

Brandon M. Butler
Shawn Michael Bullock *Editors*

Learning through Collaboration in Self-Study

Critical Friendship, Collaborative
Self-Study, and Self-Study Communities
of Practice



Springer

Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices

Volume 24

Series Editor

Julian Kitchen, Brock University, Hamilton, Canada

Advisory Editors

Mary Lynn Hamilton, University of Kansas, Kansas, USA

Ruth Kane, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Geert Kelchtermans, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Fred Korthagen, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Tom Russell, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Important insights into varying aspects of teacher education emerge when attention is focused on the work of teacher educators. Teacher educators' observations, explorations and inquiries are important as they offer access to the intricacies of teaching and learning about teaching so important in shaping the nature of teacher education itself. For (at least) this reason, research of the kind found in self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) is increasingly pursued and valued by teacher educators. In so doing, self-study also encourages others to look more closely into their own practices.

For many, self-study has become an empowering way of examining and learning about practice while simultaneously developing opportunities for exploring scholarship in, and through, teaching. Self-Study allows educators to maintain a focus on their teaching and on their students' learning; both high priorities that constantly interact with one another. This interplay between practice and scholarship can then be quite appealing to educators as their work becomes more holistic as opposed to being sectioned off into separate and distinct compartments (e.g., teaching, research, program evaluation, development, etc.). However, just because self-study may be appealing, it is not to suggest that the nature of self-study work should simply be accepted without question and critique. There is a constant need to examine what is being done, how and why, in order to further our understanding of the field and to foster development in critical and useful ways so that the learning through self-study might be informative and accessible to others.

This series has been organized in order so that the insights from self-study research and practice might offer a more comprehensive articulation of the distinguishing aspects of such work to the education community at large and builds on the *International Handbook of Self Study in Teaching and Teacher Education* (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey & Russell, 2004).

Self-study may be viewed as a natural consequence of the re-emergence of reflection and reflective practice that gripped the education community in the last two decades of the 20th century (see for example Calderhead & Gates, 1993; Clift et al., 1990; Grimmer & Erickson, 1988; LaBoskey, 1994; Schön, 1983, 1987). However, self-study aims to, and must, go further than reflection alone. Self-study generates questions about the very nature of teaching about teaching in teacher education (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999) and is important in conceptualizing scholarship in teaching as it generates and makes public the knowledge of teaching and learning about teaching so that it might be informative to the education community in general.

This series offers a range of committed teacher educators who, through their books, offer a diverse range of approaches to, and outcomes from, self-study of teacher teacher education practices. Book proposals for this series may be submitted to the Publishing Editor: Nick Melchior E-mail: Nick.Melchior@springer.com

More information about this series at <https://link.springer.com/bookseries/7072>

Brandon M. Butler • Shawn Michael Bullock
Editors

Learning through Collaboration in Self-Study

Critical Friendship, Collaborative Self-Study,
and Self-Study Communities of Practice

 Springer

Editors

Brandon M. Butler 
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA, USA

Shawn Michael Bullock 
University of Cambridge
Cambridge, UK

ISSN 1875-3620

ISSN 2215-1850 (electronic)

Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices

ISBN 978-981-16-2680-7

ISBN 978-981-16-2681-4 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2681-4>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Foreword

Springer's Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices series was initiated by John Loughran. As the founding series editor, John envisioned a companion to the first *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Loughran et al., 2004) and the journal *Studying Teacher Education* (which he founded with Tom Russell). The first volume in the series, published in 2005, has been followed by numerous others that have helped define both self-study and teacher education more generally. The current volume, which John helped guide to fruition, is the 24th in the series.

John Loughran has been a seminal force in self-study. His own scholarship is first-rate, but it is his ability to work with others in the community that I pay tribute to here. When I was a novice, he encouraged me, along with countless others, to make contributions to the scholarship of self-study. The journal and book series he founded became vibrant discourse communities that published our work. These, along with the Springer handbook, now in a second edition (Kitchen et al., 2020), are critical sources of insight into self-study of practice.

Volume 24, *Learning Through Collaboration in Self-Study: Communities of Practice, Critical Friendships, and Collaborative Self-Study*, continues the tradition of posing important questions and providing rich and thoughtful responses that are meaningful to teacher educators. As co-editor of *Studying Teacher Education*, I have been acutely aware of the need to define clearly “critical friendship” and “collaborative self-study,” as well as delineate the differences and overlaps between these terms. As I explain in my contribution to this volume, I have also seen value in employing “self-study communities of practice” when discussing larger groups of practitioners working together. I recall distinguishing among these terms in my editorial feedback to a team of self-study researchers (Appelget et al., 2020) who were being published in the journal. I mentioned to them this upcoming volume as one that would help address the need for in-depth consideration of critical friendship, collaborative self-study, and SSCoP. I also encouraged Butler and Bullock to invite this team of emerging self-study scholars to contribute a chapter on their community of practice.

Editors Brandon Butler and Shawn Bullock have brought together a mix of veteran scholars who have helped define the concepts in the book title, leading practitioners of these forms of collaboration today, and emerging scholars who will shape the future of collaboration in self-study. The editors make a case for clarity in expressing the nature of one's collaborative approach and explaining in depth how collaboration was achieved in the research process. Indeed, as Butler and Bullock note in the opening chapter, "The Complications of Collaboration in Self-Study," "[q]uestions of how one conducts self-study, and the seemingly contradictory notion that self-study is collaborative scholarship, have troubled the field since its origin." This chapter offers an overview of the three forms of collaboration highlighted in this book, as well as consideration of the complication that "many chapter authors may find themselves weaving between two or more forms of collaboration, especially when engaging in long-term self-study collaborations." The introductory chapter acknowledges collaboration, in its various forms, as central to the vitally important interactive aspect of self-study research (LaBoskey, 2004) while making a case for greater precision, depth, and sharing of stories of collaboration in action. The conclusion, "Reframing Collaboration in Self-Study," urges self-study researchers to go deeper in explaining the nature of their collaborations and connecting to other collaborative self-studies. The chapters in this volume will guide self-study researchers in the future by providing stories of practice, insights into collaboration, and a richer vocabulary for discussions of critical friendships, collaborative self-study, and self-study communities of practice. As a reviewer and editor, I will be directing self-study researchers to this book for guidance in explaining their collaborative endeavors.

The first section of the book, *Critical Friendship*, begins with a historical overview of critical friendship in self-study by a leading exponent and practitioner (Russell) followed by a chapter on the continuum of definitions for types of critical friendships (Stolle & Frambaugh-Kritzer). The remaining chapters in the section offer stories and insights from a range of self-study researchers—from graduate students to deans and across languages and cultures—who have engaged in critical engaged in the challenging yet rewarding work of creating, enacting, and sustaining critical friendships. Critical friendship can be narrowly defined, such as offering an outside perspective to a peer or student, and exist in a short period of time. Some critical friendships, by building trust, serve as the beginning of beautiful friendships and ongoing collaboration. For example, Tom Russell's critical friendships with Schuck, Bullock, Martin, and Fuentealba developed into long-term collaborations that have contributed to our discourse community.

The second section, *Collaborative Self-Study*, deals with the more fluid notion of collaboration in self-study. Whereas critical friendship generally suggests a helping relationship (at least for the specific purposes of the research paper), collaboration implies deeper engagement in shared inquiry. Collaboration involving two or more people can serve many purposes from fostering learning among peers

to co-researching shared questions to engaging creatively through play or poetry. The chapters in this section convey the depth of these self-study relationships and the power of multiple voices in delving more deeply into improving practice. Several chapters are by authors who have collaborated for years across multiple research studies. All the chapters delineate methods that support collaborative self-study by enriching the lives of the collaborators and generating richer research through interaction.

The third section of the book, Self-Study Communities of Practice (SSCoP), attends to the collaborative work of larger self-study groups. The opening chapter (Kitchen) identifies eight characteristics of effective communities. The second chapter (Appelget et al.) examines the development of a recent large collaborative group, using the language of SSCO P to examine the progress of their community of practice. The five chapters that follow offer rich accounts of effective larger collaborative teams. If self-study is to have a greater impact on teacher education, we need to engage larger groups in the work: graduate students, peers in our colleges, and colleagues elsewhere. These chapters offer possibilities for others by sharing stories of creating, enacting, and sustaining SSCO Ps.

In the concluding chapter to the book, "Reframing Collaboration in Self-Study," the editors urge self-study researchers to go deeper in explaining the nature of their collaborations and connecting to other collaborative self-studies. The individual chapters offer rich description and well-thought-out ideas that will guide self-study researchers in the future. Collectively, they provide a language that will contribute to more precise accounts of collaboration and stories of research practice that will help others to engage in this important work.

I am honored to offer a foreword to this most timely and topical book. I am also honored to have been asked to curate the Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices series after John Loughran. I rely on you as the creative/scholarly talent to bring forward proposals for future volumes of our peer-reviewed books. Please feel free to contact me with ideas before proceeding to the formal proposal stage. Together we can continue the tradition of books that address at length specific themes, methods, and questions that emerge in the self-study of practice.

Brock University, Canada

Julian Kitchen

Cross-References

- Appelget, C. Shimek, C., Myers, J., & Hogue, B. Self-Study communities of practice: A traveler's guide for the journey.
- Bullock, S.M., & Butler, B.M. The complications of collaboration in self-study.
- Butler, B.M., & Bullock, S.M. Reframing collaboration in self-study.

References

- Appleget, C. Shimek, C., Myers, J., & Hogue, B. (2020). A collaborative self-study with critical friends: culturally proactive pedagogies in literacy methods courses. *Studying Teacher Education*, 16(3) 286–305.
- Loughran, J. J., Hamilton, M. L., LaBoskey, V. K., & Russell, T. (Eds.). (2004). *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Springer.
- Kitchen, J., Berry, A., Bullock, S. M., Crowe, A. R., Taylor, M., Guðjónsdóttir, H., & Thomas, L. (Eds.). (2020). *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education* (2nd ed.). Springer.

Contents

1	The Complications of Collaboration in Self-Study	1
	Brandon M. Butler and Shawn M. Bullock	
Part I Critical Friendship		
2	Understanding and Improving Professional Practice Through Critical Friendship	15
	Tom Russell	
3	Critical Friendship as a Research Tool: Examining the Critical Friend Definition Continuum	25
	Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle and Charlotte Frambaugh-Kritzer	
4	“Do You Have Five Minutes?”: An Investigation of Two Doctoral Students’ Critical Friendship	39
	Megan Stump and Colleen Gannon	
5	Problematizing the Notion of Story Through Critical Friendship: An Exploration of Reframing Dissertation Writing Through Collaborative Meaning-Making Events	53
	Elsie Lindy Olan and Christi U. Edge	
6	With a Little Help from My Friends: The Intersectionality of Friendship and Critical Friendship.	67
	Adam W. Jordan, Michael Levicky, Andrew L. Hostetler, Todd S. Hawley, and Geoff Mills	
7	Collaborative Learning from Experience Across Cultures: Critical Friendship in Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices	81
	Rodrigo Fuentealba Jara and Tom Russell	

8	Mediating Critical Friendship Through Language(s): A Plurilingual Approach	99
	Cécile Bullock and Shawn M. Bullock	

Part II Collaborative Self-Study

9	Collaboration in Self-Study to Foster Professional and Personal Agency	117
	Hafðís Guðjónsdóttir and Svanborg Rannveig Jónsdóttir	
10	The ‘We-Me’ Dynamic in a Collaborative Self Study	127
	Nicola Carse, Mike Jess, Paul McMillan, and Tim Fletcher	
11	The Value of Collaborative Self-Study in Navigating Stages of Teacher Education: Adopting New Roles, Creating New Identities, and Evolving Our Selves	143
	Laurie A. Ramirez and Valerie A. Allison	
12	Balancing Process and Outcomes to Further Collaboration Among Teacher Education Faculty in a Self-Study Learning Group	157
	Christophe Meidl, Jason K. Ritter, and Carla K. Meyer	
13	Power-With: Strength to Transform Through Collaborative Self-Study Across Spaces, Places, and Identities	171
	Christi U. Edge, Abby Cameron-Standerford, and Bethney Bergh	
14	Game On! Collaborative Research and Resistance Through Play	185
	Rachel Forgasz and Helen Grimmett	
15	“Risky, Rich Co-creativity” Weaving a Tapestry of Polyvocal Collective Creativity in Collaborative Self-Study	203
	Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan and Anastasia P. Samaras	

Part III Self-Study Communities of Practice

16	Critically Inquiring as Community Through Self-Study Communities of Practice	221
	Julian Kitchen	
17	Self-Study Communities of Practice: A Traveler’s Guide for the Journey	235
	Carin Appleget, Courtney Shimek, Joy Myers, and Breanya C. Hogue	
18	The Power of Autobiography in Building a Self-Study Community of Practice	249
	Angela Branyon, Mark M. Diacopoulos, Kristen H. Gregory, and Brandon M. Butler	

**19 Contributing to and Learning Through
an Evolving Self-Study Community of Practice:
The Experiences of Two Science Teacher Educators..... 265**
Karen Goodnough and Saiqa Azam

**20 Learning in a Self-Study Community of Practice:
A Collaborative Journey in Coaching and Teaching..... 281**
Richard Bowles and Anne O’Dwyer

**21 Forming a Self-Study Community of Practice
in Turbulent Times: The Role of Critical Friendship 297**
Michael Ling and Shawn M. Bullock

22 Reframing Collaboration in Self-Study 313
Shawn M. Bullock and Brandon M. Butler

Chapter 1

The Complications of Collaboration in Self-Study



Brandon M. Butler  and Shawn M. Bullock 

Abstract In this chapter, the editors of the book argue for the clarity of collaboration in self-study research, noting the complications that can emerge when self-study scholars provide token acknowledgement to how collaboration was achieved in their research. Questions of how one conducts self-study, and the seemingly contradictory notion that self-study is collaborative scholarship, have troubled the field since its origin. This book and introductory chapter do not attempt to answer the question of how one conducts self-study, but they do provide the reader with a consideration of three ways in which self-study researchers engage in collaboration. This chapter provides an overview of the three forms of collaboration highlighted in this book – critical friendship, collaborative self-study, and self-study communities of practice. Although they may be perceived as three distinct concepts, the editors of the book note that many chapter authors found themselves weaving between two or more forms of collaboration, especially when engaging in long-term self-study collaborations; and offer readers some definitional clarity and suggestions for the future use of collaboration in self-study.

How does one conduct self-study? This question has been asked in various ways by novice and experienced teacher educators alike since self-study of teaching and teacher education practices methodology emerged in the early 1990s. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) noted that in the early years of the American Educational Research Association’s Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group (SIG), newcomers to SIG sessions would regularly ask “What is self-study?” and how to effectively conduct self-study research. Such questions have not gone

B. M. Butler (✉)
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, USA
e-mail: bmbutler@odu.edu

S. M. Bullock
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2022

B. M. Butler, S. M. Bullock (eds.), *Learning through Collaboration in Self-Study*, Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices 24, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2681-4_1

away in past 20 years, even with the publication of two handbooks that highlight the tenets and methods of self-study research (Kitchen et al., 2020; Loughran et al., 2004) and a number of books on self-study research methods (e.g., Lassonde et al., 2009; Mitchell et al., 2005; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009; Samaras, 2011). We believe one response to these questions could be: Consider the role of collaboration in your self-study work. We further acknowledge that this suggestion might seem a bit strange. As Loughran (2005) and many others have noted, the term “self” in self-study does initially bring to mind a solitary venture. Experienced self-study researchers will point out the “self” is a focus, and there are indeed multiple selves one might consider in self-study research: Self-in-practice, self-in-relation to colleague, self-in-relation to students, etc. The beginning self-study researcher should be forgiven, however, for some initial confusion around the seeming contradiction in the phrase *collaborative* self-study.

Although many of the methods associated with self-study research have been well-addressed and clarified over the past 20 years, regular questions emerge from those new to or interested in self-study regarding what LaBoskey (2004) notes are the interactive aspects of self-study research. Self-study is inherently collaborative, with many self-study articles and chapters having two or more authors. Such collaboration provides transparency, validity, rigor and trustworthiness in conducting self-study. However, the ways in which these collaborations are enacted have not been sufficiently addressed in the self-study literature. For example, the three areas we focus on in this book – critical friendship, collaborative self-study, and self-study community of practice – are used to varying degrees in self-study articles and chapters, but often are briefly touched upon only as a frame through which the study was conducted rather than a topic explicitly explored. Sometimes, there appears to be an assumption that readers know what these three terms mean – perhaps this is partially a consequence of the close-knit and long-standing nature of many self-study endeavors. For example, it might seem obvious to authors what they mean when they use the term “critical friendship,” particularly if they have been publishing together for a long time. Few articles or chapters have been published on what the three areas look like from an enactment standpoint – How are these forms of collaboration developed? What tensions or challenges emerge? Questions of these sort are not normally addressed, at least in full, by self-study publications that use critical friendship, collaborative self-study or self-study community of practice as a theoretical or methodological frame, which is why so many scholars new (and experienced) to self-study raise questions about this topic.

The origin of this book came from such questions raised in an S-STEP session at the 2019 AERA meeting, *Learning in and through Collaboration: Communities of Practice, Critical Friendships, and Collaborative Self-Study*, which was chaired by Brandon and attended by Shawn. This mid-morning session was attended by 51 novice and experienced self-study researchers, with many of the novice researchers wanting answers to the questions raised above, in addition to many others. It can be difficult to gain the appropriate answers to your questions when these areas of collaborative practice have received less attention than they deserve, and when such questions are asked at the end of a paper session as attendees move to their next

session. It also seems that, for many experienced self-study researchers, the boundaries between these areas are intuitively fluid.

Let us use critical friendship to elucidate our point here. Although critical friendship is widely noted in self-study publications as a vehicle through which validity and trustworthiness are sought, so few studies have so explicitly explored the idea of critical friendship that most self-study researchers are overly reliant on one self-study critical friendship article by Schuck and Russell (2005). Indeed, it is one of the most cited articles in the flagship journal *Studying Teacher Education* and for good reason, as it provides important ways of conceptualizing what a critical friendship might look like. At the same time, however, we also note that the idea of critical friendship in this article was developed via the context and work shared by Schuck and Russell. It is important for other self-study researchers to develop their own principles for critical friendship whilst acknowledging and developing the work of others (see, for example, Fletcher et al., 2018; Logan & Butler, 2013; Ragoonaden & Bullock, 2016; Stolle et al., 2019). We believe that there is a sense in which critical friendship, and indeed collaboration more broadly, is generally accepted but not rigorously examined. We would make the same argument for the idea of a *self-study community of practice* – an idea with a long pedigree in educational research but one that has not necessarily been consistently interrogated for self-study researchers. What, if anything, makes a self-study community of practice different from the more familiar idea of a community of practice? Finally, we would argue that the term *collaboration* is probably the most fluid and least defined of the three areas of focus for this book. For example, one might ask if there are forms of collaboration in self-study that do not include either critical friendship or a community of practice? Does collaboration require another self-study researcher? What does it mean to have a collaborative ontological commitment to self-study research (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009)?

1.1 Structure and Contents of the Book

We wish to emphasize that this book is aimed at both the new and experienced self-study researcher. We hope it provides catalysts for discussion for all those interested in self-study, because we believe questions of critical friendship, self-study communities of practice, and collaborative self-study are germane to this sort of work. For newcomers, the questions of how a form of collaboration might be used are often most pressing, whereas more experienced colleagues might find it helpful to use these chapters to examine their prior assumptions about long-standing collaborations.

There is a long history associated with collaboration in self-study research, going back to the origins of self-study. However, as we have already noted, how self-study researchers collaborate or what their collaborations look like have not been extensively explored. As such, we felt there was a particular need, given the extensive use of the term collaboration and its associated forms in self-study, for a volume that

explicitly considers collaboration more fully in self-study of teacher education practices.

Chapters in this book focus on one of three forms of collaboration – critical friendship, collaborative self-study, and self-study community of practice – and explicitly address how self-study researchers develop their collaborative groups, the challenges and tensions that exist in their collaborations, and the enactment of a particular form of self-study collaboration. The book is organized into three sections, one for each form of collaboration, with sections consisting of six to seven chapters. Each section follows a similar construct, opening with a framing chapter authored by self-study researchers who were integral to the use of that collaborative form in self-study research. These initial chapters are meant to provide readers with a historical, theoretical and/or pedagogical overview of their respective collaborative form. These introductory chapters are followed by chapters that provide experiences and insights into the initial development and enactment of a form of self-study collaboration, and how these forms of collaboration have been problematized by self-study researchers. The remaining chapters in each section provide readers with varying examples of how self-study researchers use the three forms of self-study collaboration to make sense of their work as teacher educators and self-study scholars, but they also offer new considerations for how particular forms of self-study collaboration can and have been utilized, ranging from fostering and mediation of multi/pluri-lingual critical friendships, the use of games and play in developing a collaborative self-study relationship, to the use of self-study communities of practice to understand and improve sport coaching identity and practice. This organization is deliberate in that we see readers developing increased understanding and expertise in the three forms of collaboration as they proceed through each section.

1.1.1 Critical Friendship

In “Understanding and improving professional practice through critical friendship,” Tom Russell provides readers with background on the concept of critical friendship, framed through five critical friendships he experienced through his career and how impactful those friendships were on his professional practice. Russell revisits seven conclusions related to the enactment of critical friendship, first raised in Schuck and Russell (2005); and concludes with a call to identify trusted colleagues who can serve as critical listeners and observers and help you examine your professional practice.

In the next chapter, “Critical friendship as a research tool: Examining the critical friend definition continuum,” Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle and Charlotte Frambaugh-Kristzer offer readers a deeper exploration of the critical friendship continuum they first shared in Stolle et al. (2019). Here, they expand on their eight descriptors of critical friendship, and provide readers with insights into the complex nature of critical friendship. They acknowledge the growing use of critical friendship in

self-study research, but caution those who use critical friendship to remain critical of how they define and make use of critical friendship in a responsible manner.

Megan Stump and Colleen Gannon, in ““Do you have five minutes? An investigation of two doctoral students’ critical friendship,” use critical friendship to challenge the trope of doctoral studies as an often-isolating experience. What started as a personal friendship evolved into a critical friendship and formal self-study research, which provided them with support in four forms during their recent doctoral studies. The critical friendship provided space for emotional, pedagogical, and scholarly support; but it also helped them find success in the dissertation process. Current doctoral students and new faculty will find value in their experiences, as the transition from teacher-to-teacher educator and into academic positions can be experiences fraught with emotion and feelings of isolation and peer competition.

“Problematizing the notion of story through critical friendship: An exploration of reframing dissertation writing through collaborative meaning-making events” sees Elsie Lindy Olan and Christi Edge provide readers with a unique contrast to the previous chapter. Rather than investigate the dissertation experience in the moment, they used critical friendship to collaboratively revisit the dissertation writing process of several years before. Their critical friendship helped them make sense of their scholarly past and to challenge existing narratives of how they experienced writing the dissertation. Of note in their findings are the stories, which may resonate with readers, of how doctoral students can feel voice-less during the dissertation process; but also how critical friendship can be used to challenge those dominant narratives.

In “And you say he’s just a friend: Enhancing critical friendship by actually being friends,” Adam Jordan, Michael Levicky, Andrew Hostetler, Todd Hawley, and Geoff Mills ask readers to consider the friendship aspect of critical friendship and the need for emotional and professional support during trying times. Their critical friendship has lasted over 5 years, but it is their poignant account of 2020 and how critical friendship can sustain professionals, and friends, through upheaval related to teaching and scholarship, but also help persevere through personal tragedy. The experiences laid bare by Jordan and colleagues encourages all of us to look past the scholarly nature of critical friendship and to embrace the human component.

The concluding chapters to the section on critical friendship provide readers with a unique perspective on the creation, enactment, and sustaining of critical friendships. Rodrigo Fuentealba Jara and Tom Russell share the development of their cross-cultural critical friendship over 10 years in “Fostering self-study critical friendships across cultures.” In the chapter, they highlight the ways in which they sustained a critical friendship that crosses culture and physical distance/boundaries. Although they live and work on two separate continents, Feuntealba and Russell used technology to narrow that distance, bringing the other into the courses they taught through video and digital tools while making use of the physical space when one visited the other for sustained periods of time. Of importance in their work is the notion that physical or cultural differences do not need to impede the implementation of long-term critical friendships.

Cécile Bullock and Shawn Michael Bullock author the final chapter of the section, “Mediating critical friendship through language(s): A plurilingual approach.” Their chapter explores the ways in which the languages used in a critical friendship – in this case, French and English – act as mediators of the experiences that are the sources for work in self-study. The chapter uses ideas from sociolinguistics to demonstrate the ways in which their critical friendship offers a space for plurilingual learning and meaning making of their roles as teacher educators. Bullock and Bullock entreat all self-study practitioners, regardless of how many “official” languages they speak, to consider the ways in which they navigate multiple forms of communication within their critical friendship. The development of a shared language, or repertoire, for critical friendship is crucial and merits serious attention.

1.1.2 Collaborative Self-Study

Hafðís Guðjónsdóttir and Svanborg Rannveig Jónsdóttir’s provide the first chapter for our section on collaborative self-study, “Collaboration in self-study to foster professional and personal agency,” which challenges the reader to consider the many ways collaboration might manifest in self-study research. In particular, they focus the ways which certain tensions and problems within collaboration might enable new avenues for growth. Central to Guðjónsdóttir and Jónsdóttir’s argument is the relationship between collaboration as agency, a relationship that requires a shared commitment to framing and reframing knowledge of teaching teachers. Collaboration as agency results in professional confidence; crucial given the sometimes-challenging conditions faced by teacher educators.

“The We-Me Dynamic in a Collaborative Self-Study” analyzes a long-standing collaboration between a team of physical education teacher educators within one institution, Nicola Carse, Mike Jess, Paul McMillan, and their critical friend from another institution, Tim Fletcher. The chapter challenges us to consider how a collective identity is framed, reframed, and challenged over a long period of time and through a shared commitment to a set of interests. Their findings are particularly germane to those teacher educators who work with teachers on longitudinal projects, particularly when collaboration is a theme of teacher educators’ work with teachers. Carse and colleagues analyze the ‘we’ and ‘me’ factors that manifest in the workings of the group and provide a model for considering how individuality retains a place in a collective.

Laurie Ramirez and Valerie Allison shed light on how collaboration might support teacher educators as they shift to different stages in their careers, particularly if such shifts come relatively early in an academic career. In “The value of collaborative self-study in navigating stages of teacher education: Adopting new roles, creating new identities, and evolving our selves,” Ramirez and Allison explain how years of collaboration have resulted in different kinds of growth and change, personally and professionally. The authors invite us to consider the ways in which changes to the collaborative process might encourage new ways of thinking about self-study, as

well as the intersections between friendship, critical friendship, and co-mentoring. Ramirez and Allison make a strong case for centering collaboration at the heart of self-study research.

In addition to being a process for understanding one's self in practice as a teacher educator, self-study methodology offers the change for tangible scholarly outcomes – part of the life of most academics the world over. In “Balancing process and outcomes to further collaboration among teacher education faculty in a self-study learning group,” Christopher Meidl, Jason Ritter, and Carla Meyer explore the tension between the pull of engaging with self-study as a means and the push to engage with self-study as an end. The chapter reports of the challenges and opportunities of collaboration between a large group of researchers within the same department. Meidl and colleagues attend to many of the salient challenges often raised by self-study researchers, including the tensions that can emerge around the “acceptability” of self-study research, which is a particular area of concern for pre-tenure faculty. The authors ask that we consider the ways in which collaborative groups tend to shift focus and membership – and why this “haziness” might be an important way to challenge academic norms.

Christi Edge, Abby Cameron-Standerford, and Bethney Bergh argue that self-study might be considered conceptual text, composed collaboratively, in a public homeplace. Drawing from feminist perspectives and transactional theory, the authors offer the concept of *power-with* as a possible outcome to a longstanding collaborative self-study. Importantly, Edge and colleagues provide the reader with an understanding of how their collaboration changed over time because of sharing writing about critical events, tensions, or artifacts from their lived experiences. Sharing within their co-created public homeplace encouraged Edge and colleagues to change the focus of their self-study from individual practices to the self-study community, more broadly. Their chapter, “Power-with: Strength to transform through collaborative self-study across places, spaces, and identities,” provides self-study researchers with ideas about how we might become more purposeful practitioners.

“Game on! Collaborative research and resistance through play” by Rachel Forgasz and Helen Grimmer juxtaposes the value of improv writing games conducted via self-study against the more widely known, often implicit, games that academics are required to play within the neoliberal university. This conceptual chapter explores some of the ways in which play might sustain collaborative work in self-study. Forgasz and Grimmer draw from their backgrounds as arts educators to demonstrate the ways they turned improvisational games designed for theatre into improvisation games that can be played via writing. The reader is invited to consider the ways in which the use of play in research can be a stance, a sense-making process, a way of learning about pedagogical practice, an attitude, and a relational dynamic. Although one can find considerable research concerning the neoliberalization of the university, there is a paucity of research that suggests meaningful paths forward for researchers who wish to resist these demands. Forgasz and Grimmer show clearly that engaging in play-based, collaborative self-study

research offers not only a way to resist neoliberal pressures and a way of gaining insight into professional roles – it is also great fun.

Finally, Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan and Anastasis Samaras are teacher educators who facilitate transdisciplinary self-study research on two continents. In “‘Risky, rich co-creativity’: Weaving a tapestry of polyvocal collective creativity in collaborative self-study,” they explore how they have used collective creativity to engage a diverse group of self-study learners and practitioners, which they note continues the trend of self-study researchers engaging in innovative forms of inquiry and methods. The use of polyvocal co-creativity in self-study research has resulted in a diverse set of outcomes from the co-researchers, including but not limited to collage, dance, drawing, poetry, and readers’ theater; and they use this chapter to highlight the range of this work and how the reader might make effective use of co-creativity in their own collaborative self-study research.

1.1.3 Self-Study Communities of Practice

“Critically inquiring as community through self-study communities of practice,” by Julian Kitchen, provides readers with an overview of standards and characteristics that define self-study communities of practice as a unique approach to conducting self-study research. Kitchen presents self-study communities of practice as representing a large form of self-study scholarly collaboration, but also as an orientation that explicitly examines the group dynamics and processes of the community, a consideration that separates self-study communities of practice from critical friendship and collaborative self-study. To make this argument, Kitchen frames his identified standards and characteristics through his professional and scholarly experiences and the work of others in self-study who have made use of this self-study approach. He also raises critical questions we should collectively consider as self-study researchers regarding the nature – and future use – of collaboration in self-study, which we touch upon further in the concluding chapter of this book.

The following two chapters provide readers with insights into how a self-study community of practice originates. In “Self-study communities of practice: A traveler’s guide for the journey,” Carin Appleget, Courtney Shimek, Joy Myers, and Breanya Hogue invites readers to follow along with them in their journey across 4 years to create a self-study community of practice, and to highlight some of the ways in which they have sustained their community. Readers will see their experiences in those of Appleget and her colleagues, from the use of community to avoid isolation or to sustain one’s self professionally, to the tensions that emerge when working with new colleagues and collaborators. Of particular importance is their exploration of lessons learned through the process, which readers will find assistive when creating their own self-study communities of practice.

Where the previous chapter took an expansive look at the development and continuation of a self-study community of practice, the next chapter, “The power of

autobiography in building a self-study community of practice,” is framed through one specific experience that facilitated the development of a self-study community of practice. Angela Branyon, Mark Diacopoulos and Kristen Gregory were students in a doctoral course taught by Brandon Butler. Butler tasked the three with writing educational autobiographies, which were explored openly using a critical incident protocol. They found that an explicit investigation of their autobiographies provided a jump start in establishing relationships and building trust among the group, and in identifying shared areas of scholarly inquiry. For those interested in self-study communities of practice, Branyon and colleagues provide strong evidence for the use of autobiographical writing in developing a community of practice.

In “Contributing to and learning through an evolving self-study community of practice: The experiences of two science teacher educators,” Karen Goodnough and Saiqa Azam return readers to a broader consideration of the evolution of a self-study community of practice. Goodnough and Azam were members in a community of practice that consisted of seven educators, but use this chapter to consider their learning within the community in their shared context as science teacher educators. Their dual stories provide readers with unique insights into the roles and responsibilities individuals take within a self-study community of practice, and the tensions associated with engaging with others in the community, and the ever-changing demands experienced that challenge the dynamic of an established community.

Richard Bowles and Anne O’Dwyer, in “Learning in a self-study community of practice: A collaborative journey in coaching and teaching,” consider the long-term enactment of their self-study community of practice, that initially focused on their work as sport coaches, but over time helped them explore the intersection between their identities and practices as coaches and teacher educators. Their contribution focuses on the boundary spanning nature of their work, and the importance of care for others and a willingness to share uncomfortable experiences within the self-study community of practice.

Michael Ling and Shawn Michael Bullock provide the book’s penultimate chapter, in which they offer a slightly different conceptualization of a self-study community of practice (SSCoP) for consideration. In “Forming a self-study community of practice in turbulent times: The role of critical friendship,” the authors explain how their initial critical friendship provided a source of trust that led to the formation of a SSCoP within a large graduate program, in part as a way of dealing with their perception of the increasing neoliberal pressures on their lives as teacher educators. Ling and Bullock offer two metaphors developed from readings they did to sustain their SSCoP – *zombification* and *comping* – as ways of interpreting competing demands on their pedagogies of teacher education with shared responsibilities in a larger graduate program. The idea of forming a temporary SSCoP in response to a problem of practice invites readers to consider the relationships between different forms of collaboration between the same self-study researchers.

1.2 An Invitation to Consider Our Assumptions

Editing this volume prompted many conversations between us about the nature of collaboration in self-study and, indeed whether we had erred in the ways in which we conceptualized our three sections. We were unprepared for the ways in which authors naturally came to each chapter with a framework developed through a relational understanding of these collaborative forms. Readers will find a number of chapters in this volume in which authors weave in and out of two or more collaborative forms. As editors, we too struggled to think about the borders and boundaries between these three types of self-study collaboration, although we eventually settled on the idea that the book was best served through three distinct sections. We fully expect that readers may find considerable evidence for wondering why a particular chapter was placed in a particular section, given that the reader might see a more obvious fit elsewhere.

We note that this book was somewhat “artificially” structured to have authors focus on one of three areas – critical friendship, collaborative self-study, and self-study communities of practice. That is not to say there are not other forms of collaboration in self-study, for instance, Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan and Anastasia Samaras, contributors to this volume, have done powerful work on polyvocal self-study. Perhaps the artificiality of the book’s structure rests in our, Brandon and Shawn’s, familiarity with the three forms of collaboration that frame the book. We have framed the book due to what Segall (2002) refers to as our reading positions, in part developed as relatively longstanding members of the self-study community who began our involvement as graduate students, and indeed engaging with authors and with each other has already encouraged us to reframe many of our underlying assumptions about collaboration in self-study.

In sum, we believe that the editorial tensions we experienced throughout our work on this volume highlight both the value of considering the nature of collaboration in self-study in an edited volume and the ways in which our assumptions shape our work as teacher educators and self-study researchers. Just as Loughran (2005) argued that there was not a single, correct way to do self-study research, so too would we argue that there are not singular definitions or methods of critical friendship, collaboration, or communities of practice in self-study. What we would argue, though, is that the self-study research community would benefit from clarifying the range of assumptions underpinning the use of these terms. It can be far too easy to assume that readers will share a researcher’s conceptualization of a particular term or approach.

References

- Fletcher, T., Ní Chróinín, D., & O'Sullivan, M. (2018). A layered approach to critical friendship as a means to support pedagogical innovation in pre-service teacher education. *Studying Teacher Education*, 12(3), 302–319.
- Kitchen, J., Berry, A., Bullock, S. M., Crowe, A., Taylor, M., Guðjónsdóttir, H., & Thomas, L. (Eds.). (2020). *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education* (2nd ed.). Springer.
- LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *The international handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 817–869). Springer.
- Lassonde, C. A., Galman, S., & Kosnik, C. (Eds.). (2009). *Self-study research methodologies for teacher educators*. Sense.
- Logan, K., & Butler, B. M. (2013). “What do we know about *elementary* social studies?” Novice secondary teacher educators on learning to teach elementary social studies methods. *Studying Teacher Education*, 9(3), 267–283.
- Loughran, J. (2005). Researching teaching about teaching: Self-study of teacher education practices. *Studying Teacher Education*, 1, 5–16.
- Loughran, J. J., Hamilton, M. L., LaBoskey, V. K., & Russell, T. (Eds.). (2004). *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 709–743). Springer.
- Mitchell, C., Weber, S., & O'Reilley, K. (Eds.). (2005). *Just who do we think we are? Methodologies for autobiography and self-study in teaching*. RoutledgeFalmer.
- Pinnegar, S., & Hamilton, M. L. (2009). *Self-study of practice as a genre of qualitative research: Theory, methodology, and practice*. Springer.
- Ragoonaden, K., & Bullock, S. M. (2016). *Mindfulness and critical friendship: A new perspective on professional development for educators*. Lexington Books.
- Samaras, A. (2011). *Self-study teacher research: Improving your practice through collaborative inquiry*. Sage.
- Segall, A. (2002). *Disturbing practice: Reading teacher education as text*. Peter Lang.
- Schuck, S., & Russell, T. (2005). Self-study, critical friendship, and the complexities of teacher education. *Studying Teacher Education*, 1(2), 107–121.
- Stolle, E. P., Frambaugh-Kritzer, C., Freese, A., & Persson, A. (2019). Investigating critical friendship: Peeling back the layers. *Studying Teacher Education*, 15(1), 19–30.

Part I
Critical Friendship

Chapter 2

Understanding and Improving Professional Practice Through Critical Friendship



Tom Russell

Abstract This chapter provides background to the concept of critical friendship in self-study of teacher education practices as an introduction to the chapters that follow. Beginning with definitions of critical friendship and consideration of the role of collaboration in self-study, the chapter continues with discussion of five personal self-study experiences spanning the period 1995 to 2019. These five experiences illustrate the range of ways in which critical friendships can develop, often serendipitously; in such moments, the opportunity to collaborate in self-study may be recognized on the spot. Two of the five experiences occurred with a colleague, while the other three involved teacher educators in Australia and Chile. The ultimate impact of these critical friendships on the quality of my professional practice was profound. Particularly memorable was a critical friendship that generated a number of conclusions about the concept; seven of those are cited and discussed. The chapter closes by recalling the unique nature of both self-study research and critical friendship, offering challenges as well as rewards as two individuals negotiate conversations about teaching. Critical friendships are a way to escape the isolation and loneliness of teaching and ultimately reduce a teacher/teacher educator's distance and isolation from students.

Although it is always before an audience of students, teaching is nevertheless a lonely profession, and teaching individuals how to teach may be even lonelier. We teach in private, despite being so public to our students; teachers rarely observe each other's classes. We may talk about our classes, but such talk is typically selective and free of student comments. Those of us who teach teachers are modelling teaching as we do so, yet we typically do not discuss our teaching with those whom we teach. When a teacher educator sets out to study personal practices in the teacher education classroom, this too can be a lonely exercise.

T. Russell (✉)
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Canada
e-mail: tom.russell@queensu.ca

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2022

B. M. Butler, S. M. Bullock (eds.), *Learning through Collaboration in Self-Study*, Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices 24, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2681-4_2

Enter the critical friend. Many consider critical friendship to be an essential element of a self-study of teacher education practices. This chapter explores several features of the concept, beginning with definitions. Accounts of five personal critical friendships illustrate the potential complexities as well as the potential long-term impact on my personal practices as a teacher educator. Discussion of seven generalizations about critical friendship draws attention to various ways in which it can help to understand and improve a teacher educator's professional practice. This chapter sets the stage for the reports of critical friendship that follow. The conclusion asserts that anyone conducting a self-study without a critical friend is missing a unique opportunity to better understand and improve personal practice and to generate insights that will be valuable to other teacher educators.

2.1 Definitions of Critical Friendship

The term *critical friend* and the associated role have been discussed by many, particularly by those working in the field of action research and more recently in self-study. There is no perfect definition. A number of sources attribute the term to Stenhouse (1975), who had a powerful influence on the development of action research, to which self-study has obvious similarities. Farrell (2001) introduced critical friendship in these words:

Critical friendship was first discussed by Stenhouse (1975) when he recommended another person who could work with a teacher and give advice as a friend rather than a consultant, in order to develop the reflective abilities of the teacher who is conducting his/her own action research. By way of definition, Hatton and Smith (1995, p. 41) say that critical friendship is 'to engage with another person in a way which encourages talking with, questioning, and even confronting, the trusted other, in order to examine planning for teaching, implementation, and its evaluation'. They argue that it can give voice to a teacher's thinking, while at the same time being heard in a sympathetic but constructively critical way ... I define critical friends as people who collaborate in a way that encourages discussion and reflection in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. (pp. 368–369)

Kember et al. (1997) also attribute the term *critical friend* to Stenhouse:

The idea of a 'critical friend' or 'critical colleague' was first recommended by Stenhouse (1975) as a 'partner' who can give advice and is working with the teacher-researcher in the action research. Instead of perceiving the role as an advisor or consultant, the 'critical friends' see themselves as the 'friend' of the teacher-researcher. There is a 'dual' or 'overlapping' role to facilitate the progress of research by developing the reflective and learning capacity of the teacher-researcher, in a supportive, cooperative manner. (p. 464)

These comments and definitions provide a useful starting point for discussing critical friendship in the specific context of self-study of teacher education practices.

Each of the two words in the term has powerful significance. In self-study, a critical friendship starts with a *friendship*, ideally another teacher educator who shares some of the researcher's values and who is broadly interested in the improvement of teacher education experiences and programs. The term *critical* is more complex in

this context. Our culture has mixed feelings about criticism, and the role of a critical friend is definitely not to make negative comments or to name weaknesses in the researcher's teaching practices. From a constructive stance, the critical friend in a self-study can highlight features of practice that appear to be successful. Perhaps more importantly, the critical friend can help to identify assumptions underlying practices and also suggest how the teaching practices being modelled to teacher candidates might be affecting those candidates' professional learning. The role of a critical friend is to help the teacher educator studying personal practice delve more deeply and identify significant features the researcher may not have identified for analysis.

As a member of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group since its formation in 1993, I have been privileged to participate in a number of critical friendships, both as self-study researcher and as critical friend. Brief accounts of several of those experiences help to set the stage for the chapters that follow in this section. I describe these not because I think they were done well but to show something of the range of possibilities for working as either self-study researcher or friend in a critical friendship. First, it is important to draw attention to the issue of collaboration.

2.2 The Place of Collaboration in Self-Study

Northfield (1996) offered important comments about self-study in the early years of this research methodology. His insistence that self-study must involve collaboration suggests that one critical friend should be a minimum requirement:

Self-study must be a collaborative activity

All levels of the self-study process would seem to benefit from interaction with others. Framing the problems, gathering data, analysing and interpreting the data and communicating findings *require collaboration if self-study is to be seen as more than a confirmation of existing views and values*. This need to make self-study accessible to others means that those undertaking self-study have to find ways of retaining some of the complexity of the context. The characteristics that make self-study authentic for readers are essential to obtain the collaboration that is needed to achieve the worthwhile outcomes. Ideally, *all stages of the self-study can involve collaboration* – framing and reframing the problem and sharing the knowledge development process. Self study is a learning process with concerns, issues and ideas requiring checking and testing with colleagues. This is one way to answer the suggestion that self study is too subjective and relativistic and sharing findings and interpretations can be regarded as a responsibility for all who engage in self-study. (p. 6, emphasis added)

Only 3 years into the formal existence of self-study research by teacher educators, Northfield provided valuable insights into the importance of collaboration; critical friendship is one of the most obvious ways to collaborate.

2.3 Five Self-Study Experiences with a Critical Friend

In this section of the chapter I draw on personal experiences both as a self-study researcher including a critical friend and as a critical friend to other teacher educators studying their own practices.

2.3.1 *A Self-Study with an International Visitor (1995)*

In the fall term of 1995, John Loughran spent leave at Queen's University and attended every class I taught, one B.Ed. (methods of teaching physics) and one M.Ed. (action research) After every class, we sat together to discuss significant moments and their implications for the next class. Sadly, in those early days of self-study as a named field of research, we did not keep detailed records. John's insights, always constructive, helped me explore several layers of my teaching and the students' learning. My first self-study with a trusted teacher educator opened my eyes to the importance of a critical friend.

2.3.2 *A Self-Study with an Australian Colleague (2003–2004)*

Faced with some unexpected challenges in my teaching in 2003, I invited Sandy Schuck (University of Technology Sydney) to act as a critical friend by responding to email accounts of my teaching experiences over a period of five weeks. Then, when I was invited to visit Sandy's university in 2004, I attended her first four classes in a primary mathematics methods class in the role of critical friend. Among our conclusions were the following:

One problematic issue of self-study concerns the difficulty of assessing one's own practice and reframing it. Personal practice develops in tandem with a practitioner's beliefs and images of appropriate practices and thus tends to be comfortable. It is often difficult to make changes or to ascertain if those changes have improved practice....*It is our shared view that a critical friend is essential* if self-study is to involve critiquing existing practices and rethinking and reframing practice...; a critical friend also provides essential support and maintains a constructive tone. (Schuck & Russell, 2005, p. 108, emphasis added)

Our analysis led us to generate a table of eight ways in which teaching and critical friendship share common features. We concluded our published account of our critical friendship experiences with 11 statements about teacher education, self-study and critical friendship. Seven of those statements are discussed in greater detail below.

2.3.3 A Self-Study with a Queen's University Colleague (2016)

Andrea Martin has been a special colleague in terms of collaborative research and writing for more than 20 years. When *Studying Teacher Education* planned a special issue on learning in the practicum, it seemed natural we should try to contribute self-studies of our supervision of teacher candidates during their practicum placements (Martin, 2017; Russell, 2017). We agreed to serve as critical friend to each other. During a moment in a discussion of Andrea's most recent week of supervision, I found myself puzzled when her response to a question seemed incomplete. I told Andrea: "You are telling me what you did but not why you did it!" Only at our next meeting a week later did she reveal that my statement had a devastating effect on her, leaving her speechless and wondering whether she should have me continue as a critical friend. Fortunately, we were able to analyze the event and continue, but it takes a strong friendship to survive such an unexpectedly challenging moment.

2.3.4 A Six-Year Cross-Cultural Self-Study with a Chilean Teacher Educator (2014–2020+)

Rodrigo Fuentealba and I collaborated to write one of the chapters in this section. Rodrigo, who is Dean of Education at Universidad Autónoma de Chile, has collaborated with me in self-studies since 2014. Our chapter describes a six-year critical friendship in which two teacher educators have shared their inquiries into their own teaching practices through Skype, videorecordings and personal visits. There is little we do not know about each other's teaching and its effects, both positive and negative, on our students (Fuentealba & Russell, 2020). Collaborating across cultural and linguistic differences over an extended period of time has contributed significantly to identifying assumptions underlying our practices and to improving those practices.

2.3.5 A Teacher Educator's Final Self-Study (2018–2019)

My self-study in my last year before retirement in 2019 was in many respects my most memorable and most productive, building on those that preceded it. I invited two of my closest teacher education colleagues to join me: Andrea Martin as internal critical friend and John Loughran as external critical friend (Russell et al., 2020). With ethical clearance from Queen's University, on the first day I met the 13 teacher candidates in my physics methods class (running September to April, 2 h twice a week for 72 h during non-practicum time), I invited them to consider the letter of information and sign a consent form to participate in my self-study. On that first day, I introduced three significant changes: (1) rather than *theory* and *practice*, we

would speak in terms of *book knowledge* and *craft knowledge*, following Cooper and McIntyre (1996); (2) we would stop 15 minutes before the end of each class to discuss what and how we had learned, and (3) all students would be invited to participate in the self-study by permitting their work to be cited anonymously. All students immediately agreed to participate in the study, the term *craft knowledge* was received positively, and the end-of class discussions evolved to follow the students' agenda of topics; some discussions ran as much as 2 h beyond the official end of class. Andrea attended more than 50% of the classes and helped identify the deeper insights that emerged from her first-hand knowledge of the students and events in the class; "internal critical friend" captures her role as a true insider to the study. John was designated an "external critical friend" as someone who knew my teaching well and offered suggestions to improve the preliminary analysis. This was my only self-study in which a critical friend (Andrea) became a regular presence across 36 classes; she was welcomed by the students for her occasional contributions and her contribution of time was remarkable. I urge others to explore the gift of a critical friend's multiple visits to one class. Finally, without two trusted critical friends and without the methods of self-study, my final year of teaching would have been far less productive and rewarding.

2.3.6 *The Impact of Self-Study on a Teacher Educator's Practice*

I was fortunate to participate in an AERA conference session in 1992 that inspired a member of the audience to suggest formation of a self-study special interest group; I was also present when that group was formed at the 1993 meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Thanks to the suggestions of close friends, in 1996 I was able to organize the first Castle Conference, the international self-study conference held biennially in the UK at Herstmonceux Castle, which is owned by Queen's University. (The proceedings of the Castle Conferences between 1996 and 2020 are freely available at <https://www.castleconference.com/conference-history.html>). Thanks to collaboration with others who also quickly recognized the potential of self-study research for improving teacher education practice, the last 25 years of my career as a teacher educator were transformed.

Choosing a critical friend for different self-studies has always seemed rather effortless, whether the friend has an office down the hall or as remote as a 10- or 15-h flight. Both faculty colleagues and friends made at conferences have been critical friends in my own self-studies. Serendipity has often been as important as deliberate planning in identifying a critical friend for a particular study. Through my own self-studies, I have learned that moments of tension can be as common as moments of insight. Perhaps the single greatest impact of self-study on my own practice has involved learning different ways to listen to my students (Cook-Sather, 2002) and