Threading a Golden Chain:
An Attempt To Find Our Identities as Teacher Educators

By Mieke Lunenberg & Mary Lynn Hamilton

Multiple Layers, Multiple Perspectives

Several years ago we met over coffee and discussions about teacher education at an international conference. With mutual interests in the role of teacher educators' development of their professional identity, we developed an intellectual relationship as we pondered questions related to our interests. We found our conversation together provocative not in small part because of geographical differences. Teacher education programs and what it takes to be a teacher educator differ between the United States and The Netherlands. Since we did not realize this immediately, the discovery of similarities and differences strengthened our relationship as colleagues and raised critical issues.

We began our current work together by asking each other to address a series of questions and issues regarding the identity of teacher educators. At the start, these questions were rather broad and random, but during the year we worked on this project, discussing the identity of teacher educators and studying literature, some questions proved to be central. Throughout this article we use our own shared writings about these central questions to situate ourselves within the layers and perspectives in the literature on teacher educator identity.

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Mieke: *I identify as a teacher educator, not as a teacher or professor. Sometimes I identify as a researcher . . . that's because people in The Netherlands don't always expect teacher educators to do research. Outside of that, I see being a teacher educator as preparing future teachers and doing it on the basis of experiences, theory, reflection, and learning to be critical of their own work.*

Mary Lynn: *I think that my identity as a teacher educator is contextual. Sometimes I am a teacher, sometimes I am a teacher educator, sometimes I am a researcher, and sometimes I am professor. It depends on who I am with and what I want to accomplish. This, I think, is the problem with the identity of teacher educators, at least in the United States. There are instances when I feel that I am devalued when I identify as a teacher educator where the title of professor or researcher achieves greater status or attention. There is a fallacy in academia, and perhaps beyond, that teacher educators have less knowledge, or less intelligence, or less something, and their work is devalued. If I look beyond the contextual issues, I see that my commitment as a teacher educator is to prepare the best teachers possible so that they can work with all students. While I would describe a teacher as thoughtful, creative, and someone who understands the research process, I would describe a teacher educator as one who thoughtfully and creatively teaches and engages in research.*

As seen above, based on our own writing, feelings, and experiences, being a teacher educator complicates things. Teacher educators are not one identity or another and being a teacher educator in one country does not seem to be the same as being a teacher educator in another country. In the United States teacher educators usually attain doctorates in curriculum and instruction or related areas. While they often have experience in public schools, that may not serve as a job requirement. Moreover, teacher educators in the U.S. often engage in research, but not always. In The Netherlands, teacher educators are usually experienced and excellent teachers with a master degree in a specific subject like English, history, or science. Only a minority of teacher educators are engaged in research, even fewer teacher educators have a terminal degree.

As we explored our situations and experience we saw dramatic differences and contrasts yet similarities and likenesses. Our feelings and experiences are confirmed by literature: the profession of teacher educator is neither well-defined nor recognized as being an important profession on its own merits and this seems to have effects on the identity of teacher educators. As Bullough (2005), in line with Gee (2000-2001) argues: recognition is foundational to identity formation.

For example, it is quite remarkable that there is a common assumption that a good teacher will also make a good teacher educator. So, in the eyes of many there are few differences between the profession of teaching and the profession

of teacher educator. In the Netherlands, even teacher educators seem to share this assumption: more than a few identify themselves as teachers instead of teacher educators (Swennen, Korthagen, & Lunenberg, 2004).

A comparable phenomenon can be observed in the United States, where teachers of teachers often prefer to be seen and identify themselves as professors rather than teacher educators. This fits with Ducharme's assertion that education faculty who spend the majority of their time with the teacher preparation curriculum and students often do not identify themselves as teacher educators (Ducharme, 1993, p. 3). It may be the Janus-like nature of their lives, looking toward both the "field" and academe that produces a schizophrenic quality to their lives (Ducharme, 1993, p. 4). However, Ducharme continues, teacher educators even seem to have more than two faces: "School person, scholar, researcher, methodologist, and visitor to a strange planet" (Ducharme, 1993, p. 6).

The vagueness about what it means to be a teacher educator seems only to have increased in the last two decades, partly related to the shift in responsibilities for the preparation of future teachers:

> Many teacher educators are part-time, adjunct, temporary, and/or clinical faculty and fieldwork supervisors; graduate students who supervise as part of financial assistantships or part-time jobs; and school-based personnel who work as site-based supervisors, coordinators, and school-university liaisons. (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 22)

This shift in responsibilities, at least in the U.S., comes from the heightened expectations for publications and inability of tenure track faculty to meet both the expectations of university and teacher education programs. While adjunct and clinical faculty may have vital roles in the teacher education program, the temporary nature of their positions raises questions about consistency and commitment. To strengthen the connection between theory and practice a shift from learning to teach in teacher education institutes to schools has been taken place in the U.S. as well as in The Netherlands. This shift increases the responsibilities of teachers in the school and puts them in the role of teacher educators. Both developments make it more difficult to define the professional group of teacher educators.

Another sign that the profession of teacher educator is vague can be found in the fact that there is little preparation for it. As Buchberger, Campos, Kallos, and Stephenson (2000) stated in relation to the preparation of European teacher educators:

> Most teacher educators . . . have never received education and training in methodologies of teaching, co-operation and learning appropriate for adult learners (student teachers and professional teachers). A number of problems of teacher education could arise from the fact that the whole issue of education of teacher educators has been rather neglected. (p. 56)

In the U.S. the preparation of teacher educators varies greatly. This international situation raises interesting questions for teacher education programs individually and more questions about the global perspective of teacher education.

As thoughtful teacher educators with a global view, we ask: who are we as teacher educators? And where are we in the development as a professional group? What directions could and will we take in the future? In this article we take a critical look at these questions.

We agree with Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004), who point out that there are few distinct moments when teacher educators are only practitioners or only researchers. Although we realize that Cochran-Smith and Lytle most likely have focused on teacher educators in the U.S., we believe this statement fits both U.S. and The Netherlands teacher educators. Along with them, we recognize the blurred boundaries of analysis and action, of inquiry and experience, of theorizing and doing, and understand that the contexts of teacher education shape and are shaped by teacher educators. We wrestle with what this suggests for teacher educators as a profession. In this article, for analytical reasons, we address two issues that seem crucial for further development of the profession and identity of teacher educators. The first issue concerns the connection between personal history and practical theory; the second issue concerns the task of teacher educators to develop (public) knowledge, a task not to be taken for granted, as we explain. We attempt to distinguish our ideas about these two issues in what might look like a linear fashion, taking one role/task at a time. In the final section, however, we return to the multiple layers and multiple perspectives of the teacher educator profession and we offer our vision about how it might develop.

From Personal History to Practical Theory

In this section we explore connections between the personal and the practical and consider the relevance of these issues to the identity of teacher educators. Before we address the research literature, we ask ourselves about relations between personal history and practical theory, we look at our lives and our perspectives to situate ourselves and the readers within this query:

> M: *I was not that successful in secondary school, so when I was 16 years old I exchanged secondary school for a school for vocational education. I decided to become a graphic designer and I did. After graduation I found a job at a publishers firm specialized in school methods. That's the place where my fascination for teaching and teacher education started. So, five years later, when I was 25, I decided to go to the university to study adult education. In contrast with ten years earlier, learning became a pleasure. Based on my own experiences, I am convinced that in (adult) learning a concrete future goal is a great motivational factor.*
>
> *I became a faculty staff member, wrote my Ph.D. thesis and then, when I was 39 years old, I became a teacher educator, which I am today . . . 17 years later.*
>
> *Implicitly, I have always felt that being a teacher educator is a profession on its own, that my students are adults wanting to become professional*

teachers who will be able to work with uncertain and unfocused pupils like I was when I was 16-years old.

I am convinced that personal characteristics of teachers and teacher educators, their gender, race and age, as well as their personal history and their own way of learning should be taken into account in a professional development process. We should not only recognize that students and pupils differ from each other and from us; we also have to think about ways to make these differences productive.

ML: *What is a teacher educator? Is a teacher educator just one thing? Do they have just one role? What might be the elements of a teacher educator? Let me see. A teacher educator . . . a teacher educator . . . a teacher educator is a person who educates teachers. That could be someone who works in the schools or who works at the University . . . it could be anyone who works with teachers to help prepare them for the work with students . . . preK-12 students.*

Wait a minute?! Who prepares teacher educators to teach their students? Once a teacher always a teacher? Are there no differences between teachers and teacher educators? Are there no differences between PreK -12 and college age students? Are teacher educators just "grown up" teachers? Could anyone be a teacher? Could anyone be a teacher educator? How does that work?

And does a teacher educator have to be someone who has worked in the schools as a researcher or a professional developer? In what ways does this person have to be familiar with teaching? With educating students? With educating colleagues? What qualifies the person as a teacher educator? Does a PhD qualify them? Does an advanced degree?

In times past, in the United States, teachers educators did not always have a background in teaching at the PreK-12 level. These days, for the most part, teacher educators bring their PreK-12 teaching experiences with them with applying for position in University teacher education programs. From my perspective, a teacher educator has to be familiar with teaching, with the content involved in teaching, and with pedagogy…but more than that. I think a teacher educator must be a curious and critical inquirer into their teaching and their theories about teaching. I think that a teacher educator is often associated with someone who works at the University, but not always. In addition, I hope a teacher educator has a foundation in issues of social justice to encourage their students to understand policies and issues relevant to a statement like "leave no child behind" or "all children can learn."

For example, at my institution, we have graduate students, clinical faculty (colleagues with a strong familiarity with teaching in the public

schools) and professors on the tenure track who work with our preservice students. All of them are expected to have worked with in the public schools. And in our department when we interview people for available positions we expect that they will have been teachers for at least three years. That would mean that a teacher educator has experience with students, pedagogy, content, and the schooling context. There would be things learned from experience, but it is more than that. This knowledge must also come from . . . be grounded in . . . theory and research. Those connections among research and practice and experience are among the essential elements for strong teacher educators.

Personal History

We argue that our own personal histories as well as the personal history of other teacher educators and the practical theory or wisdom they develop cannot be seen as separate. Personal history includes among other things the development of our nature, our experiences and the possibilities and limitations that institutions and other persons offer us (Gee, 2000-2001). Although the influence of personal history on professional action is carried out is not unique for teacher educators, the vagueness of the profession and the fact that there are no straight career paths for becoming a teacher educator, seems to make the influence of personal history on the profession of teacher educator more significant than in may other professions.

For example, Bullough (2005) describes the struggle of Barbara to become a teacher educator. Barbara, an experienced and devoted teacher who gives overwhelming assistance and support to her pupils, becomes a school-based teacher educator in a School-University Partnership centered on supporting the preparation of student teachers. Initially Barbara views the mentoring of student teachers within the school as basically "a mom thing . . . I feel like a mom" (p. 148). Quickly she realizes that she is not the competent teacher educator she would like to be because she mainly supports student teachers on the basis of her own experiences. Although the school administrators view mentoring as a part of her daily work and therefore offer only minimal support, Barbara seeks to learn more about teacher education. Unfortunately, her university-based partners do not include her in their discussions about students or teacher education. So, as Bullough, following Darling (2001), concludes, Barbara's personal history leads her to a practical theory of creating a community of compassion with her student teachers and not a community of inquiry. Support, not learning, becomes the central focus of her teacher education practices with students.

The example of Barbara's experiences with teacher education is not unique. Many teacher educators, school-based as well as university-based, were teachers before they became teacher educators. The road from being a teacher to being a teacher educator is well documented by Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, and Placier (1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998). These teacher educators have written individually and collectively about their rocky roads toward becoming teacher educators. Their

practical notions and their intermittent inclusion and exclusion from conversations about teacher education have affected their identities as teacher educators. Like Barbara, Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, and Placier grappled with the distinctions between public school teaching and becoming teacher educators. For them, the obligations they felt toward public school students affected (and still affects) choices made when addressing their preservice students in their teacher education classes.

Other aspects of the influence of the personal histories of teacher educators on their work are also documented. Oda (1998), a teacher educator with a Japanese heritage, contemplated issues of diversity in relation to her students and the students of her students as she prepared the curriculum for her teacher education classes. Valuing diversity as well as the children her students would work with, she attempted to design the best curriculum possible for her teacher education class without much support from the design of the teacher education program. Tidwell and Fitzgerald (2006) give more examples of the way diversity colors the personal histories and the teaching of teacher educators. Knowles and Cole (1995) describe how their feeling of becoming split personalities—due to the contradiction between their need for knowledge on teacher education and the academic research standards—drives them to conduct research on their own teacher education practices. The difficulties of finding a comfort zone in academia where the work of teacher educators lacks value and threaten their abilities to engage in best teacher education practices is a common theme in the personal history of teacher educators who turn to self-study research (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004).

Modeling

As teacher educators must come to reflect on their personal histories, their students need to become conscious of their personal histories and the ways in which this history shapes their beliefs too. For example, in what ways do their theories affect their response to curriculum? To behavior? As asserted by Bullough (2005), knowledge of personal history makes teaching choices more conscious and more powerful. Once they accomplish this, they can explore their possibilities as a teacher and start developing a personal style of teaching (Fenstermacher, 1999). According to Fenstermacher, the moral and intellectual virtues (manner) and the professional training (methods) of teachers, and by extension of teacher educators, show up in different approaches to teaching and teacher education, depending of personal style. In turn, these become important elements of teacher educators' identities.

A powerful way to support the professional preparation of student teachers and the development of their personal styles is the modeling by teacher educators as Loughran and Northfield (1996, among others) illustrate. Modeling by teacher educators means intentionally displaying certain teaching behaviors and processes with the aim of promoting student teachers' professional learning (cf. Gallimore & Tharp, 1992). ***Intentionally*** is a keyword here, because teacher educators must be able to make their teaching choices explicit and discuss with students the process

used to make those choices. As teacher educators discuss their teaching practices and processes with their students, the students can consider ways they would and would (or not) use the presented practices in their own development as teachers (Wubbels, Korthagen, & Broekman, 1997). To engage in this successfully teacher educators must have a conscious understanding of their professional identity and personal history.

As Loughran and Berry (2005) show, modeling is not as simple as just saying what one is doing; it involves a sensitivity to situations; a concentration on deciding what explanation and discussion will be helpful (and what not) given the background, the experiences and the level of development of the students involved. Done well, modeling can help student teachers to bridge the gap between practice and theory, because through modeling words are given to experiences and practical wisdom, and what Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, and Wubbels (2001) call phronesis, can be developed. Again, to present to their students successfully teacher educators must have developed their own understandings of phronesis.

As Grossman (2005) reminds us, teacher education has always encompassed a wide range of pedagogical approaches and given the complex and multidimensional nature of teaching, no single pedagogical approach—as for example modeling—is ever likely to suffice in preparing teachers. What is interesting, however, with regard to modeling, is that this pedagogical approach connects not only experience and practical theory, but also an instructional approach (what Fenstermacher terms *methods*) with relational aspects of learning. Here teacher educators carefully thread their experience, their practical theories and their personal histories to prepare best practices for their classrooms and best ways to articulate the processes—all within their understanding of their professional identities.

Loughran and Berry, longtime colleagues in science education at their university, have focused some of their writings (for example Berry & Loughran, 2002) on the development of their professional identities. They share a belief that through modeling the relationship between teacher educators and students shapes the learning of student teachers. The following example, provided by Loughran and Berry (2005), can clarify this:

> Adam and Ben, two student teachers, have prepared a micro-teaching lesson on Buddhism. They put up a long and difficult text for the class to read on the overhead projector. No one protested, so Amanda Berry and John Loughran interrupted: "I can't read it" and "Buddhism seems dumb to me." Adam and Ben did nothing, no one did anything. "Come on, are you going to deal with me?" John continued. A long and painful silence followed. Finally, a class member spoke up: "That is inappropriate behaviour, John. Stop it." (p. 197)

As Loughran and Berry emphasize, knowledge about the students involved and trust that vulnerability is allowed in the class are needed to make a situation as described above a productive learning situation. In this specific experience, Adam and Ben's classmates learned along with them about the effects of the methods

they chose and potential behaviors in such a confronting situation. Through the experience and the discussion that followed, the students involved could begin to develop their own practical theories about how to handle such situations and the teacher educators could explore their success in presenting their practical theory.

Reflection

As mentioned above, consciousness of personal history and carefully orchestrated discussions of experiences are important ingredients for shaping the practical theories of teachers and teacher educators. But what is a practical theory?

We agree with Cole and Knowles (2004) that practical theory starts by assuming that teaching (and teaching education) and research are closely related activities. Use of practical theory involves experiencing a critical insight in the real world, using that insight to solve a problem and including this experiential learning in a future action. Academic theory is used to nurture or critique this process of problem solving and learning (Bullough, 1997). The connection with academic theory prevents practical theory from becoming "anything and everything" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 21).

Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, and Wubbels (2001) argue that, to stimulate the development of practical theory, it is important to deepen the discussions of experiences to a reflective level. The ALACT-model (Action, Looking back, Awareness of essential aspects, Creating alternative methods of action, Trial) can be helpful. Thoughtful examinations of belief and action are critical here. When stages of the model's essential aspects like frustration and resistance are revealed, as the earlier Adam and Ben example demonstrates, teacher educators need to know what to do. At this point, in the middle (or LAC) stages of the model where the development of a practical theory can be stimulated by learning from others, knowledge provided by research literature (academic or public knowledge, or as Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, and Wubbels call it— episteme; see also Zeichner, 1999; Richardson, 2002) as well as modeling of reflective thinking by teacher educators can help move the preservice students forward.

Here we meet another aspect of the profession of teacher educators: offering academic knowledge and insight so that new teachers need not re-invent the wheel, yet doing so without overloading them with theory not relevant at that particular moment. Again, this calls for a sensitivity to situations on the part of teacher educators; a concentration on deciding what will be helpful (or not) given the background, the experiences and the level of development of the students involved and a broad knowledge of academic knowledge.

As we stated earlier, an important feature of the profession of teacher educator seems to be their competence to support student teachers in becoming conscious about the ways their personal histories influence their professional development and the ways to use this consciousness productively. This means that teacher educators may be expected to create and use teaching and learning experiences and to discuss

these experiences with the purpose to promote the development of practical theory in student teachers. Literature, as we illustrate above, clarifies that this competence includes many different aspects, such as modeling, building a relationship with student teachers, sensitivity to productive learning situations and emotional aspects of learning; the capacity to decide what explanation, discussion and academic theory will be helpful (or not) given the level of development of student teachers, and a deep knowledge of theory.

As several authors (among others, Howey & Zimpher, 1990; Ducharme, 1993; Zeichner, 1999) have explained, the question, "How do teacher educators deal with the roles of teaching and teaching about teaching?" is a crucial one. Based on our perspectives, we argue that the answer to this question is complicated as well as central for (the development of) the profession of teacher educator. As will be explained in the final section of this article, we feel that recognizing that teacher education is multi-layered work is a starting point to answer this question. Moreover, we feel that work has to be done to assure that all teacher educators, taking into account local and national contexts, develop (further) competencies needed to carry out these roles.

An indication that this is not always the case can be found in the study by Koster, Dengerink, Korthagen, and Lunenberg (2005) about 25 experienced and highly motivated Dutch teacher educators who participated in a professional development project to become formally registered as teacher educators by the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators. The participants in this project had a preference for experimenting and interactive learning as ways of strengthening their teaching practice during professional development activities. At the same time, however, at least sixteen participants participated in professional development without explicitly reflecting on their work experiences and at least ten participants went through a process of professional development without reading a book or any other source of literature. While American readers might claim that tenure track expectations keep teachers educator engaged in reflective research, this possible discrepancy speaks to the multiple-layered nature of the profession and the need to explore the professional identity of teacher educators.

Teacher Educators as Producers and Consumers of Knowledge

Having looked at teachers educators and teaching, we asked ourselves, "What is the role of teacher educators as both consumers and producers of knowledge?"

> M: *Two developments in recent years have helped me to develop my practical theory and to discuss it. The first development concerns the upcoming of self-study research. The second development is the introduction of a professional standard for teacher educators in The Netherlands. Over the*

years, I have also read articles and books written from different theoretical perspectives and points of view. Some of these I chose myself, others had to do with what was supposed to be in fashion in a certain period of time. Looking back, the studies that influenced me most, had to do with discussing tensions—tensions between distance and involvement, between searching for facts and taking care, between theory and practice. Recently, I am interested in connecting "traditional" research with practitioner research in teacher education, because I feel that such a connection can support to enhance the professional level of teacher educators and teacher education. I am intrigued by self-studies, but I also recognize that in The Netherlands, due to the way teacher education is organized, most teacher educators do not have the time and skills to carry out self-study research. So, I search for alternatives.

Participants in my research projects, in my case teacher educators, may expect respect for their daily work and for their willingness to participate in a study and making themselves and their practice vulnerable. They may expect from me—and from my Ph.D. students—that we carefully present the research results and discuss with them the possible consequences of these results for their practices.

ML: *My theories about teaching and learning, about consuming and producing knowledge have developed over the course of my career as a teacher. As a public school teacher I engaged in reflective examinations of my teaching, but in these early stages I looked at my own teaching and consumed the stories told by others. I rarely read research-based work. As my thinking and my theories developed, I examined my teaching and the teaching of others and enhance my understandings that developed from that with the readings I now included in my knowledge base. As that happened I began to produce ideas, research and thinking I hoped would contribute to the knowledge base—particularly in the areas of self-study and qualitative research. For me, the consumption and production of knowledge fit onto a Möbius strip that contributes to an ever-deepening understanding of the teaching-learning-living process.*

For both of us, the consumption and production of knowledge associated with teaching and teacher education link together and relate, often directly, to our work with our students. As we discussed in the previous section, we see the guidance of student teachers toward becoming consumers of public or academic knowledge as an important aspect of the professional identity of teacher educators. This presumes that teacher educators are also regular consumers of academic knowledge, a presumption that we question, however.

Taking this into account, the issue we discuss in this section is a tricky one. We are conscious of the fact that while the idea of teacher educators as regular

consumers of academic knowledge may be generally accepted, it depends on your definition of teacher educator as to what you might expect from them with regard to the production of knowledge. Moreover, we realize that between the United States and The Netherlands (and elsewhere we are sure) there are differing definitions of and expectations for teacher educators. Below (see Table 1), we present an overview of variations of teacher educators in the United States and The Netherlands and their professional backgrounds.

Knowledge Production

In the 20th century the issue of who consumes and/or produces knowledge ebbed and flowed through research literature in education and beyond. For too long teachers were simply seen as consumers of knowledge with university academics seen as the creators and promoters of that knowledge. The practical research of teachers, critical to classrooms, was not seen as useful in a generalizable sense. Then, in the twilight of the 20th century into the dawn of the 21st century with the turn from modern to postmodern views of research and possibilities beyond a

Table 1. Types of teacher educators in the U.S. and The Netherlands.

	School-based teacher educators (Cooperating teachers, teachers who support students during practica)	*Teacher educators for students preparing to be primary school and junior high teachers*	*Teacher educators for students preparing to be senior high teachers*
United States	Teaching certification, teaching experience, coursework beyond certification They have expertise as a teacher but little if any preparation as a teacher educator	Teaching certification with teaching experience, usually in public schools, and a doctorate—general teacher education or specific content-teaching area. (In the United States we have a variety of institutions that prepare teachers, some are research-extensive institutions, some institutions focus more on teaching.)	
The Netherlands	Experienced teachers; limited (often not compulsory) training as teacher educator	Mostly experienced, excellent teachers with a master degree in a specific subject; seldom involved in research(work at institutes for Higher Vocational Education)	Mostly experienced, excellent teachers with a master degree in a specific subject or a doctorate; part of them have also a research task (work at Universities)

terminal duality, the work of some researchers ventured into this realm to contest "the traditional approaches to research" (Hamilton, 2004, p. 404). Whether called practitioner research (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001, for example), or scholarship of teaching (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999), or practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004), or the broader identifier of self-study research (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004), these approaches to research push our understandings of knowledge production.

Based on an extensive review, Cole and Knowles (2004) discuss various assumptions concerning knowledge production by teacher educators. An example of a conventional assumption is that, research "and teaching are dichotomous activities (p. 475)" and the alternative assumption is that within, "the field of teaching and teacher education, research and teaching are inter-related and mutually informing" (p. 475). Along with the work mentioned earlier, Cole and Knowles support the alternative choice, suggesting that teaching and practice are the sites for research. As teacher educators we take the stand that the development of the profession of teacher educators needs them to be both consumers and producers of knowledge. We fear that teacher educators will disempower themselves and their profession if they fail to make their work public.

Lest it appear that we find self-study to be the only kind of research that teacher educators pursue as they explore the knowledge base of teacher education or that we have taken a very narrow perspective of the kinds of research that contributes to practical knowledge and teacher education, we do not. Excellent research has been done that explores professional knowledge, like the works of Richardson (1994a; 1994b; 2002) and Fenstermacher (1986; 1994) on the practical arguments of research, the works on personal practical knowledge by Clandinin and Connelly (1996, for example), the exploration of practitioner inquiry by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004, for example), the discussion of realistic teacher education by Korthagen and colleagues (2001, for example) and the pedagogy of teacher education as it relates to professional learning (Loughran, 2006). Further, we recognize that self study is not the only way to document one's own teaching; exploration of one's teaching practice can also be seen in the work of scholars associated with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999, for example), in the form of web presentations, case studies, and electronic portfolios. We find self study as ***one*** promising way of constructing knowledge for teacher education.

As we discuss below, the developments with regard to knowledge production by teacher educators are promising. Since the early 1990s, when self-study research began to emerge, a growing number of teacher educators produced detailed accounts of their own work in teacher education, or of their own professional development. (Self-study can be seen as a systematic approach to research with self as a focus that gives attention to questions of generalization and draws on academic publications to enhance its trustworthiness (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004)). Yet, there are still too many teacher educators who do not consider themselves producers of knowledge.

Teacher Educators as Producers of Knowledge: The Current Situation

In the United States most university-based teacher educators carry out some form of research. Many of them, however, connect this research task with their role as professor, not their role as teacher educator. As professors they have to publish, because the University criteria for promotion mainly focus on the quality of their research and on the number of publications produced. Consequently, the knowledge they develop may not be knowledge that contributes to the development of teacher education and the profession of teacher educators. Instead it may be disseminated to the esoteric few that read a specific publication. This tension between the expectations of academia and the roles of teacher educators clearly creates problems for those teacher educators who have become increasingly aware of the discrepancies between new insights about teaching, learning and the role of research, on the one hand, and the traditional academic context in which they work on the other hand. We already mentioned Knowles and Cole (1995), who explained how they almost developed split personalities in their academic assignments. In their teaching, they worked with views of knowledge as context-bound, personal and dynamic. In their research, however, they had to show their faith in traditional ways of knowledge growth. To receive rewards (like tenure) they had to meet expectations that focus on conventional views of research.

The self-studies of teaching practices offer one way to address these contradictions (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004). Without question, dealing with these contradictions has been an important factor in promoting self-study research. Self-study research carried out by teacher educators, focuses on their own teaching and academic practices. Zeichner (1999) also emphasizes that self-study appears to be a productive way for teacher educators to connect the academic task of conducting research with their own professional development and the development of the profession. In this respect, he states, a new kind of scholarship has surfaced, that allows teacher educators to address their interests in teaching and scholarship. Cole and Knowles (2004) state that "through the collective will" of the generation of teacher educators that initiated self-studies in the early nineties, "a shift has occurred in the way that teacher educators are viewed and understood within the broader academic community" (p. 455).

As Cochran-Smith (2003) suggests, many part-time, temporary, and school-based teacher educators have neither the time, nor the knowledge, to study their own practices systematically. In fact, it could be said, based on solid arguments, that conducting research by themselves is not a realistic undertaking for these particular groups of teacher educators because they lack opportunity for professional development and for improving their practices.

This is certainly the case in The Netherlands where only a minority of Dutch teacher educators has research as an integrated part of their job description. As illustrated in Table 1, this is so because for primary school teachers and for teachers at the lower levels of secondary schools are not trained at traditional universities, but

at specific colleges for higher vocational education. Until recently, teacher educators working at these colleges did not have research tasks within their job description. A professional development project of the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators illustrates the slow change in this situation: in the initial version of a list of competencies for teacher educators (Koster & Dengerink, 1999) who wanted to be registered, research was listed as an extra competency for some teacher educators.

In the second version of this list (Koster & Dengerink, 2003), knowledge production became a competency that all registered teacher educators are expected to have. The change in language from research to knowledge production also mirrors a change from more conventional to more alternative assumptions concerning knowledge production by teacher educators (compare Cole & Knowles, 2004). So, in The Netherlands, the idea of knowledge development by teacher educators is greeted as a policy, but in practice the situation is difficult: the majority of teacher educators lacks time and skills for knowledge production. Moreover, Koster (2003) found that not all teacher educators are enthusiastic about the idea of knowledge production being part of their tasks.

Alternative Ways of Knowledge Production

While we see positive developments, we also must conclude that at this stage of development in the profession of teacher educators the production of knowledge may be a bridge too far for some of them. At some institutions in The Netherlands and the U.S. the production of knowledge may be fostered. At other institutions there may be less support. And even if there is support, many teacher educators spend most of their time focused on their teaching. Therefore, the challenge for the future is to think about ways to form communities of knowledge producers where teacher educators work together to produce knowledge. For example, Lunenberg and Willemse (2006) carried out some small projects in which they formulated problem definitions together with the teacher educators involved, so that the problem studied by the researchers was widely recognized. They also worked with teacher educators who, after being trained, conducted parts of a study (for example observing each other, interviewing each other and each other students). Finally, they collaboratively reflected upon findings and as a group wrote an article for fellow teacher educators (Bal, Lunenberg, Swennen, Tanja, & Wetsteijn, 2002). In the United States and elsewhere, collaborative self-studies have been undertaken to promote alternative assumptions about research as well as deeper understandings of the learning-to-teach process for teacher educators (for example, Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, & Placier, 1997; Clift, Brady, Mora, Choi, & Stegemoller, 2005; Bass, Anderson-Patton, & Allender, 2002). Each of these different studies explore ways that teacher educators at the university collaborate to promote the deeper development of understandings about teaching for all involved.

And how do we support these novice researchers in the fields of teaching and teacher education? From our own experiences we know that young researchers

often wrestle with the communication with experienced and much older teachers and teacher educators with whom they work. They find it difficult to share and discuss expectations, ideas and results with them. Based on these experiences, in the spring of 2005, three professors in teaching and teaching education (Jos Beishuizen, John Loughran, and Mieke Lunenberg) met with 17 Ph.D. students in the context of a short international course (9 contact hours). The leading question of the course was "What can we do to help teachers/teacher educators to benefit from our research?"

Based on literature study, presentations of the professors and structured reflections and discussions, the group formulated guidelines to help teachers and teacher educators, including: expect your professors to model ways to discuss results with teachers/teacher educators interactively; be clear about the benefits teachers/teacher educators can and cannot expect from your research; and with "what can we learn from each other" as a motto discuss results with the group of participating teacher/teacher educators. Evaluations from this program show that the participating students valued the course highly and hope that this preparation will serve them well as they begin their careers as teacher educators (Schildkamp, Loughran, Lunenberg, & Beishuizen, 2006).

More deliberate preparation of teacher educators regarding pedagogy and research practice seems important here. The lack of distinct moments where a teacher educator is only a practitioner or only a researcher calls for more attention to teacher educator as a profession. While we have begun to examine the professional knowledge of teacher educators (for example, Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), the teaching of teacher educators (Korthagen, Loughran, & Lunenberg, 2005), the pedagogy of teacher educators (Loughran, 2006), and the process of becoming teacher educators (Van der Klink & Swennen, 2006), there has been little work done that examines the profession in its fullness.

Multiple Layers, Multiple Perspectives Revisited

We return again to the question—who are we as teachers educators?

M: *As a teacher educator I am someone who makes my personal history productive to develop a personal style and a personal, practical theory, and connect this theory with public knowledge. As a teacher educator I try to model my learning and teaching for my students and to support them to reflect on their own development as learner and teacher.*

As a teacher educator, I am part of a national and international community of teacher educators that feels the obligation to produce knowledge, because when it comes to theory development for teaching education we are the experts.

ML: *When I ask myself who I am as a teacher educator and what my*

identity is as a teacher educator, I respond with a multiplicity of possibilities. Who I am very depends upon what I am doing, where I am, and who is with me. I am expected as a professor to write and I do write. I write about my practice, my understandings of text, and my understandings of the students with whom I engage. I intend for my research to have impact on my students and those within teacher education in the teaching I do as well as the writing I do. I am encouraged by readings that I do, not of the quantifiable sort, but of the storied sort where there is understandings of the complexities of the world within which we work and attempt to make a difference. So, as a teacher educator, I have an advanced degree, have doctoral students with whom I work, I teach both undergraduate and graduate classes, I continuously engage in the self-study of the my teaching practices, sometimes more formally than other times; I represent my teacher education community at various meetings, and I attempt to stay current in the public schools as well as with the literature and politics about schooling in general.

As I teacher educator I feel it is important for me to resist traditional approaches to teaching and research, not simply to resist, but because I do not believe those approaches are most appropriate for either teaching or research. And taking this alternative stand within my teaching and research and life has not always had positive results. Yet, to best support my students and the ways that I perceive my identity, this is the proper stand for me.

Throughout this text we have used our own writings to situate ourselves within the layers and perspectives of teacher educator identity. We discussed the vagueness about what it means to be a teacher educator and the fact that there is no training for it. Next, we addressed two issues that seem crucial for the (further development of the) profession and identity of teacher educators: the connection between personal history and practical theory and the task of teacher educators to develop (public) knowledge. We showed that taking into account personal history is important for our own development as well as the development of our student teachers. We also showed that academic knowledge and insight helps us and our student teachers to prevent re-inventing the wheel. Both issues pointed our attention (again) to the two-layered character of our profession.

Although the idea of teacher educators as regular consumers of academic knowledge may be generally accepted, it depends on the definition of teacher educators what might expect from them with regard to the production of knowledge. We have taken the stand that teacher educators need to be both consumers and producers of knowledge. We fear that teacher educators will disempower themselves and their profession if they fail to make their work public. The development of self-study research in the last decade has been an enormous step in this direction. We acknowledge, however, that in the current situation not all teacher educators have

the opportunity and knowledge to carry out research. Therefore, it seems important to form communities of knowledge producers where teacher educators together produce knowledge. As we described in this article, some promising examples of how to do this can be found.

We return to the multiple layers and multiple perspectives of the teacher educator profession. Through writing this article, we have come to the insight that this *vagueness* is not a problem to be solved, but a challenge to be taken. In the last decade we, as teacher educators, have gained a lot of insight in our own profession. We know now that it is a multi-layered profession with local and national variations. We know that as teacher educators our personal histories shape our personal style and practical theory. We know that our task is to offer insight and knowledge to new teachers. We also know that modeling and reflection are powerful instruments to do so. We are convinced that carrying out research and developing public knowledge is an integrated part of our profession. We study and write about our practice and connect our findings with public knowledge, because this way we contribute to a knowledge base for teaching education that is rooted in and can be used in practice.

Of course, there are limitations to self-study research. There are always limitations and concerns that emerge when *the self* is the focus of study. Self-study researchers themselves recognize the boundaries of self-study research and are keen to preserve the quality of their work. For example, Bullough, and Pinnegar (2001) provide guidelines to strengthen this work and insure (as much as is possible) the integrity and power of the work.

Summarizing, it seems to us that in the last decade we have identified the beads of our profession and our next challenge is threading them. We cannot do this threading alone. As have many of our colleagues-teacher educators, we recognize that being a teacher educator sometimes means taking a stand when asserting that theory and practice are two aspects of the same bead. We do so because of the development of our profession and because of our own well-being: we cannot and will not become split personalities. Since the late 20th century a strong community of teacher educators who share the aforementioned ideas has grown. Together we can thread the beads on a golden chain.

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