Symposium 'The role of research in the work of teacher educators'

Paper 3:

Understanding the processes of supporting self-study research with teacher educators

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Dutch Context

. Increasing emphasis (often initiated on policy/management level) on research in teacher education (by teacher educators and students).

. Most teacher educators still have a teaching-only position.

. Project 'Teacher educators study their own practices' (2007, 2008), followed up by a self-study community (2008-2012).

. Presentations and publications, from facilitators as well as participants.

. Development of guidelines for supporting self-study research.

Lunenberg, M., Korthagen, F., & Zwart, R. (2010). Critical issues in supporting self-study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26* (6), 1280-1289.

Lunenberg**,** M., & Samaras, A., (2011). Developing a Pedagogy for Teaching Self-Study Research: Lessons Learned Across the Atlantic. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27 (5), 841-850.*

Research Question / Theoretical Framework

How can we use the guidelines and insights from other studies* to further promote self-studies by teacher educators?

Davey, R., & Ham, V. (2009). Collective wisdom: team-based approaches to selfstudyin teacher education. In C. A. Lassonde, S. Galman, & C. Kosnik (Eds.), *Selfstudy research methodologies for teacher educators* (pp. 187-203). Rotterdam,The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Hoban, G et al. (2012) Developing a model for a self-study peofessional learning community. In Bullock & Russell (Eds)., Self-studies of Science Teacher Education practices

Lunenberg, M., Van den Bos, P., De Heer, A., Geursen, J., Hoekstra, W., Korthagen, F., Meindersma, Y., Morshuis, J., Rentrop, J., Ruit, J., Zwart, R., (2012). Learning about Research; Acting as a Researcher. Experiences from our Self-study Community. In L.B. Erickson, J.R. Young, & S. Pinnegar (Eds.), *Extending Inquiry Communities: Illuminating Teacher Education through Self-Study*, pp.187-190. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University.

Samaras, A. P., Adams-Legge, M., Breslin, D., Mittapalli, K., Magaha O'Looney, J., & Wilcox, D. R. (2008). Collective creativity: a learning community of self-study scholars. In A. P. Samaras, A. R. Freese, C. Kosnik, & C. Beck (Eds.), Learning communities in practice (pp.141-155). Dordrecht,The Netherlands: Springer Press.

Vanassche, E. & Kelchtermans, G. (2015). Facilitating self-study of teacher education practices: toward a pedagogy of teacher educator professional development, *Professional Development in Education.* On line first: DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2014.986813

Methods

. Polyvocal approach: project participant (Janneke Geursen), project facilitator (Mieke Lunenberg), and critical friend (Mandi Berry).

. Dialogue and Metalogue (in the context of a collaborative relationship that is caring, respectful and accepts inconclusivity.

Dialogue: discussing and reflecting on our collaborative practice.

Metalogue: learning about our learning: moving up to theory.

. Starting point: a selection of the guidelines.

The Problem of the Personal

Guideline 1: Guard the connection between the self-studies and the individual practices and concerns of the teacher educators.

Aspects: 1) The development of a researchable question; 2) The recognition that self-study is an accepted type of research; 3) The risk of focus shift; and 4) The aspect of vulnerability.

Janneke: Researchers generally look for generalisable outcomes, and teacher educators themselves often think their particular questions may not be important enough to be researched.

(…)
There is a tendency in The Netherlands to be rather critical of others, but also of ourselves. Being open, sharing insecurities and even showing achievements is not really encouraged.

The Strength of Community

Guideline 4: Consider the social aspects: create a sense of belonging to a group because of its support function, but also because of the 'voyeurism' aspect: *"The group made the meetings more important. The chemistry between us was very pleasant. The openness, everyone struggling, and the fact that you all experience the trajectory in a comparable way".*

Mandi: Working in a community can be an important means to support identity development processes; in this case, learning to see yourself differently as a teacher educator.

(...)

I believe that the community of practice needs at least one member with institutional power to show that doing this work matters. Communities matter but communities need institutional support and acknowledgement.

The World Outside (1)

Guideline 2: Formulate an external goal, and stimulate the researchers to go public (e.g., give a presentation or write a conference paper)

The World Outside (2)

Guideline 6: Take the wrapping up of the self-study studies seriously. Discuss possible follow-ups to prevent the results from fading into oblivion.

Janneke: First I had to get introduced to the self-study approach and to other people conducting self-studies. That was the easy part. Now I need to find ways of sharing my findings and experiences with people who are not familiar with what I have done. I was once told that I should focus on my core tasks. Well, isn't doing self-study focusing on my core task?

Mieke: Looking back, maybe that was one of the reasons that the community was a success: it offered a safe place to return to. In that context, it is a pity that we did not allocate time for – strategic – discussions about how to conquer the world or, more concretely, how to create space for self-study in your own institution.

Reflections

- We have learned about
  - our learning processes.
  - the need for a trusting relationship
  - staying on track and keeping track of the "steps in between".

We feel that it could be interesting to further explore the use of this metalogue method for self-study research.

- Many teacher education institutions lack a research culture and/or have doubts about the legitimacy of self-study research. Beginning self-study researchers need to be supported to find ways to get and keep time, resources and support for continuing their work.

We found that these are aspects that do not get sufficient attention in research.

Thanks!

Forthcoming (2015):

Amanda Berry, Janneke Geursen, Mieke Lunenberg. A dialogue on supporting self-study research in the context of Dutch teacher education. In: Anastasia Samaras, Kathleen Pithouse (Eds.), *Polyvocal Professional Development: Enacting dialogic professional learning through self-study,* Sense Publishers.

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