it calls into being alternative ways of knowing about one's practice, which results in a reframing of that practice.

Pushing the Boundaries of Teaching

The very nature of personal history research with its multiple and alternative methods pushes the boundaries of teaching and teaching programs as it challenges the status quo of traditional research. In that manner, researchers seek alternative interpretations of the rhetoric, including their own, that surrounds teaching. They examine the inconsistencies involved in their teaching and showcase their failings so that they and others, especially their students, might learn from their mistakes. Personal history self-study research is part of a larger teacher education reform movement and involves extending the boundaries of thinking about teaching and teacher education (Cole and Knowles, 1996; Knowles and Cole, 1994a).

Personal history self-study is a method for educational transformation in two key ways. First, as a unique form of reflection, personal history self-study opens what was once hidden so that those unexamined assumptions and beliefs about the world no longer drive the production of curriculum and assessment. Second, the teaching of personal history itself, because it deals with things that tend to be buried far beneath the surface,

often requires non-traditional pedagogies in order to help teacher-students mine the depths of their own past.

Teacher educators tend to be conservative and fear alienating and offending their conservative students, K-12 school personnel, and governing institutions (McCall, 1998; Liston and Zeichner, 1990). One way to move away from that conservative paradigm is to explore both what forces are at work in the support of such tendencies and also what has enabled more reform-oriented teachers and teacher educators to break away from the conservative paradigm. Personal history self-study has done both of these things. Moving away from the status quo and pushing the boundaries of the work of teachers and teacher educators is a key feature of Zeichner's work (1995), one of the few students in his high school graduating class who went to college, writes of becoming "politicized by growing up in the city of Philadelphia, and by attending Philadelphia public schools" (p. 12). He has taken a consistent stand in his commitment and work in preparing teachers to work for social justice and believes it to be an important part of his being. Zeichner (1996) and others continue to push the boundaries of teacher preparation practices toward social reconstruction by encouraging teachers to reflect on the social and political consequences of their teaching and on the institutional, cultural, and political contexts in which they work (Zeichner and Liston, 1996).

However, teachers generally are not political activists and do not challenge the politics of schooling. In her quest to better understand this phenomenon, Rumin (1998) corresponded with four "dedicated" teachers who had vowed to be silent about their disillusionment about teaching and their devaluation by society. Subsequently, Rumin now works to ensure that student teachers hear these stories as well as consider how their

own personal histories inform their teacher knowledge and teacher politics. She provides time for her students to reflect and write about their experiences with power and its influences on their learning. Personal history work provides a space where her students can examine the development of their beliefs and challenge the assumptions about what it means to be a teacher. As teacher educators reshape status quo curricula, they find that teaching about perspective-taking, diversity, social justice, and teacher empowerment are more effectively studied within a personal history self-study landscape and through non-traditional pedagogies. There is a plethora of literature in personal history self-study where teacher educators employ new pedagogies to rethink their practice and to reframe curricula. We offer some exemplars to demonstrate the uniqueness and usefulness of these novel pedagogies to teaching and learning.

For example, Hamilton (1998) asks her students to explore their beliefs using the tool of autobiography clubs, which she adapted from the work of Florio-Ruane (1994) to “allow students to push beyond their own world to see themselves and others in new ways” (p. 118). She searches for a better way to prepare preservice teachers to work for social justice and teach in diverse settings through a personal history approach. Hamilton did find that using autobiographical text helped her open an honest dialogue about teaching in diverse settings with her students but that students did not change their beliefs, and subsequently their teaching practice, in any significant manner. This research illuminated that she needs to continue to search for more effective ways to teach about the difficult.

While much of the personal history self-study is grounded in, and explored through words to push the boundaries of teaching and learning, images are also strong

and visceral pieces. Mitchell and Weber (1998; 1999) use images to boldly assert that it is time for teachers to look at the identities crafted from their schooling past and reinvent themselves. Working back through a memory space, they employ multiple atypical methodologies to that end. With the use of narratives, they walk teachers through replaying their childhood dress-up time as want-to-be teachers to help them understand their teacher identity then and now. They talk about issues of authority and control, play and work, gender, and purposeful forgetting. Inspired by the work of Joan Solomon (1995), they conduct memory work to explore the feelings associated with their school photographs. A school photograph workshop yields data that helps them to ask questions about specific memories of their schooling. Pedagogical tools also include writing poetry, thinking about the “teacher’s body and “how it is adorned and clothed; how it looks, sounds, moves and smells” (Mitchell and Weber, 1999, p. 124). Popular culture such as teacher stories and movies about teachers are examined as cumulative cultural texts, i.e., for their multidimensional, intergenerational, and intertextual qualities (p. 169). Videotaping is also used to look at old and reinvented identities all to the end of rethinking a body of knowledge about teaching, learning, and adult identity.

O’Reilly-Scanlon (2002) has also conducted memory work with photographs and narratives for her own professional development and then employed the strategy with her students. She collected, analyzed, and appraised her memories to ask questions about herself and think about other’s questions. Showing the power of personal history self- study to examine what was, change what is, and shape what is to come, she contends: “Through the careful consideration of what was once there and what is there

for us now, lies the potential to ‘re-invent’ ourselves as we reflect upon and examine how our memories are manifested in our lives today” (p. 77).

Salvio (1997) emphasizes the need for emotive elements in teachers’ and children’s learning as she challenges standardized forms of expression. She adapts tools of theatre to education to teach emotion using improvisation, narratives, and autobiography as she works to help teachers recognize the interplay of their emotions, their teaching beliefs, and the actual curriculum of their classrooms. In the narratives that were performed and reflected upon, Salvio finds that teachers’ educational experiences were highly contingent upon their emotional life. Through theatrical improvisation, teachers were able to recognize emotions as a path toward making connections between their pedagogic intentions and their classroom curricula. She asserts:

Embedded in the emotional responses teachers have are beliefs, judgments, and values which, if confined to the private realm of the faculty or seminar room, disassociate them from their selves, from their relationships, and from what they know about the world in which they teach. (p. 252)

Equally provocative and potentially transformative experiences in the personal by educational philosophers, college and school practitioners, and artists/educators employing critical perspectives in pedagogy and aesthetic education are showcased elsewhere (Diamond and Mullen, 1999; Mirochnik and Sherman, 2002).

Knowles and Thomas (2000) use the arts to explore how their “place experience” and “place memory” of the Arctic and Tropic poles influence their pedagogy and ecologic identities. They study how place is emphasized in their personal and teaching lives and question how geographical experiences and ideological notions of place

influence the educative experiences of their students. In two-dimensional installations and with poetry, they craft their vision of new curricula and a “pedagogy-of-place.” They discover through a life-history approach that the personal is connected to the social and attest:

We promote learning that extends beyond the confines of the classroom and the development of interconnecting links with community. Our pedagogical perspectives support a sense-of-place in community, that engenders an awareness of the nature of our connectedness, interrelatedness, and interdependence within the natural environment and social/political contexts. (p. 136)

Their research highlights usefulness of innovative pedagogies in personal history self-study that help forge new ways of understanding the self in the world. Moving away from more traditional ways of teaching, teacher educators like Knowles and Thomas, are finding that personal history self-study transports them and their students towards transformative learning and towards reframing programs of teacher education.

Through personal history self-study, and especially through the arts, teacher educators have discovered new and powerful ways in promoting teachers’ professional growth towards the end of self-knowing and professional identity, modeling and testing effective reflection, and pushing the boundaries of teaching. In the following case study, we focus on a teacher educator’s quest to make herself against the grain through her personal history self-study of: (1) synergy of person and practice, i.e., her search in coming to know her professional self and the contexts that help form and reform her theoretical orientation; (2) walking the talk, i.e., her research in modeling of a Vygotskian approach involving collaborative partnerships; and (3) making the familiar strange and

the strange familiar, i.e., her crafting of new a pedagogy for preservice teacher education, which includes the arts, towards educational change.

A Case Study of the Utility of Personal History Self-Study

This case study is framed from a three-year investigation and book by Samaras (2002) and provides a compelling account of how personal history self-study can lead to new insights in professional identity and innovations in teacher education. Samaras interrogates her pedagogy within the social cultural milieu of her past while she also questions the taken-for-granted assumptions of preparing teachers. She models her examination of self-knowing for her students through her own education-related life history study. She discovers how her personal history and pedagogy impacted her decision and efforts to reshape the preservice teaching experience by structuring ways for preservice teachers to learn by doing in real classrooms.

Synergy of Person and Practice

Although this work describes Samaras' search of professional self-knowing, she did not set out with that goal in mind. Interestingly enough, Samaras begins her self-study work with the purpose of studying how she utilizes Vygotskian (1981) principles of learning in a teacher preparation program and what effect it has on her students' learning. Yet, as a self-study educator, her writing soon changes from *how* to use such an approach to a questioning of *why* it resonates with her. She employs a personal history self-study approach so she can understand what she asks her students to do - reflection of their teaching with personal history self-study. She explains:

When I began to write about using and studying the model, I recognized that something was missing. I asked myself, “Why Vygotsky? Why was I attracted to this theory?” One of Vygotsky’s basic themes is that higher mental functioning and individual cognition are derived from social life. He insisted that an individual’s historical, cultural, and institutional context was an important factor in his or her intellectual development. In order to understand the individual, one must first understand the social context in which the individual exists... What were the cultural forces that shaped me and affected my beliefs about teaching? In a Vygotskian sense, I too am a knower who exists in a sociohistorical context that influenced the way that I understand the phenomena I investigate. (pp. 4-5).

This pull towards a personal history self-study approach was largely triggered by one of the projects she offers her students—an education-related life history assignment which Samaras has adapted from the work of Bullough (1997). She writes: “Because of the openness I ask of my students, I begin with my own snapshots of schooling and perspectives on learning in the hope that they will feel comfortable when they share theirs with our class” (2002, p. 47).

In her education-related life history, she retraces her early schooling and life experiences and analyzes how four Vygotskian principles get played out in her personal and professional life, i.e., (1) how social and cultural influences have shaped her development as well as her need to know her students’ cultures, (2) the manner in which her learning experiences were situated and collaborative and her belief and use of field-based teaching; (3) how her thinking was socially mediated and the ways she structures

social mediation for her students; and (4) her apprenticeship experiences and scaffolding of her students' growing capacities.

As she looks back, she sees the seeds of her values as an educator, a feminist, a caretaker, a humanist, and a bicultural Greek American in her childhood and young adulthood. Each of these identities is important in her work as an educator, and each of them is an integral part of her because of her life experiences. She remarks, "I did not try them on for size as an experiment; they passed through my body and became part of my being" (p. 8). As a Greek American, Samaras reflects on the connections of her personal and cultural experiences with her chosen pedagogy. Her story raises important issues of ethnicity, class, and gender and particularly illustrates the tug-of-war among those of immigrant heritage, who longed to hold on to the values of their native culture while they also tried to immerse themselves in the new American culture they were living in.

Examining her education-related life history writing and the wider social and ideological forces that shape her past, Samaras begins to understand the underpinnings of her practical theory and explores the way her commitment to Vygotskian tenets in her teaching change and grow over time. This connection helps her to appreciate her attraction to Vygotskian principles of learning that center her research and pedagogy while she begins to see herself as a theoretician. She writes of her agency as a knower that she gained through a personal history self-study:

Now I move away from using only Vygotsky's words as I tell of my teaching. I am developing my voice as I suggest practices in keeping with my intentions and values. This process will help me move my students toward formulating their own theories rather than simply parroting mine. I can better understand now where my

students must pass because I have journeyed there. I am a practicing theoretician, modeling and studying theory in practice. (p. 8)

The discovery of seeing herself as a knower is supported by the critical friends and audience she finds in the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices SIG of the American Educational Research Association. She thinks deeply about the questions they pose:

Finding like-minded communities in which to share and refine my work helped me sort through the theories that inform my teaching. But did the theories I subscribed to translate into practice in my classrooms? In other words, did my teaching have integrity? I found that the theoretical model for my teaching grew out of my cultural context: my intellectual experiences, my relationships and interactions, and the historical-political era of teacher education that encircled me. Self-knowledge enabled me to better understand how my model for teaching grew. (2002, xiii)

Through her quest of self-knowledge, she finds that by articulating her practical theories to her students, she is able to model a necessary professional inquiry for them, i.e., personal history self-study. She also demonstrates the need to question the given curriculum or “how things are done here” and asserts that curriculum belongs to teachers, after all. Teachers construct and hopefully examine their practical theories of how to teach. This creative ownership of the curriculum will be an invaluable asset in helping her students to cope with mandated curriculums.

Walking the Talk

Samaras believes it is critical for teacher educators to model what they profess and writes:

Like my students, I found that just talking about theory was not enough; in my case, it was essential for me to practice and model the theory of self-study for educators. Professors serve as role models for their students as they pose questions about their practice and seek answers to those questions through research and reflection. I share questions I posed about developing and using Vygotskian principles in my teaching...I examined my graduate studies and the university context that enabled me to try out my theory in practice. As I wrote, however, I realized that my Vygotskian orientations were rooted much earlier. (2002, xiii)

Accepting the necessary exposure that comes from this work, she acknowledges the “disrobing” in making public the connections she draws between her past and her interest in a teacher education program restructuring effort. She finds the journey unpredictable and enlightening as she comes to know the possibilities of those innovations because she has searched for them through self-study supported by others. Now she wants her students to begin to embrace personal history self-study towards their professional development.

In her early work, Samaras (1991) researches Vygotskian theory as related to young children’s learning, although she cannot locate research on this approach in teacher preparation. When she became a teacher educator, she asked herself why she wasn’t modeling a Vygotskian approach in teacher preparation, especially so her students

could experience it before trying to use it with their pupils. To address this gap, Samaras begins to consider how she can integrate Vygotskian tenets in her work and conducts research on the impact of her efforts.

In collaboration with colleagues (e.g., also see Samaras and Gismondi, 1998) Samaras works to restructure a teacher education program, with a focus on situating teacher education methods courses with field experiences. The research involves the experiences of four elementary education preservice teachers and their cooperating teachers. While she experiments with a Vygotskian approach to teaching teachers, she simultaneously conducts a personal history self-study she gathers data on her students' experiences and perceptions of the ways she uses Vygotskian principles, i.e., how she comes to know her students, situate their learning, structure social mediation, and scaffold their growing potentials. For example, the value she places on knowing the social and cultural influences that have shaped the development of her students gets played out in her pedagogy in multiple ways, e.g., projects like education-related life histories, professional growth papers, developmental portfolios, exit conferences, and interviews. These efforts were generally supported in the larger milieu of the institution where she worked. She taught the same cohort in a year-long methods course in early childhood and elementary education. This arrangement incorporates Vygotsky's emphasis on personal history and the importance of understanding the development of teachers' social interactions and relationships over time.

Multiple data sources are collected, including feedback from her students and their cooperating teachers, e.g., one-on-one audiotaped semi-structured interviews, professional papers, written self-reports, mid-term and final evaluations. She also

examined the reflective journals kept by her students as well as herself and analyzes the data to see if her teaching is making any difference in her students' learning. The analysis suggests that socially shared cognition in field work and course work makes a significant difference in enhancing preservice teachers' sense of what it means to teach in terms of using partnership for cognitive and collegial support, perspective-taking, social negotiation, and ownership. Control and feedback styles of cooperating teachers had an impact on preservice teachers' perceived readiness for student teaching, opportunities for reflection, and spirit of social reconstructivism.

Samaras models how she came to know and understand classroom life and pedagogy through her personal history self-study. Through the personal history self-study, she helps extend the knowledge base of practicum experiences and the need for their connection to education methods courses. Additionally, she creates an alternative forum for her students to view themselves critically so that they can reflect upon their actions to improve their teaching and their pupils' learning.

Making the Strange Familiar and the Familiar Strange

Throughout her career, Samaras has attempted to shift the normative structure of teacher preparation in which preservice teachers have limited opportunities to explore personal history and social history, particularly through the arts (e.g., Samaras and Pheiffer, 1996; Samaras and Pour, 1992; Samaras and Reed, 2000; Samaras, Straits, and Patrick, 1998). Samaras, working with Reed, a drama professor, recognizes how teachers, including herself, can learn about themselves and human diversity through the arts. She writes: I had been dancing around the arts, notions of feminism, and the connections

between the cognitive and the emotive realms [in her teaching]. I looked back, and it suddenly all made sense (p. 146).

Samaras understands that preservice teachers are typically given little information about how to use the arts in their teaching and consequently many are uncomfortable in using it in their own classrooms. This led her towards exploring non-traditional pedagogy using drama to encourage preservice teachers' self-knowing and to unearth their biases. As a part of her continuing efforts to restructure a teacher education program, she co-created a drama/education course with the major course objective for students to use drama as a conduit for perspective-taking, or taking the perspective of someone other than themselves. Perspective-taking exercises enable students to experience abstract principles such as the life and dignity of the human person. She emphasized a commitment to social justice and moral reasoning by asking students to improvise solutions to human problems and discuss the dilemmas inherent in personal points of view. Students explored ways to empathize and understand better what it is like to be in someone else's world or on someone else's path. It's a learn-by-doing course with enactive representation. It's a course where students use their bodies to learn. Their expressions of what they are learning become iconic as they are asked to create images in their minds and symbolic when they use language to symbolize their experiences.

Through drama exercises, students were pressed to come to understand the self through others or, in Vygotskian (1981) terms, to move from intrapersonal to interpersonal knowledge. The Vygotskian approach of social interaction and verbalization of ideas affects the cognitive development and cognitive restructuring that lead toward self-knowledge. Language helps students classify, interpret, and make sense

of new and ongoing experiences in ways they can't do alone. It served several purposes in this research: They learned by retelling their stories to others, it provided a platform for peer and professors' scaffolding, it offered redirection, and it facilitated bonding within the class. The drama activities required students to use their bodies and language to communicate their intentions and feelings. Placing their thoughts and emotions in body movements and actions helped them see themselves differently. The drama strategies invited students into a discussion and doing of "otherness" and gave them a space for rewriting versions of themselves. The collaborative nature of the drama work cultivated a sense of community, care, trust, and respect that hopefully they will promote in their own career settings.

When students observed and then improvised a street person or when they enacted an oral history interview or when they read a poem in the voice of a character or when they told a favorite story about values, they began to know a part of other's pasts. The exercises allowed them to recognize that one can understand others on the inside even if on the outside they seem very different from who they are. Students spoke of the similarities they found between themselves and street people they observed. They noted similarities such as "getting through the day, survival, trying to hold on to our human dignity, and tuning out the world around you if the world around you tunes you out." A student observed a man who appeared to be homeless. He rocked back and forth and sang about how Jesus loves him. After she enacted his actions, she wrote:

While singing, I didn't feel foolish like I thought I would. Instead, I imagined that no one else was in the room with me and I really concentrated on being happy and joyous. When I was asking [fellow classmates] if they loved Jesus, I

felt hurt like my character. The blank faces and faces of confusion were expressed to me through the class reactions, so I understood his feelings more because I was treated in the same manner to a certain degree. This was a great experience. It really challenged me to walk in someone else's moccasins, to feel another's emotions and feelings (p. 139).

In written and oral post-enactment reflections of the street person observation assignment and following their presentation of a family oral history interview, which they enacted in the role of the storyteller, students expressed how they came to know a side of others and themselves. Many pointed out how they could now see a part of themselves in their mothers and sisters through role-playing.. After reading in the voice and playing the body language of her mother, a student announced to the class, "Adults really [are] little kids too." Another student became very interested in her father's escape from a war-torn country after she interviewed him and spoke to the class in his voice. She reflects, "He doesn't see his story as interesting; [he] only [sees it] as a negative story that makes him look bad, even though he is the hero in it." One student brought us closer to her mother's struggle and other young, single mothers' lives and writes: "Thinking back on the interview with my mother, I know that being a teenage mother was a difficult, difficult thing for my mother. It makes me proud every time I think of her story." Another reflected in her oral history assignment:

Realizing what my mother's life was like reveals the reasons why she acts in certain ways around people and also kind of tells why she raised my brothers and sisters and myself the way she did. I think I understand a little more about

where my mom came from and what important things meant to her as a little girl. (pp. 141-142)

Students were not the only one to benefit from this pedagogy. In this personal identity work, Samaras journals about her epiphany in drama work:

I realized that I had been trying to teach preservice teachers to understand how to see things from the point of view of the student, of parents, and of society, but I had only taught it as a purely intellectual process. I observed how when they cast themselves into someone else's nature, they embodied it. They were learning dramatic empathy and possibly caring empathy that would help them to know the people they would work with and the students they would teach. (p. 140).

This research showcases how the arts can be utilized for self-knowing and to push the boundaries of teacher education, especially in our efforts to teach about humanity. It also demonstrates the value of collaboration in personal history self-study work towards professors' professional growth and the benefits of such connections for preservice teachers' growth.

Through this case study, the contributions of personal history self-study become evident as they are linked in ways that do lead to differences in teacher education. Samaras' personal history self-study enriched her self-knowing, or personal and professional development, as she struggled to sort out the connections between her Vygotskian orientation, her past, her teaching, and how they impacted her pedagogy. Although she models both the process of personal history self-study as well as a Vygotskian approach to learning, she continues to experiment with new ways to both research and utilize such an approach in her teaching. The interdisciplinary work Samaras

conducted with others moved her closer to an understanding of the Vygotskian principles she professes, and especially through the arts. Her incomplete story serves to further demonstrate that this process is ongoing as her knowledge is socioculturally constructed and her practices continuously reframed. The case study suggests that personal history self-study is a lifelong process enriched by collaboration and by questioning the status quo of teacher education towards the redesigning of teacher education.

Conclusion

Personal history self-study can be used to transform our relationships to ourselves, to our students, and to the curriculum. A review of the literature reveals how teacher educators use this approach towards self-knowing, modeling the process for students and others, and to push the boundaries of teaching as they reframe teacher education. Also woven throughout the literature, the collaborative and contextualized nature of personal history self-study becomes evident. Diverse pedagogies have been employed towards the end of making a difference in teaching and teacher education. The case study highlights how personal history self-study contributes to teaching and learning and can lead to transformative learning both for students and teacher educators alike.

We have used personal history throughout our work and find, as have the many others whose work we have discussed throughout this chapter, that it is a necessary and vital part of who we are as teachers and learners. We hope that this chapter highlights the usefulness of personal history in the growth of teaching and learning and the transformation of education. The multiplistic, context-specific nature of every individual, multiplied exponentially when you think of collaborative educational contexts, requires

research that is as complex and multifaceted as its subjects. We believe that personal history can expand the edges not only of teaching and teacher education but also images of what research is and should be. If that were true, Zeichner's (1999) prediction that the birth of self-study would likely be the single most significant development ever in the field of teacher education research would be fully realized to the benefit of teachers and teacher educators everywhere.

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