



**PALGRAVE STUDIES ON LEADERSHIP
AND LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

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Learning, Leading, and the Best-Loved Self in Teaching and Teacher Education

Edited by

Cheryl J. Craig · Denise M. McDonald
Gayle A. Curtis

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Palgrave Studies on Leadership and Learning in Teacher Education

Series Editors

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Braga, Portugal

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College of Education
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The series focuses on original and research informed writing related to teachers and leaders' work as it addresses teacher education in the 21st century. The editors of this series adopt a more comprehensive definition of Teacher Education to include pre-service, induction and continuing professional development of the teacher. The contributions will deal with the challenges and opportunities of learning and leading in teacher education in a globalized era. It includes the dimensions of practice, policy, research and university school partnership. The distinctiveness of this book series lies in the comprehensive and interconnected ways in which learning and leading in teacher education are understood. In the face of global challenges and local contexts it is important to address leadership and learning in teacher education as it relates to different levels of education as well as opportunities for teacher candidates, teacher educators education leaders and other stakeholders to learn and develop. The book series draws upon a wide range of methodological approaches and epistemological stances and covers topics including teacher education, professionalism, leadership and teacher identity.

Cheryl J. Craig
Denise M. McDonald • Gayle A. Curtis
Editors

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Editors

Cheryl J. Craig
Teaching, Learning and Culture
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX, USA

Denise M. McDonald
Curriculum and Instruction
University of Houston-Clear Lake
Houston, TX, USA

Gayle A. Curtis
University of Houston
Houston, TX, USA

Texas A&M University
College Station, TX, USA

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PREFACE

After the Faculty Academy—a group of teacher educators originally from five universities in Texas—successfully authored *Cross-Disciplinary, Cross-Institutional Collaboration in Teacher Education* (Craig et al., 2020) (the second Faculty Academy book), the question of what collaborative project we might engage in next naturally emerged. I was amazed to find out that members of the Faculty Academy—of their own volition—chose to focus on the best-loved self (Schwab, 1954/1978). The best-loved self is an idea I revived from Schwab’s scholarship in the 1950s and a research strand I have investigated since the early 2000s. The term itself is an elusive one that I chased for years.

Studying a generative strand of research on one’s own is a rich consummatory learning experience. Being joined in the effort by one’s professional colleagues is an added boon. The chapters in this volume illuminate and extend what is known about the best-loved self. This scholarly work captures our discoveries as we inquired alongside one another in territory previously unnamed and largely uncharted. Members of the Faculty Academy and I invite readers to join us in our journey into knowing and living the best-loved self—alone and in community with others, including our colleagues.

Note: Special thanks is extended to Dr. Xiao Han who formatted the chapters and addressed all technical queries in this book’s preparation.

Spring, TX

Cheryl J. Craig

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Christine E. Beaudry, Ed.D., is Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education at Nevada State College. She teaches courses in social studies and literacy education, secondary pedagogy, and educational foundations. She is the recipient of Nevada State Be Bold and Teaching Excellence awards. Her research interests include critical, constructivist, and relational approaches to education, teaching, and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts, and educational equity and justice. She focuses on narrative and self-study approaches to critical qualitative research.

Yuhua Bu is a professor at East China Normal University. She is mainly engaged in research on school reform, teacher education, future schools, and children's organizational education. As a core member of the School of "Life-Practice" Pedagogy in China, she advocates that modern education should break through modern epistemology and turn to caring for life and nature, and return to local historical and cultural traditions.

Jane McIntosh Cooper, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor at University of Houston-Clear Lake. Her research and pedagogical interests include urban justice, relational practices, and collaborative inquiry. Through the application of postcolonial theory to educational policy practices, She elucidates pragmatic effects of standardized practices in P-16 classrooms. Her practice focuses on helping novice teachers connect to all learners, through differentiating practices, unpacking biases, and creating relationships. Recently, she piloted collaborative self-study research initiatives to improve practices in her program area.

Cheryl J. Craig is a Professor and the Houston Endowment Endowed Chair of Urban Education at Texas A&M University. She also serves as the Program Lead of Technology and Teacher Education and is the Founding Director of the Collaborative for Innovation in Teacher Education. Craig is an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Fellow and has received career awards from AERA's Division B (Curriculum) and Division K (Teacher Education) in addition to the Michael Huberman Award for Contributions to the Understanding of the Lives of Teachers.

Gayle A. Curtis is a Program Manager for the Asian American Studies Center, University of Houston and a Research Associate for the School of Education and Human Development, Texas A&M University. Her research delves into the lives of teachers, teacher preparation, reflective practice, teacher collaboration, and identity employing varied methods of narrative inquiry, critical ethnography, and self-study.

Kent Divoll, Ed.D., is an Associate Professor at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. He teaches Curriculum and Instruction courses in the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs. His research interests include classroom management, relational pedagogy, teacher preparation, professional development, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. He has served as the Chair, Vice Chair, and Program Chair for the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Classroom Management SIG.

Paige K. Evans, Ed.D., is Co-Director and Clinical Professor for the University of Houston's secondary STEM teacher preparation program, *teach*HOUSTON. Her research focuses on STEM education, STEM teacher preparation, and culturally responsive pedagogy. She is the PI/Co-PI on several federal grants with goals to broaden STEM participation and improve STEM literacy. She is the American Physical Society Physics Teacher Education Coalition Fellow, recently served as the president of the UTeach STEM Educators Association, and received UH Teaching Excellence Award, the UH Group Teaching Excellence Award, and the NSM John. C. Butler Teaching Excellence Award.

Leslie M. Gauna, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor of Bilingual/ESL Education and Cultural Studies in the Department of Counseling, Special Education, and Diversity at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She conducts qualitative research that has used narrative inquiry, self-study of teacher education, and an applied linguistics language program evaluation

approach. She focuses on the preparation and retention of ESL/bilingual teacher candidates and novice teachers. She is the author of *"In Between" English and Spanish Teaching: Stories of a Linguistically Diverse Student Becoming a Teacher* (2016). Leslie M. Gauna has worked with migrant populations in urban schools on projects related to multicultural and bilingual education, violence prevention, gender equality, and community participation issues both in the U.S. and Argentina.

Xiao Han, Ed.D., is a Researcher in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture at Texas A&M University. She majored in Instructional Technology and received her Master's and doctoral degrees from George Mason University and the University of Houston respectively, and was the Director of Online Masters' Degree program at St. Thomas University, Houston. Her interests focus on narrative inquiry, instructional technology and design, teacher education, online learning, and educational reform.

Michaelann Kelley, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor and Chair of the Department of Art & Design, School of Arts and Humanities, Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kelley was the Director of Visual Arts for Aldine ISD in Houston, Texas before joining the university. Kelley was named Eisenhower High School's Teacher of the Year in 1999 and received the Stanford University Outstanding Teaching Award in 2013. In 2020, she was named the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Western Region Supervision & Administration Art Educator and, in 2021, was awarded the Texas Art Education Association (TAEA) Distinguished Fellow honor for her long-term contributions to the work of the association and to the advancement of the art education profession. Kelley has published numerous articles, chapters, and co-authored a book about her long-term collaboration with the Portfolio Group.

Jean Kiekel, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. Kiekel holds a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Instructional Technology. She advises secondary education students and teaches courses in the Teacher Education program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Her research interests include technology in the classroom, effectiveness of e-learning, classroom climate, and new teacher support.

Mariam Manuel, Ph.D., is an Instructional Assistant Professor for the STEM teacher preparation program, *teach*HOUSTON in the Department

of Mathematics at the University of Houston. She teaches undergraduate and graduate coursework in STEM education. Her research interests include STEM teacher education, engineering design education, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Denise M. McDonald, Ed.D., Professor, Program Coordinator of Teacher Education, and Sandra Johnson/Barrios Technology Endowed Professor at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. McDonald teaches Curriculum and Instruction courses in the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs. Her research interests include teacher education, scholarly identity formation, learner motivation, and reflective, relational, and exemplary pedagogy. McDonald employs qualitative research methods, such as self-study, narrative inquiry, and critical ethnography to explore topics of interest.

Miguel Burgess Monroy, Ph.D., is on faculty at the University of Houston in the College of Education. His research interests include Latinx teacher education and teacher retention. He is a native of Mexico City and now lives in Texas.

Janice Moore Newsum, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in the Department of Literacy, Library and Learning Technologies. She teaches master's courses in the School Library and Information Science Program. Her research and teaching interests include school librarian leadership and administration, advocacy, collection development, diversity in literature, and instructional technology applications. Newsum utilizes sequential explanatory mixed-methods research to study school librarian leadership behavior in a natural environment.

Michele Norton, Ph.D., completed her studies in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. She wrote a Texas A&M T3 Grant that funded the study of Emotional Intelligence (EI) of engineering students. Norton's research interests are in STEM education, engineering design process, design thinking, creativity, coaching, and social and emotional learning. She is currently working on two NSF funded grants aimed at developing teachers and leaders in STEM Education.

Bernardo Pohl, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Houston-Downtown. He currently teaches critical issues in social studies and social studies methods. His research interests include teacher retention and attrition, social studies pedagogy, and ethical and moral issues in special education.

Angelica Ribeiro, Ph.D., is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston-Clear Lake and Houston Baptist University. She teaches Curriculum and Instruction and ESL courses in undergraduate and master's programs. She has over 20 years of experience working with language learners and preservice teachers in Brazil and the United States. Her research interests include second language acquisition and ESL/EFL pedagogy, specifically in the areas of task-based language teaching, computer-mediated communication, and corrective feedback. She is passionate about preparing future teachers and spreading positivity. Angelica Ribeiro is the author of *Running into Happiness* and *My Happiness Habit Journal*.

Jacqueline J. Sack, Ed.D., is a Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Houston-Downtown. She teaches mathematics methods courses for preservice and in-service teachers at elementary, middle, and secondary school levels. Her research interests focus on teaching mathematics through multiple representations, especially using learners' self-drawn images to represent contextual problems to close the numeracy gaps so prevalent at all grade levels. Her qualitative methods include narrative inquiry, self-study, and design research for her curriculum development work.

Donna Stokes, Ph.D., is a Professor of Physics and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs and Student Success in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Houston (UH). Her scientific research focuses on understanding the structural/optical properties of semiconductors. Her education research focuses on physics/STEM student success, and teacher education. She received her PhD at UH and was a postdoctoral researcher at the Naval Research Laboratory. She is an American Physical Society Physic Teacher Education Coalition Fellow and has been a recipient of a NSF Early Career Award, an UH Excellence in Group Teaching Award, and the Provost's Faculty Advising Award.

Sandy White Watson, Ed.D., is an Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Louisiana at Monroe where she teaches the qualitative research course for the education doctoral program and science and secondary methods for the undergraduate teacher education program. Watson holds the Chase Teacher Education Endowed Professorship at ULM. Her research interests include science education, teacher education, and multiculturalism in STEM. Watson employs qualitative research methods, such as hermeneutic phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and resiliency theory to explore her research interests.

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Introducing the Book and the Best-Loved Self

Gayle A. Curtis

The *Best-Loved Self: Learning and Leading in Teaching and Teacher Education* is authored by members of the Faculty Academy, a cross-institutional, cross-disciplinary group of teacher educators/education researchers initially from five universities in Texas, USA, who have met and collaborated since 2002. The group began when a national reform movement recognized that changes not only needed to be introduced to urban schools, but also to universities where faculty prepare preservice teachers, provide professional development for in-service teachers, and conduct research in the Greater Houston area schools. As will be evident in the introduction of the chapter authors, some group members have taken university positions outside of Texas, giving the Faculty Academy's collaborative work more of a national reach.

G. A. Curtis (✉)

University of Houston, Houston, TX, USA

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA

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This volume advocates for understanding and promoting the development of the best-loved self of teachers and teacher educators as a vital part of teaching and teacher education programs. The best-loved self is a tender, yet vital concept that exists beneath the surface in teaching and learning situations. It involves the teacher, the learner, subject matter, and milieu working in unison and in harmony with one another. Through her research program (Craig, 2013, 2017, 2020), Faculty Academy founder Cheryl Craig has brought renewed attention to Schwab's concept of the best-loved self that was first introduced in his 1954 article *Eros and education: A discussion of one aspect of discussion* (Schwab, 1954/1978). Schwab declared that:

[teachers/professors] want something more for students than the capacity to give back to [them] a report of what [they have] said. [They want them] to possess a knowledge or a skill in the same way that [the teacher/the professor] possesses it, as a part of his/her **best-loved self**...[They want] to communicate some of the fire [they] feel, some of the Eros [they] possess, for a valued object. [Their] controlled and conscious purpose is to liberate, not captivate the student. (Schwab, 1954/1978, pp. 124–125, bold type added)

In short, teachers and teachers of teachers (professors) are the ones who open the doors to student learning. In fact, teachers and teacher educators may be students' "ways in" until they develop their own intellectual interest for the material at hand. Some students may ride on their teachers' and professors' zest for teaching and learning for their entire lives. Like Schwab, our hope is that students find their own passion for teaching and learning, and, in so doing, come to know and live their best-loved selves.

The best-loved self is a close cousin to Dewey's "consummatory experience" (1934/2005), Bruner's "combinatorial activity" (1964), and Csikszentmihalyi's "flow" (optimal experience) (1997). What distinguishes Schwab's concept of the best-loved self is that subject matter plays a critically important role. The best-loved self cannot be dismissed for being psychological or philosophical. It cannot be called esoteric because subject matter is tethered to teacher identity development. How to teach the disciplines is a critically important part of the foundation of teaching and teacher education. All prospective/practicing teachers and teacher educators major in some content area. Members of the Faculty Academy are no different. Our cross-institutional, cross-disciplinary group is an

active knowledge community (Craig, 1995a, 1995b, 2013; Craig, Curtis et al., 2020; Craig, Turchi et al., 2020) that is leading the way in capturing the best-loved self of educators with all of its nuances and complexities and across all subject areas.

Divided into four sections, this book discusses the best-loved self, an overlooked quality that sits at the core of teachers' and teacher educators' beings and practices. Chapter 1 introduces readers to the book, the chapter authors, and the best-loved self. Brief overviews of each chapter are provided to facilitate and guide reading. Chapter 2, is authored by Cheryl J. Craig (Professor and the Houston Endowment Endowed Chair in Urban Education, Texas A&M University). In it, Craig acquaints readers with the concept of the best-loved self and summarizes related research conducted thus far. The chapter underscores the significance of the best-loved self to teaching and teacher education, drawing critical connections between and among teacher identity, the image of teachers-as-curriculum-makers and the best-loved self of teachers/professors.

In Section II, educators from across disciplines—technology, science, mathematics, bilingual/ESL, engineering, visual arts, library science, social studies, special education, literacy—share their journeys in identifying their best-loved self. Denise McDonald (Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Houston-Clear Lake) opens this section with Chap. 3, “A Challenging Teaching Experience Cultivated Profound Professional and Personal Rewards,” which vividly describes her memory of a forced teaching experience in a special education assignment that incited disruption and destabilization of her foundational knowledge of teaching. McDonald transparently retells the intense cognitive, emotional, social, and moral struggle encountered in the midst of the experience and the feelings of vulnerability and desperation that ensued. Learnings from her experimental trial-and-error actions in this setting proved invaluable in shaping her best-loved self.

In Chap. 4, “Recognizing and Fostering the Best-Loved Teacher Self: One Teacher's Story,” STEM educator Sandra Watson (Associate Professor, University of Louisiana at Monroe) takes a reflective look back at her educational narrative to examine how and when she identified her best-loved teacher-self, highlighting how it was nourished and became integral to her pedagogical practices, educational research, and curriculum making. Watson's experiences reveal the shaping influences of students, educational leaders, and professors of curriculum on her process of identifying and sustaining her best-loved self.

Next, Xiao Han (Postdoctoral Research Associate, Texas A&M University) and Yuhua Bu (Professor, Deputy Head of Department of Education, East China Normal University, Shanghai) inquire into the puzzle “What Makes a Good Teacher: One Female Educator’s Lived Experience” by retelling one female teacher educator’s lived experience with four teachers who impressed her most in her life and career. Han and Bu highlight the ways in which qualities of excellent teachers remain unchanged and are embedded in the ways they teach the content, interact with students and care for their well-being, despite the shifting social, cultural, and political contexts around them.

In Chap. 6, “Kicking and Screaming: Reflections of a Reluctant Educator,” Jean Kiekel (Associate Professor in Technology, University of St. Thomas) examines the qualities of a “good” teacher she saw in her favorite teachers and takes a reflective look back at her educator experiences to identify those qualities in her own practice. The process illuminated the ways in which Kiekel understood and took to heart the concept of the best-loved self as a “story to live by” long before she became acquainted with the term.

For Janice Newsum (Assistant Professor of School Library and Information Science, University of Houston-Clear Lake), a close relationship with her mentor shaped her personal and professional best-loved self as a school librarian. In Chap. 7, “Joined at the Hip: Learning the Ropes and the Charge to Pass It On,” Newsum’s personal narrative as a beginning librarian highlights the importance of informal mentor relationships in the academic and professional success of minority school librarians working in a profession in which they are underrepresented.

Chapter 8, offers “Vignettes of the Best-Loved Self” from Michaelann Kelley (Assistant Professor of Art and Design, Mount St. Joseph’s University, Cincinnati, OH), Gayle A. Curtis (Program Manager, University of Houston/Postdoctoral Research Associate, Texas A&M University), and Cheryl J. Craig, (Professor and the Houston Endowment Endowed Chair in Urban Education, Texas A&M University). This chapter teases out first recognitions of the best-loved self from the experienced educators’ perspectives (Curtis et al., 2013). The vignette approach to this chapter works as a novel representation which allows for serial interpretation of scenarios that took place in different places and different times.

In Chap. 9, “Exploring Your Past to Strengthen Your Best-Loved Self,” Kent Divoll (Associate Professor and Doctoral Program Coordinator,

University of Houston-Clear Lake) and Angelica Ribeiro (Adjunct Professor, Houston Baptist University and Houston Independent School District) reflect on their life and career experiences that led them to challenge the norms and become advocates in their often marginalized fields: middle school/high school teacher-student relationships and teaching English language learners. The authors reflect on their life experiences that generated their best-loved self and advocate for preservice teachers, current teachers, and teacher educators to analyze their life experiences to determine the “why” behind their “best-loved self.”

Chapter 10, “Unleashing the Best-Loved Self,” is an autobiographical narrative inquiry in which Miguel Burgess Monroy (Clinical Assistant Professor in Bilingual/ESL, University of Houston-Main Campus) and Michele Norton (Postdoctoral Research Associate, Texas A&M University) recount discovering their best-loved selves during their doctoral studies—Burgess Monroy in reclaiming his identity as a Latinx educator and Norton in embodying her research method. Parallel reflections of their journeys are given from the perspective of their advisor and third author, Cheryl J. Craig, showing how the revealing of their best-loved selves was integral to both Burgess Monroy and Norton in their dissertation defenses and to Craig’s longitudinal understanding of the best-loved self.

In Chap. 11, “My Best-Loved Self,” Jackie Sack (Professor in Urban Education, University of Houston-Downtown), elucidates the experiences and interactions with individuals from South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States that shaped her career trajectory, ultimately leading to a career as a mathematics education educator. Her story shows the ways in which less-than-positive experiences can be reversed and transformed into successful career pathways that sustain the best-loved self.

In the last chapter of this section, “A Milieu for Flourishing as Your Best-Loved Self: A Mentored Knowledge Community Learning About Mentoring,” Michele Norton and Gayle A. Curtis, provide an account of a group of doctoral students as they aided one another and learned in relationship. The chapter captures how different contextual qualities appealed to different learners and how their advisor strove to attend to the flourishing of each best-loved self.

Section III brings together stories of one’s best-loved self reflected back to educators from the fields of mathematics, science, social studies, urban education, and language and culture. In Chap. 13, “Discovering the *E* in

STEM,” Mariam Manuel (Instructional Assistant Professor, University of Houston-Main Campus) retells the stories of two educators in different contexts—middle school science teacher Ashley and university-based teacher educator Manuel—and how the sometimes challenging and tension-filled engagement in the engineering design process played an integral role in each discovering the joy of teaching. The mirrored stories illuminate what is possible when one unlocks and shares one’s best-loved self.

Chapter 14, “She Even Gave Me Her Liver: A Story Given Back,” authored by Paige Evans (Clinical Professor and Co-Director of *teach*-HOUSTON, University of Houston-Main Campus), captures exchanges between a professor and a *teach*HOUSTON student, which led to the student writing to the professor about how the professor had metaphorically given her liver in preparing her to be a quality teacher. This chapter unpacks the student’s metaphor to show how impurities were removed from her teaching and teaching situations along the way.

In Chap. 15, “Discovering Your Best-Loved Self as a Multifaceted Mentor,” Donna Stokes (Professor of Physics and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Affairs and Student Success, University of Houston-Main Campus) relates her experiences of mentoring STEM majors (including STEM preservice teachers) and their parent/supporters. Stokes’ lived experiences demonstrate how becoming her best-loved self through mentoring at multiple levels (including parents and other supporters) within both academic and social settings was not a planned process but one of organic and authentic engagement.

In Chap. 16, “Bernardo Through Jackie’s Eyes and Jackie Through Bernardo’s Eyes,” University of Houston-Downtown colleagues Jackie Sack and Bernardo Pohl (Associate Professor of Urban Education) tell how they came to know one another, disclosing the challenges of their individual immigrant experiences, and describing commonalities that strengthened their intellectual bond. The authors’ experiences demonstrate the benefits of knowledge community collaborations and how their relationship complements their best-loved self as educators.

In Chap. 17, “Composing our Best-Loved Selves: Using the Education Disruption of the COVID-19 Pandemic to Reforge our Teacher Educator Identities: How Lost Stories of Our Best-loved Selves Sustain Educators,” is authored by Las Chicas Críticas (the Critical Girls), three teacher educators from different urban-serving teacher education institutions who have collaboratively studied their practice for over ten years: Jane McIntosh

Cooper (Assistant Professor, University of Houston-Clear Lake); Christine E. Beaudry (Assistant Professor, Nevada State College); and Leslie Gauna (Assistant Professor, University of Houston-Clear Lake). The authors detail how the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic created an educational milieu that disrupted their teaching identities and strained their conceptions of teacher-educators' best-loved selves. Through their analysis of practices, class outcomes, and educator values, Cooper, Beaudry, and Gauna push to redefine what is "good" in their teaching and in education, re-storying their future identities in the face of an unknown educational future.

Centered around the theme of parting words, the last section of this book takes a reflective look backward before thinking forward with future research agendas in mind. In Chap. 18, "Journey of Discovery: Finding One's Best-Loved Self," book co-editor, Denise McDonald, retrospectively ponders the stories of the best-loved self shared by Faculty Academy authors/educators in this volume and shines a spotlight on the themes from the preceding chapters. Taken together, the identified points of emphasis present a richer, fuller view of the best-loved self, teacher/teacher educator vulnerability, and what is needed for one's best-loved self to feel nurtured and sustained within teaching-learning situations.

Co-editor Cheryl J. Craig then draws the discussion of the best-loved self to a close in Chap. 19, "The Best-Loved Self: Where to From Here?" by looking forward to potential future research agenda items having to do with the best-loved self across the professional landscape. This final chapter calls for the claiming of the best-loved self as a pivotal concept crucial to improving selves, identities, and lives-as-lived. It furthermore argues that the best-loved self needs to be woven intentionally into the warp and weft of teaching and teacher education programs. Nurturing and sustaining the best-loved self is foundational to learning how to live together and learning how to be where twenty-first-century learning and leading are concerned.

We end this volume with an Afterword: Gayle Curtis' (2013) poem, *The Best-Loved Self*. The *Best-Loved Self* uses words and phrases from Cheryl Craig's 2011 ISATT keynote address and reframes them as a found poem expressing the journey of discovery, of coming to know, and of being one's best-loved self.

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CHAPTER 2

Tracing the Roots of the Best-Loved Self

Cheryl J. Craig

INTRODUCTION

Initially, the expression, the “best-loved self,” captured my attention in a most unusual way. When I accidentally dropped Westbury and Wilkof’s (1954/1978) book on my office floor, my eyes serendipitously landed on the page where the term, the best-loved self, appeared (Schwab, 1954/1978). Hallelujah! There it was! The best-loved self instantiated an idea that had been churning in my mind and research program for years. The concept—albeit without a name—had been evident to me in keynote addresses (i.e., Ben-Peretz, 2009), in conference presentations (i.e., Pillen et al., 2009), in books (i.e., Goodson, 2003), in my fieldwork (i.e., Craig, 2013, 2017, 2020a, 2020b), and in my own career (i.e., Craig, 2019). Overall, the purpose of this chapter is to sketch the theoretical roots of the

Note: This chapter draws on my previous scholarship on the best-loved self (Craig, 2013, 2017), most especially the best-loved self chapter in my book, *Curriculum making, reciprocal learning and the best-loved self* (Craig, 2020a).

C. J. Craig (✉)
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA

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best-loved self with emphasis placed on what happened with the development of the concept *after* I acknowledged its nameless existence in my own and others' practices and research.

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Four key concepts inform this inquiry: (1) Dewey's connection between experience, education, and life; (2) the rise of liberal education in U.S. history; (3) Schwab's explanation of the best-loved self; and (4) the discovery of ideas. After that, I present narrative inquiry as my research method, followed by the story before the story, which sets the stage for my most recent revelations about the theoretical underpinnings of the best-loved self.

Experience, Education, and Life

John Dewey viewed teachers (and, by extension, teachers of teachers) as minded human beings with their own propensities and desires. Dewey (1938) believed that two or more people could have the same experience, but take away different meanings from it. This is because educators bring different prior knowledge and experiences to their situations as well as create different meanings from new experiences. The concept of experience is foundational to Dewey's educational philosophy. For him, experience, education, and life are intimately linked, with past experience informing present experience, with an eye perpetually fixed on how both the past and the present contribute to future knowing. Dewey also said we undergo experience at the same time as we bear its consequences. These consequences can be either educative—that is, growth-orientated—or non-educative—that is, arresting growth.

The principal way raw experiences can be channeled is through story. "Story," to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), "is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made meaningful" (p. 477). Put differently, story is a "portal to experience" (Xu & Connelly, 2010, p. 35) and a gateway to the lives of teachers and teacher educators. Story conveys narrative knowing; conventional communications transmit paradigmatic knowing. Bruner (2002) said "lives narrow" when too much emphasis is placed on the paradigmatic at the exclusion of narrative knowing (pp. 26–27). This is because

narrative captures human uniquenesses while the paradigmatic places people in categories and identifies traits and trends.

Liberal Education

A robust form of humanistic education, liberal education, was developed at the University of Chicago and became known throughout the U.S. and the world. The University of Chicago was where John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey created the widely acclaimed laboratory school. It also was where Joseph J. Schwab developed his views on scientific inquiry and taught human genome researcher, James Dewey Watson (Koppes, 2004), in addition to educational giants, Michael Connelly (Canada), Elliot Eisner (U.S.), Seymour Fox (Israel), and Lee Shulman (U.S.) (Ben-Peretz & Craig, 2018). The University of Chicago's Robert Maynard Hutchins' (President: 1929–1945, Chancellor: 1945–1951) intent was not to “produce hands for industry or to teach the young how to make a living [but] to produce responsible citizens” (Hutchins, 1953, p. 3). Hutchins believed education could improve the world and that “...education is a conversation aimed at truth—not in the hope of obtaining unanimity but in the hope of obtaining clarity. The object is not agreement but communication...” (Hutchins cited in Schwab, 1953, p. 9).

Hutchins' “Chicago plan” was a “radical experiment.” The entire catalogue of undergraduate education courses did not rely on rote learning (Hutchins, *Guide to Hutchins Papers*, 2014). Hutchins envisioned undergraduate education to be focused on students' intellectual development through selected classic works taught via a dialectical Socratic method, an idea that threads to the ancient Greeks and the roots of liberal education. This approach was contrary to the practical skills and professional training characterizing American higher education in Hutchins' day and many would argue in our time as well.

Best-Loved Self

A key player in the liberal education movement at the University of Chicago was Joseph Schwab. Following Hutchins' lead, Joseph J. Schwab approached classroom instruction as a rigorous form of conversation. Schwab outlined his method in *Eros and education: A discussion of one aspect of discussion* (Schwab, 1954/1978). Within that article/chapter, Schwab briefly mentioned the best-loved self (also called the beloved self).

However, he did not carry its description further, leaving it more as a figure of speech than a concept:

He (the teacher) [Joseph Schwab] wants something more for his students than the capacity to give back to him a report of what he himself has said. He wants them to possess a knowledge or a skill in the same way that he possesses it, as a part of his **best-loved self**...He wants to communicate some of the fire he feels, some of the Eros he possesses, for a valued object. His controlled and conscious purpose is to liberate, not captivate the student. (Schwab, 1954/1978, pp. 124–125, emphasis added)

Reflecting Hutchins' vision, Schwab's best-loved self was intimately linked to democracy and the fundamental rights of citizens to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (American Declaration of Independence, 1776). Eisner (1984) later explained that

[Schwab]... provide[d] a theoretical justification of the virtue and complexity of practical inquiry... [He] explained...why eclecticism was not a practical liability but a necessary feature of the deliberative process and why deliberation—the exercise of the human's highest intellectual powers—was necessary in making decisions that always must suit changing contexts riddled with idiosyncrasies. (p. 24)

With this background in place, ideas and their discovery will now be discussed.

Development of Ideas

To Lovejoy, the founder of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*:

...ideas are the most migratory things in the world. A preconception, category, postulate, dialectical motive, pregnant metaphor or analogy, 'sacred word', mood of thought, or explicit doctrine, which makes its first appearance upon the scene in one of the conventionally distinguished provinces of history (most often, perhaps, in philosophy) may, and frequently do, cross over into a dozen others. (Lovejoy, 1940, p. 4)

He continued:

An idea...is after all not only a potent but a stubborn thing; it commonly has its own ‘particular go’; and the history of thought is a bilateral affair—the story of the traffic and interaction between human nature, amid the exigencies and vicissitudes of physical experience, on the one hand, and on the other, the specific natures and pressures of the ideas which men have, from various promptings, admitted to their minds. (p. 23)

For Lovejoy, ideas in the study of cultural and intellectual history fall into several categories (Kelly, 1990). Included in his 12 identified areas were the history of philosophy, the history of science, folklore, and education as well as some parts of ethnography. This chapter addresses one of Lovejoy’s dozen domains: the history of ideas in education.

In this chapter, my unearthing of the idea of the best-loved self closely resembles what Annie Lamott, David Hansen, and Oliver Sacks had to say about “promptings” admitted to their minds. Lamott (2016) spoke of ideas “knitting [themselves], getting [themselves] organized” to make space for “really deep arrival[s] of ...things unavoidable” (p. 130). Hansen (2017) described ideas formulating in his mind being similar to how humans experience growth. Sacks (2017) declared that his “ideas... [were like] living creatures...aris[ing] and flourish[ing] and go[ing] in all directions...” (p. 216). These three experiences relating to the discovery of ideas animate and inform my coming to know the best-loved self as an educational concept of use and value.

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter illuminates an “inquiry into inquiry [enquiry into enquiry]” (Schwab, 1962). Its origins reach back to Schwab’s Inglis Lecture on how scientists think. Schwab was not only interested in how people think using inquiry but also in how people do inquiry and conduct research using the inquiry method (Connelly, 2013). Schwab also valued retrospectively reflecting on completed studies to cull additional lessons from them. Taking a cue from Schwab, I “look across” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 131) several experiences in this work to arrive at a richer understanding of the concept of the best-loved self. My sources of evidence come from my own research and experiences as well as the scholarship of Schwab, Dewey, Bruner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Sacks. Before I draw on my first- and second-hand sources, I share my story before the story—this is, what

triggered my tracing of other theoretical advances that appeared before and after Schwab's mention of the best-loved self.

THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY

I began this chapter with the story of Westbury and Wilkof's edited book dropping to the floor in my office and the volume flipping open to the page where Schwab's phrase, the best-loved self, appeared. However, I need to say a bit more here. I would not have noticed the term, the best-loved self, had I not had several prior experiences to which it could apply. Otherwise, the best-loved self would not have held any meaning. No associative thought would have prompted me to examine the concept further—let alone my making it a pillar of my research program. Reflecting the history of ideas, I will now elucidate how a series of amorphous lived experiences became connected with one another and linked to the unknown term.

After conducting studies with several teachers and principals in their respective Greater Houston school contexts, I felt a new idea forming in my research program, an idea that would knit itself together and become more fully formed over a period of years. The unfolding of the idea happened after I had developed the "story constellations" approach to narrative inquiry (Craig, 2007) and continued until the time I began using "serial interpretation" (Schwab, 1983) in an amplified way. What Lamott, Hansen, and Sacks earlier observed about their own working of ideas resonated with my journey of coming to know the best-loved self as an educational idea of increasing meaning and heightened importance in my research niche and within the field of education.

My sense of approaching something that did not have a name began with Daryl Wilson (Craig, 2009a, 2009b) and his colleagues when T. P. Yaeger was involved in the readers' and writers' workshop approach to literacy instruction. Daryl had been told that he could no longer teach the Holocaust unit of study that he had refined over several years, alongside his concentration camp travels in Europe and visits to Israel. Daryl, in turn, felt as if his knowledge and scholarship as a teacher had been purged. Daryl mourned the loss of the Holocaust study—not only for himself as a teacher, but also for T. P. Yaeger's students whose experiences were narrowed as a consequence. The new content that the principal's hired staff developer prescribed did not engage the teens in Daryl's classroom in the way his Holocaust study had done. As the situation unfurled, Daryl's