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Perspektiven der Praxisforschung: Partnerschaften beim Wissensaufbau und lebenslange berufliche Entwicklung von Lehrpersonen

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Positions toward Inquiry: Partners in Knowledge Construction and Teacher Development Across the Professional Life Span

Jennifer Snow-Gerono and Alan John Zenkert

Abstract Emphasizing inquiry and action research for teachers, we work to cultivate an inquiry stance toward teaching through our scaffolding of inquiry projects in teacher candidate experiences. They spend one year in an elementary classroom as a clinical field experience and are required to complete a teacher inquiry project in their internship semester. We recognize a tension within conducting an inquiry project and cultivating an inquiry stance toward teaching. Our ultimate goal would be the positionality of a stance, yet the emphasis on product that often comes with an «assignment» caused stress for teacher candidates so that our ultimate goal and theirs were not always aligned. Therefore, in this article, we discuss our theoretical framework for teacher inquiry and an inquiry stance toward teaching, our inquiry into our process of cultivating such in teacher candidates, and how we have engaged the tension of inquiry stance vs. inquiry project in order to support our candidates work with inquiry.

Keywords teacher research – inquiry stance – teacher development – knowledge construction

Perspektiven der Praxisforschung: Partnerschaften beim Wissensaufbau und lebenslange berufliche Entwicklung von Lehrpersonen

Zusammenfassung Um eine forschende Einstellung zum Lehrberuf aufzubauen, unterstützen wir angehende Lehrpersonen in ihren Praxisforschungsprojekten in der Schule. Eingebettet in ein Jahr mit wiederholten Kontakten zu einer Grundschulklasse, führen sie in ihrem Praxissemester ein Lehrerforschungsprojekt durch. Dabei beobachten wir eine Spannung zwischen dem Durchführen eines Praxisforschungsprojekts und dem Aufbau einer forschenden Einstellung zum Lehrberuf. Unser eigentliches Ziel wäre die Verankerung einer forschenden Haltung, doch die Studierenden sind auf das Produkt fokussiert und fühlen sich wegen der verlangten Studienleistung oft unter Druck, wodurch ihre und unsere Ziele nicht immer übereinstimmen. Deshalb diskutieren wir in diesem Aufsatz den theoretischen Rahmen zur Lehrerforschung und zu einer forschenden Einstellung zum Lehrberuf, um dann unseren eigenen Erkenntnisprozess nachzuzeichnen, was den Aufbau dieser Einstellung bei den Studierenden anbelangt. Schliesslich beschreiben wir, wie wir mit der Spannung zwischen Einstellung und Produktorientierung umgegangen sind, um die Studierenden bei ihren Praxisforschungsprojekten unterstützen zu können.

Schlagwörter Lehrerforschung – Praxisforschung – forschende Haltung – Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung – Wissensaufbau

A new generation of educators in both schools and universities has been pressing a set of challenging and often unsettling questions about practice and the power of collective action in educational reform ... Action research and other modes of practitioner inquiry have emerged as particularly promising vehicles for politically strategic action and in some settings have come to play a galvanizing role in collaborative efforts to rethink the relationships of theory and practice, school and university, and local and wider agendas for social change. (Marilyn Cochran-Smith & Susan L. Lytle in Noffke & Stevenson, 1995, p. vii)

1 Introduction

In the foreword to Noffke and Stevenson's book, *Educational Action Research: Becoming Practically Critical* (1995), Cochran-Smith and Lytle discuss the potential for action research in connection with educational change and collaborative efforts. Hansen (2008), discussing Dewey's (1985) take on «public interest», states: «Public interest constitutes an orientation of point of view premised on the idea that persons can learn from their experience. It points to a disposition of inquiry that ideally would saturate public affairs» (Hansen, 2008, p. 20). As teacher educators, we believe in the power of an inquiry stance toward teaching in similar terms. Perceiving inquiry as a tool and a positioning, we understand the propensity to wonder and question a key disposition. In our work we encourage the cultivation of an inquiry stance in teacher candidates while at the same time hoping to model one ourselves. By partnering as teacher educators with each other, our candidates, school partners, and our colleagues we hope to generate knowledge through shared inquiries as a way of being as much as a way of researching.

With this dedication to inquiry and action research for teachers, we work to cultivate an inquiry stance toward teaching through our scaffolding of inquiry projects in our teacher candidates' Professional Year experiences. They spend one year in an elementary classroom as a clinical field experience. They are required to complete a teacher inquiry project in their internship semester. We recognize a tension within conducting an inquiry project and cultivating an inquiry stance toward teaching. Our ultimate goal would be the positionality of a stance, yet the emphasis on product that often comes with an «assignment» caused stress for teacher candidates so that our ultimate goal and theirs was not always aligned. Therefore, in this article, we discuss our theoretical framework for teacher inquiry and an inquiry stance toward teaching, our inquiry into our process of cultivating such in teacher candidates, and how we have engaged the tension of inquiry stance vs. inquiry project in order to support our candidate work with inquiry.

2 Theoretical Framework

In coordinating our professional positioning and subsequent actions we looked to literature in teacher education and professional development. A persistent presence in

teacher education and professional development literature is that of reflective practice (Dana, Thomas & Boynton, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Neufeld & Grimmett, 1994; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Working from the conception of an «inquiry stance toward teaching» (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, 2001, 2009; Snow-Gerono, 2005), our professional inquiries have largely focused on beginning experiences with teacher inquiry supporting the cultivation of an inquiry stance toward teaching, based in critical, reflective practice. We understand that inquiry as *stance* is not often explicitly cultivated in teacher education. It is enacted through the conduct of inquiry projects (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Friedman & Pine, 2009; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009) or an emphasis on reflective practice (Friedman & Schoen, 2009; Parkison, 2009; Postholm, 2008; Pultorak & Barnes, 2009).

Yet in our work, we look toward what Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009, p. 7) describe as an inquiry stance toward teaching where «this stance becomes a professional positioning, owned by the teacher, where questioning one's own practice becomes part of the teacher's work and eventually a part of teaching culture». Living an inquiry stance toward teaching is a framework where teachers own «knowledge-*of*-practice» (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001). Teachers have transformed notions of «knowledge-*for*-practice» from external educational researchers and «knowledge-*in*-practice» from inside classrooms to a «knowledge-*of*-practice» where teacher researchers enter the dialectic of knowledge created for and within classrooms. When inquiry is emphasized in the early years of teaching, its value «resides in the ongoing improvement of educators' capability to make instructional decisions and their orientation toward research as a resource ...» (Mitchell, Reilly & Logue, 2009, p. 348).

2.1 Purposes of Teacher Inquiry

A large component of the literature on teacher inquiry focuses on knowledge-generation and research in education, traditionally and as it could be altered by the phenomenon of teachers doing research. Knowledge-*of*-practice does not dichotomize the concept of knowledge as either being formal or practical.

Rather it is assumed that the knowledge teachers need to teach well is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, p. 48)

Knowledge-*of*-practice holds within it the «assumption that through inquiry, teachers across the professional life span ... make problematic their own knowledge and practice of others and thus stand in a different relationship to knowledge» (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, p. 49). Additionally, this concept of «across the professional life span» is defined through lifelong learning rather than «expertise». This conception is important to the notion that teacher educators must also model and practice an authentic inquiry stance positioning toward knowledge.

Furthering the purpose of knowledge construction, teacher inquiry may serve the purpose of professional self-knowledge, instructional improvement, or the transformation of teaching and learning opportunities. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, p. 18) also theorize teacher research as ways of knowing in communities so that it is about «agency for classroom and school change». Furthermore, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001) describe an inquiry stance with the words «critical and transformative». Teacher research may be used in this transformative sense as a tool for making power, authority, and knowledge-generation visible in schools.

2.2 Forms of Teacher Inquiry

Teachers doing research takes the form of inquiry projects («classroom studies»), journals, oral inquiry processes, and essays. Throughout the literature on teacher research, the purpose of teacher inquiry is often professional growth or classroom/instructional improvement. There are several texts recognizing and describing the process of teacher inquiry for educators (see, e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Noffke & Stevenson, 1995). Most of these texts include samples of teachers doing research and are useful in supporting the conduct of teacher inquiry projects with teachers and teacher candidates.

Teacher researchers may learn and borrow new ideas from other teachers' inquiry findings as well as form plans for conducting their own inquiries as they read about teachers doing research. Teachers then systematically study their classroom practice through data collection and analysis in a deliberate fashion. Some type of support – sharing in a community of learners or collecting evidence with your students – is necessary for successful classroom study (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). No matter what type of teacher research, though, teachers are doing research in order to learn more about themselves as teachers and how to be more effective in their classrooms. Therefore, establishing inquiry communities with teacher candidates has also been an important part of our work scaffolding the conduct of inquiry projects.

2.3 Potential Outcomes of Engaging in Teacher Inquiry

An intersection of literature concerning aspects of teacher inquiry and school-university partnerships leads to a discussion of outcomes. For example, Neufeld and Grimmett (1994, p. 210) comment on teacher development in connection with inquiry:

It is assumed in teacher development theory that growth toward a developed professional state (which we name as an autonomous, self-directed agency) can take place through reflection on the ordinary, day-to-day experience of instructing students in classrooms ... The reflective practitioner, as an autonomous self-directed thinker, is described as continually inquiring into the practice of instruction ... This development is ongoing, embedded in current practice and rooted in dailiness.

Development rooted in dailiness and reflection may be found within teachers cultivating an inquiry stance toward teaching — teachers who are consistently problem-posing and

considering questions based in their personal practice and experience. The conduct of inquiry projects is one means of accessing and developing this stance.

Vulliamy and Webb (1991, p. 233) suggest «teachers trying to introduce changes to their classroom practice are likely both to understand better the complexities of the change process and to be more successful in achieving their intentions if the central role of pupils is appreciated and acted upon». Changing structures for teacher learning and development therefore involve a struggle for authenticity:

In the struggle for authenticity, teachers attempt to discover both their true selves as responsible professionals and the new knowledge that enables them to see possibilities in teaching that will lead to a redefinition of classroom realities and roles and an enhancement of student learning. (Grimmett, 1996, p. 45)

Authentic struggle engages teachers in the pursuit of experiences that not only fall in line with professional structures or intrinsic pleasures, but also fill the purpose of moral aim (Grimmett, 1996). Therefore, our work with teacher candidates conducting inquiry also works to engage authentic struggle.

3 Methodology

In previous semesters, we engaged in qualitative research to attempt to understand candidates' experiences. According to Merriam (1998, p. 6), «qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world». This primarily qualitative study explored teacher candidate experiences with teacher inquiry. As a largely phenomenological case study, researchers gathered insights and understandings from the participants to generate themes connected to cultivating an inquiry stance toward teaching.

As researchers we attempted to understand candidate dispositions and professional positioning, in addition to knowledge of inquiry, before, during, and after they purposefully engaged in a formal inquiry project. We worked to intentionally model an inquiry stance in our teacher preparation coursework, which included completing an inquiry project. In addition, we collected observational data, including field notes, during the participant experiences (Patton, 1990). As we periodically debriefed and shared notes with one another, we began to understand that our researchers' journals, used to document and bracket assumptions and initial ideas, were yielding a great deal of data. We conducted document analyses of participant journals, final inquiry briefs and inquiry presentations themselves. Our initial study was descriptive and intended to capture participant experiences and analyze important structures and influences toward the cultivation of an inquiry stance toward teaching. However, as researchers intending to model inquiry in action, we found ourselves as key to the evolution of themes in

data analysis. Therefore, we included our personal journals and communication as data sources and as a means for bracketing assumptions.

We gathered evidence from a specific «Professional Year» experience, the inquiry project. The «Professional Year» is a year-long clinical experience in an elementary school geared toward a culminating portfolio and synthesis of theoretical and practical knowledge and experience. Candidates spend three days per week in elementary schools while completing methods course requirements during the first semester and full-time, following the school district calendar rather than the university calendar, during the second semester. As instructors, we espoused to model inquiry as stance through our openness to questions, modeling uncertainty and vulnerability (Dale & Frye, 2009) in knowledge construction, and our requirement of inquiry experiences as assignments. Electronic communications, inquiry briefs and journals from participants were collected to conduct document analysis for themes. To triangulate this data, we observed participants where they were engaging in or experiencing inquiry and maintained field notes to analyze in connection with themes. The coding search was intended to locate salient comments connected to participant experiences. Researchers memoed (Creswell, 1998) and shared data in several, regularly scheduled researcher meetings in order to confirm findings and maintain trustworthiness, truthfulness, and verifiability (Breault & Adair Breault, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990).

In the earlier research described above, we used participant words, pulled from focus group and individual discussions, as well as written documents, to describe their experiences. We also pulled from our own electronic communications, journals, and notes on meetings to further enrich thematic presentation. In researcher meetings we combed field notes and data sources for confirming and disconfirming evidence to verify stated positions in practice. Rather than reliability, the study maintained «dependability» or «consistency» of the results obtained from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 288).

Here, our goal is to share our story and recommendations based on these experiences. Although many themes emerged from the data, we focus specifically on one set of themes that revolve around *tension*. At this stage, we are working to make sense of what happened by problematizing our work and considering a specific tension that came about and what it means for teacher education.

4 Tensions to Explore within Inquiry

As teacher educators, we must deconstruct tensions in cultivating an inquiry stance as professional positioning. Knowledge construction in partnership is fraught with power differentials and process-product struggles. We found four main tensions in our personal struggles in cultivating an inquiry stance in community. (1) An inquiry stance is both visible and invisible, formal and informal. (2) *An inquiry stance includes a*

«*shift in understanding*» that allows teachers to see inquiry as conceptual rather than procedural, as a process more than a product. (3) Both external and internal factors impact the cultivation of an inquiry stance, environment and predisposition. (4) An inquiry stance necessitates negotiating individual agency and the collective agency of the school as an organization and teaching as a profession, public and private purposes.

We recommend that teacher education partnerships focused on inquiry explore each of these, and here we share our focus on the process (*stance*) – product (*project*) tension (tension 2) because it is the one that was most salient in our research. Further exploration into the other tensions and the overlap and interplay between them is still necessary. We recognize it is difficult to demonstrate how living an inquiry stance is actualized as it encompasses much more than following the cycle of an inquiry project through completion. The irony is that inquiry projects are one of the most visible ways to describe the life of an inquiring teacher.

Our focused tension for this manuscript is the difficulty in actualizing what it means to live an inquiry stance toward teaching. Indeed, conducting an inquiry project appears to be the most visible indicator of an inquiring teacher. However, we have found tensions between cultivating an inquiry stance and conducting an inquiry project. These two forms of inquiry are not necessarily one in the same. The visibility of an inquiry stance toward teaching lies in the actions of teachers when they pursue their questions. They may not be conducting an inquiry project, but they are talking with their colleagues about teaching and learning, making changes in their professional practice, and portraying a general attitude of openness and willingness to pursue questions of practice. Teachers living an inquiry stance toward teaching are willing to spend the time it takes to wonder about the questions that they have about their profession. They have a certain patience with the process of pursuing questions in a deliberate manner.

Yet, when working to *cultivate* this inquiry stance, an inquiry project proves to be one of the best mechanisms for scaffolding such a positioning toward knowledge. In particular, when working with teacher candidates, requiring the assignment of an inquiry project provides the space for candidates to engage in teacher inquiry in a meaningful way. We strongly recommend requiring inquiry projects in our Professional Year teacher candidate experiences. We do, however, also recommend scaffolding this experience to push the cultivation of an inquiry stance while engaging in an inquiry project.

This tension assertion that an inquiry stance is both product and process caused us to pose the following questions for teacher education research and re-consider how we structure our visible enactments:

- How important is it for an inquiry stance to be *made* visible?
- How can the invisible teacher inquiry stance be recognized?
- How may an inquiry stance be explicitly modeled for others?

These questions hold implications for teacher education and partnerships that value inquiry because if it is desired for teacher candidates to cultivate an inquiry stance toward teaching, it is important for teacher educators to consider how to go about this cultivation. How may teacher inquiry be explicitly modeled outside of an inquiry project? Perhaps it is simply the modeling of an inquiry stance – a professional positioning that includes a perpetual openness to questions and evidence as well as a willingness to take action based on that evidence.

Of course, this wondering leads directly into how to make an inquiry stance visible when so much of it is meta-cognitive. An inquiry stance is something that primarily occurs inside someone's head. It is their thinking processes and their approach to questions and solutions, a process of problem-posing. What are the primary benefits of making thinking visible? One benefit may be the sharing and celebrating of this stance with other educators. This celebration may, in turn, impact the scholarship of the profession. Teachers with an inquiry stance may be more valued as professionals rather than technicians who carry out policy and procedure designed by someone else.

A persistent struggle within this tension is the necessity for naming or labeling forms of inquiry. We worried that we proceduralized teacher inquiry by requiring inquiry projects in our preparation program. As teacher educators interested in cultivating an inquiry stance toward teaching, we may privilege procedural or formal aspects of an inquiry project in hopes of cultivating informal or ever-present inquiry as stance.

Certainly, our personal struggle with how we, as teacher educators, should encourage the act of formal inquiry while our ultimate goal is the cultivation of informal inquiry pushes us to continue our research. In practice we have often taken inquiry apart so as to name it and may have lost its essential meaning in the dissection. This danger of losing conceptual understandings of inquiry and the life of a teacher with an inquiry stance in efforts to understand it leads us to cautionary thoughts about the push to institutionalize inquiry in teacher education. This is not to say we do not promote the idea and process of teacher inquiry as an important tool and disposition in teacher development. However, understanding the danger of trivializing inquiry so that it may become everything and anything (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) necessitates patience to cultivate a culture of inquiry in schools and universities (Dana, Silva & Snow-Gerono, 2002). We recognize danger in pushing formal inquiry so much so that it becomes procedural as well as the danger in promoting informal inquiry so that it becomes so nebulous as to lose its power associated with knowledge generation and social and educational change. The key to formalizing informal inquiry may be in the actions teachers take upon gaining insights into questions of practice. Teachers living an inquiry stance are change agents in their schools and, potentially, in their communities and society in general. Exploring the tensions within formal and informal inquiry will guide teachers and teacher educators to understandings of situations that signify a question and its pursuit as teacher inquiry. We recommend the following strategies for scaffolding inquiry projects so as to cultivate an inquiry stance toward teaching.

5 Scaffolding Inquiry for Teacher Candidates

In our work with teacher candidates, we have found that structuring the process of inquiry in purposeful ways is quite pivotal. In particular, we need to review the parameters of the inquiry project assignment:

In an Inquiry Project, a teacher and teacher candidate identify and define a «problem of practice,» explores solutions to the «problem,» generates a response(s) to the «problem,» and examines results of the investigation/implementation of response(s). (College of Education, 2012, p. 13)

Candidates are asked to

1. Identify and define a problem or issue in the classroom/school setting.
2. Conduct background reading and/or research on the issue.
3. Develop a plan of action to address the issue.
4. Implement (i.e. explore to the extent possible) the plan.
5. Summarize and report on the findings.

In the minds of most teacher education students, this becomes a research project, typical to any other type of course assignment in their programs. However, our intent is to develop dispositions and habits of mind «regarding the problem-solving nature of teaching and learning» (College of Education, 2012, p. 13). Therefore, we find ourselves engaging the tension of end product/assignment with the process of co-constructing knowledge-*of*-practice.

In our work we have found the following steps to be helpful in emphasizing the cultivation of an inquiry stance toward teaching. It is imperative that teacher inquirers *own* the questions they pose. We ask them to be problem-posers. We ask them to turn to a state of wonder. We ask them to then ponder their questions through the empowering act of inquiry. In order to scaffold this process for teacher candidates, we engage in a «story-telling» protocol from the National School Reform Faculty's website (see http://www.nsrffharmony.org/protocol/doc/inquiry_circles.pdf) We encourage our learning communities of teacher candidates to become inquiry communities through the use of «Critical Friends Group» protocols and structures. We have found this structuring of inquiry to provide more purpose for professional *and* personal disposition development in our candidates. When they have to tell the stories behind the questions they may pose, they develop more ownership into the questions to which they seek responses. In some cases, candidates found similarities in their stories, which led them to further question both themselves and their peers, leading to deepened, collaborative efforts to understand and a heightened agency to seek answers. For example, one pair of candidates transcended the process-product tension because they developed collaborative agency. These two candidates investigated how school-wide rules and procedures were understood, communicated, and enforced in one elementary school. This inquiry led to direct work with the principal of the school, the sharing of data with a task force, and

the data from this inquiry has led to a professional development plan for the school for the upcoming school year.

Although this work can seem very based inside the school walls, we find it necessary to emphasize the external research candidates must engage in in order to conduct an inquiry project. Again, this act could become more akin to a teacher candidate's «home-work» or assignment of a teacher inquiry project. However, engaging in this research also helps them to think about how knowledge is generated when they feel true ownership of a question. The question is driven not only by personal interest, but also by some type of practical issue teacher candidates are engaging in during their clinical field experience. Therefore, there is a sense of urgency connected to the external research search. Once candidates are provided the time to do literature and research searches connected to their questions it is also important to structure time to *dialogue* about what the external research says. Again, dialogue protocols can be quite helpful in structuring such conversation in inquiry communities.

In the case illustrated above, the principal became involved and empowered the candidates due mainly to the external research that they engaged in. It was similar to, and expanded on, what she and the district had been working on, and this created a common language and camaraderie that propelled this inquiry to the place where it was «owned» on multiple levels and the candidates felt very connected to it, as it was valued in their school and by their principal.

Where the inquiry project truly becomes the project is in the «Action Plan» candidates must create. This plan must include data collection and it must be narrowed enough to provide meaningful evidence for the inquiry question as well as in line with methodological research design. Creating this plan provides the space for teacher candidates to truly become researchers. Again, this is emphasized as an empowering moment where they are scientists exploring real-world problems of practice – in their very own classrooms. Most often, teacher inquiry projects contain qualitative design strategies because of the emphasis on local context. However, our candidates also disseminate surveys and conduct analyses on numerical data or figures evidence provides. This is an important aspect of not only the teacher inquiry project, but also an important aspect of seeing oneself as a researcher. This, in turn, provides scaffolding for not only completing an end product/assignment but also for cultivating an inquiry stance toward teaching across a professional life span.

Looking again to the example above, the students did create a survey, which was distributed electronically to faculty and staff members, that they created in conjunction with us, as their supervisors, their mentor teachers, and the principal. Based in the external research and some previous research and experience within the school by the other professionals who teamed to help create this survey, the questions asked were relevant to multiple members of the team. In analysis and sharing of the data and its potential

meanings, the candidates worked on their own, but once these results and wonderings were shared back, multiple meetings were had to analyze the data from different perspectives and in different ways and to consider what the data could mean. But we are careful not to simply emphasize «results» with our candidates, as there is a concern that that indicates an endpoint, which does not fit well for development «across the professional lifespan». Therefore, one final component of cultivating this inquiry stance over simply completing a project for a course assignment is to emphasize the act of «further wonderings» over «results» in the inquiry brief – final paper – candidates are required to submit upon completion of the inquiry project assignment. In fact, we spend time in inquiry communities brainstorming questions that result from data analysis more than we ask candidates to report on findings.

It was this, specifically, that led to the school-wide professional development plan for this upcoming year. Rather than attempting to state what the data indicated that faculty did or did not think, do, say, or understand, our candidates were encouraged to, and successfully did, we believe, help a principal wonder about her school. «Problematizing» was a key term we used, and in this case, the candidates problematized, alongside peers, supervisors, and a principal, the beliefs, experiences, and structures that could lead to such data and posed questions that eventually led to a long-term plan. This long term plan, it is important to note, involves constant and consistent inquiry.

This focus on questioning and problem-posing over completing a project is perhaps the key scaffold in our work toward cultivating an inquiry stance over completing an inquiry project. Certainly, they are both integral and key components to teacher inquiry. However, when inquiry is seen as a living phenomenon, it cannot be put on the shelf as the end result or answer. When teacher candidates may return to these living inquiries throughout their careers they may see how they change due to class context, educational political climate, or their own personal professional positioning across the years. This is why in our work we also call for teacher inquiry as an emphasis in mentoring and induction programs for new educators.

6 Conclusion

When teacher inquiry is an institutional agenda, it may increase teachers' abilities to collect data and consider evidence in response to a question, but these questions may not impact schools and the profession of teaching. Or the «answers» to these questions may reinforce stereotypical notions of student learning or prejudicial values about students. Certainly this is a danger of institutionalizing teacher inquiry in preparation or professional development programs. An attitude of patience, which values a process or a positioning more than procedures, may be the best response towards teacher inquiry that promotes that status quo in education. If teacher inquiry is about transformation, then, individuals should be willing to change as well as impact collective agendas for

the betterment of all teaching and learning. Teacher educators must also remain humble within their own inquiry stances – professional positioning – in order to integrate the tensions of an inquiry project and an inquiry stance in intentional, productive ways. We provide insights from our own work here with the scaffolding of an inquiry project with the key purpose of cultivating an inquiry stance.

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