

## RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND ACADEMIA IN NORTH AMERICA\*

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### Abstract

The self-study of teacher education practices has found its place on the teacher education landscape as a principled, scholarly practice that has begun to shift understandings about the nature and significance of teacher educators' work and what counts as acceptable academic scholarship. Self-study scholars have brought their individual career histories and commitments to teacher education to bear on their academic roles within the context of the university and, in so doing, have taken up a challenge to shift status quo perspectives on the role and status of teacher education in the academy. Through individual and collective action self-study scholars have responded to criticisms levied against the place of teacher education in the academy, dilemmas presented by the nature of their work and roles, and challenges facing them in their professional and academic work. In this chapter we focus on the tenure system in North American universities and the role it plays in monitoring, mediating, and moderating the individual and collective practice of teacher educators. We offer a framework for reconsidering the norms of academic convention and the socializing forces that govern teacher educators' work in the academy and a vision of what such a reorientation might mean in practice. We then draw on this framework to explore how the self-study of teacher education scholarship and practice, as a genre, has positioned itself to challenge the status quo of academic convention for schools, departments, and faculties of education.

Faculty members in schools, colleges, faculties, and departments of education have been variously described as: *the most maligned of academics* (Lasley, 1986);

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*the least welcome guests at the educational lawn party of the establishment of higher education* (Ducharme, 1986); and, *marginal people at the periphery of the university* (Ryan, 1975). While blanket generalizations about education faculties as a whole have limited validity, at least from a post-positivist standpoint, there are certain truisms about which there is little question and for which there is abundant empirical support. Regardless of institutional status (according to the Carnegie classification of universities), whether elite research universities or lower ranked colleges of education modeled after normal schools or ‘teacher training’ institutions of the early twentieth century, education schools, colleges, faculties or departments within those institutions are at the bottom of the heap (see for example Lanier & Little, 1986; Lucas, 1997). They have low prestige, minimal resources, and negligible institutional power and authority.

One of the most powerful systemic forces governing faculty practice or expression of knowledge in North American universities is the tenure system. In this chapter we focus on the tenure system and the role it plays in monitoring, mediating, and moderating the individual and collective practice of teacher educators. We offer a framework for reconsidering the norms of academic convention and the socializing forces that govern teacher educators’ work in the academy and a vision of what such a reorientation might mean in practice. We then draw on this framework to explore how the self-study of teacher education scholarship and practice, as a genre, has positioned itself to challenge the status quo of academic convention for schools, departments, and faculties of education.

As a starting point, we draw parallels between knowledge that is individually developed, held and expressed, and knowledge that defines a collection or community of individuals. We begin with the assumption that what individual teacher educators know and how they know is a reflection of who they are and where they have been. How they express their knowledge within academic institutions is marked by the intersection of lives and context. In other words, the knowledge that individual teacher educators bring to bear on their practice is multifarious and idiosyncratic, informed by experiences, conditions, and events over a life and career span. How that knowledge is articulated is a function of the relationship between who they are as individuals – what they stand for, believe in, strive toward – and the institutions and systemic structures within which they work. Similarly, as a community or professional body, teacher educators are defined by, and operate from, a collective (albeit diversely nuanced) knowledge base that differs and sets them apart from other professions and disciplines. The collective knowledge of teacher educators is mediated within and by the institutional contexts within which it is situated. This idiosyncratic collective knowledge is a reflection of what teacher education is, how and why it has developed, where it has been situated historically and its current location within the university.

What we intend to show in this chapter is how, as a collective, self-study scholars have brought their individual career histories and commitments to teacher education to bear on their academic roles within the context of the university and, in so doing, have taken up a challenge to shift status quo



perspectives on the role and status of teacher education in the academy. Self-study scholars, through individual and collective action, have responded to criticisms levied against the place of teacher education in the academy, dilemmas presented by the nature of their work and roles, and challenges facing them in their professional and academic work. We begin with an historical overview that sets the context for our analysis and commentary.

### **The Teacher Education Professoriate**

Over the last two decades of the twentieth century the profile of teacher educators put forward in much of the literature on the teacher education professoriate is highly pejorative. Examples abound. Lanier and Little (1986) in the *Handbook for Research on Teaching*, ascribe teacher educators the following characteristics: low level knowledge and skills primarily associated with a practical focus rather than high level or abstracted knowledge; practical rather than theoretical or abstract orientations; less scholarly productivity than their academic “peers”; lack of cognitive flexibility necessary for the kind of knowledge development and creativity expected in higher education; conservative and conformist orientations; and, lack of indoctrination in cultural norms and values of the academy. Lanier and Little acknowledge the identity struggle that characterizes teacher educators’ careers in the academy and, to justify the situation, blame teacher educators themselves – their “humble social origins” and “cultural characteristics” – for their lack of fit in the academic culture. Adopting a blatantly classist stance they describe teacher educators as a group having lower social class origins which fundamentally affect their ability to belong to and adequately function within institutions of higher education.

Ducharme and Agne (1989) similarly malign the teacher education professoriate with its faculty members of humble social and intellectual origins. These authors basically attribute the low status of education within universities to the anti-intellectual orientation, inferior social standing, and questionable academic pedigree of its faculty. Even though, in a more recent study, Ducharme (1993) acknowledges that a shift in profile has occurred, that teacher educators are more closely approximating academic standards, still, the classist, elitist, patriarchal stance reflected in these analyses is disarming.

Raths, Katz, and McAninch (1989) offer another of the more disparaging profiles of teacher educators. They use a framework developed by Freidson (1972) to analyze the medical profession in order to compare the orientations to knowledge, research, and practice of health care scientists with the orientations to knowledge, research, and practice of clinicians such as teacher educators. According to this analysis (which the authors claim to be “descriptive and neutral” with no “derogatory connotations” intended), scientists are reflective and inclined to seek further information, concerned with adequacy of methods and robustness of data, want to develop concepts and explanations that make sense, are scholarly and read research reports of others, and strive to uncover laws that account for phenomena. By implication, teacher educators reflect none



of these qualities, interests, or practices. Instead, as mere (adjective implied not stated) clinicians, they act unquestioningly, show concern primarily for whether something will work (presumably regardless of its moral worth or philosophical, pedagogical or other merits), rely on personal experience as a test of virtue or validity, and believe that real world phenomena are too complex to be lawful.

Raths and his co-authors question the suitability of the university as a home for teacher educators given their lack of regard for research and, by extension, lack of facility for researching. They maintain that, as “norm breakers,” teacher educators will continue to be sanctioned for their non-conformist attitudes and behaviour until either the teacher educators comply with university standards or leave:

Teacher educators often show their disdain for research and research process. They generally do not engage in research; they find it uninformative. Furthermore, they share negative views about research with their colleagues. ... Their generalized lack of respect for research and their abstention from research rebounds against them. (Raths, Katz, and McAninch, 1989, p. 114)

The authors go on to suggest that teacher educators should perhaps be removed from university settings and assigned to “special purpose institutions” (not unlike the normal schools or teachers colleges of earlier times) or perhaps be isolated within the university so that they can carry on with their anti-intellectual work. While there is merit in a debate about the place of education in universities it is the disparaging tone of these authors that stands out. It is teacher educators’ clinical, anti-scientific mentality that is ‘the problem’. Similarly, Burch (1989) demands that education professors “examine their individual behaviors and attitudes to determine if they reflect the commitment to [narrowly defined] scholarship fundamental to professing” (p. 103).

Who are these teacher educators of whom these various authors speak? Such depictions bear little resemblance to the teacher educator scholars we know and have studied. The characteristics and practices described certainly in no way resemble what those involved in the self-study of teacher education practices stand for and express. Is it the teacher educators who are the problem; or could it be that teacher educators’ status within universities is perpetuated, in part, by these characterizations and by a blatantly functionalist view of the university as a static, unshakable, unquestionable culture? While it is not our purpose here to explore how teacher educators have earned such a reputation, this acknowledgment does underscore the magnitude of the challenge teacher educators face as they struggle for acceptance in the academy.

If the above depictions do, in fact, describe any teacher educators they are likely a small minority, certainly not a broad swath of the contemporary professoriate and certainly not enough to define an entire professoriate. We suggest that there are more resonant portrayals. For example, in a study of teacher educators conducted in Canadian universities (and we assume that there is sufficient similarity between Canadian and American teacher educators to extrapolate),



Cole (1999) put forward the following characterization that stands in dramatic contrast to the analytic profile of the teacher education professoriate described in much of the literature:

The teacher educators who participated in the study ... all took up their tenure-track positions after working numerous years as classroom teachers, school administrators, curriculum consultants, special education/resource specialists, or staff, program, and/or community developers. Many had several years' experience teaching part- or full-time at a community college or at a faculty of education in a non-tenure track position. Among the group were two winners of awards for outstanding [doctoral] theses, the winner of an award for outstanding writing, book authors, winners of major research grants, and journal editors-in short, they had made significant scholarly contributions to the field of education.

Almost without exception, their choice to become teacher educators involved career changes with high associated costs. For various reasons, they left or chose not to return to secure jobs with associated professional status and established reputations, instead taking up positions at a lower salary and with no job security, no status in the institution, no established reputation, and, therefore, minimal credibility with students and/or colleagues. In addition, there was often little technical or clerical support for their work. ... A tireless commitment to education and to work in general is a driving force in these teacher educators. Education is my life," said one, although most admitted they were being driven to exhaustion by work demands. Their commitment to teacher education and to "making a difference" seems to outweigh any concerns associated with their vulnerable status in the institution. (pp. 283–284)

Other similar portrayals can be found in Cole, Elijah, and Knowles (1998), Hamilton (1998), Knowles and Cole (1996) Pinnegar and Russell (1995), Russell and Korthagen (1995). Authors in these edited volumes, through intensive and often personal examinations, with self-study being a primary goal and process, permit more than a glimpse into the education professoriate. They reveal the passions, anxieties, frustrations, commitments, and complexities that characterize teacher educators' work. The result is a starkly different depiction than that offered by the aforementioned critics of teacher educators. Perhaps it is in part, as Ducharme (1993) posited, that the changing times have shifted the profile of the new generation of teacher educators. Or perhaps, it is not that teacher educators have changed but rather that, in large part through the collective will and practice of those such as self-study scholars, a shift has occurred in the way that teacher educators are viewed and understood within the broader academic community (a point we will address in the next section).

While we do not wish to romanticize or overestimate the current status of teacher education within the university and the role that the self-study community has played in facilitating any positive gains in status or acceptance, or



to claim any empirical evidence of such a shift, we do wish to point out that the scholarship of self-study of teacher education practices professors bears a strong resemblance to Wisniewski's (1989) vision of "the ideal education professor":

Professors who are active in their field ... persons committed to strengthening their teaching, to probing and expanding their scholarship, to working closely with public schools; ... who share the excitement of experimentation in education; ... from whom one can learn as a peer or as a student. ... One who values and takes pride in the interrelationship among scholarship, teaching, and professional service. ... recogniz[ing] that these activities nurture one another and cannot be separated. (p. 144)

We also argue that this group of scholars, along with members of the American Educational Research Association Division K, Teacher Education, has been largely responsible for establishing teacher education as a *bona fide* field of study within the academy.

### Teacher Education as a Field of Study and *Bona Fide* Discipline

In a recent, compelling analysis Tony Clarke (2001) traces the evolution of teacher education as a recognized field of study. Using a cartography metaphor to chart points on the teacher education landscape, he demonstrates how a rise of institutional regard for teacher education and teacher educators has occurred over the past fifty years along with a concomitant increase in teacher educators' emphasis on scholarship and scholarly work.

"The chronic discrepancy between institutional regard for the role of educator 'teacher' and 'scholar'", he asserts, have been "a constant impediment to the development of teacher education as a field of study." He goes on to posit that such a discrepancy "has diminished in recent years to such an extent that the two are coming together in unprecedented and productive ways" (Clarke, 2001, p. 599).

The critical points to which he attributes this shift in status are: the emergence of refereed journals specializing in teacher education, publication of several academic reference texts on teacher education, and the establishment of a number of significant academic associations focused on teacher education.

All of these events, Clarke argues, evidence the development of a concerted interest in and effort to define and bring coherence to the field of teacher education and to develop, a body of specialized knowledge within the field. Between 1970 and 1990 seven new refereed journals specializing in teacher education emerged. Over a period of nine years alone five comprehensive reference texts in teacher education were published: *International Encyclopedia of Teaching and Teacher Education* (1st edition) (Dunkin, 1987); *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (1st edition) (Houston, 1990); *International Encyclopedia of Teaching and Teacher Education* (2nd edition) (Anderson, 1995);



*Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (2nd edition) (Sikula, 1996); and *Teacher Educator's Handbook* (Murray, 1996). Between the early 1970s and early 1990s several international associations were formed to provide forums for meetings and discussions about teacher education. Among these groups are: the Canadian Association for Teacher Education, a subdivision of the Canadian Society of the Study of Education; Division K, Teaching and Teacher Education, of the American Educational Research Association; and, the Self-study of Teacher Education Practices, a Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association.

Ken Zeichner (1999) traces the development of teacher education research in the United States over the last 21 years and summarizes its evolutionary significance in this way:

Given all the developments that have taken place in teacher education research over the last two decades, it is time that research in teacher education be given the respect that it is entitled to in the educational research community. ... That this research has not received the attention it deserves in the educational research community and in policy circles is more a reflection of the historical prejudices against teacher educators and teachers than it is of the quality of the research itself. (pp. 12–13)

From an historical perspective, what is the significance of the appearance of teacher education as a legitimate field of study? Using Burton Clark's (1988) analysis of academic cultures and observation that a clearly defined disciplinary identity is key to establishing a legitimacy and presence in institutional settings, we argue, along with Clarke, that, until relatively recently, teacher education has neither identified itself nor been identified as having a body of specialized knowledge. This lack of recognition as a 'subject' per se has, in part, contributed to education's low status within the university – a status which Clarke conjectures has significantly shifted over the past few decades and will likely continue to do so. It is helpful, then, to briefly explore the history of teacher education within the university as a backdrop to understanding the role that self-study scholarship has played in shifting understandings of the place and status of teacher education in the academy.

### **Education in the Academy**

In North America, teacher training institutions moved into universities throughout the twentieth century. Prior to being affiliated with or located in universities, most formalized initial teacher preparation took place in community or land grant colleges (in the United States of America), normal schools, provincially mandated teachers' colleges (in Canada), or other tertiary institutions with solely a professional mandate. (For a comprehensive account of the history of teacher education in America, see Lucas, 1997 and for a similar account of Canadian teacher education, see Johnson, 1968). Such a move was a strategy intended to





professionalize teaching and raise the status of the education profession that, historically, suffered low social status and lack of economic resources (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988). Recent moves to offer a variety of alternative teacher certification programs with little or no involvement of higher education institutions, particularly in the United States, and programmatic decisions (in both Canadian and American universities) that are largely market driven, serve to powerfully perpetuate the status quo reputation of education faculties, schools, and departments. Such moves keep schools of education struggling for acceptance by and legitimacy within the university system.

In a long struggle for acceptance and identity within the university, educators and educational researchers historically have been as round pegs misshapen to fit the square holes of the university's value system as it pertains to academic credibility or merit. Regardless of its adequacy or appropriateness as an approach for researching educational issues or problems, universities set the scientific method, originating in the natural sciences, as the standard by which academic worth is judged and they have challenged educational researchers to prove their academic worth. One result has been a frenzied proliferation of educational research that measures up to scientific standards but has little or no direct relevance to educational practice. A concomitant result has been the alienation of educational researchers from their own discipline. As Shib Mitra (1974) puts it, "In the field of education, one would like to see a systematic study of significant problems rather than a scientific study of insignificant problems" (p. 234).

Pulled between commitment and allegiance to the professional community and identification with and acceptance by the academic community, schools of education have been caught in an institutional tug-of-war. The professional community has lost considerable ground as the stronger forces of prestige and status pulled schools of education closer to the norms of the university. But, as Schwebel (1989) asserts:

There is nothing appealing about having to "look up" to one's supposed peers in the academic community. Or, at the same time, in "looking down" at those in the schools to receive sneerful expressions about the impotence of their research. (p. 58)

With the pleasures associated with pseudo-academic recognition have come confusion and uncertainty about identity, roles, rules, and conditions of the relationship between Education and the disciplines of the rest of the university. One painful discovery for education professors is that, "There is an inverse relationship between professional prestige and the intensity of involvement with the formal education of teachers" (Lanier & Little, 1986, p. 530). The pain in this discovery lies in the conflict of values this represents – a conflict apparent both within schools of education, between those faculty members who align themselves with the profession, and those who see themselves as theoreticians and academicians (Hazlett, 1989; Roemer & Martinello, 1992), and between schools of education as professional schools and the academy as an elite bastion of narrowly defined intellectual discipline.





Donald Schön (1983) describes the hierarchical relationship between universities and professional schools. Citing Veblen (1918/1962, p. 36) he states:

Quite simply, the professions are to give their practical problems to the university, and the university, the unique source of research, is to give back to the profession the new scientific knowledge which it will be their business to apply and test. Under no conditions are the technical men [sic] of the lower schools to be allowed into the university.

This analysis also applies even within schools of education. It is poignantly apparent in the following statement by Ducharme and Agne (1989):

On many campuses, [education] faculty fills three metaphorical roles: beasts of burden, facilitators, and academicians. In the first are those who flit from place to place, carrying equipment, reprints, games, and transparencies as they do differing versions of academic dog-and-pony shows; the second, those largely “contentless” persons who apparently see their function in life as bridging the work of others; and the third, those who teach, advise, study, and write with inquiry, rigor, and scholarship uppermost. (p. 83)

When teacher training institutions joined the university they brought with them faculty who were practitioners and who had little or no expertise in researching. These teacher educators had many skills but those associated with research were not among them. Being researchers had not been required of them and was, therefore, not part of their orientation or knowledge base. At the time, the definition of research was narrow and that definition had very little to do with practice or professional education. Research was for scientists and scientists had highly specialized skills and areas of research. Teacher educators did not belong to this elite group. This created a class system of the separation of those who teach and those who research within higher education institutions that specialize in teaching and universities that specialize in researching.

A demand for a more scientific approach to education was well received by some educators and rejected by others. Those who wanted to develop the science of education and who wanted to be education scientists themselves worked hard to establish programs of educational research, based on the scientific method of course and that had little or no direct relevance to the day to day practice of teaching. Within programs of education these educational scientists (often educational psychologists, for their work was grounded in an accepted discipline) earned some favor within the university and broader academic community and carried on with their agenda of developing a science of education. Burdened by large numbers of students and the pressures of teacher certification, other faculty members in schools of education continued to place their energies into the professional preparation of teachers where scientific enterprise had little value. Thus began the unfair division of labor that prevails in many schools of education along with instrumental, overly-structured teacher education curricula that make professional preparation programs more like high school than university work;



the kind of division to which Ducharme and Agne (1989) refer. To be other than a scientist of education engaged in the “scientific study of insignificant problems,” as Mitra (1974, p. 234) put it—that is, to be a professor committed to the improvement of preparation programs and the quality of teaching and learning in schools, for example—required more grounded interests and actions contrary to the models of research valued by institutions. So it is, as Milton Schwebel (1989) states, that a key dilemma continues to trouble education faculty:

[Do they] perhaps become mired in finding ways to make the schools work for larger proportions of children, or follow a safer, more traditional academic path[?] If education faculty are to ‘make it’ under the new priorities in the university, and if their research is to be useful in the schools, they must choose the riskier course. (p. 64)

Those who engage in self-study research have chosen this riskier course although, for self-study scholars, it is not an ‘either/or’ but a ‘both/and’ solution. The broad agenda defining the work of self-study scholars consists of finding ways of making schools work through programs of relevant, academic scholarship. For self-study scholars, among others, this also means challenging the conventional definition of research and replacing mainly positivist approaches with those that better reflect both the complex and nuanced nature of education and the interrelationship of practice and theory. Although there are multiple approaches to self-study, in general self-study research is personal, explicitly subjective, practically-oriented, aimed at improving professional practice as well as developing knowledge beyond the self, qualitative in nature, and usually creatively communicated in narrative form. As such, in epistemology, purpose, method, and form self-study research stands in opposition to the norms and conventions of academic scholarship.

### **Roles and Expectations of Teacher Educators**

In this section we elaborate on the dual allegiance of teacher educators to the university and field. We delineate the expectations demanded by each community and discuss how self-study practice and scholarship sits at the nexus of the two communities.

Faculties in schools of education are caught in a bind. On the one hand, they are committed to meeting university standards of scholarship, research funding, prestige, and general operations associated with academic institutions (Newport, 1985). On the other hand, they are obliged to respond to standards associated with teaching excellence, professional service, and relationships with schools and community set by the professional community and the public (Nolan, 1985). As Watson and Allison (1992) point out in a report based on an analysis of policy documents and interviews with ten deans of education in Ontario, Canada these faculty members to do it all. These authors note, however, that despite valiant attempts to, “walk the thin line between the university and the field,” the



“question of possible conflicts between research and teaching, and research and involvement in the field continues to bedevil faculties of education” (p. 21).

The academy, it seems, is a sacred place held in high esteem because of the power it holds and grants to its worthy members. For those with aspirations and commitments to make a difference in the lives of students and teachers and, by extension, to better institutions and society, the academy is a place where that kind of influence is deemed possible. Such individuals with secure, well paying jobs in schools or other educational settings often leave those situations to take up positions as university-based teacher educators, usually for much less salary, status, and little or no job security. Frequently, their quest for an academic life uproots them; they leave region, community, home and family. Sometimes they literally leave behind spouses and children; other separations might be more metaphorical. Once affiliated with the academy, the desire to stay is so strong that these faculty members become increasingly self-sacrificing. They become encompassed and consumed by work. Pressures to perform as teachers, researchers, scholars, and community members and personal ambitions to “make a difference” leave little time or room for life outside work, especially when those two sets of goals require different but equally demanding ways of working.

Teacher educators’ work is a balancing act of activities, demands, obligations, commitments, and aspirations. The multiplistic and diverse nature of their work and the time and energy commitments involved in the elusive pursuit of a balanced professional life also makes a search for balance between the personal and professional realms of life a fruitless effort. The dual mandate of teacher educators’ work that requires them to serve both the academy and the profession keeps their gaze focused on the fulcrum of their lives always striving for balance. Work and personal commitments (self, family, and community) work against one another as do professional and academic commitments. Time spent on teaching and staff development activities must be kept in check so that sufficient time is available for research and writing. Decisions about the kind of research to engage in, where to publish, and for what purposes must take into account the different sets of values that define the profession and the academy. Aspirations and commitments to work collaboratively must be carefully monitored (even in spite of rhetoric that suggests otherwise) so as to live up to the university’s standards of individualism, especially for purposes of tenure and promotion. A divergence in research interests must be curtailed in order to establish a specialized and unique program of research. Given their tenuous positions within the university and along career paths, attitudes, values, and practices cannot be overly challenging of the status quo upon which structures, policies, and norms are based.

The problem for most teacher educators, especially those committed to change in teacher education, is that no matter how hard they try, the scales are impossible to balance because the weights are uneven. According to the values and standards of the university, teaching, service, professional and community development, and other activities, that have mainly local or professional implications and which demand inordinate time and energy commitments, do not carry much



weight. The university more heavily weights are those activities that result in intellectual and financial prestige and international acclaim. For most teacher educators, it seems, any balance that is possible to achieve is always imperfect.

In a large scale survey of teacher educators' perceptions regarding self-esteem and the perceived value of their work by other academic disciplines, Reynolds (1995) ranks the unanimous affirmation by teacher educators of the conflict associated with, "serving two masters: the teaching profession and the academic community" (p. 222) among the most notable findings. Mager and Myers (1983) studied the work patterns of new education professors and concluded that 73 to 81 percent of new professors' 50 to 69 hour work week is spent on teaching, advising students, and administrative work; research and program development work could only be done by extending the work week beyond 70 hours. This is precisely what happens. Scholarly work of various kinds is squeezed into the odd cracks of workday, evening, and weekend time. We make this point knowing that this has particular relevance for new and untenured faculty who usually have different and greater pressures to perform than their more experienced and tenured colleagues.

Weber (1990), in one of the earliest in-depth interpretive studies of teacher educators, captures the essence of six participants' experiences as teacher educators and highlights, among other things, tensions related to the duality of commitment. In a similar study by Whitt (1991), the essence of the professional realities of six beginning professors of education is depicted in the title, "Hit the Ground Running." Knowles and Cole (1994), in an early piece of self-study research, compare their own experiences as beginning professors to their earlier experiences as beginning teachers and to the experiences of beginning teachers they studied. They analyzed those experiences amidst the backdrop of literature on the education professoriate and raised questions about the role the university plays in the career development of beginning professors. Writing within and about the Canadian context, Acker (1997) and Acker and Feuerverger (1996) report on an in-depth study of mainly women teacher educators and their struggles within university contexts as women, as teacher educators, and as untenured professors. Cole (1999) also writes about the challenges faced by untenured, progressive teacher educators working within conservative institutional contexts. She, along with co-creators, also poignantly depicts some of these challenges in a three-part, three-dimensional, multi-media, representation (Cole, Knowles, Brown, & Buttignol, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c).

Time is the one commodity for which most teacher educators crave more. Time, assuming the presence of intellectual and physical energies needed for innovative, embryonic work to develop, is a key component which makes possible the development of conceptually sound and professionally meaningful scholarly inquiries. Time for research often comes at great costs. Teaching and supervising agendas, not to mention bureaucratic directives in the form of meetings and paperwork, simply drain many teacher educators of their energies for activities associated with research and scholarship. Such community activities are essential for the development of sound programs of instruction and the articulation of



appropriate pedagogies. Their absence in teacher education can only reflect poorly on the state of programmatic development. However, it is these very same activities (which become demands) and their institutionalization within bureaucratic structures which can deplete the energies for creative inquiry and its resulting scholarship. The line is fine indeed.

Teacher education scholars are in a unique position because so much of their work is situated in professional practice located outside of the protected sanctuaries and ivory towers of the “pure disciplines” of the arts and sciences, the standard bearers of scholarly expectations within contemporary western universities. The pressures are even greater when considered alongside the ways education departments often arrange and allocate teaching, field supervision, and field and institutional development roles and responsibilities. Colleagues in other academic disciplines would simply not tolerate the workloads endured by most teacher educators.

In the professional lives of teachers educators, generally speaking, expectations and activities associated with research and scholarship and those related to other professional demands – teaching, service, professional and community development, school-based work, reform efforts – pull against one another creating dilemmas for teacher educators that are seemingly unresolvable. Teacher educators’ work is becoming increasingly difficult within the current climate of economic rationalism where: teacher educators (and others) are required to do more with less (fiscally, programmatically, professionally); emphasis on quantity (especially for purposes of evaluation) makes quality difficult (more coursework, more students, more publications, more grants); increasing outside interference by government and other legislative and policy-making bodies restricts academic and programmatic freedoms; expectations are reaching unachievable limits and stress, burnout, and disillusionment are pervasive.

Schools of education, by virtue of their position and location in the university community, traditionally have given priority to meeting university standards of performance. For faculty members, this means working within reward structures based primarily on academic merit (that is, rigorous standards of research and scholarship). It also means, as Roemer and Martinello (1982) observe, that schools of education are pressured by the university to retain a competitive edge in attracting both large numbers of high quality students to their programs and high profile academicians and researchers to serve the priorities of the university agenda. According to Clifford and Guthrie (1988):

Schools of education ... have become ensnared improvidently in the academic and political cultures of their institutions and have neglected their professional allegiances. ... They have seldom succeeded in satisfying the scholarly norms of their campus letters and science colleagues, and they are simultaneously estranged from their practicing professional peers. (p. 3)

A commitment to teaching (and, by extension, to the teaching profession) historically has suggested that schools of education sacrifice their position or struggle



for status within the university structure as it is currently defined – a sacrifice few if any, it seems, are prepared to make, or prepared to even negotiate. For, as several authors remind us, the struggle for acceptance by and legitimacy within the university system has a long history and schools of education are not likely to relinquish any gains, however incremental, that may have been made over the past century (see, e.g., Clark, 1978; Clifford & Guthrie, 1988; Ducharme, 1993; Hazlett, 1989; Jones, 1986; Lucas, 1987; Reynolds, 1995).

Those who engage in the self-study of teacher education are able to maintain their dual commitment to teacher education and the academy so that they can live out their heart-felt, moral, and intellectual commitments. Through their efforts, changes in teacher education are taking place. If our comments seem to assign self-study teacher educators with qualities bordering on heroism, that is intentional. To challenge the status quo of (teacher education) institutions requires initiative, innovation, and considerable risk-taking-qualities not genuinely fostered in institutional contexts expressing long entrenched conserving values. Those who do persist, often in the face of great personal and professional risk, are heroes of a kind.

### **Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Rewards Structure within the University**

In this section we describe the rationale for the tenure system in North American universities, how it works, and how tenure is gained. Related to this is a discussion of academic freedom within the university, its integral connection to tenure, and what it means in schools of education.

#### *Academic Freedom*

While the concept and implications of academic freedom have been widely debated and its future questioned (e.g., Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), by and large it is a right (and privilege) jealously guarded by academics. The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, published by the American Association of University Professors, states:

[University and college] teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties ... are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject ... [and as] citizens ... and members of a learned profession ... should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. (reprinted in DeGeorge, 1997, p. 118)

Bowen and Schuster (1986), in their analysis of the Professoriate, more broadly interpret the concept of academic freedom. Citing academic freedom as one of the hallmarks of the academy, they state:

Academic freedom includes the right of faculty members to substantial autonomy in the conduct of their work, and to freedom of thought and





expression as they discover and disseminate learning. This freedom is essential to the advancement of learning. (p. 53)

Shils (1991) asserts that the concept of academic freedom pertains to the rights and freedoms of academics to teach, conduct research, and communicate knowledge derived from their studies – a definition of academic freedom that should remain pure and, therefore, quite narrow. Those, such as Bowen and Schuster (1986) and Russell (1993), who argue for a broader and perhaps more contemporary definition of academic freedom, have been criticized by those who suggest that such elasticity weakens the concept. Skolnik (1994), for example, in a review of Russell's book, *Academic Freedom*, suggests that, "to stretch the term, academic freedom, too far, is to risk losing credibility and understanding with those groups outside the university whose respect for this principle is essential" (p. 109). DeGeorge (1997) concurs that academic freedom is necessary for the good of society and is a necessary protection that allows academics to conduct their research without fear of reprisal from political powers and pressures outside the university and, we would add, within the university. As Clark (1989) notes, with the university's increasing expansion and diversity, a universal definition of academic freedom is no longer appropriate. The concept necessarily has been interpreted to reflect the various roles and mandates of contemporary universities – a point to which we will return in a discussion of academic freedom within schools of education.

#### *Academic Tenure and the Rewards Structure*

In North America, in particular, academic freedom has come to be intricately linked with academic tenure and job security. The tenure system was created as a way of protecting academic freedom. At Stanford University in 1900, a landmark firing of a popular economics professor for his overt socialist, political views, gave rise to a series of meetings and talks which resulted in the formation of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). This association subsequently published a report in which the concept of academic freedom was defined as a fundamental principle of all universities and colleges. The document, according to Tierney and Bensimon (1996), "set academe on the road to constructing the system of tenure that is in place today" (p. 25). The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (AAUP, 1940) states:

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good. ... The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition. ... Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. ... Freedom and economic security, hence, tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society. (reprinted in DeGeorge, 1997, pp. 117–118)

Bowen and Schuster (1986) argue the significance of the relationship between





academic freedom and job security and cite academic tenure as part of the wider contractual commitment to academic freedom. They assert that job security is necessary so that faculty members have:

long periods of unbroken time and freedom from distractions to perform their duties well. ... Thinking and communicating are exacting tasks that require concentration and peace of mind. ... One of the most costly aspects of the current anxiety among faculty about job security is the adverse affect on their productivity. (p. 236)

Most critics of the tenure system attack the close relationship that exists between the promise of academic freedom and the reward system of the university. According to DeGeorge (1997):

The main purpose of academic tenure is to prevent the possibility of a faculty member's being dismissed because what he or she teaches or writes about is considered by either administrators or some people outside the institution to be wrong or offensive. ... Without tenure, faculty members have no guarantee that they will not be penalized for presenting new ideas, for challenging accepted truths or ways of doing things, or for criticizing institutions, governments, mores, and morals. (pp. 10, 11)

In contrast, Shils (1991) maintains that tenure (or its denial) is but one of any number of potential sanctions against academic freedom. Similarly, Tierney and Bensimon (1996) criticize the integral relationship that exists between academic freedom and tenure, arguing that academic freedom is a false promise:

If one of the reasons for the creation of tenure was to protect faculty so that they could engage in intellectual battle without fear of reprisal, then that purpose has been lost. ... If a faculty member does not walk the ideological line, he or she will be at risk of not attaining tenure and promotion. (p. 8)

Tierney and Bensimon go on to assert that, because of the tenure system, the pursuit of knowledge under the protection of academic freedom has become more of a rhetorical than a real goal. They suggest that obtaining tenure rather than advancing knowledge, has become the real goal of most junior faculty members. In a subsequent analysis Tierney (1998) calls for an overhaul of the tenure system. While "protecting academic freedom as the bedrock of the academy is imperative" (p. 59), he argues, the tenure system as we know it needs to change to more appropriately function in contemporary society. According to Tierney, the focus of such change needs to be placed on the academic and institutional culture within which the tenure system is embedded.

The punishment of expulsion from academic positions is a practice with a long history. When the topic of tenure denials is raised in informal conversations among academics, it is only a matter of minutes before collective remembering



produces a lengthy list of names of prominent and not so prominent scholars, those who Tierney and Bensimon (1996) might call *radical riff-raffs purged by their universities*. Given the profile and reputation of many of these scholars and the perspectives they reflect, there is little doubt about the real, though not necessarily stated, grounds for their dismissals. In some way-ideological, personal, or political-these individuals represented a threat and challenge to the status quo of the institution and were removed.

The tenure system is, as Tierney and Bensimon argue, a powerful socializing force and one of the most potent instruments of conservatism in the university. However, DeGeorge (1997) argues, it is not clear that eliminating tenure would guard against internal threats to academic freedom. In developing democratic societies such as in North America, the academic tenure system makes sense, says DeGeorge, because, "there is a widespread belief that knowledge is useful, ... not everything is known. ... and creativity and originality have an important function" (p. 15).

Many academics have openly engaged in research and practices counter to the dominant discourse of an institution and have successfully achieved tenure and the protection of academic freedom. Among this group are numerous self-study scholars. A number of self-study scholars, however, have openly defied the academic conventions of their institutions and have paid the price. Being fired for non-conformist practices, as DeGeorge says:

has a chilling effect ... on many, many others. ... The result will be a less dynamic and bold faculty, with less in the way of new truths or techniques being developed. ... Without the example and encouragement of teachers who are bold and seek the truth wherever it may lead them, students will in turn be taught by example to be conservative and safe. The detriment to society is a less critical citizenry. (p. 13)

This 'chilling effect' achieves hypothermic proportions in schools of education where those who teach teachers, who, in turn, are responsible for the education of future leaders of society, are penalized for challenging the status quo.

### **Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure in Schools of Education**

Is academic freedom even an issue in schools of education? In an exploration of this question Hutcherson (2001) suggests that, in the past, academic freedom might not have been of great concern for teacher education professors who, for the most part, engaged in rather non-threatening and conservative practices. More recently, however, academic freedom has become an issue as education professors' work reflects greater dissatisfaction with the social order and becomes more controversial. While the significance of the concept of academic freedom, on its own, is not so clear in the lives of teacher educators, the issue of academic freedom as it is tied to the tenure system is more straightforward.

What counts as knowledge? What counts as research? What counts as scholarship? These are questions to which the academy has definitive answers; questions



that are met with uncertainty in schools of education. One of the explanations given for the lack of acceptance of schools of education by the academy is the practical orientation of many of its faculty members (see e.g., Lanier & Little, 1986; Raths, Katz, & McAninch, 1989). As Burch (1989) notes, “Academic reputations are rarely made as a result of good teaching or professional service” (p. 88). For teacher educators, the weight of the pressure to publish and carry out the kind of work rewarded by the university, at the expense of other aspirations, is often burdensome.

The notion of academic freedom in schools of education provokes interesting debates. One argument is that, if academic tenure is a reward for proving oneself worthy of job security and promotional rewards and if such rewards are primarily based on conventional views of scholarly production (i.e., articles in prestigious, refereed journals or other scholarly venues deemed meritorious by university standards), then teacher educators and teacher education institutions must make a commitment to the production and communication of knowledge in ways that uphold the values, priorities, and orientations of the university. One result of following this conservative line of argument is that:

Education faculty quickly comes to understand which research and publication efforts “count” and which do not. ... The result is that education faculty veer away from professionally demanding activities and toward those understood and hence rewarded in academic departments. (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 337)

In other words, to earn academic tenure, education faculty essentially are forced to overlook or turn their backs on their commitment to the professional community and field, that is if they want to become and remain *bona fide* members of the academy. This calls into question the meaning of academic freedom in schools of education.

There are those who argue that the definition of academic freedom, which ties it to the reward structure, is inappropriate for schools, departments, or faculties that have a professional as well as scholarly commitment (e.g., education, social work, nursing) and that a redefinition is in order. For example, Nixon (in Nixon, Beattie, Challis, & Walker, 1998, pp. 282–283) calls for “an ethical turn” from an exclusive to a more inclusive notion of academic freedom. His suggestion for redefinition includes redefining what counts as research; putting the teaching relationship first; developing professional selves; and, turning collegiality inside out. This suggestion merits serious consideration because the ideas reflect and take into account the goals, values, and commitments of teacher education as a field or discipline. Few contemporary teacher educators, especially those who define themselves as such, would argue with any of Nixon’s suggestions; they likely would find his ideas refreshing. Not only do universities need to rethink or extend the definition of academic freedom to better suit, but not diminish, professional schools, teacher education institutions also need to engage in a broader examination of the concept of that freedom as provided to and experienced by faculty. Indeed, Hutcheson (2001) intimates that the role of education



professors in performing a service to a nation (or society or professional community, we would add) raises substantial questions about the appropriateness or relevance of academic freedom for this group.

Many education professors soon discover that, “the more one’s work ties that faculty member to the public schools, the more marginal the rewards and status in the education school” (Holmes Group, 1995, p. 64). For, as the Holmes Group authors go on to say, “the university’s reward system continues to favor a steady stream of publications over all other criteria for promotion, tenure, and merit pay” (p. 65). Even those who work in institutions where the dean of education gives prominence to teaching may run the risk of discovering, too late, that the university (usually meaning the provost, chief academic officer, or a university-wide promotions and tenure committee) actually rewards research and scholarship over everything else (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). It is easy for deans to overtly support alternative agenda within their own faculties but the reality of their willingness to ‘go to bat’ within the broader institution to support such agenda is more difficult and often lacking.

In a critical commentary on the reward structure of the academy, Skolnik (1998) attributes the academy’s antiquated management practices and failure to practice espoused values to a reward system that, “elevates individualism over community, competition over collegiality, quantity over quality and secrecy over openness” (p. 16). For teacher educators the implications of this analysis are amplified.

The values and priorities of the academy, which emphasize scholarship (narrowly defined), research funding, and academic prestige, are reflected in the kind of work faculty members do and get rewarded for; the values and priorities of the professional community, which emphasize teaching excellence, service to the professional community, and ties with the public and professional sector, also are reflected in faculty work. For teacher educators, the mandate to “serve two masters” (Reynolds, 1995, p. 222) demands that they be super-faculty members if they are to survive and thrive within the academy.

Each set of values and priorities demands a different kind of commitment and way of working which, in turn, requires different facilitating conditions. Schools of education, with their cultural history and ethos rooted in practice and the demands of practical problems, are not set up to support the work of teacher educators endeavoring to meet the demands of the academy. Similarly, the academy is not set up to support the work of teacher educators intent on serving the professional community. The academy is committed to protecting the academic freedom of those members deemed worthy by virtue of their ability to uphold its academic “ideals” (which are conservative translations of scholarship or what it means to advance knowledge). This is so that, as Bowen and Schuster (1986) assert, scholars can proceed with the tasks of thinking and communicating free from distractions and with peace of mind. The realities of teacher educators’ work are fraught with, perhaps defined by, distractions, demands, and obligations that make “peace of mind” and, therefore, academic freedom almost an impossibility.



If one of the reasons for placing teacher education in the academy was (and is) to raise its status as a *bona fide* field or discipline, then, in order for that to happen simultaneously with the successful honoring of the academic-professional dual mandate, a rethinking of the concept of academic freedom is required. This rethinking requires teacher education institutions to closely examine the working conditions of its professoriate. At the same time, the broader university policy on academic freedom, particularly as it is tied to job security, career mobility, and financial remuneration, needs to be examined and expanded to take into account the nature of teacher educators' work and commitments. As indicated earlier and despite Ducharme's and others' suggestions to the contrary, teacher educators, particularly self-study teacher educators, are often former elementary and secondary teachers, well socialized to public schools, who have explicit notions about the ways schools could be. By virtue of their career histories and their commitment to teaching and the improvement of schools, professors of teacher education generally have a reform agenda more in line with professional community standards or priorities (as outlined earlier) than with university standards. This allegiance reflects both who they are as professionals and the institutional norms with which they are most familiar.

It is an historical reality that, "traditionally feminized occupations [such as education, nursing, and social work] are not accorded equal status and resources with male undertakings" (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 328). Acker and Feuerverger (1996) use the phrase "doing good and feeling bad" to sum up the sentiment of women education academics. They cite women's "outsider" status in the academy as one reason for their tendency to keep trying to work harder in order to prove themselves successful and comparable to their male counterparts. This same line of argument can be applied broadly to schools of education as feminized institutions. As members of a feminized occupation, teacher educators (both male and female) are used to, in Ann Oakley's words, "taking it like a woman" (Oakley, 1984). That is to say, they are so entrenched in their feminized roles that they keep working harder to meet personal, professional, and institutional demands without overtly questioning the fairness and appropriateness of such demands and the resources available to meet them. The kinds of infringements on the personal time and space that many teacher educators experience, the lack of resources available to support their work, and the sheer volume of work expected make it almost impossible for teacher educators to feel good about what they are able to accomplish and to feel like they have academic freedom or other kinds of freedom.

Feeling overwhelmed by and unable to meet high expectations and demands of the work of being a teacher educator are widely experienced. Accounts of such challenges are reported in the literature on the teacher education professoriate (e.g., Acker, 1997; Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; Cole, 1999; Cole, Elijah, & Knowles, 1998; Knowles, Cole, & Sumsion, 2000; Weber, 1990; Whitt, 1991). For example, Jennifer Sumsion (2000) writes:

My plans to stay home tomorrow to write have long since evaporated. If I



put in at least another 12 hours in my office instead, I might be able to salvage a writing day later in the week. I had such high hopes of the writing that I would do during the semester break but these were eroded by an onslaught of assignment marking and faculty meetings; on-campus sessions for distance education and ... graduate students; obligations arising from a recently awarded teaching development grant; and the vast number of telephone calls associated with coordinating a practicum, and supporting students, cooperating teachers and university advisers through the personal and professional crises that a practicum so often precipitates. The debris of those various responsibilities surround me now. (2000, p. 78)

These comments concisely summarize the demands on teacher educators. No wonder so many become disillusioned, frustrated, and overwhelmed.

A group of teacher educators, in writing about their work and its demanding nature, connect their disillusionment with their work environment with the concept of, what they call, “professorial autonomy”:

We came to the professoriate with false impressions about the work environment. We thought university teaching would offer more personal and professional autonomy than it does. ... While many of us teaching in the program are convinced that we are preparing a better beginning teacher, the effect on personal and professional autonomy is significant. ... [Striving for] programmatic integrity in teacher education may mean abandoning notions of professorial autonomy. (Kleinsasser, Bruce, Berube, Hutchison, & Ellsworth, 1998, pp. 308–309)

Whether it is due to outdated management practices and associated workplace conditions or simply a matter of too much work for too many diverse purposes, few teacher educators would argue that there is just not enough time to do all that is required of them, especially when what is required is rooted in two very different perspectives on academic life and work.

Most teacher educators do not experience the kind of freedom Bowen and Schuster (1986) deem necessary for academic productivity or, for what Mager and Myers (1983) would call, developing a life of the mind. Hence, creativity and commitment are difficult to express in a meaningful way. A teacher educator interviewed as part of a study of pretenured teacher educators (Cole, 2000) commented:

I get renewed by the kind of work that I love to do. Work is such a central part of my life and who I am. I wouldn't want to be not working but I've spent a lot of time doing work that doesn't renew me. [For the seven years prior to receiving tenure] I was badly exhausted, under stress, and suffered serious health problems. Creative work does not do well under those conditions. [Creativity] is about being playful with words and ideas and I don't play under stress. If you're going to be creative you have to have loads and loads of failed experiments. [Before receiving tenure] I could never afford



the time to have one let alone five failed experiments. I had to have a product at the end of a certain number of hours of work. That burns you out because when you grind out a product that you're not absolutely delighted with you don't have time to go back and work on it until you are. You think, "Oh God, now I have to do another one." (p. 42)

This comment is reminiscent of Park's (1996) and Skolnik's (2000) observations that the academy values quantity over quality, a comment that an outgoing editor of a reputable scholarly educational research journal recently underscored. In her final editorial comment as journal editor, Beth Young is highly critical of the quality of many of the manuscripts submitted for peer review. She states:

In the press to publish or perish ... some academics and aspiring academics are much more interested in pumping out articles than in making a scholarly contribution; much more willing to "talk" about their work than to read anyone else's, however it might inform their own; much keener to be published in a widely indexed and circulated journal ... than to support the journal by subscribing to it themselves. (1998, p. 250)

Her comment reflects a sad-but-true reality for education academics. They simply do not have the time (and, in some cases, the commitment) to fully engage in the consuming and creative task of producing high quality scholarly writing.

The above comments are also a commentary on the inappropriateness of the conventional definition of academic freedom for schools of teacher education, especially, as it is tied to the university's reward system. The following excerpts from the experience-based writing of teacher educators further elucidate this notion. First, a published journal entry of one teacher educator from the Arizona Group:

Being a teacher educator in a U.S. research university does not mean spending one's time educating teachers. Though that work may be the most socially important work I do, and the work to which I feel the highest moral obligation, it becomes only one isolated piece of my position. It is also not the one that "counts" the most in terms of establishing job security. (Arizona Group: Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, & Placier, 1998, p. 177)

And another:

I cannot allow myself to be cultivated into the academic teacher education community at the expense of losing the value I attach to classroom practice. ... I cannot forget my place as a classroom teacher ... since this is the place from which I am educating my students. (Olson, 1998, p. 167)

Most contemporary teacher educators share a passion for teaching and field-based activities related to the betterment of teacher education. Indeed, "for teacher educators who want to fundamentally change the ways in which teachers are prepared and how they play out their professorial roles in the academy,





teaching is ‘the heart of the matter’” (Cole, Elijah, & Knowles, 1998, p. 9). It is the case, however, that, as Park (1996) notes, “The decisive factor in tenure and promotion (and salary) decisions is research” (p. 48). Many teacher educators find themselves torn between their survival as academics and their ability to flourish as creative and productive teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. The enormous time and energy demands required to meet the university’s standards of academic worth is time and energy taken away from the work they most want to do and the work that they feel that they do best. They do what they have to do to stay employed or to gain status within the university and to gain the “freedom” associated with those rewards; however, this investment is often at the expense of their own passions and interests (in teaching, program development, and / or community work).

Some teacher educators have a passion for research or for writing, perhaps in non-conventional ways to reach other than academic audiences; others find challenge and joy in creative moments associated with program development; still others crave more time to spend on understanding and improving their teaching as part of a broader teacher education agenda. However the commitments are articulated, each is in the interest of the mandate of serving the professional community and field of education. These are not, however, necessarily viewed by the academy as meritorious activities – a situation that seems like an inherent contradiction to the definition of academic freedom stated earlier, that is, “the right of faculty members to substantial autonomy in the conduct of their work, and to freedom of thought and expression as they discover and disseminate learning” (Bowen & Schuster, 1986, p. 53).

In most of the analyses in the literature about the role and place of education and teacher education in universities the inevitable conclusions or recommendations are in the form of challenges to educators to change their ways, to engage in more seemly work that is fitting of academic faculty, to measure up, to publish or perish. An example:

SCDE [schools, colleges, departments of education] professors should examine their individual behaviors and attitudes to determine if they reflect the commitment to scholarship fundamental to professing. Efforts to enhance scholarship and research do not mean that one can afford to be less concerned with teaching competence or professional service responsibilities. ... It is critical that professors find ways of responding to these expectations while engaging in scholarly activity at a level commensurate with university standards. (Burch, 1989, p. 103)

Suggestions that the university make changes to respect the work of educators are made but seldom with much hope that anything will be done. Yet, that is precisely what needs to happen. We return, for a moment, to Clark’s (1989) comment about the need for contemporary universities to more loosely interpret the concept of academic freedom and to Tierney’s (1998) call for a reconsideration of the culture within which tenure is embedded. We suggest that such



reinterpretation needs to happen where schools of education are concerned. We are not suggesting a ‘dumbing down’ of academic expectations but, rather, a thoughtful reconsideration of what counts as meritorious activity, knowledge, and scholarship in schools, departments, and faculties of education.

We also call for a reconsideration of the role that education plays, or has the potential to play, in a world of true academic freedom, in advancing citizenry and society. To initiate such a reexamination we offer the following framework: a set of presuppositions that have come to define academic life. In a sense they are the norms of academic convention and the socializing forces that govern professorial work; an alternative set of conventions that might more appropriately govern teacher educators’ work; and, a vision of what such a reorientation might mean in practice. We then draw on this framework to explore how the self-study of teacher education scholarship and practice, as a genre, has positioned itself to challenge the status quo of academic convention for schools, departments, and faculties of education.

### **A Framework for Rethinking the Evaluation of Teacher Educators’ Work**

<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Research is more highly valued than any other activity.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Academic activities associated with Teaching (including research) are highly valued.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	A broadened definition of research and scholarship would include “self-study” of teacher education practices, and the contexts and processes of everyday teacher education work would become valued possibilities for inquiry.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Research productivity is the best indicator of faculty worth.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Faculty contribution is optimum when individually determined and negotiated.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Individual freedom to choose the nature and direction of work without fear of reprisal is as important as redefining what counts as research.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Quantity matters more than quality.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Numerical assessments are poor indicators of work quality (let alone scholarship).
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Systematic efforts to challenge the over-reliance on measured accountability and productivity are imperative; quality is worth more than quantity.



<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Status quo practices and approaches to scholarship are preferable.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Non-conventional approaches to research, such as self-study, and challenges to status quo concepts, especially when directly linked to educational realities and practice, go further in advancing knowledge and developing critical and creative thinkers.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Collective efforts are required to promote and conduct alternative paradigm research; being on the margins fosters views alternative to the status quo.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	The purpose of research is to develop scientific knowledge and abstracted theories.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	The purpose of research is also to inform practice; in teacher education, theory and practice merge.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Collective efforts to promote and conduct research are rooted in and aimed at informing personal/professional practice.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Research and publishing in exclusively scholarly venues have an impact on knowledge development and society.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Wider accessibility of research findings to the public and to schools has a better chance of impact.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Greater emphasis is placed on diversity in communication forms and venues; opportunities to create alternative research texts.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Research and teaching are dichotomous activities.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Within the field of teaching and teacher education, research and teaching are inter-related and mutually informing.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Teaching and other elements of practice are considered as sites of research.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	The good of the institution is more important than the good of its members.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Happy and healthy individuals make a good institution; individuals come first.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Consistent attention to staff development, well-being, and renewal through an ethic of care and community are essential.



<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Teaching and service activities do little to advance the reputation of the institution.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	More emphasis on equitable valuing of activities is likely to enhance an institution's reputation among prospective students and faculty.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	Attention is paid to institutional ethos and development of norms of collegiality, community, and mutual respect and care.
<i>Conventional Assumption:</i>	Prevailing hierarchies are maintained through differential treatment of faculty members based on seniority, status, race, class, and gender.
<i>Alternative Assumption:</i>	Equitable treatment of individuals and the valuing of diverse perspectives enrich individual and institutional quality of life.
<i>Meaning in Practice:</i>	A serious and extensive re-examination of the values, goals, policies, and practices of the reward system is required.

### **Self-study as a Challenge to the Status Quo of Academic Convention**

The very existence of self-study of teacher education practices research on the academic and scholarly landscape is evidence of its challenge to the status quo. This is work directed by individuals and collaboratives who are intent on changing practices and programs. The dimensions of such status quo challenges articulated through self-study include: individual and collective teacher education practices (considering matters of relationality, pedagogy, and ideology, for instance); curricular and programmatic influences associated with teacher preparation programs (considering orientation, context, philosophy and purpose, for example); and, indeed, many of the researching practices and methodologies embodied in self-study. Vicki Kubler LaBoskey (2001) describes the self-study of teacher education practices as a methodology borne out of the concerns of teacher educators for the learning of preservice teachers and their students. Further, she explains how self-study has earned the designation of "scholarship of teacher education". As a methodology, practice, and scholarship, self-study challenges status quo conceptions of both knowledge and research. In conservative-minded institutions value is attached to those individuals who uphold, through their work, the dominant ideology of the institution (or other institutions that are deemed leaders, are widely acclaimed, or that the home institution aspires to emulate). Basically, this means that research should follow the scientific doctrines of positivism and meet criteria of objectivity, measurement and quantification, predictability, and generalizability, and be presented in relatively detached, impersonal ways. Self-study research is antithetical to all of these principles.



Universities tend to base their status and reputations on the construction of academic, discipline-based knowledge that is judged by standards of abstraction and obscurity. Self-study research, by its “up-close and personal” nature and by its focus on the self and immediacy of practice, flies in the face of these standards. As such, it is part of a political agenda, on the part of teacher educators, to challenge traditional conceptions of what counts as knowledge and research. Self-study work that is true to its nature and spirit leaves no holds barred, no processes sanctioned, and no topic sacred. Judged according to long-held conventional academic standards, self-study research is methodologically, epistemologically, and politically radical. Yet, as a movement, consisting of geographically dispersed clusters of like minded practitioner-researchers, the self-study of teacher education practices has established itself as a powerful mechanism for changing the way Education is viewed in the university, redefining teacher education as a field of study within schools of education, and for improving schools. According to Zeichner (1999, p. 12), “The self-study genre of research in teacher education is the one clear example of where research has had an important influence on practice in teacher education.”

The self-study of teacher education practices, as a group, represents an example of how, through collective will, action, organization and solidarity, self-study has found its place on the teacher education landscape as a principled, scholarly practice that has begun to shift understandings about what counts as acceptable academic scholarship. Moreover, it certainly appears that this work is achieving the fundamental goals put forward by LaBoskey (2001). Whether this is so across the board, in the various institutions represented by self-study researchers, we have no empirical evidence. And, we imagine, self-study researchers hold a minority perspective.

What is clear, from the evidence presented elsewhere in this Handbook and in other publications (see, e.g., Cole, Elijah, & Knowles, 1998; Hamilton, 1998; Knowles & Cole, 1996; Pinnegar & Russell, 1996; Russell & Korthagen, 1995) as well as hundreds of research and professional conference presentations, is that the teacher educators involved in self-study research are highly committed to the improvement of their own practice, the reforming of courses and programs of study, and teacher certification. Still, apart from the public representations of this work in the various venues mentioned (which may or may not be accessed, read, acknowledged or even understood by peers in other disciplines within one’s home institution), the benefits of self-study are largely hidden from view (although the publication of this volume may have some modest influence). In addition, it is our perception that there is a majority of North American teacher educators in the field who do not understand self-study, subscribe to it, acknowledge its benefits, or understand the possibilities of its various processes, let alone think about it as a legitimate scholarly activity.

One of the important future tasks of self-study researchers, therefore, is to take their work to new heights, to new places and to new audiences. Primarily this means going public and being political in ways that go beyond the immediate agenda of self-study aimed at improving practice. It means being an advocate



for educational change in a broad sense with self-study as one significant part of and mechanism for that broader agenda. It means taking principled actions informed by disciplined and sound approaches to knowing.

It is our hope that teacher education may be transformed and that the status of self-study as a meaningful way of coming to know will be firmly accepted within the circles of university research and practice. So it is that, through a disciplined research and publishing agenda, self-study of teacher education practices scholars will continue to:

- take care to explicate goals, intentions, and processes of individual and collective self-study work so that appropriate scholarly and institutional appraisals can be made about the value of such work;
- work toward maintaining the integrity of self-study research through explicit adherence to sound methodological standards (broadly defined);
- make clear the epistemological and methodological issues associated with self-study work by focusing on its unique strengths rather than on its dichotomous relationship with more traditional research approaches; and,
- focus self-study work on issues, matters, processes, and problems that also have value to others, and make explicit how self-study work contributes to the broader understanding and improvement of teacher education.

As a movement, the self-study of teacher education practices, as an organized body of like-minded scholar-teachers, has grown enormously in just over a decade since its inception (not to suggest that, prior to this, individuals did not orient themselves in similar ways). This has been in large part due to an explicit commitment to developing a sense of community among its members. This Handbook is a testimony to the strength and diversity of the community that has developed and how, through community, the field of self-study has gained a collective voice that rings loud and clear across the teacher education landscape. This kind of presence will only strengthen as self-study of teacher education practices scholars continue to:

- facilitate the work of colleagues and graduate students who wish to initiate their own self-study research and, when appropriate, join with them in collaborative self-study work;
- maintain and build on various networking efforts already established by self-study researchers so that those who are at the boundaries of self-study and more traditional research practices can enter the conversations;
- work towards establishing “centers” of self-study in local institutional contexts; and,
- continue “community building” activities such as national and international meetings and conferences, newsletters, and electronic mail networking.

For all of these reasons and through all of these ways self-study has established itself as a *bone fide* field of study in the Education community and has laid the foundation for shifting understandings in the academy about the nature and significance of teacher educators’ work. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges



now facing self-study scholars is building on this foundation at an institutional level. Most of the self-study pioneers and founders of the movement are now senior scholars, well established in their academic careers with all of the privileges associated with that status (having said this we acknowledge that, among that founding group, are a number who were denied tenure at one institution and had to search for a more hospitable academic home). These scholars are now in a position to work within their institutions to influence the future of a new generation of self-study of teacher education practices scholars and scholarship. As senior academics, it falls upon their shoulders to:

- engage other faculty and administrators in conversations about the integral value and place of self-study in ongoing professional, program, and institutional health and development;
- make self-study processes (and work) a central component of ongoing course, teaching, and program evaluation;
- increase the scope of activities of self-study work by writing for “popular” audiences as well as scholarly and professional ones;
- become part of publishing, tenure and promotion, and grant agency decision-making groups where and when possible; and,
- become politically savvy, active, and expressive with regard to focused energies on academy and school reform through self-study.

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