Reflections On Collaborative Research: Implications For Research, Collegiality, And Teaching

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Abstract

This article expertly states the relative importance of collaborative research. Collaborative research provides a great opportunity for learning about ourselves and colleagues. The positive elements of collaborative research and its implications give readers deeper insights.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) reminded teacher educators that we need "to tell our own stories as we live our own collaborative researcher/teacher lives" (p. 12). In this self-study, we explore the effects of a collaborative research project on our views of ourselves as researchers of teaching and as practitioners of teacher education. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of participation in collaborative research for research, collegiality, and teaching.

As two of several co-researchers in a qualitative research project involving a cross-case analysis of separate case studies, we expressed very early in the project an interest in the research process itself and eventually about its effects on all of us as teacher educators, colleagues, and researchers. Although convinced that the research process should be studied, we were unable to systematically examine that process while completing individual case studies. This self-study, based on reflective processes both during and after the original research project, attempts a retelling of an experience we shared as collaborative researchers. Specifically, in this article we consider and discuss the multiple roles assumed by each of us and the ways they emerged and changed through the project. We describe the explicit and implicit mentoring that occurred during the project between and among the research team members and the impact on collegial relationships that we perceived both during and after the study. Finally, we share the changes in our self-perceptions as the study progressed.

The Original Research Project

The project upon which we based our self-study was a multiple case study that paired each researcher with a different middle level teacher to explore the nature of the teachers’ personal practical knowledge about middle level teaching, about learning, and about students. Biweekly observations of two class periods over
a six-month interval and three interviews, completed individually by each researcher provided data for the study. Regular team meetings of the researchers also influenced and informed the study.

The individual case studies, as well as the cross case analysis, allowed us to present multiple interpretations of middle level teaching, to discuss the nature of personal practical knowledge, and to consider the usefulness of personal practical knowledge in the study of teaching. The cases presented detailed pictures of the middle school teachers’ perceptions of how their personal practical knowledge influenced their decision making, classroom environment, and interpersonal relationships. Our interest in the personal practical knowledge of teachers led us to wonder how the research project influenced our own personal practical knowledge.

Modes of Inquiry

Loughran and Gunstone (1996) wrote that "self-study can be both personal and collaborative" (p.1) and "self-study can be of teaching and of research" (p. 1). Although they were describing a professional development program, we believe the concept applies to our study in a different way. Frequent conversations about the collaborative research project led us to consider collaborating on a self-study of participation in the original research project. This self-study, in fact, is at once personal and collaborative as well as of teaching and of research.

Narrative inquiry often means that participant and researcher create a shared narrative construction to understand the participant’s experiences—her or his story, if you will. After considering the experiences of others engaged in narrative inquiries (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard, 1993; Knowles & Cole, 1995; Pinnegar, 1995; Russell & Korthagen, 1995; and Schon, 1991), we decided to become the participants, learners, and researchers in this process of self-study and storytelling.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) wrote that, "Narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future" (p. 24). Schon (1991) argued that storytelling might provide "a natural basis for learning from experience" (p. 237) and that stories "give meaningful form to experiences we have already lived through." (p. 237). Jack Whitehead (1993) encouraged teachers (and teacher educators) "to study [our] own educational development in the workplace" (p. 1). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) and Carter (1993) encouraged researchers to acknowledge the power of story in furthering an understanding of teacher knowledge. In this article, we attempt to do that by retelling and examining our stories in order to articulate and interpret our experiences.

Wasser and Bresler (1996) stated that researchers collaborating and conducting studies that employ qualitative methodologies should examine and reflect upon the..., relationship[s] of researcher to researcher and the role researchers’ interactions with other researchers play in the interpretive process and the co-construction of knowledge" (p. 5). They pointed out that much of the work that addresses qualitative methodology focuses primarily on the..., procedural rather than the interpretive perspective" (p. 5). With that in mind, this article includes discussions of how both the procedural and the interpretive issues impacted our work in teacher education, research, and collegiality.

Data Sources

In preparation for this self-study, we examined recollections of our experiences as participants in the research project, at research group meetings, and as colleagues. The reflections were stimulated by transcripts of research team meetings, self-recorded data about experiences, individual case studies, the cross-case analysis, written reflections and notes from de-briefing sessions, and conversations following two national conference presentations.

After examining recollections and the data, we individually wrote about how we thought we had been influenced by participation in the research project. We began by writing about the influence of participation...
on classroom teaching, research practice, and collegial relationships. That early writing became the impetus for continued conversations. As we wrote and talked, we clarified our thinking and identified influences that were common in both stories. At that point, we were able to begin constructing this article as a report of what we have learned about ourselves through the process of collaborative research. After a brief description of each researcher’s background, a discussion follows of how the original study influenced our teaching, relationships, and research.

**Background and Introduction to Our Stories**

With a recognition that this article represents the perspectives of only two researchers, we have tried to present information about ourselves and the context within which we work. For a self-study to have meaning for its readers, it seems necessary for the audience to understand something about the “selves” that are being shared and studied. In this section, each of us provides our backgrounds and considers our involvement with the original research project.

**Rebecca’s Story**

When I invited several colleagues to participate in a qualitative study focusing on the personal practical knowledge of middle level teachers, I had a sense that it was time in my career to demonstrate an ability to serve as lead researcher. Actually, I had been the lead author on other reports of qualitative research, but as I began thinking about what it would mean to feel qualified to be a full professor, I wanted to demonstrate that I had mentored less experienced colleagues. Not coincidentally, the department recently had hired two new assistant professors, and I had chaired the search committees that recommended their hiring. The timing seemed right.

I already had completed four collaborative, year-long qualitative research projects working with a variety of other colleagues. All four projects were middle level classroom-based and focused upon middle level teachers and their teaching. My colleagues and I had experienced success with the projects, making national presentations at conferences of both the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the National Middle School Association (NMSA) as well as publishing articles in *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly* and the *Middle School Journal*. Although I had virtually no formal training in qualitative methodology, my experiences as a qualitative researcher gave me enough confidence to propose the study.

Initially, I saw my role as the conceptualizer of the project as well as the organizer for the research team. The project conceptually was based on previous work I had done with middle level teachers; I have been heavily influenced by the work of Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly on the personal practical knowledge of teachers. In addition, my service as a member of the Research Committee for NMSA influenced my thinking about the kinds of research that are needed in middle level education.

As research team organizer, I planned to organize research team meetings, propose and monitor study time lines, and take the lead in conference proposals and paper writing. Yet, I often was frustrated by what I perceived to be the added expectations of my colleagues for me in that role. With one exception, I became the individual who transcribed the audio tapes of research team meetings, duplicated materials for team members, drafted conference proposals and an article submitted for publication. Others sometimes took the role of responder and critic. Others yet seemed content with my efforts providing little, if any, response of their own. I began to feel like the resident nagger or a task master. We all had difficulty meeting agreed-upon deadlines. I hated the role of nagger; in fact, as the project progressed, I became both apologetic and resentful about this self-characterization.

I became increasingly frustrated with the role of lead researcher. Part of the frustration emanated from other things that were going on in my life and demanding time and attention. With the project, my frustrations stemmed from both trivial things like being the designated group transcriber and copier as well as from more consequential issues. I was deeply frustrated with the role I felt I played of the "keeper of the
knowledge” about middle level education and the project’s theoretical framework. I felt that all researchers had an obligation to read some literature on middle level education and on personal practical knowledge. My colleagues seemed comfortable with me sharing my understanding of those concepts with them, rather than gaining a deeper understanding through reading. Clearly, we had conflicting expectations for one another.

Despite the frustrations I described earlier, I continue to believe that I am a better researcher when I work with others than I am when I work alone; my thinking is sharper when I am talking with others about what I’m seeing, reading, and thinking. Therefore, I am sure I will continue to participate in collaborative research projects. In the future, I will try to be more specific up front about sharing the responsibilities inherent in a large-scale study and more explicit about my expectations for co-researchers.

Steve’s Story

At the time that the middle school research team was formed, I was beginning my second year of work in academe. My first year was at a southeastern university, but due to a series of events, I pursued a position in the southwestern part of the United States. My current employment at a major metropolitan university began the same year that the research project began.

As the newest faculty member on the research team, I did not know the contexts of the university, the College of Education, the local schools, nor the school district. The project year was a learning year for me—contextually, professionally, and personally. The newness was at the same time exciting and challenging.

I was interested in establishing working relationships with the district and as many school personnel as possible. The pressures placed upon the local school district’s resources due to extraordinary growth in the community have resulted in an enormous need for qualified and effective teachers. Thus, along with learning about the community and school district, I was faced with numerous students that were essentially assured of a teaching position upon completion of their education.

Many of my students view the process of becoming a teacher as merely an issue of completing the required number of hours toward certification. My personal practical knowledge regarding teacher education was opposed to such an orientation, and yet my lack of knowledge about the district’s schools and the teachers offered few insights on which I could draw without sounding like an outsider.

Along with the need to learn about the schools, I faced other competing demands placed upon presumably all junior faculty new to a university. Being fairly new to the profession, I grappled with the time constraints due to committee work, class schedules, and new roles placed upon me by the institution. Furthermore, not knowing the faculty well (their academic strengths, weaknesses, or research interests) also placed pressures upon me that I had not before experienced. This lack of contextual understanding made it difficult for me to find avenues for academic conversation and professional stimulation.

The middle school research project offered me numerous opportunities to mitigate or eliminate many of the intellectual, professional, and personal obstacles or stumbling blocks just addressed. Although not a panacea, the research project offered me avenues to learn about the community and the schools, recognize my colleagues’ strengths, and acknowledge the future professional needs of my teacher education students.

Influences on Our Practices in Teaching and Teacher Education

The multiple ways in which the project assisted in our development are discussed in the following sections. We address the ways the study influenced our practices as teacher educators, colleagues, and researchers. In each section, we begin with Rebecca’s voice followed by Steve’s voice, and a section that synthesizes issues that we both experienced.
Rebecca’s Story about Teaching and Teacher Education

I teach most of the middle level education courses offered at our institution. This study provided me with new understandings of my values about middle level teaching as well as new stories to share with my classes.

The summer after the original research project, I taught a middle school curriculum development course for the second time. The first time I offered the course, student evaluations were extremely positive. I modified the syllabus a little bit and planned the second offering to build on the strengths of the first. Following the first class session, I was reading Stevenson and Carr’s (1993) introduction to Dancing Through Walls which speaks of the importance of empowering students, allowing them to choose learning in which they have genuine interests, and integrating a variety of disciplines. I realized that I'd become my own version of teacher educators who lecture about the importance of not lecturing all the time.

Here I was admonishing my students to give their middle schoolers choices and to negotiate the curriculum with them in order to provide meaningful learning experiences. Yet I was handing out a syllabus that specified the activities that my student would engage in to "result" in learning. I literally went in the second day of the class and asked the students to throw away the syllabus and negotiate the curriculum for the course. I think, to some degree, this happened because of the research project.

My experience observing and interviewing the teacher who participated in the case study certainly influenced my thinking in this regard. I had a great deal of internal conflict about the teacher I observed and interviewed in the original project. Despite high praise from district administrators, I thought she was a bundle of contradictions. She really liked her students and displayed their work with great pride, but I was concerned about how directive her style was with her middle level students. This, I think, influenced my belief that I needed to give the teachers in the class opportunities to experience a negotiated curriculum as students in order to give them the requisite knowledge to provide such an experience for their students.

My experiences as a student often have influenced my teaching. I never liked group projects when I was a student; ironically, I expect the students in my teacher education courses to work in groups frequently. At times when groups have experienced difficulty working together, I’ve had a tendency to give them some version of the "you’re all adults; you work it out" speech. I realize, as a result of my experience in the research project, how unhelpful that response must have been to my students.

In the project, I was working with colleagues who I knew well and liked very much; yet, we experienced difficulty at times working as a group. As a result of this experience, when I assign group projects, I give more examples of the problems that might arise. I talk with students about strategies for addressing those problems before they occur.

So, my personal practical knowledge as a teacher was influenced by the experience of observing middle level teachers and students going about their lives in schools. What had been for me more theoretical notions of the importance of student ownership became embedded in my practice largely because I had examined my beliefs about teaching during the original research project.

Steve’s Story about Teaching and Teacher Education

The secondary preservice teacher education program at our university has been framed by the faculty’s thoughts about the importance of our students’ prior schooling experiences and the possible concomitant beliefs and/or misconceptions about what it means to teach. Thus, our program and the curriculum have been constructed in an attempt to get at, and explore, those embedded beliefs structures that the preservice students bring with them.

Many of the classroom and fieldwork activities that our students are assigned attempt to bring to the surface often deeply rooted beliefs about teaching, students, and their subject-matter. As such, my classroom
teaching methods have relied heavily upon a Socratic method of exploring and questioning students. At some point during many of the preservice students’ experiences in my classes, some students usually express concern or frustration with the lack of specificity in my remarks about how to respond to a given teaching situation.

I have always been intrigued by Doyle’s (1983) work on academic tasks and as such have attempted to maintain high levels of ambiguity among preservice students, failing to provide prescriptive advice about how they should respond to situations. In classes, I address the established and evolving knowledge base in teacher education; yet, due to the complexities of classroom environments, I have been reluctant to provide "the" answers to hypothetical or observed classroom situations. Over the last few semesters, my advice and academic tasks have taken on a more prescriptive nature. Where previously, I might have had the preservice class explore various alternatives without offering a solution, now, with as many variables as possible being acknowledged, I offer more prescriptive advice. I am not certain whether this is an improvement in my teaching or a step backward. This is an issue I continue to ponder.

My co-researchers were highly educated, very intelligent people who seemed to me at times unwilling to unpack their own beliefs about research and who also seemed uncomfortable with ambiguity. I began to realize that if I couldn’t influence people like them, who are typically open to having their thinking challenged, why would I assume that neophyte, 20 year-old teacher education candidates would be willing and/or able to challenge their own beliefs. This conflict made me think differently about my ability to influence the prior beliefs of teacher education students.

I value the ambiguities and complexities inherent in our discussions in teacher education, but I now have more empathy toward students who are not engaged or who are confused by our class conversations. As a result of the project, I continually ask myself whether my aspirations and/or expectations of my students have shifted. Have they lowered? I don’t know, but I continue to reflectively press these questions.

I made another adjustment in classroom activities in the area of fieldwork observations and assignments. In brief, the preservice students are required to complete a set number of practica hours through observations and interactions with students in public schools. The preservice students are given a series of assignments by their field supervisors that are designed to assist them in learning about the schools, the teachers, the students, and the surrounding communities.

My classroom role is to assist the students with those understandings; yet, the preservice students’ responses to the activities are not given to me. Thus, much of the classroom conversation about the school sites is problematic due to the lack of a common contextual dialogue. As a result of the knowledge gained about the district and schools from the research project, I have a better contextual understanding of the students’ needs and have therefore structured my own series of focused observations for my students (i.e. paying specific attention to diverse learners, focus on managerial issues and desists, focus on teacher talk vs. student talk). These activities offer the students a common lens through which classroom conversations can be framed.

Finally, my involvement in the research project affected my interactions and intellectual work with graduate students. Again, the rich team meeting conversations and the observations in the local schools and of their faculties assisted me to understand the complexities of the schools and the needs of the graduate students, most of whom are in service teachers.

Our Story about Teaching and Teacher Education

As we examined our individual stories, we discovered that our teaching was similarly influenced. As we have talked about the project, we attributed this change in part to the discomfort we experienced in pushing our thinking as well as the thinking of our colleagues. At times any one of us seemed to need more clarity than we believed to be possible in such a complex qualitative study. In our past classroom teaching, both of us frequently asked our students to examine and reexamine their attitudes, values, and beliefs about
teaching; we don’t think we’ll ever do that again in quite the same way. We continue to believe the examination to be important, so we search for supportive ways to encourage our students to embrace the discomfort.

**Collegiality and Collaborative Research**

Obviously, in a collaborative research project, there are both direct and serendipitous influences on collegial relationships. Furthermore, projects of this nature stimulate our thinking about what it means to conduct educational research. As research partners, we engaged in frequent conversations about the study and its effects on our collegial relationships and research understandings.

**Rebecca’s Story about Collegiality and Research**

This study had significant impact on my collegial relationships with co-researchers. I had known Mary (all names, except the authors’, are pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity), for seven years; she worked as a student teaching supervisor when I coordinated the student teaching program. In her quest for a tenure track position at the university, we wrote together, discussed university politics, and become good friends. Joe also is a good friend; he and I share similar views on departmental politics and frequently discuss department and college business both during and after the work day. As the project began, Andrea and I knew each other less well; she was a quantitative researcher who described herself as reluctantly willing to learn about qualitative, and I looked forward to getting to know more about her.

Steve was the "new kid on the block.” He was in his first year at UNLV. He says that I told him about the study when he interviewed the previous spring; I don’t remember that, although I had been thinking about the study for quite a while.

I had not been mentored in my doctoral program for the realities of a faculty position that required yearly publication, and as a new faculty member, I had been forced to mentor myself about scholarly expectations until other new faculty were hired; then we did our best to mentor one another. In my first year, a faculty member in another department invited me to collaborate on an article, and I remain embarrassed when I think how unhelpful I must have been. Nonetheless, that collaboration resulted in my first publication. This was my opportunity to give something back. Mary already was published, and although Steve had been well educated and well mentored at the University of Arizona about research methodology as well as about expectations of tenure track faculty members, he had not yet published his first article.

I wanted very much to extend a welcoming and helpful hand to my new colleagues as well as to learn from and with the two other individuals for whom I held great respect. I wanted to learn more about myself; I wanted to test my ability to conceptualize and implement a complex study. I set it up as an important challenge for myself. Because of this I had high expectations of my colleagues and of myself. I felt considerable pressure to have ready answers to their questions and careful justification for my decisions. I often felt inadequate for the task and insecure of my ability to coordinate the study.

At times, Mary and Andrea, looked to me to help them understand, to affirm their contributions, and to instill confidence. I gained confidence from their looking to me in that way; it made me feel as if I did have something to teach them about qualitative methodology and/or about the research questions. Then something would happen and someone would ask a question, and I’d lose confidence again.

I wanted to do a good job with my own case, so I spent a day a week in observations and writing. But I also tried to be available to the others for conversations about their cases. These conversations, my reading, and team research meetings also were time consuming. This dual role of teacher-of-colleagues and self-as researcher created competing obligations.

**Steve’s Story about Collegiality and Research**
As the study began, it was my assumption that all of my colleagues would know a lot about qualitative research methods. I found myself somewhat surprised at the differing levels of understanding among the co-researchers. With the exception of Rebecca, it seemed to me that the rest of the research team had either a rudimentary or no understanding at all of qualitative research. As a result of the difficulties with communication that I described earlier and this unexpected surprise, my self-confidence waned. It seemed apparent then, and is evident in the team meeting transcripts, that Rebecca and I would be responsible for teaching and/or mentoring our colleagues about methodology, procedures, and interpretations. Furthermore, it seemed apparent that the responsibilities of maintaining the momentum of the project also fell upon our shoulders. At times we felt that we played almost a cheerleading role as we encouraged others.

These roles simultaneously increased my insecurities about my research skills due to my relative newness to the profession yet, curiously, offered me a boost in my confidence. That is, the more I articulated the procedural and interpretive issues involved in the research approach, the more authoritative my voice became.

The processes of the study and the concomitant discussions about methodological issues made me question or reflect on my perceived understandings of qualitative research. The project reinforced my belief that these methods never become static; that is, we never know all we need to know about them. Qualitative research is metamorphic and ongoing.

Finally, I became concerned about my understandings about the purposes of educational research. It sometimes seemed that the ultimate goal of the research project centered upon the number of publications and journals in which they might be published. Conversations of that nature during the project appeared to me to be counter-productive to completing the project. That is, I could not reconcile the tension I felt about doing the research for publication purposes only, as opposed to generating knowledge that would be beneficial to the education community at large. I’d always, perhaps naively, assumed that solid research would generate a product that needed to be shared in publications. Thus, I began to think of research for publication only as fast food quality research. In my personal notes and in transcriptions, the notion of the publish or perish mentality of academe was a concern; it remains one still.

Our Story about Collegiality and Research

Research team meetings provided opportunities to interact collegially. After the first couple of meetings, which were held at the university, the group met at individuals’ homes. Meetings typically lasted three to four hours, and the group usually ate a meal together. Rebecca generated an agenda for each research team meeting, and different individuals at different times worked at keeping the group focused on the agenda.

However, when we got together, we needed to talk, and we talked not only about the project. We were members of the same large department, so we talked about business, university gossip, and individual dilemmas. For Rebecca, who was the assistant chair of the department, meetings became an opportunity to share the business of the department or seek advice on a particular issue. For Steve, team meetings were opportunities to get further acquainted with new colleagues, witness the interaction among tenured faculty, and develop a tacit knowledge about the institution. For both of us they became important opportunities to socialize (see Wasser & Bresler, 1996).

In addition to informal opportunities to learn about one another, the two of us also learned as we talked with the other team members about methods and interpretations. We believe that we played off one-another in those conversations in ways that were effective for all of us. Steve’s formal schooling in qualitative research methods and Rebecca’s practical experience with those methods combined in ways that encouraged rich conversations and explorations about qualitative research methodology.

Our views about what it means to be "successful" in higher education have shifted, especially as they relate to the requirements for promotion, tenure, publications, and research agendas. Steve found himself both
encouraged and concerned about his ability to be successful in academe. Rebecca, as a tenured associate professor, was convinced that mentoring tenure-track colleagues means more than providing them with opportunities to participate in studies, co-author articles, and discuss teaching ideas. She continues to think about issues of quality as well as rewarding collaboration when making tenure and promotion decisions. This project heightened her commitment to raise this issue with her tenured colleagues.

From team conversations and subsequent probings, we gained deeper insights about the research methods we employed. The research team’s project revealed some of the practical concerns of teacher educators engaged in school-based research, and this self-study provided the opportunity to examine and address those concerns.

**Implications**

In considering the implications of this self-study, we thought about our own personal practical knowledge about collaborative research, collegial relationships, and teacher education. The following is a brief discussion of the implications that evolved.

**Research**

The process of "doing" qualitative research has implications for both novice and experienced researchers. It frequently raises multifaceted questions, and individuals engaged in qualitative methods are forced to consider procedures, interpretation, orientation, theory, framework, and product. Until individuals have engaged in research processes, it is difficult for them to ask meaningful questions and/or to clarify their thinking about what it means to conduct research. The tensions inherent in the "doing" are educative, and our experience in the original research project and in the self-study stimulated our thinking about these issues and influenced our work with doctoral students.

Because the original study involved more than the two researchers who later reflected on that study, issues of ownership arose. We struggled with the questions inherent in that issue: To whom does the original study belong? Can we share our learning in the absence of the others’ perspectives? How can we press our thinking to move beyond the process of bouncing around ideas and the murkiness of reflection on past activity?

As with other self-studies, these reflections raise questions about what might be, in fact, implications of a self study. Obviously, self-studies are not intended to be generalizable; however, this study and others must share the larger implications for teacher educators engaged in and guiding research projects.

**Collegiality**

In collaborative processes, it is likely that natural leaders and followers will emerge. Therefore, we caution individuals who conceptualize and organize collaborative research projects to prepare for the impact of group dynamics on both the project and the researchers. We found our research team meetings to be essential in the development of a shared sense of purpose, as well as in the accomplishment of diverse, dynamic, individual goals. Team meeting conversations, sometimes cathartic and other times frustrating, added to self-awareness as well as knowledge about others.

We also are convinced that collaborative research can greatly affect the individual relationships that are so important among colleagues in higher education. As relationships develop through the research process, they may ameliorate concerns about or provide support when faced with the demands inherent in academe. However, the struggles that are natural in a collaborative research project also can create difficulties among the researchers. It is necessary to build relationships, based on trust, that are sensitive to individual perspectives and concerns.
This type of research promotes an understanding of colleagues that is different than the understandings gained through curricular discussions, faculty meetings, and/or hallway conversations. Finally, collaborative researchers draw conclusions about one another that affect relationships, perceptions of self, and perceptions of colleagues. These conclusions, naturally, carry over into the broader work arena and have broad implications for individuals who work closely with one another.

Teaching

In addition to affecting collegial relationships, such collaborative processes and research methods can have powerful effects on teaching and mentoring of students. As we engaged in the research, we learned more about school contexts, middle level issues, and young adolescents. That knowledge enhanced our classroom conversations, instructional planning, and curriculum development. We also affirmed our beliefs about the importance of encouraging students to participate in research in order to gain understanding and experiential knowledge.

Further Study

Questions for further study include the following:

- How might self-studies of the sort described here inform the broader study of collaborative research endeavors?
- How can researchers engaged in collaborative research also study in a meaningful way the impact of collaborative research on their work as teacher educators?
- How might we, in a more broad-based manner, study the impact (both positive and negative) of collaborative research on researchers?
- What encourages and what impedes the process of reflection after research? Is self-study a useful vehicle for encouraging that reflection?
- What narrative style is most appropriate for sharing the results of a self-study? How can writers of self-study best address the concerns of reviewers who look for "substance rather than emotion" in reporting.

Conclusion

In conclusion, collaborative research provides great opportunity for learning about ourselves and colleagues. Through the process of talking and thinking about research data, thinking can be clarified, self-awareness can be sharpened, and collegial relationships can be strengthened. Through the process of reflecting on the experience of collaborative research, implications for collegiality naturally surface. These processes are not clean; they are not objective. They are, however, educative in several important ways.

References


