Research in teacher education


This article suggests that part of the task of the teacher educator is functioning simultaneously as both researcher and practitioner. However, there are sharply diverging viewpoints about the worth of this kind of research. On the one hand, there is now more research about teacher education being conducted by teacher educators themselves than at any previous time. On the other hand, in certain contexts, this research is discounted because it is judged not rigorous or because it does not generalize across contexts. The article considers the deliberations about practitioner research by the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education as an illustration of how these competing viewpoints can play out.


In this long-awaited sequel to *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*, two leaders in the field of practitioner research offer a radically different view of the relationship of knowledge and practice and of the role of practitioners in educational change. In their new book, the authors put forward the notion of inquiry as stance as a challenge to the current arrangements and outcomes of schools and other educational contexts. They call for practitioner researchers in local settings across the United States and around the world to ally their work with others as part of larger social and intellectual movements for social change and social justice.

Link: [https://www.tcpress.com/inquiry-as-stance-9780807749708](https://www.tcpress.com/inquiry-as-stance-9780807749708)


There is growing interest in the professional development of teacher educators as the demands, expectations, and requirements of teacher education increasingly come under scrutiny. The manner in which teacher educators learn to traverse their world of work in the development of their knowledge, skills, and ability is important. This article outlines some of the crucial shaping factors in that development, including the transition associated with becoming a teacher educator, the nature of teacher education itself, and the importance of researching teacher education practices. Through a careful analysis of these features, a framework for better understanding what it might mean to professionally develop as a teacher educator is proposed. The framework is designed to draw serious attention to the major aspects of teaching and learning about teaching that are central to shaping scholarship in teacher education and offer insights into the ways in which teacher educators’ professional development might be better understood and interpreted.


The current paper will briefly elaborate on the concept ‘research-based’ teacher education and discuss what type of research teacher education and teacher educators can chiefly benefit from. I argue that developing teacher educators’ research competence is a neglected challenge and so is the need for protected time for teacher educators to engage in research.

Link: https://www.uel.ac.uk/schools/cass/research/research-in-teacher-education/volume-5-no-2-november-2015


Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the need for teacher educators’ – or those who teach the teachers – professional development became increasingly recognised in both policy and research literature. In this respect, a growing body of publications highly stress the teacher educators’ task of engaging in research and becoming a teacher educator-researcher. This article assumes that teacher educators’ professional development can be conceptualised as the development of a ‘researcherly disposition’. A researcherly disposition is defined as the tendency to engage in research, and involves an inclination towards research (affective aspect), an ability to engage in research (cognitive aspect) and a sensitivity for research opportunities (behavioural aspect). Twenty in-depth interviews with teacher educators were conducted and analysed in order to empirically explore the concept and assess differences in teacher educators’ researcherly disposition. The findings indicate a typology with three types of teacher educators: ‘the enquiring teacher educator’ (Type 1), ‘the well-read teacher educator’ (Type 2) and ‘the teacher educator-researcher’ (Type 3). Based on the proposed definition of a teacher educator’s researcherly disposition, each type’s disposition towards research is presented. Finally, implications for further research and for future programmes that focus on teacher educators’ professional development are discussed.


This study reports on the development of a self-reported measurement instrument – The Teacher Educators’ Researcherly Disposition Scale (TERDS) – to improve understanding of teacher educators’ researcherly disposition. Teacher educators’ researcherly disposition refers to the habit of mind to engage with research – both as consumers and producers – to improve their practice and contribute to the knowledge base on teacher education. Taking into account the shortcomings of the emerging field of teacher educator professional development research (which is largely confined to small-scale, qualitative studies), a large-scale quantitative survey study (n = 944) was conducted. The first part of the article reports the results of factor analysis (EFA and CFA), which suggest a four-factor structure of teacher educators’ researcherly disposition: (1) ‘valuing research’ (α = .86), (2) ‘being a smart consumer of research’ (α = .89), (3) ‘being able to conduct research’ (α = .82), and (4) ‘conducting research’ (α = .87). Goodness of fit estimates were calculated, indicating good fit. The second part of the article explores differences in teacher educators’ researcherly disposition across several subgroups of teacher educators using the developed instrument. Results indicate that having research experience leads to significantly higher scores on each of the subscales. Furthermore, significantly higher scores were found for those with more than 3 years’ experience as a teacher educator, as well as for those without (prior) teaching experience in compulsory education. To conclude, the
implications for further research and practices related to teacher educators’ professional development are discussed.


This article reports on a systematic review of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices research literature published between 1990 and 2012. Self-study research refers to teacher educators researching their practice with the purpose of improving it, making explicit and validating their professional expertise and, at the same time, contributing to the knowledge base of teacher education. Reflecting our analysis, we defined self-study as a research approach in the field of teacher education which can be typified by the following characteristics: self-study research focuses on one’s own practice; for this reason, it privileges the use of qualitative research methods; collaborative interactions play a central role in the research process; and its validation is based on trustworthiness. Furthermore, we identified two tensions inherent in the self-study work, on which researchers always and continuously need to position themselves for self-study inquiries to achieve its purposes: the tension between relevance and rigour on the one hand, and that of effectiveness and understanding on the other hand.


The chapter is a large-scale review of research conducted in and about teacher education. It recognizes three major research areas: (1) Evaluative studies of teacher education programs, comparisons between “traditional” and “alternative” routes into teaching, assessment of beginning teachers’ knowledge and skills, and the impact of policies concerning accountability and certification on teacher education programs and graduates’ qualities. The authors conclude that future evaluative studies need to focus upon specific program characteristics rather than global measurements, and demonstrate links between these features and students’ learning. (2) Research on diverse pedagogical aspects of teacher education: disciplinary, pedagogical and technological knowledge and skills, teacher education curricula, field experience, the relations between teacher education institutes and schools, and teacher educators’ work and professional development. The authors assert the need for more research on technology in education (3) Addressing diversity and social justice issues in teacher education. It seems that too little is known about these issues. Furthermore, most of the existing literature deals with ways to ameliorate the consequences of the current situation rather than the political, sociological and economic factors responsible for these inequalities.


We are recent graduates of a graduate faculty of education in a research-based university in Canada. Our aspirations to become successful teacher educators and to write our dissertations brought us together to form a writing support group. During the 2010–2011 academic year, we conducted a self-study to better understand how the support group helped
us to navigate the process of writing our dissertations as well as our endeavors to become teacher educator researchers. The results of our self-study indicate the importance of a supportive writing group in developing an identity as a teacher educator, developing research and writing skills through being a critical friend, and preparing graduate students for the complex role of teacher educator.


This paper focuses on the professional and academic development of mid-career teacher educators from two universities in England. The objectives of the study were to analyse and compare the career experiences of teacher educators; in particular, to identify stages of development, landmark events and contextual factors affecting professional learning and academic identities. In-depth biographical interviews were carried out with 12 teacher educators, together with living graphs of their career paths. Clear landmarks were identified in both contexts, with development in teaching seen as largely positive, while research development was much more varied. Teacher educators who were further on in their careers saw research development as transformative personally as well as academically. In analysing the findings within a sociocultural learning framework, the authors draw in particular on Swennen et al.’s model of teacher educators’ sub-identities, Akerlind’s categorisation of an academic identity and Eraut’s contextual and learning factors.


This paper explores issues related to teacher educators publishing in journals. They do so for obvious reasons such as tenure, career advancement, personal satisfaction and university prestige. In order to offer an extra means of helping teacher educators achieve these publishing goals, the paper explores how using one’s own professional experiences in a number of spheres may offer substantial opportunities for publishing. Using a Grounded Theory analysis, the author presents an analysis of his own publications. These are laid out in five categories in which his professional pursuits with teacher trainees have led to a considerable number of publications, 34 of which have appeared in international journals, 25 of them in international Grade A and B journals. The author calls for academics to examine their own practices, suggesting that there is much in one’s own professional experiences that can be of worth to the international community.


The article focuses on school-based development and how collaboration between teacher educators and leaders and teachers can promote development in teacher education, in school and in the collaboration site in school where both parties meet. The data were collected in Norway through qualitative interviews with groups of teachers and leaders at three schools, and with a group of teacher educators. With the Cultural Historical Activity Theory as the framework, central concepts within this theory have been key elements in the study. The findings reveal that collective collaborative learning is a positive form of enhancing the professional development of teachers and that both structure and culture should interact when fostering development in school. The study also shows that the development of teacher educators’ research competence can enhance development and learning both in teacher education and in school, and also improve the developmental transfer between these two

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This article focuses on a virtual research environment (VRE) and how it facilitated the networking of teacher educators participating in an Economic and Social Research Council-funded research capacity-building project. Using the theoretical lenses of situated learning and socio-cultural approaches to literacy, participants’ ways of engaging with this technology are described, and the reasons why their existing technical expertise did not unproblematically transfer to the new technology are explored. We argue that three main factors affected the use of the VRE, and in particular its wiki tool: the individual’s motivation to learn and to engage with (more) new technologies; the emerging dynamics of each research group as they developed shared working practices; and the institutional climates, which supported or discouraged the individuals’ engagement with both the technology and a regional Teacher Education Research Network that used this technology. In conclusion, we suggest that successful engagement with new technologies in future academic communities of practice might well benefit from a shared commitment to agreed working practices across the group and the provision of brokerage and championing of the technology by key individuals who are in the position to inspire, motivate and support others.


The Research Excellence Framework has led to increased scrutiny on the volume/quality of writing produced by academics within higher education institutions. This paper describes the initiation of a writing support programme for teacher educators in a new university and analyses its impact. A key finding has been that supporting staff to write is not simply a case of ‘hurrying them along’ but requires understanding of the particular barriers to writing for this group. We show how tailored interventions, with emphasis on professional development rather than the explicit demand for publications, may be a fruitful approach towards encouraging staff to write and publish.
This paper examines university teacher educators’ engagement with and in educational research. Survey results collected from eighty-two teacher educators at a leading university in Saudi Arabia pointed to modest levels of research activity and also suggested that these individuals held largely technical views of what research is. Their assessments of their institutional research culture also signalled a perceived gap between the research productivity expected of them and the support they received from their university. The implications of these findings for promoting research activity among university teacher educators, where this is considered desirable, are discussed.

Drawing from the theoretical foundations of reflective teaching, culturally responsive education, social constructivism, and self-study, this collaborative self-study investigates the role of an interactive online journal in an international research collective. Each from a different country, the authors came together through a common interest in the “philosophy for children Hawai’i” approach to education and designed an online platform for journaling together. The overall objectives of the study are to examine how interactive online journaling influences international collaboration, individual research interests and goals, and personal and professional development. To analyze their journal the authors use an applied self-study research methodology that is self-initiated, improvement-aimed, and communicative. The findings reveal how journaling can create an international commons, deepen inquiry in the research process, and foster a culturally responsive approach to international collaboration. The discussion explores the impact of the authors’ relationships and roles on their joint production of knowledge and elaborates the usefulness of collaborative technologies in reducing face-to-face tensions often experienced in cross-cultural collaboration. The authors explain how community, philosophical inquiry, and reflection in the context of online journaling proved to be powerful tools for culturally responsive researchers who wish to construct their own understandings of what it means to be a part of an international research collective.

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This study explores the specific characteristics of teacher-educator professional development interventions that enhance their transformative learning towards stimulating the inquiry-based
attitude of students. An educational design research method was followed. Firstly, in partnership with five experienced educators, a professional development programme was designed, tested and redesigned. Secondly, a qualitative multiple case study was conducted to examine the active ingredients of the designed interventions with regard to educators' changes in beliefs and behaviour. The study was carried out in four different educational settings in which 20 educators participated during nine months. Data sources included videos, questionnaires, interviews and written personal theories of practice. The analyses indicated that aligned self-study interventions on a personal, peer and group level guided by a trained facilitator supported the intended leaning.


This article reviews 65 studies presented at the 10th international self-study of teacher education practices conference in 2014 to determine whether emerging self-study research incorporates the five major characteristics of self-study: self-initiated inquiry that is situated and improvement-aimed; undertaken collaboratively; uses multiple research methods; and demonstrates trustworthiness. We present an analysis of 63 empirical studies with reference to the five major characteristics and several additional criteria. Our analysis indicates that most of the self-studies reported at the conference were conducted within the context of faculty teaching programs with case analysis as the predominant approach; also, most were carried out collaboratively. Multiple research methods were preferred over single methods and the most frequent analysis was presented in the form of themes and topics. This review corroborates that empirical studies generally meet the major characteristics of self-study research, although not every self-study reviewed was conducted with a defined collaborative theoretical framework. Collaboration, use of multiple research methods, and trustworthiness emerged as three characteristics that were not always addressed adequately or carefully.