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Narratives of Learning from Co-editing, Writing and Presenting Stories of Experience in Self-study

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In this self-study, we look at the contribution made towards our professional learning through an aspect of teacher education work that is not commonly featured in the research literature: exploring the implications of our work as co-editors of an international collection about teacher educators' journeys of professional becoming. Through this self-study, we argue that this type of work is valuable to individuals and institutions in relation to its impact on the professional learning and career development of teacher educators. Adopting a narrative approach, we examined our experiences of co-editing the book and the associated activities such as conference presentations, to understand how this influenced our professional learning and identity as teacher educators. Findings include having a stronger sense of the evolution of our professional selves over time and greater insight and awareness of our strengths and uncertainties. A clearer perspective on our own career development and professional becoming was evident, and many parallels could be drawn between our experiences of professional becoming and those of the chapter authors in the edited book. We conclude that while activities such as book editing do not usually count in institutional metrics as outputs, they are nonetheless a significant opportunity for professional learning and make a contribution to knowledge and to teacher education practice, and should be recognised as such by institutions and colleagues.

Keywords: teacher educator professional learning; career development; trajectories; communities of practice

Narrativas de aprendizaje por medio de la co-edición, escritura y presentación de historias de experiencias en self-study

En este self-study abordamos la contribución hacia nuestro aprendizaje profesional de un aspecto del trabajo de la formación docente que no siempre es considerado en la investigación- la exploración de las implicancias de nuestro trabajo como co-editores de una colección internacional acerca de los recorridos de los formadores de profesores en su desarrollo profesional. Por medio de este self-study, proponemos que este tipo de trabajo es altamente valioso tanto para personas individuales como para sus instituciones en relación a su impacto en el aprendizaje y desarrollo profesional de los formadores de profesores. Adoptando un abordaje narrativo, los autores examinaron sus experiencias co-editando el libro, y las actividades asociadas, como presentaciones en conferencias, para comprender cómo éstas impactaron en su aprendizaje profesional e identidad como formadores. Los hallazgos incluyen un mayor sentido de la evolución de su "ser" profesional, y una mayor comprensión y consciencia de sus fortalezas e incertidumbres. Se evidenció una perspectiva más clara respecto al desarrollo de sus carreras profesionales, y se establecieron varios paralelos entre las experiencias de desarrollo profesional de los autores, y las de los autores de los capítulos en el libro. Los autores concluyen que, aunque las actividades como la edición de un libro no siempre cuentan como productos en la métrica de evaluación institucional, éstas son una oportunidad significativa para el aprendizaje profesional, y hacen una contribución al conocimiento y a la práctica de la formación docente, por lo que deberían ser reconocidas como tal por las instituciones y los colegas.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje profesional de formadores docentes; desarrollo profesional; trayectorias; comunidades de práctica

In this self-study, we consider the contribution made towards our professional learning through an aspect of teacher education work that is not commonly featured in the research literature: exploring the implications of our work as co-editors of an international collection about teacher educators' journeys of professional becoming (Williams & Hayler, 2016a). We believe that such work is less visible in the research literature because it counts less in the current climate of quantifiable research outputs and metrics. Through this self-study, we argue that this type of work is highly valuable to individuals and institutions in relation to its impact on the professional learning and career development of teacher educators. While there has been increasing self-study and other research on the professional learning and identity of teacher educators in recent years (Mayer, Mitchell, Santoro, & White, 2011; Williams, Ritter, & Bullock, 2012; Monroe, 2013; McAnulty & Cuenca, 2014), there has been little examination of teacher educators building a career in the academy, over time, and what this means for individuals and the profession. Some self-study scholars have explored their work as leaders and administrators (Clift, Loughran, Mills, & Craig, 2015), but there is less literature about the career development of teacher educators who are not in positions of high-level leadership.

The authors first met at the Seventh International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices at Herstmonceux Castle, UK, in 2008, when Mike attended Judy's presentation on making the transition from teacher to teacher educator. (Throughout this article we refer to this conference simply as the Castle conference.) Our subsequent conversations revealed career paths that shared many similarities, despite being based on opposite sides of the globe. Mike works in a teaching-focused university in the UK, where he holds the position of senior lecturer; Judy is a senior lecturer in a research-intensive university in Australia. We are both mid-career researchers and have worked in our respective universities for approximately 10 years, not having worked in any other university during our careers as teacher educators. We are both former primary school teachers and have long-standing connections to our universities through previous academic studies, including our Doctorates. From our meeting at the 2008 Castle conference there emerged a professional collaboration that has seen us visit each other's universities for data collection and seminar presentations. Most significantly, in 2014-2015 we initiated, organised and co-edited a collection of narrative accounts, by scholars working in a range of countries, of the professional becoming of teacher educators. We contributed two joint chapters to the book and presented at three international conferences in relation to this work. As we became more aware of the impact of this work on our professional sense of self, we undertook a collaborative self-study to examine in detail how the experience of co-editing a book about professional becoming contributed to our own professional learning and identity as teacher educators.

Theoretical Frame for the Self-Study: Trajectories of Learning and Identity

In order to explore aspects of change in our professional learning and identity that arose from our work as co-editors, we drew upon Wenger's (1998) notion of *trajectories*, within which he argued that trajectories of learning and identity facilitate the process of *constant becoming* within communities of practice. In developing the concept of situated learning from his earlier work with Lave (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Wenger (1998) offered a definition of a community of practice as a group that becomes in some ways coherent through mutual engagement in a sustained enterprise. While this notion of community of practice can be seen to shift considerably in Wenger's later work, where the focus moves towards communities of practice as managerial tools (e.g., Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Wenger, 2010), the 1998 definition serves us well as self-study researchers and as teacher educators framing our own experience of mutual engagement through the book-editing project. We see the profession of teacher education, and in particular the self-study Special Interest Group and other self-study researchers, as a significant community of practice in which we have both become participants over the past decade. Also, we became aware that a coherent community of practice emerged during the editing process and beyond, which included the publishers, authors, conference participants and ourselves, all engaged in pursuing a sustained enterprise—the production and dissemination of the book. While we acknowledge that

Wenger's work has been increasingly understood and critiqued as performative rather than analytic (Davenport & Hall, 2002; Contu & Willmott, 2000; Cox, 2004), our aim here is not to join this discussion nor to critique aspects of the concept itself, but to draw on Wenger's particular focus upon trajectories of learning and identity as an analytic tool of enquiry.

In his definition of community of practice, Wenger (1998) stressed the importance of trajectories of learning and identity through different *levels of participation*, and examined some of the tensions generated by multi-membership of different communities, which is seen as a key dilemma for the individual. As Blackmore (2010) argued, the use of trajectories as a temporal conceptual tool can help in understanding individual identity in relation to a community of practice and to the habits, history and behaviour of the group as a whole. The nature of boundaries between different communities of practice was also explored by Wenger, and this seems especially apposite in analysing the experience of becoming and being teacher educators. For us, the move from and between being school teachers and academics, authors and editors, and mentors and collaborators, involved the crossing of a number of such boundaries. As well as the practical requirements that each of these roles entails, each also carries symbolic value that encourages those who assume them to see themselves, at least to some extent, in a new way during the process. Wenger argued that as "we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going," (p. 149) we move through a succession of forms of participation. As we participate, "our identities form trajectories, both within and across communities of practice" (p. 154). These trajectories may be:

- peripheral (at the edge of the community, not fully a member but contributing to one's identity)
- inbound (joining the community with the intent of becoming a full participant)
- insider (full participation as practice and identity continue to evolve)
- boundary (brokering across the boundaries of several communities of practice)
- outbound (leaving a particular community and moving towards a new one).

Practice and identity are profoundly connected in parallel within this frame as participants negotiate and re-negotiate experience through participation with others and come to understand themselves in new and multiple ways. Wenger (1998) argued that this involves at least some attempt to reconcile the various forms of membership into one identity or nexus, where we reify (realise or make real) who we are. The identity that arises out of this "inter-play of participation and reification" (p. 153) is not an object or a place at the end of a journey but what Wenger describes as a *constant becoming*. It is neither a core nor an innate characteristic (although it may be informed by these), nor something we acquire at a certain point in our lives (although it will be more salient and have more prominence in focus at certain times), but rather "our identity is something we constantly renegotiate during the course of our lives" (p. 154). The trajectories are clearly not fixed paths, determinedly leading to certain destinations, but are best seen as forms of continuous motion connecting past, present and future. Peripheral trajectories, for example, may not lead to full participation (or membership), yet they can generate a momentum of their own, providing connections that inform identity. Similarly, becoming a full member of a community of practice brings change rather than termination to the inbound trajectory as it evolves to *the insider*, with new experiences opening up new perspectives on one's identity. While Wenger's suggestion that a nexus, where trajectories meet and identity can be reified, offers some response to the dilemmas of multi-membership, he maintains that the work of reconciliation is a necessary and on-going process, essential to maintaining some sort of coherent identity across boundaries.

Professional Learning and Identity Construction of Teacher Educators

While there has been increasing attention paid to the professional learning and identity development of teacher educators, with many researchers linking the work of teacher education to the on-going construction of their professional identities, the concept of professional identity itself is represented in a variety of ways in the literature. For example, Bullough (2005) suggested that identity refers to the many facets of self that people have, including both their core sense of self and of personal agency and their publicly-evident personas that are adopted and displayed in social contexts. As people interact in social situations, different personas are revealed and they adapt (or not) to the various social and cultural norms that they encounter. Pinnegar (2005) argued that the notion of a professional identity is not fixed, but is evolving as we assume different roles and responsibilities in our work. As we take on various roles that

become available to us, "we respond to the space available by accepting, rejecting, or negotiating that role through the way we position ourselves in the space, or shape the space to reflect our identity" (p. 260).

Professional identity, however, does not just develop early in one's career. Construction of a professional identity is a career-long process and is influenced by a range of personal, professional and social experiences, as evident from many self-studies of teacher education practice. Researchers have presented a range of ways in which professional identities develop in relation to self and others, institutional roles and responsibilities, and collaboration. Erickson, Young, and Pinnegar (2011) presented a conception of teacher educator identity as "both *being a teacher educator* and *doing teacher education"* (p. 105, emphasis in original). Murphy and Pinnegar (2011) agreed that "experience is fundamental in identity development" (p. 131) and that "identity is shaped through reflection in relationship with our past, present, and future, as well as with other teacher educators and in-service and pre-service teachers" (p. 132). McNeil (2011) stated that "the self is an ongoing construction produced by, among, with, and through interaction with others through language and within material contexts" (p. 133). Others agree that the nature of identity construction is essentially a social process mediated by personal history (Young & Erikson, 2011) and the various roles and responsibilities that one assumes (Clift, 2011). Such a process often involves professional learning, identity construction and career development through educational administration and leadership (Clift, Loughran, Mills, & Craig, 2015; Mills, Loughran, & Clift, 2012) where new, quite different, roles are assumed. Clift (2011) examined the (re)shaping of her sense of self as scholar, teacher educator and college administrator by drawing upon role theory (Biddle, 1979) and the conceptions of habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1972/2002), in order to demonstrate the ways in which prior practice in one role influences and shapes perspectives and approaches to new professional roles. Garbett (2013) outlined her challenges in seeking promotion based upon teaching rather than research and administration, and the associated struggles encountered in order to advance her career while maintaining her core values and beliefs. She concluded that teacher educators need to be resilient crusaders if they want the aspects of their work that they value, but which are often less-valued in academia, to be recognised for the good that they bring. In Garbett's case, this work was teaching; in our case, the work we came to value was editing.

Research Design

The aim of this self-study is to explore how co-editing a book about teacher educator professional becoming, and the associated collaboration, writing, presenting and self-study, contributed to our professional learning and the on-going construction of our teacher educator identities, that is, our own professional becoming. The research question was: *How did co-editing a self-study collection about teacher educator professional becoming contribute to our own professional becoming as teacher educators?*

Methodology

For this self-study, we used a personal-history, narrative inquiry method to explore our professional learning. We identified narrative to be the method of inquiry that had the potential to capture the nature of identity that we wanted to explore. Bruner (1986) argued that narrative is the form of knowledge that is most appropriate for the understanding of human interaction. Samaras (2011) stated that personal history method "is particularly useful to examine who you are as a teacher [educator], your teacher [educator] identity, the motivations behind your teacher [educator] goals and the constraints and supports you have experienced in reaching those goals" (p. 95). The study took place in three phases. Phase one was undertaken from the time we began working with the authors in the drafting of their chapters (early 2015) to the presentation of a paper at the Castle conference in August, 2016. Phase two began after the conference, in response to feedback from the session's participants and to our own desire to build on the initial findings. Phase three involved each of us constructing a final narrative about our learning from the complete process of co-editing the book, including conference presentations and self-study data collection.

Data collection

We initially drew upon two sources of data. First, the chapters from the book, including our own co-written final chapter, were examined to see what connections existed between the chapter authors'

experiences of becoming teacher educators and our own experiences. In the final chapter of the book, we wrote about key themes that emerged from the writing of the 12 authors and we made connections to our own experiences as teacher educators in a dialogic way (Williams & Hayler, 2016c). These data provided the initial links between the authors' experiences and our own. For the second source of data, we constructed a series of personal history narratives during each phase of the study to explore our professional learning at a deeper level. The first narrative was written towards the end of the book-editing process (phase one), and the second was written after the book had been published and we had presented our findings and received feedback at the Castle conference. The narratives were constructed as reflections on key experiences of entering and working within teacher education, including within the international self-study community, which the process of co-editing the book and related activities had triggered. The narratives were dialogic in nature, in that they became conversational through our analytic discussion. In this way, the process of data analysis and written critical feedback on each other's narratives provided further data in the form of extended narratives (approximately 3000 words each). A third and final phase of data collection was effectively generated through final narratives (approximately 2000 words each) that we wrote following analysis of the existing data to capture our individual reflections on our professional learning through the process, in an attempt to answer our research question.

Data analysis

First, we each examined our joint concluding chapter in the book for key ideas about the authors' professional learning that resonated with us in terms of our own experiences. These were noted and discussed via email and Skype. We nominated several ideas that were common among the authors and in our own experiences. We then analysed our narratives and looked for significant moments in our professional learning and identity construction during phase one. We tentatively identified in our own and each other's work what might be examples of trajectories of learning and identity (Wenger, 1998). We also noted any other significant ideas that were evident. Analysis of each narrative involved three levels. We shared our initial narratives with each other and annotated each other's narrative with comments, questions, and provocations to elicit greater depth of thinking about the content. The narrative was then returned to the author, who added more comments and text to the narrative in response to the feedback. We then each undertook a final examination of our own narrative as a third level of analysis. This became the basis for our 2016 conference paper (Williams & Hayler, 2016b). After the Castle conference presentation we began phase two of the study, in which the same process of data analysis was followed. Our intention was to consider each of the narratives as what Goodson (2013) has called "a story of action within a theory of context" (p. 31). Our email and Skype conversations and comments on the data were used to further develop an understanding of how our professional identity as teacher educators are both formed and represented by our narratives of experience, and how this aligned with ideas presented by the authors in the book. Critically, the individual stories of experience needed to be culturally located to avoid de-contextualisation and individualisation in this analysis.

After the second phase of the study, and multiple analyses of the data, we each constructed a final narrative for phase three in which we attempted to answer the research question and to identify the findings of the study. We did this individually, so that rather than identifying common themes across the data (as we did after phase one and two), we identified the key findings about our own individual journeys of becoming. In this final narrative, we made explicit links to the ideas in the book and to Wenger's (1998) idea of trajectories. We recognised that, even though we collaborated on the same editing project, as individuals we would react and respond in our own ways, hence the decision to identify our own findings. These are presented and discussed in the next section, where narrative is used to present findings from analysis of the data (Polkinghorne, 1988; Pachler, Cook, & Bradley, 2009). As Pachler et al. (2009) stated, such narrative presentation is an "iterative and inductive approach in which the 'story' is allowed to emerge through systematic analysis and categorisation of available data in discussion with other researchers" (p. 81). It is acknowledged that such compromises lead to limitations, but as Schostak (2006) noted, all methods ultimately form "data into a shape that fits" (p. 141). Using an explanatory narrative analysis enabled us to keep the integrity of the data intact rather than generate the further abstraction of themes across all the data (Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995; Chase, 2005; Goodson, 2013).

Findings and Discussion

Here we present our individual findings as personal narratives of our own professional learning. The sub-headings refer to the key ideas that we identified after multiple examinations of the data.

Mike's Narrative of Professional Learning.

As a teacher educator and researcher who engages in and through narrative methods, and in accordance with Murphy and Pinnegar's (2011) understanding of the role of experience and reflection in developing identity, I will identify and analyse some of the data from this self-study that led me to know what I know about myself and the story of myself as a teacher educator. I can see much of that story in the narrative data and dialogue that Judy and I collected together between early 2015 and the end of 2016. Wenger's (1998) concept of trajectories within communities of practice provided a useful framework for beginning to understand how our work in co-editing, contributing to and presenting the book of teacher educators' stories of becoming influenced our own journeys of becoming. The interactions and decision-making with authors, with each other, and with the publisher were both driven by, and contributed towards, our changing perception of how we saw ourselves and our work. The inbound trajectory (in Wenger's terms) from the periphery towards becoming a full member of the community of practice, as I understood it, was further highlighted by the content and quality of the book itself, which was all about identity and how the authors understood the narratives of their own professional becoming. I identified two strong themes in the data, through the symbolism and significance of the events that were described and discussed in the construction and analysis of our own stories of experience.

Constant Becoming

The theme of constant becoming is central throughout the edited book and was also most prominent in the first phase of our narrative data. Early in the study, I wrote of seeing myself in a new way while reflecting upon my responses and reactions to a number of events that seemed to signify my trajectory towards a sort of insider position within my profession and the self-study community of practice: being the lead external examiner for a PhD viva, presenting at meetings of the American Educational Research Association, and completing the process of editing the book with Judy. These were all turning-point moments (Bullock & Ritter, 2011), new events for me that occurred in the first half of that year. While my narrative indicated some surprise that I should find myself at the centre of these events, it also signalled that I realised, again with some surprise, *that I was indeed the right person for the job.* While I knew this in a practical kind of way, writing of walking in London after the viva and remembering visits to the city throughout my life led me to be "struck by the feeling as much as the thought, that I had become a person who takes a leading role in the awarding of a doctorate." I saw this through Wenger's (1998) framework as a significant step from the academic periphery towards the centre of things, in becoming more of an insider. In our online dialogue, Judy asked if this connected closely with the work of editing the book. This made me recognise that it was indeed part of the same process, and that leading the viva carried some of the same professional characteristics and symbolism of co-editing the book. I wrote that "co-editing the book might be a further example of how colleagues [the authors] trust me to do a good job, but I see it more as an example of how I trust myself to do that job [co-editing]." Each of the authors in the book had identified the power of collaboration in their professional becoming, and the recognition of new roles emerging, as Bullock (2016) put it, in coming to "understand my pedagogy, my identity and/or my professional knowledge differently" (p. 29).

My confidence in trusting myself to do a good job seemed high in this narrative; in England it was the end of the academic year, which had gone well for me. The book was about to be published as Judy and I prepared a proposal for the Castle conference of 2016. However, when I looked back and reflected on this in my second narrative, I noted that "my own rather self-congratulatory remarks about the viva in London and the symposium in Chicago [in the earlier narrative] seem a little overly-optimistic in some ways." This suggests the temporal nature of identity as discussed by Wenger (1998). Perhaps it is also an example of the double-edged nature of reflection, which sometimes seems to have the potential to paradoxically undermine as well as strengthen self-confidence, almost simultaneously. A sense of disorientation had been a central aspect of the teacher educators' stories throughout the book. For

example, reflexivity did not remove uncertainty for Loveless (2016) or Brubaker (2016), and yet it played a central role in helping them to move forward as they faced the various tests that Bullough wrote about in the foreword to the book (2016, p. ix).

Inbound/Outbound

While the theme of constant becoming had not disappeared, I seemed to be feeling less of an insider in my narrative of September 2016. While elements of self-doubt emerged for me, this appeared less as a loss of confidence than as a choice on my part, where reflection on the narrative itself engaged with the influence of personal biography (Williams, Ritter, & Bullock, 2012) that goes back much further in my own story and was not (directly) part of the data for this self-study. The second phase of data may be less positive than the first narrative in some ways but the anxiety of old was not there. Looking at the text, it seems that I was *choosing* not to see myself as what Wenger calls an "old timer" or a full-member of S-STEP. Judy and I recognised this in our dialogue, where we both considered whether some people are always to some degree outsiders, even when they think they want to be insiders. We both recognised that our own lives and background play a part in this, but it made me wonder if teacher education itself is a profession of outsiders to some extent. In England, teacher education sits on the periphery of university education, caught between the academic and the vocational. It is also on the outside of school-based education, made up mainly of staff who have left one professional sector (education in schools) but never fully arrived at the centre of a new one (Higher Education in universities). This led me to question the notion of a community of practice to some extent, and to realise that one reason that I am attracted to S-STEP and its methods is the diverse nature of the self-study group itself, which has been described respectfully and affectionately on at least one occasion as a "group of oddballs" (Senese, 2016, p. 139). There are common interests and ideas within the group, as illustrated in the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the book, but no manifesto or set of rules. The diversity reflects the increasingly diverse character of teacher education internationally as well as the diversity of perspectives on how the education of teachers should be researched, represented and developed. My analysis of the narratives revealed that, having found a place to be, I continue to (re)position myself in relation to that community of learners (Pinnegar, 2005). This kind of questioning or holding pattern can be seen within many of the narratives shared by the authors we worked with: Fuentealba and Montenegro (2016) emphasise the need to seek differences as well as commonalities in the on-going process of becoming a teacher educator, while Ovens recognises the central aspect of "a constantly changing personal and professional context" in the development of teacher education pedagogy that requires and provides "multiple spaces and communities to promote reflexive engagement with ideas in a way that challenges prior experiences and assumptions" (Ovens, 2016, p.133). It would appear that none of us would want to be *too* comfortable within our community of self-study.

I looked for further evidence of this in both sets of narratives and noted how I wrote of not wanting my head of school to be at the Castle conference: "The thought . . . would send me running for the hills and even having good friends who are colleagues there would put a different slant on things for me." This indicates that I see, and seemingly want to see, the S-STEP community as distinct from my day job, although it informs my work in so many ways. I also wrote about not getting promotion and acknowledged that the "lack of recognition has welled up like a stain" by September 2016, but it had taken years and much persuasion from friends and family before I had the confidence, or perhaps courage, to apply in the first place. A recent job interview at another university brought me face to face with at least one answer to the "So what?" question about self-study in teacher education. I was able to make a decision and recognise clearly that I should walk away from the interview as soon as politely possible: it was clear to me that there was a certain amount of tension among the interviewers, with their different levels and areas of responsibility (Dean, Head of Department, Head of Research, Head of Teacher Training), concerning resources and the role in question. I was unable to imagine myself negotiating the various challenges of managing the position with any sense of satisfaction or enjoyment, which I recognised as key elements for me. The job had its attractions, and while many would relish such a role, it was not for me. My knowledge of the teacher education environment and the ways in which schools and

departments of education work, gained from both experience and study, informed this decision, but it was the knowledge of myself as a professional teacher educator and academic that allowed me to see clearly the mismatch between what was on offer and the person who was being interviewed. This was informed by self-knowledge rather than a more familiar lack of confidence. I do not think self-knowledge like this comes naturally; it requires self-study. Both my work with Judy and the authors of the book and the collaborative reflection upon our own narratives have played a central role in gaining this awareness.

My first narrative took me one way in seeing myself as becoming a successful academic, a "member of the club," while the second narrative saw me choosing to move the other way. Is this a fear of rejection or a reluctance to take responsibility, to stand up and be counted while I utilise the connections and benefits of contact with scholars whom I admire and enjoy working with? Perhaps there is always a tension between the need and desire to belong and to be accepted, and the fear of being found out. More positively, the feeling of not belonging can be seen as critical reflexivity in keeping a sense of myself as an individual and independent thinker (Bullough, 2005). Perhaps the critical reflection I have attempted to engage with through narrative inquiry inevitably moves me in a number of directions (trajectories) and eventually takes me back towards the periphery, where at least part of me feels that I belong.

Judy's Narrative of Professional Learning

The process of co-editing the book and the related activities, and undertaking this self-study, has provided me with the opportunity to analyse my professional journey and to understand how I have become who and where I am today. What have I learned from the chapter authors, the collaboration with colleagues, especially my co-editor Mike, the conference presentations, working with the publisher, and recording my thoughts in this self-study? When I look at my narratives and the collaborative analysis with Mike, I see two strong elements that characterise my learning from this process, ideas that no doubt have contributed to my professional journey as a teacher educator: experiences of uncertainty and affirmation, and a clearer sense of my career as a teacher educator.

Uncertainty and Affirmation

Throughout my data there are frequent references to varying degrees of uncertainty in taking on new work and about my ability to successfully undertake the associated tasks. Like Mike, this lack of confidence appears in many aspects of my work, and I have learned to live with this rather than overcome or succumb to it. Editing the book was no exception. However, each time I expressed anxiety or vulnerability in the context of co-editing the book, it was followed by an event, encounter or comment that affirmed that my concerns might be misplaced and that I did indeed make a contribution to the self-study community and to knowledge about teacher education. Like Berry and Forgasz (2016) in the book, I sometimes feel that I am trespassing into spaces where I do not belong, or that I am not up to the task at hand. Early on in the editing process I wrote that "I was a little apprehensive about my ability to successfully undertake this task because I had not done anything like it before." In these initial stages, I even wrote "Who am I to take on such a big task, and to provide feedback to much more experienced scholars than I am?" When I recalled my initial meeting with some of the authors at my first Castle conference in 2008, I wrote the following:

> I remember in my first presentation, being a bit in awe of those who attended, especially one person, who I had quoted in my paper, and who was now sitting next to me, engaging in a conversation about the ideas in the paper. As it turned out, we became colleagues and collaborators, undertaking joint research, writing together…. Other people at that conference, and subsequent conferences, whom I was somewhat overawed by, have become colleagues and collaborators too, in the form of authors in the book and co-presenters at conferences.

The importance of participation in the Castle conference was also mentioned by some of the authors in the book (Russell, 2016; Senese, 2016), and this highlighted that I was not alone in believing that this experience was affirmation that I had a place in teacher education and was central to my trajectory into and within the self-study community.

The data also suggested that, although I was somewhat daunted in taking on the role of co-editing, it was an opportunity to develop existing skills and to learn new ones, in collaboration with others. I wrote that "I think [mentoring] is something I do well – it has been mentioned to me several times. Maybe the

book project helped me to further develop skills that I already use in other aspects of my work … and to see this more clearly." As Erikson et al. (2011) stated, "Teacher educator identity…develops as [teacher educators] negotiate the obligations, duties, and responsibilities [of their work]. Interestingly, as they enact the *being* and *doing* of these obligations, duties, and responsibilities, tensions multiply" (p. 106, emphasis in original). While doing the work of co-editing and related activities, the data showed that I was gaining a stronger sense of myself as a teacher educator, but I was also grappling with the tensions and uncertainties that emerged. When I shared this concern with Mike, he helped me to see this tendency in a new light—an opportunity to analyse why the doubt might exist and to learn from it. He wrote that "perhaps it is time to see this as a strength rather than a weakness or problem. Maybe self-doubt can be reframed as self-awareness and an ability to maintain perspective and to identify ways to grow—changing a negative into a positive." The power of collaborative reflection that emerged from this self-study, and the gentle nudges that encouraged me to look more deeply (or broadly) than I might have otherwise, illustrated Murphy and Pinnegar's (2011) point that reflection works in connection with our past, our present, and our future lives, and in connection with our teacher educator colleagues. Most of the chapters in the book had emphasised the importance of collaboration and professional relationships and of taking risks in unchartered territory in the journey of becoming a teacher educator. These themes resonated strongly with me, and in the final chapter of the book I wrote about these as central to my professional learning from editing the collection (Williams & Hayler, 2016c). For example, I highlighted the importance of learning from mistakes and perceived failures and from persisting in the face of uncertainty or setbacks, just as many of the chapter authors had done. I also pointed out the importance that the authors had placed on collegiality and professional relationships and networks, a theme that was also recurrent in our data for this self-study. Co-editing the book had clearly become another important part of my trajectory, or journey of becoming, within the teacher education community. Being supported by self-study colleagues at my university, who initially encouraged me to consider self-study as a way to make sense of my experiences of transitioning from teacher to teacher educator, was the reason that I attended that 2008 Castle conference. The collegial support and encouragement that I received at the very beginning of my career as a teacher educator have shown me the power of collaboration and mentoring, something that I now believe characterises my work in relation to others, especially early-career researchers. As the book chapters and self-study data revealed, affirmation and belief is a necessary ingredient in helping oneself and others to overcome the inevitable uncertainties that are part and parcel of a career as a teacher educator.

Emerging Perspectives on my Work and Career as a Teacher Educator

When I now think of my professional journey as a teacher educator, I see the work of co-editing and the subsequent self-study as important projects that have helped me to reflect more deeply on my career to this point. The dialogic and collaborative nature of co-editing and presenting, and of the self-study, gave me insights into how I respond and react to situations, and what I value and want to pursue in my academic career. Throughout my data there are references to new or unfolding perspectives on my work and on my place within the S-STEP and teacher education communities. Wenger's (1998) notion of trajectories was a useful frame with which to view my progression into and within the self-study community and to see that it is not about a smooth straight-forward progression but, rather, a collection of advances, side-steps, circles, accomplishments and new beginnings—the ebb and flow of our working lives. The metaphor of a long and winding road was used in the book to great effect by Elliott-Johns, (2016) and by others who presented their careers as teacher educators as less than straightforward journeys. Loveless portrayed her career as a form of "way-finding" (2016, p. 61), while Kitchen looked "inward, outward and backward" to make sense of his professional becoming (2016, p. 168). The metaphors of travel/journey/navigation had a great impact on me while I was reading the manuscripts and discussing them with Mike, and I came to appreciate that, like others, my career is about being open to new ideas and experiences, such as co-editing the book, participating in a range of activities and contexts, taking some calculated risks, and learning from participation and experience (Erikson et al., 2011). It is about learning by doing and identifying the thread that holds it all together. For me, this is teaching and research about the professional learning of teachers and teacher educators and about developing my

interest in, and understanding of, narrative inquiry as a way in which to learn about teachers and teaching. I noted in the data that undertaking the co-editing role helped me to

> make sense of my work in academia and as a teacher educator; [it is about] making connections, building relationships, overcoming fears, learning from mistakes, developing my pedagogy of teacher education, building a research track and profile, and gaining a greater sense of who I am. These were all strong themes in the book, and as I read them, I constantly thought back to my own experiences, many of which mirrored those of the chapter authors.

During this project, I also found myself doing things as a co-editor that, when I was a newcomer to teacher education, I would have looked at and thought "that is what other people do, not me." I wrote in my phase two narrative that

> people whose work I read early in my career are now colleagues and collaborators—this is perhaps one of the greatest opportunities provided by co-editing this book. It has allowed me to start to see myself differently. Moving along that trajectory of constant becoming to being someone who can now mentor others, and hopefully they can benefit from whatever wisdom I can offer – just like the contributors to the book were asked to do [in their chapters]…Maybe this process has given me the chance to reflect on the same questions [posed to them]…How (and what) do I contribute? How can I continue to grow and develop, and make a contribution and make a difference?

The co-editing process, including conversations with Mike, enabled me to see a bigger picture of how I have progressed, and hopefully will continue to progress, in my career as a teacher educator. The data collected over a period of two years show a gradual unfolding of a clearer sense of self in terms of my learning and career path, the inevitable twists and turns, and despite the uncertainties, pride in my place within the wider academic community. In my phase two narrative, I considered what the future might hold:

> While a good deal of our conversations have been about looking back on our work, this self-study and collaboration have also encouraged me to look forward and to begin thinking about the next stage of my career – where to from here? My learning has helped me to think about what else I could achieve and how I might achieve it. These thoughts would probably have eventuated anyway, but by gaining a clearer perspective on my career up to now helps me to see the "thread" or narrative that will help me to take the next steps.

Just as several authors of the book had commented that the process of writing their chapters had given them much-needed perspective on their journey and work as teacher educators, the process of co-editing, writing and presenting these journeys of becoming gave me insights into my own career trajectory—past, present and future.

Concluding Thoughts

Although we wrote our final narratives of learning independently and did not read each other's work until our own narrative was completed, it is important to note strong parallels in our journeys of becoming teacher educators. It is clear from the data that becoming and developing an identity as a teacher educator is an ever-evolving process in response to changing roles and responsibilities, relationships, reactions and responses. It is not a linear trajectory from one point to the next, but a combination of multiple pathways that, despite setbacks, each lead to new understandings, knowledge and skills. It is also something that is not restricted to new members of the profession but is a process that spans all phases of a career. Much is written about the transition from teacher to teacher educator, and about the process of becoming a teacher educator. However, it is easy to assume that this only happens in the early stages of a career. Findings from this study and from the chapters in the edited book show how the process of becoming a teacher educator continues over time, at all stages of a career and in response to circumstances, opportunities and experiences. The value of collaboration, collegial support, self-study and taking risks, as exemplified in the co-editing process, appear to be hallmarks of a career in teacher education, no matter how long you have been working in this field. *It is through and from experience that we learn.* To be transformative, the experience must be examined and analysed closely, with uncertainties and dispositions laid bare.

This self-study has helped us to unpack our learning from the co-editing experience and to illuminate the potential for professional learning in an undervalued activity of academia. In our respective

institutional contexts, editing a book does not count as research, and book chapters and conference papers are less valued than peer-reviewed journal articles in terms of output and impact. While we understand why this may be so, our experiences show that undertaking less-valued activities can open up unexpected learning opportunities far beyond the immediate work involved. We believe that teacher educators need to identify and champion the aspects of their work that they value, even if others do not. Beginning and more experienced teacher educators need to balance the requirements of their institutions regarding research outputs with their personal beliefs and values about what work is important to them and for teacher education. These contributions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but where limited time has to be allocated to a diverse range of tasks, the road less travelled could turn out to be one of the most rewarding and fulfilling journeys to take. Editing a collection may not count in institutional metrics, but for us, it counts as one of the most significant learning experiences of our careers.

Our narratives revealed a shared disposition to be tentative and uncertain in taking on new roles, but they also demonstrated how we, and other teacher educators, need to embrace unexpected opportunities in order to continue the professional learning journey. This self-study has helped us to gain greater self-awareness and to unpack why we might be tentative in assuming new roles and responsibilities. Our hesitation may in fact be a conscious or sub-conscious choice, positioning us where we want or do not want to be. This was illustrated when Mike was considering a move to another university and was able to draw upon awareness of context and self in making a decision to withdraw. It was also clear from the narratives that our sense of achievement and success ebbed and flowed over time, and that new-found confidence in our work can be fragile. Rather than falling victim to these ups and downs, we now see that they are part of our learning trajectory and are therefore to be recognised, managed and analysed to help us navigate new stages of our careers. Schön (1971) argued that all real change and learning involves feelings of "being at sea, of being lost, of confronting more information than you can handle" (p. 12). Our self-study has not brought us to the certainty of dry land but we have found some sea legs in the process of collaborative narrative inquiry. These experiences mirror many of those described by authors in the book and we hope they are instructive for others in the profession. We believe that teacher educators should be encouraged to collaborate in a range of activities in developing their work and in strengthening the profession as a whole, whether or not they are officially sanctioned as outputs that count. As Judy wrote in her data, "we don't become teacher educators on our own."

The self-awareness gained from undertaking this self-study has provided valuable insights into how and why we respond or react to particular circumstances and has led us to recognise and accept a degree of self-doubt as necessary to *who we are.* This tendency will not prevent us from taking on new challenges and opportunities as they arise. In fact, we have just embarked on another journey as co-authors of a book about teacher education, an output that will count in our respective institutions' metrics but that would probably never have developed if we had not undertaken the task of co-editing the book of narratives. Narrative inquiry and self-study have both provided a lens to help us see ourselves more clearly, as a mix of skills and qualities, both personal and professional, that are there to be developed, nurtured, recognised and challenged. In collaboration, we have found that identity includes our core sense of self and personal agency, as we identify and accept that, while we might be limited by our hesitations, we also have personal agency in understanding, accepting or rejecting career opportunities as they arise, in relation to our interests, beliefs and values. We hope that other teacher educators are also inspired to see challenges that they encounter in their work as opportunities to further develop their identity and careers as teacher educators.

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