

# Inquiring About Practice: Using web-based materials to develop teacher inquiry

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This paper explores a new pedagogical approach to teaching teachers to assume a learning or inquiry stance in their practice. It is based on an assumption that professional learning is a core capability of good teaching that is responsive to the changing needs of children, schools, and communities. One source of teacher learning is practice—one's own practice and the practice of others. Whereas there is much written about teachers learning from their own practice, there is scant attention in the field currently about learning from the practice of others. What do we mean by learning from the practice of others? Beyond visiting their classrooms, how might teachers access the practice of others so that they can learn from it? How does learning work proceed? This paper grapples with these questions as a frame for discussing one teacher education attempt at preparing teachers to learn from the practice of others. It begins by making a case for learning as a centerpiece of good teaching, and then proceeds to describe one example of how the inquiry practice of experienced teachers was used to teach teacher inquiry to a group of novice teachers in California.

## Introduction

The highest form of morality is not to feel at home in one's own home. (Theodore Adorno)

I was reminded recently of this quote by Theodore Adorno that I first read in college more than three decades ago. This time I found Adorno quoted by Azar Nafisi in her book *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, which is about her teaching under the increasingly repressive conditions of life in Iran during the late 1970s and 1980s. Nafisi used the quote to initiate a conversation in her American Literature class at the University of Tehran about the role of fiction in opening the reader's imagination and in questioning

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the “taken for granted.” She said “I explained that most great works of the imagination were meant to make you feel like a stranger in your own home” (Nafisi, 2003, p. 94).

This notion of being a stranger in one’s own home caught my attention as a metaphor for a central goal, and a persistent dilemma, of mine in my work as a teacher of teachers in California in 2005. My goal is to prepare my student teachers to be learners in their teaching practice. In some ways this requires them to cast themselves as strangers in the familiar context of school. My dilemma is how to accomplish that goal given the powerful “apprenticeship of observation” Lortie (1975) spoke of generations ago, which, combined with the current push to standardize teaching across contexts, generates a feeling, even in novice teachers, that they already know much of what there is to know about the work. The result is little motivation for learning new approaches, challenging the status quo, or pushing the boundaries of what teachers can do within the parameters of the familiar public school classroom.

One way to be a learner as a teacher is to approach schools as if one is a stranger to them, to ask questions of what exists in the school setting and not take as “given” the routines and regularities we typically find there. For my student teachers these regularities are important touchstones in what feels like a rapid-fire world where the newness of their responsibilities as teachers feels challenging enough. How to draw on the predictable aspects of schooling while at the same time learning to question them is the challenge I face in teaching students to assume a learning stance towards their work. I want my students to learn to approach schools as if they were strangers of sorts. I want them to ask questions of what they see and not take as given things as they are. I want them to become learners of teaching who can grow and change and imagine schools to be “otherwise,” as John Dewey and Maxine Greene and others have pushed us to do. Learning to “imagine it otherwise” is about learning in general; to question things as they are in pursuit of making them better is a stance that places learning at the core of teachers’ work.

Adorno reminded us that allowing oneself to be a stranger in one’s own home is a moral stance in that it opens the door for change. This point of view challenges teachers to interrogate what they do and why. They must look at the consequences of their actions for the purpose of strengthening practices that lead towards ends they want and changing those practices that do not. As teachers commit to learning and change, schools too will change to better meet the needs of the students they serve. This paper is about preparing teachers to approach teaching with an inquiry stance by studying the inquiry-based practice of teachers like themselves.

### **Teacher Learning and Reform: The background**

Over the past two decades we have experienced numerous approaches to educational reform in the USA. Whereas these various efforts focus on different aspects of the processes and structures surrounding teaching and learning, central to all of them is the teacher—what he or she knows and is able to do. In part, what teachers know and are able to do is aligned with their capacity to learn. Teacher learning is a

core feature of both effective practice and educational change (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fullan, 1993; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Sarason, 1996). But learning in teaching, and learning to learn as a teacher are not processes we can take for granted in our profession (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, Wells, 2000). Most schools are not structured to support teacher learning and many teachers have not had the opportunity to learn the skills of learning in and from practice at any point in their teaching careers (Fullan, 1993; Sarason, 1993, 1996).

Recently I asked a group of my M.A. students about whether or not they thought they could continue to investigate their teaching as we had been practicing in my class. Whereas all of the students said they hoped they could continue with their inquiry work, many (more than half) indicated skepticism as to whether or not they would be able to given the politics of the districts in which they worked and the consequent pressures facing them each day. One student, a third year teacher studying for her M.A. degree, expressed the feelings of many:

I would like to think that it will be possible for me to continue this inquiry stance, but I honestly don't know. I'm depressed/disillusioned/disheartened with all the politics and other stuff happening at my school. The current climate and environment is not conducive to an inquiry stance. I don't know if I can maintain it.

To build a teaching practice that has learning as a core feature teachers must have opportunities to build knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will support them in their learning efforts (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Lampert, 2001; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wilson & Berne, 1999). They must also be in contexts that will allow them to use these capabilities to learn and improve their practice in an ongoing way.

One place to begin the work of building a learning practice in teaching is in teacher education. This case describes one teacher education effort to teach teachers the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with assuming a learning or inquiry stance. It rests on the coupled assumptions that: (1) in teacher education we can lay the groundwork for teacher learning in and from practice; (2) developing a teacher education pedagogy for doing so is an important challenge to our field.

### **Learning to Learn in Teaching**

In their article on teacher learning Ball and Cohen (1999) framed the challenge of learning in teaching as one of learning from practice. They were clear to point out, however, that this practice need not be one's own practice, although certainly learning from one's own practice is a centerpiece of good teaching and one that is at the heart of many long-term collaborative teacher/learning projects around the country (the North Dakota Study Group, the Teacher Learning Collaborative in Philadelphia, the Brookline Teacher Collaborative, the National Writing Project, and others). Ball and Cohen's work suggested that in addition to learning from one's own practice, teachers can also learn from the practice of others. They explained:

Centering professional education in practice is not a statement about either a physical locale or some stereotypical professional work. Rather, it is a statement about a *terrain of*

*action and analysis* that is defined first by identifying the central activities of teaching practice, and second, by selecting or creating materials that usefully depict that work and could be selected, represented, or otherwise modified to create opportunities for more novice and experienced teachers to learn. (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 13, emphasis added)

Ball and Cohen's conception of learning from the practice of others intrigues me in that it suggests new possibilities for my teaching. I have been struggling for years with developing an effective methodology for teaching my second year graduate students, all of whom are practicing teachers, how to approach their work with an inquiry stance. Over the years I have seen them struggle to imagine what an inquiry stance would look like in the high-pressured, complex, urban settings where they teach. Most do not see examples of teacher inquiry at their schools; in fact their school contexts are anything but helpful when it comes to providing the resources they would need to assume an inquiry stance, as the quote above suggests. They have little or no school or support time for talking with colleagues and little time for thinking on their own. Many are required to teach with scripted curricula and all are pressured to orient their curricula towards high student performance on the state's ever more pressing slew of standardized tests. None of these factors leads them to believe that their reflections about practice matter, nor are they encouraged to take time from their contact hours with students to plan, reflect, or in any way make sense of what they do. The deprofessionalizing of teaching described by Grossman (2003) and others, and school contexts that prize clean, quick, and easy answers rather than messy questions, make presenting the benefits of asking questions of one's practice a challenging idea to plant in the heads of novices entering the field.

### **Early Attempts to Teach Teacher Inquiry: Modeling and reading teacher research**

One strategy I tried early on in my efforts to teach my group of M.A. students about teacher inquiry was to use myself as a model of a teacher who assumes an inquiry stance. I am explicit about my own inquiry about my teaching and the ways in which they, as my students, are co-investigators. My idea was that if students had an image of what an inquiry stance "looks like" they might find it easier to assume that stance themselves. In an earlier study of my inquiry-based practice in this class I found that not only did the students not see this part of my practice, even though I pointed it out repeatedly, but also when I asked them directly how it could be that they could not see my inquiry approach they responded that they saw this as unique to me rather than something they too could do (responses in a focus group in 2001) (Richert, 2003). They also pointed out, and rightly so, that inquiry for the higher education teacher who has time to reflect is necessarily different from what is possible for a K-12 teacher in an urban public school.

Another strategy I have used with a bit more success has been to have the students read and study the written texts of teacher inquirers (for example Ballenger, 1992; Fecho, 1993; Paley, 1986). Whereas these texts reveal experiences closer to those of

my K–12 teaching students, often they do not provide an image of the everydayness that I wanted my students to see. Instead, they are typically end-result reports of the inquiry process that do not reflect the daily puzzles and changing questions of practice. I want to help students see inquiry not as something additional that they needed to do, or something that always results in a written document, but rather as an approach to their practice or a stance towards their work that they can assume every day (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001).

### **Learning from the Inquiry Practice of Others: A new approach**

During the academic year 2003–2004 I decided to draw on Ball and Cohen’s (1999) work and build a new “terrain of action and analysis” for learning about teacher inquiry in my “Inquiry into the teaching process: Practice into theory” class, which is a second year M.A. class for practicing teachers. As the name of the course implies, the central goal of this class is for students to learn the skills of teacher inquiry and to become active inquirers in their teaching— “strangers in their own homes”—who would take the risk of asking new questions of themselves and their practice. Using teacher inquiry as the “central activity of teaching practice” (Ball & Cohen, 1999) that I wanted students to learn, I designed a new approach to accomplishing my goals.

At the heart of my new teaching methodology are the records of inquiry-based teaching practice of two former students of mine, Rebecca Akin (2004) and Sarah Capitelli (2003). At the time of their classroom research Rebecca and Sarah taught in schools neighboring Mills College where this work took place. Each had created a record of their teacher inquiry practice as part of a program sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (Hatch, forthcoming). Whereas the records of practice differed for each teacher, both teachers created web sites that described their teaching and their teacher inquiry. The web pages included a variety of “texts” and images that made visible the teachers’ inquiry work, including their questions about their teaching and their students’ learning, the classroom “data” they collected, the conclusions they came to, and representations of their changing practice. Available on the web site were videos of them teaching and their students engaging in various classroom activities, examples of student work, interviews with students and so forth.<sup>1</sup> I decided to use these sites with the idea that if my students could see and study the work of urban teachers like themselves who were asking questions of their practice and pursuing answers in a variety of interesting ways, perhaps they too would begin to imagine themselves assuming an inquiry stance and thus be motivated to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue their own classroom inquiry work. The sites also provided concrete ideas about how to proceed with the inquiry processes in their own classrooms.

### **Curricularizing these Materials for Use in my Teacher Education Course**

There were many steps I took in planning how I would use these web sites of classroom materials in my class. First, I had to study these multi-layered records of

practice with a clear picture of my course goals in mind. I realized how important it would be to develop a curriculum for the materials that would help my students access the materials and grasp the potential lessons about teacher inquiry that they contained. I found I had to keep in mind that the purpose of my teaching these web-based records of practice was different from the purposes the teachers had in creating them. To begin I needed to consider the work from the teacher author's point of view, i.e. with a goal of understanding their work as they constructed it and the outcomes as defined by them. With that as a backdrop, I could consider the work with my own curricular goals in mind.

I made the pedagogical decision to start by looking at the research products the teaching reflected in them.<sup>2</sup> This decision was based on my graduate students as learners. What I know with certainty about them is that they are deeply interested in teaching and learning, especially teaching and learning in urban schools. Both Capitelli and Akin study urban school practice and both ask questions about student learning and teacher practice in that setting. To prepare I needed to connect the scholars' teaching questions with the questions about teaching and learning my students had, as well as with the discussions about practice we were having in class.

Each time I used the scholars' work we began with looking at the images of teaching on the site, a hook of sorts that put those of us studying the texts together on a common page. Once familiar with the teacher's practice as represented in various the forms available on the site (videos, examples of student work, written narrative reflections about various classroom events, etc.) I raised questions about methodology: "What was the inquiry that led to the research documents we are studying here? How and when did the teacher gather her classroom-based "data"? What kinds of data did she collect? Can you tell from what is presented how each teacher analyzed student work? Are the findings represented in a form that makes sense? In what ways are these findings useful? Or are they not?"

My approach was informed by the work of Joseph McDonald (1992), who laid out a set of ideas about how teachers can study their practice and why doing so matters. The students read McDonald's book, *Teaching: Making sense of an uncertain craft* and discussed his three steps in the teacher learning/inquiry process: (1) text making (or rendering teaching a text); (2) "gripping" the text to study it; (3) "doubting" the text, which involves pushing oneself to ask questions of it (McDonald, 1992, pp. 17–18). In order to study one's practice one has to have some representation of it to study; in McDonald's terms there has to be some text-making activity to get the ball rolling. As we considered the methodology Akin and Capitelli used to study their practice we began by considering what kinds of teaching "texts" they created: videotapes of their teaching, collections of student work, narratives they wrote about particular teaching incidents, etc. From there we began the analysis stages of "gripping" and "doubting" these texts to help us make sense of what the teachers themselves, and we, could learn from the work.

### **Situating the Records of Practice in Relation to the other Course Readings**

To engage the processes of “gripping” and “doubting” we drew on a collection of research-based course readings to help us make sense of what we saw in the teachers’ inquiry materials. We viewed the materials from multiple standpoints, in particular as they reflected (or did not reflect) some of the ideas about teaching and learning that we were studying on the course. The class “reader of research literature” is of notable importance here. Early in the semester the students read Paulo Freire’s (1998) essay “Reading the world/reading the word,” in which he challenged teachers to read the literature in their field so that they can “rethink what has been thought and revise their positions” (p. 17). Freire argued that reading the word allows you to re-read the world. “Reading the world” is what studying classroom data is about. As significant as it is to help students recognize the importance of experience as one starting place for “coming to know” in teaching, it is equally compelling for students to come to value the role of the research literature in our field as a window for understanding what happens in their classroom day to day. The records of practice did not stand alone. Rather, they were part of a collection of readings that the students examined in the course. It was the collection and interplay of these various texts that I hoped would lead students to assume an inquiry stance in their own practice.

In order to engage in powerful inquiry about practice teachers need to know what new ideas about teaching and learning are emerging from the research community and consider how these ideas might illuminate their everyday classroom events. The research literature helps them ask new questions of what they see as they teach. As we think about this dialogue between theory and practice, which is an underlying focus of the “inquiry” class, we read not only Freire but also Sarason (1993), who warned of the potential entrapment of the “non-reading professional,” and Fecho, (1993), whose teacherly voice on this matter of reading in teaching compels us to consider the oppressive cost of operating in a knowledge vacuum that keeps us isolated from not only our own work, but that of our colleagues. Rebecca’s teacher scholarship and Sarah’s as well both provide explicit connections to the literature of the field and the research traditions that inform their methodological decisions, as well as the lenses they bring to bear on the data they collect.

#### *Developing the Teacher’s Voice*

Another idea that guided my development of the curriculum of this class was to situate these “records of inquiry practice” in relation to other course goals. For example, one idea about teaching that we consider in the “inquiry” class is that of teacher voice. I decided early on to directly consider the role of the teacher scholars in both doing the scholarly work and presenting it to others, in part because I wanted to challenge the conception that teachers must always and only use knowledge constructed by the university research community (or others who are outside the context of school). Additionally, I wanted to emphasize my belief that as a profession

teachers need to conceptualize and subsequently claim the importance of both their questions and their methods for determining “truth.” That Sarah’s and Rebecca’s research is deeply and centrally grounded in practice raises the issue of the teacher’s voice in this way.

To create a broader context for considering the teacher’s voice and questions of professional knowledge we read several articles in the more traditional research literature about knowledge production in teaching, including articles about teacher research as a context within which the teacher’s voice takes hold. For example, the students read the work of Patricia Hill-Collins (1990), in which she used standpoint theory to problematize the research traditions of the academy that marginalize certain voices in favor of others. Hill-Collins is an African-American feminist. We considered what she calls the “contours of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology” (p. 206) alongside the framework offered by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001) that distinguishes between knowledge of, for, and in teaching practice. The Carnegie teacher scholarship provided us with an opportunity to ask what kind of knowledge we found represented in these particular teacher-produced texts. The materials provided a practice-connected context to explore these epistemological questions of the “inquiry” class and to think through the role of the teacher in partnering with others to determine what it is that teachers “ought” and need to know.

### *The Embeddedness of Inquiry in Everyday Practice*

Both Rebecca and Sarah situate their research squarely in the routines of everyday practice, which is how I chose to highlight their methodology. My plan included studying how their research was an everyday task and analyzing how their practice was affected by their inquiry approach. Sarah’s study was about English language learners and how to structure the English learning hour of the day. Every day during her hour of English instruction she collected data about the students’ work and about her teaching. Rather than figuring out what these data meant at the end of the school year, her study demonstrates the value of studying these data throughout. Her final research product tracks the evolution of her question as well as the changing structures of her practice over time (<http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/scapitelli/>).

Similarly, Rebecca’s research took place in the context of her teaching first graders to read. She began wanting to know how to help her students “engage in the discourse of school,” so she videotaped the book discussions she had with them in which she intentionally provided opportunities for this learning to occur. The video clips included on her site show multiple examples of these reading groups. In Rebecca’s research we can also track the evolution of her question and the journey from one mini study to another as the school year unfolded. In the products of their research we see both scholars busy at their everyday work with children. The research products they generated reveal the groundedness of the inquiry in the classrooms where they teach.



## **Tying the Course Assignments to the Records of Practice Work: Trying it out**

In addition to weaving Capitelli's and Akin's work throughout the course, just as I did Freire's, McDonald's, and Hill-Collins', as well as many other authors whose work we read, I drew on their scholarship in particular to help me scaffold the two central assignments we did during the fall term. Prior to deciding to incorporate the Carnegie work into my course I built two inquiry projects into the course plan. The two projects involved using data gathering strategies that both Rebecca and Sarah used in their work; the products of their scholarship were similar to the products I had in mind for my students as well. My process of building a curriculum using their work, therefore, included developing the connection between the scholars' inquiry processes and the inquiry processes I hoped my students would learn. Their work provided an "end view" or an image of where we were headed in terms of how to do inquiry, what products the work might produce, and how those products could be generative for teacher learning in a variety of ways.

For example, the first inquiry project I had planned was a narrative writing and sharing exercise. The narrative project occurred during the first half of the term and was designed to produce a product similar in form to the narrative Rebecca includes as one of several texts displayed on her web page. The students were required to write a three or four page true story of a classroom event told from their (the teacher's) point of view. Based on careful examination of the event being described, the stories are meant to recreate in this written form not only what occurred during the incident, but also the thoughts and feelings the teacher had as things were unfolding in the event described. Rebecca's narrative work provided a helpful scaffold. We began by reading her narrative, which is about a child in her class. Because she had so many different impressions of the child, depending on what data she looked at and/or what this child chose to do at any particular time, she decided to write her narrative in three voices, all of which were her own. I asked three different readers to read different parts when we read the narrative aloud in class. The impact was chilling. It provided a dramatic representation of the complexity of teaching on the one hand and the teacher's unique position of being able to see many different things simultaneously on the other. It also made clear the value of "data" when thinking about students, and the challenge of reading those given the conflicting information they often provide.

The second assignment was a video case project that involved building a case around a video clip of classroom practice that the students presented to one another. Similarly to the narrative assignment, I designed the video case assignment with the purpose of connecting our Mills classroom with the ones where the students teach. We began thinking about the project by looking at the video clips on Sarah's web site and discussed what questions the images raised about teaching and learning. We also discussed how she embedded the images of practice within a description of the context where the teaching took place, on the one hand, and in relation to the research literature that guided the questions, on the other.

Finally, in thinking about the course assignments as methods towards accomplishing my curricular goals the work of the scholars helped me in one more significant way. I want my students to see inquiry as a process they can build into their everyday work so that professional learning becomes a cornerstone of their practice. This means they must come to see the inquiry processes embodied in the assignments of the course not as ends in themselves, but as means to the real end, which is a better understanding of their practice. The examples of inquiry-based practice provided by the research documents Akin and Capitelli produced (the video data they collected and analyzed, the narratives they wrote, the student work they analyzed, the web sites they produced, and so forth) were all presented as steps in a lifelong process of knowing their practice well and becoming the kinds of teachers they wanted to become.

### **What did the Teachers Learn from Engaging with these Texts?**

To both study the process of teaching with these new web-based teaching texts and consider the impact of these materials on student teacher learning I documented my practice using the materials in this one class during the 2003–2004 academic year. I began by videotaping each class period where I used or referred to these materials. Additionally, I kept a running record journal of my own reflections about the process and what I noticed as my students and I engaged in this work. The process also generated a collection of student data. In addition to the completed narratives and video case assignments, students wrote their reflections at the end of the class period each time we considered either these records of practice and completed two questionnaires about this work and their learning (one at mid term and one at the end of the semester during which these materials were used).

In the analysis of these data it was clear that seeing their “near peers” engaged in classroom-based inquiry was not only inspiring to the novice teachers in my class, but also provided an opportunity to learn about a broad array of teacher inquiry strategies, such as how to build data gathering into a classroom’s everyday work, how to collect and analyze student work in new ways depending on the question one is studying, how to engage parents and other teachers in one’s inquiry work, and so forth. The multi-layered records of practice that we were able to view and consider from each teacher (videos of classroom practice, examples of student work, written reflections from the teacher, other artifacts of classroom events, etc.) provided “images of the possible” as my students contemplated how to begin this kind of inquiry work themselves.

Three themes emerged as I reviewed these data that describe how records of practice can be useful for learning to teach in general, and learning about inquiry-based teaching in particular. The first was that the records offered a chance for students to ponder the issue of “stance” in teaching and what an inquiry stance “looks like” in practice. They were also able to think together about why an inquiry approach might “matter” in terms of both teacher and student learning. The second was that students were able to ponder the role of the teacher who assumes this stance and

begin to see how they might assume that role themselves. Given the rich assortment of classroom-based texts available for our review, the students began to consider the variety of representations of teaching practice that are possible and contemplate how different representations of practice offer teachers different opportunities to learn (Akin, 2003). Considering the relationship between representations of practice and teacher learning was the third theme I found in studying the impact of this work. I will describe each of these themes briefly below.

Pondering the practice of teaching as inquiry refers to the thinking the students began to do about what teaching as inquiry really entails. I mentioned earlier that since I have been teaching at Mills I have been trying to teach my students to assume an inquiry stance towards their practice. My data show me how using the Carnegie Scholar's work as texts in the class described here has opened up new possibilities for accomplishing this goal. Slowly, over the course of the year, while engaging with this new form of scholarship students began to talk about the inquiry part of teaching in new ways. "Inquiry is part of teaching; it's not something extra," one student said as she reflected on Sarah Capitelli's work. Another said she was beginning to see "research as part of the classroom instead of taking away from class time." About Rebecca's work a third said, "We are constantly deepening our knowledge of our kids and our practice—or at least we are to the extent we try to observe and to reflect on our practice."

Key to helping the students reframe teaching to include inquiry as a core process was the way in which they saw themselves reflected in the role of teacher as scholar/inquirer, which I identified as pondering the role of teacher as scholar. As the students started to see what teaching as inquiry is they began to talk about what they saw teacher scholars do. As a teacher scholar you have to "reflect and be willing to see yourself and your students in new ways" one student said in reflecting on one scholar's work. She continued by putting herself in that scholarly role: "I'm hoping to find the better, deeper, questions in my research now. I wasn't really thinking of this before." Whereas this student wasn't thinking that way before, she is moving closer to assuming a teacher-as-scholar stance in her own practice. Another student had already moved in this direction. She explained that our work with the web site "reinforce ideas I'm already coming to have about the realities of being a teacher researcher. It's inspiring and supportive to hear about research people are doing and are excited about."

The third theme concerned how students responded to how the scholars represented and/or presented their scholarship; what form these representations took and how they worked more or less well as learning texts for teachers. I identified this theme as pondering the representations. One idea we grappled with was how teaching is represented in the literature both within and outside the field of education and how it might be represented differently, or more "accurately" from my students' points of view. Part of their interest in representation comes from one of the class assignments in which they wrote and shared narratives of practice, an inquiry strategy employed by both Akin and Capitelli in their work. Our discussion about the narratives extended beyond the content of the narrative, which consumed the bulk

of our focus each week, to the narrative form and its strengths and weaknesses for conveying the reality of teachers' everyday lives.

The various student reflections about the forms of representation embodied in the Carnegie scholars' work provided a window into the kinds of representations they found most powerful in terms of the learning potential they offered. Given that the inquiry practice of our Carnegie colleagues was presented as work in progress rather than complete in a polished for presentation way, the students began to see inquiry as an ongoing enterprise that can be a foundation for collaborative learning in our field. With this reasoning in place, the students identified those representations of practice that invite others to consider new questions about teaching as the ones they found most compelling. One student explained:

As a learner, it's hard to learn from things that are a finished product. We're separate from them. We don't get to see the method of getting there. We don't see the process, the questioning . . . . It's alienating trying to learn from the polished product.

Another expressed a similar sentiment:

Reading flowery descriptions of such perfect teaching moments is frustrating as a beginning teacher. It makes me long to read about the tedious road getting to that beautiful moment.

In contrast, presentations that open up new questions—questions that capture the interest and attention of the teacher who presents them—suggest both the role of the audience in the sharing of the teacher/scholar's work and the potential for joint learning for everyone involved. In the process that invites the collaborative examination of practice, a community of teacher scholars is formed, and the dimensions of influence grow. Comments such as this were common when the work was represented that way:

I was very intrigued by the idea that we represent our work in ways that reflect what we know, but that at the same time, we come to know new things about our work through the process of representing it. I like this cyclical feeling—it inspires me to keep trying to describe/represent my teaching/students/learning in different ways in order to learn new things and to document how my thinking/understanding is evolving.

### **Closing Thoughts**

My purpose in writing this case was two-fold. First, I wanted to explore an example of teacher learning from the practice of other teachers as described by Ball and Cohen (1999) and look, in particular, at this one kind of "record of practice" to understand what new opportunities for learning it might offer my students and me. Teaching my students to assume an inquiry stance in their teaching has been a consistent goal of my practice, as well as a persistent challenge, for me since I started teaching teachers almost two decades ago. What incorporating these particular records of practice into my course allowed me to do that I had not been able to do previously is show students multiple images of every day inquiry-based teaching and also the results of that particular teaching approach.

The second purpose for writing this case was to explore the challenges of curricularizing these records of practice for teacher education. If teacher educators want to incorporate images of practice, or other representational forms that capture what teachers do, they must render those forms curricular for their own purposes in teacher education. Creating rich representations of teaching practice is one step in developing opportunities for teachers to “learn from what others do.” The challenge for teacher educators is to develop a curriculum around those texts, as they would any other texts, to help them accomplish their teacher learning goals. This case describes the approach I took to curricularize the powerful records of inquiry practice of my two teacher colleagues, Rebecca Akin and Sarah Capitelli. Just as I have come to rely on the works of such scholars as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Joseph McDonald, Patricia Hill-Collins, Maxine Greene, and others to help me teach about the value of asking questions about one’s work, I have now come to rely on these teacher scholars to help me with this important challenge as well. It is clear to me as I close this piece that I have just begun to mine the opportunities that records of teaching practice such as those I have studied here will offer my students and me as I continue to teach with them in upcoming years.

## Notes

1. Recently the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching sponsored a project that supported a group of K–12 teachers in documenting some aspects of their teaching practice. The result is a collection of web pages that show various aspects of the teachers’ practice, including videos of classroom teaching, student discussions, and interviews with teachers and students. Additionally, these sites house various teaching artifacts, including student work, lesson and unit plans, teacher journals or other written reflections, etc. These sites are public and available for multiple uses. In the instance I report on here I have used them as “texts” in my teacher education class. The sites can be viewed at <http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/collections/index.htm>. Sarah Capitelli’s website, which is discussed in this paper, is one of those listed on the Carnegie Gallery page listed here.
2. I am using the word “products” here to signify the various forms the Carnegie scholarship took at completion. Each scholar produced different kinds of “texts,” which ranged from papers and books to narratives, interviews about practice, web pages, analyzed examples of student work, video representations of school and teaching days, and so forth. Both Rebecca Akin and Sarah Capitelli had web pages that allowed access to a variety of different products that I was able to use in the class. That their inquiry process itself was visible was central to why I chose these scholars’ work.

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