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Researchers In Our Own Classrooms: What Propels Teacher Researchers?*

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A teacher-researcher is an observer
a questioner
a learner
and a more complete teacher.
Glenda Bissex (1987, p. 4)

A teacher researcher, among other things, is a questioner. Her questions propel her forward. As teacher educators, we strive to instill in our students this desire for constant betterment, but I needed a nudge to help me see the importance of this stance.

One day I attended a meeting with trustees at the University of New Hampshire, and one gentleman declared, "What you professors in education do wrong is send out graduates who think they've learned how to teach and are now supposed to do it. Teaching is something they are supposed to learn to do throughout their lives."

He caught my attention. Do I give the teachers in my classes that impression? Do they see me as someone who has learned how to teach and now just does it? Or do they see me, the one from whom they are learning to teach, reflect and replan with their needs in mind?

The more I thought about my teaching, the more I realized I am still learning. I am a teacher researcher, a term I do not usually apply to myself. I have grown into it from being a researcher in other teachers' classrooms, taking copious notes, and learning the value of having a transcript of what goes on. I reread my scratches from my own classes, analyze them, and use them to plan the next class session and future courses. In my research, I have come to use my students' words as my primary data, and record as many of their utterances as possible.

I SERVE AS A RESEARCHER IN MY EVALUATION COURSE

This behavior of mine sometimes confuses my students. In the summer of 1995, a teacher in my Evaluation Course had taken a different class from me in 1987. We were

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both excited that she was going to be in one of my courses again, but on the first day of class this summer I scared her. I sat and wrote throughout the day while the 20 teachers in this graduate class became acquainted, and explored the notion of evaluation. I entered the discussion less frequently than most professors do, but I did contribute. Mostly, however, I wrote.

By the end of this 3-week course, I had filled two spiral notebooks with their words. I continue to do this in my classes this fall, did so in my classes last spring, and in the previous fall. I am not sure when I began, but I had not sat and written 8 years ago when Debbie was in my class, nor had I reflected upon my notes after each class session in the form of a letter to the class. Now, I review what happens, try to make sense of it, and set a direction. I publicly evaluate myself, and distribute this letter at the beginning of each class. All is quiet while we read a replay of some of our words, and think about the significance of what everyone said.

One of our topics of conversation throughout this Evaluation Course was the individual goals each student worked on to learn something of interest to herself or himself about evaluation. They started to call these their research projects, a label I did not provide, and they started to realize that their out-of-context summer learning would take them into their schools in the fall. This, I had hoped for.

One teacher, for example, who was a special education teacher in California, searched for ways that her students could keep their own records of their growth in relation to the goals of their Individual Education Plan (IEP). She decided to have them create portfolios that they could present at the department's end-of-the-year staff meetings. She phoned the California Department of Special Education, and they gave her the go-ahead. Her students will constantly evaluate themselves this year, and she will constantly evaluate them. She will learn something new about evaluation, which is one of my goals for my students, but not my primary focus.

I want my students to begin to see themselves as their own evaluators. The program in which my Evaluation Course abides determined this goal for me. This course is one of three courses within our Summer Writing Program. For the Writing Course, the center of the course is the teacher as writer. Similarly, for the Reading-Writing Course, the core of the course is the development of the teacher as a reader-writer. So, the heart of the Evaluation Course is for the teachers to see themselves as evaluators of themselves and their work and, given the social milieu of the summer program, they also evaluate each other.

Actually, of course, the teachers in the other courses already do this. The teachers in the Writing Course evaluate themselves, their own writing, and that of each other, informally, when they meet in small and large groups. Similarly, the teachers in the Reading-Writing Course evaluate themselves and each other as readers and writers (Sunstein, 1994). All I do in the Evaluation Course is formalize this, as a way to bring together (in a third year), what the teachers do during their first 2 years. To my surprise, the teachers in my class have "Aha!" experiences.

Somehow, to put the evaluation of themselves up front focuses the teaching of writing and reading. They say things like, "The philosophy of this course is really bringing me to decide to change what I do in my classroom. I've been to this summer

program before, but I haven't really changed what I do in my classroom." I am caught off guard. The previous summers have not changed their teaching?

While I try to sort out what is going on, they spring another surprise upon me. They start calling themselves teacher researchers. Whereas the curriculum of this course lies within the goals each person sets for herself, I have not conceived of this work as research, but they do, and probably more importantly, they immerse themselves in it. They enjoy it! So, unexpected by me, I find myself in the midst of a group of 20 busy, self-consciously excited, self-proclaimed teacher researchers.

WHAT PROPELS TEACHER RESEARCHERS?

I decide to study what I have spawned. *Teacher Researchers* is a term I have let encircle me for several years, but have not pursued, even though I coedited a book of chapters written by teacher researchers (Hansen, Newkirk, & Graves, 1985). In my quest for information for this chapter you are now reading, I found that university researchers are not included in most references to teacher researchers. The term *Teacher Researcher* is usually reserved for elementary and secondary teachers who research their own teaching, a task typically not pursued by university researchers. University researchers generally research the teaching of the elementary and secondary teachers. Even though an increasingly larger number of teacher educators are becoming teacher researchers, we do not publicly question ourselves as much as elementary and secondary teachers do.

As I read research reports, accounts, articles, book chapters, stories, and books written by teacher researchers, I learned of two outstanding characteristics of teacher research: (a) it represents a world view, and (b) a way to question. As a world view (Hudson-Ross & Graham, 1996), teacher research represents an approach toward teaching in which teachers learn from and with their students. As a way to question, teacher research supports teachers' efforts to ask what Suzanne Brady and Suzie Jacobs (1994) call "real questions." These, in general, are a learner's own questions, not questions given by someone else for the learner to pursue.

In trying to find out more about the questions teacher researchers pursue, I found many articles, chapters, and books. I read, for example, an exploration with different ages of readers (Vine & Faust, 1992); a review of various methodologies (Santa & Santa, 1995); guidelines for conducting research (Hubbard & Power, 1993); several case studies (Bullock, 1987); a helpful reflective technique for preservice reading students (Tidwell, 1995); and information about how to frame our own stories (Meyer, 1996). Eventually an organization emerged for this paper. As I read I began to feel the energy these teacher researchers have for their teaching, and began to wonder, in regard to each piece of research, "What propels this teacher researcher forward?" In this chapter I elaborate on three different forces that propel teacher researchers forward:

1. Teacher researchers search for what is behind their success;
2. Teacher researchers address their concerns; and
3. Teacher researchers search for their students' cutting edges.

I will mainly share with you what I learned from five teacher researchers: one primary teacher, one high school teacher, and three professors, one being myself.

TEACHER RESEARCHERS SEARCH FOR WHAT IS BEHIND THEIR SUCCESS

Ellen Brinkley does this. She decided to try to figure out what led to her success, and says, "I always felt so good about my undergraduate course called Writing for Elementary Teachers. I decided to try to find the reasons why this class worked. " I learned about Ellen's research in conversations with her, and from an article she wrote in a book edited by Patterson, Santa, Short, and Smith (1993).

Ellen teaches in the English Department at Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo, and collected her data in a course she had taught several times before she decided to become a teacher researcher. This is what she says about the success that prompted her research, "I observed—or thought I observed—that many students began the semester feeling 'student-like' and by the end of the term felt eager to teach and fairly confident of their ability" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 210).

Whereas her students seemed to leave her class with a feeling of confidence about their ability to teach, Ellen wanted to know more about how and why students' view of themselves changed. She writes, "My observations were based on impressions and hunches and I decided to explore them through classroom research. I initially had two research questions: Do my students in fact experience this shift? If they do, why does it happen?" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 210). In the first semester of her two-semester study she used data that were already a part of her teaching, even though she had not thought of this information as data. She collected students' comments written in the first and last class sessions and excerpts from their journals. She supplemented those by her own notes written after class sessions.

On the first day of class she asked her students to write to her, briefly, about their hopes and fears for the course. In the past she had "only read through the replies casually." Now, as a researcher, she categorized and counted the responses, and was "surprised" by what she saw. Whereas she thought they entered without much confidence, "almost half of those who mentioned teaching already seemed confident" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 211).

In addition to comments about teaching, many of her students also wrote about writing and about how they saw themselves as writers, "some comments were positive. However, for each student who expressed enthusiasm, two or three expressed apprehension about themselves as writers" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 212).

Faced with a group of insecure writers, Ellen turned to the professional literature for insight. She decided that it was absolutely essential to reduce her students' writing apprehension if they were to become effective teachers of writing. Ellen asked them to write about and share their early memories of writing.

She often asked them to write about a personal experience of any kind from throughout their lives, and asked them to write and talk in class about the writing process they used for this paper. To address the uncertainty they wrote about, Ellen conducted an in-class fishbowl writing conference to demonstrate how they could confer with each other. Once they learned to generate options about what to do to improve their writing, they started to gain confidence.

A few weeks later, Ellen asked each student to read a final draft to the class. As a researcher, she asked for their reflections about this session and learned that the experience of sharing their writing for response from the class was a "turning point in the course, a time when students experienced—some for the first time—the joy of having their own writing heard and accepted" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 215).

Now that her students' negative attitudes toward themselves as writers had started to turn a corner, Ellen could concentrate on the teaching of writing. Each student led two writing sessions in an elementary classroom as a practicum assignment, and most students felt their ability to teach confirmed.

At their last class session Ellen collected her final piece of data for that first semester of her research. She asked students to respond to three prompts, all of which addressed her two research questions. Her prompts were:

1. When I registered for English 369, I thought . . .
2. Now that the class is over, I think . . .
3. If your attitudes have changed, what has been involved in the change? (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 216)

From these findings, Ellen learned that class discussions, their classmates' presentations, conferences with classmates, and small-group sharing all had more of an impact on her students than Ellen realized.

She then began her second semester as a researcher. So far, as a researcher, she had learned to analyze and gain insights from the data she routinely collected, and she felt ready to use new data collection methods. She gave the 26-item version of the Daly-Miller Writing-Apprehension Scale (Patterson et al., 1993) as a pretest during the first class session and again as a posttest during the last class session.

The results gave her "overwhelming statistical evidence of reduced apprehension about writing. Every item, without exception, indicated a positive shift" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 217). In confirmation of her insight from the first semester, Ellen now learned that this group attributed their decreased apprehension about writing to sharing with each other.

In reflecting back on her teaching procedures during this second semester, Ellen writes, "Although I had tried throughout the semester to emphasize each part of the writing process, these numbers led me to (realize) the positive effects that sharing (had) on my students' attitudes" (Patterson et al., 1993, p. 217). She learned, as a teacher researcher, about the importance of giving her students time to share their writing during class.

Ellen's search not only helped her see what she was doing well as a teacher, but alerted her to possible subsequent changes for her course. She adopted the stance of constant change that characterizes teacher researchers, stating:

> I'm always reflecting. Now I direct a National Writing Project site, know a lot of teachers who teach writing, and try to hook my students into their classrooms. Also, instead of leading two workshops, more often they work on five to six occasions with individual students. This gives my students closer contact with children on a regular

> basis. They learn how to best meet the children's needs, to respect what the children bring, and to build on that.

This recent goal of Ellen's, the goal of wanting her students to spend as much time in classrooms as possible so they become driven by their caring for the children, is similar to the main finding of another teacher researcher I studied as noted below.

TEACHER RESEARCHERS ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS

Camille Allen, a professor at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island, also decided (as a result of her research on her own teaching) to give her university students more contact time with children. I learned about Camille's research in her undergraduate reading class from conversations with her and from her book (Allen, 1996).

Camille began her career as a teacher researcher at a different starting point than Ellen Brinkley. Instead of researching her success, Camille, similar to other teacher researchers (see also Hoffman, 1992; McKinney, 1995; Roller, 1996), started with a question she asked herself, semester after semester, "What else can I do to help my students become good reading teachers? What else can I do?" Gradually, Camille started using field placements more and more. Now, she says, "I only teach with field placements. This realization on my part happened when I just kept looking and looking at what was real." Only when she connects with her students around children, and her students become determined to teach children to read, do they realize they must make constant adjustments in what they do. "It's different when they work with real children. They've got to feel they make a difference."

In order to learn about reading instruction, Camille's students need to care about the children they teach. The process of caring may be one of the unseen processes Huberman (1996) challenges teacher researchers to keep in mind in order to keep teacher research alive. He says, "teaching is not just a technical enterprise, but is also inextricably linked to emotional life. I would even suggest that we have ignored it at our great expense—that is, at the price of weakened validity and power. What are the consequences on our knowledge base? I hate to think" (p. 130).

Camille finds out what her students need from the school reports they write to her every week. They write about their plans, what they did, and what their children learned. She writes back, and her specific help reroutes her students' instruction.

Camille's students also write reactions to their university class sessions during the last 5 minutes of each class. In addition, they write reactions to their readings. Camille reads all this information and uses it to plan her class sessions. When she reads, for example, that a student is concerned about her ability to ask questions, Camille uses this concern to teach a lesson on "How to Ask Children Questions." Camille is driven by one major concern: How can I provide the best instruction? She continuously asks, "What can I do to help them figure out what their children need?"

Camille performs a different role than in the past, stating, "I moved away from a dictator's role." When she assigns readings, for example, instead of telling her students what they are to get from the articles, her students talk about the handouts in relation to

the children they are teaching. Her course has become "college-student centered, as elementary classrooms become child-centered." She realizes she cannot teach about reading from her perspective. As she says:

> They have to be in a situation where they care enough to ask, and where they're not afraid to ask. I don't grade their reflections or their teaching. I just watch the whole semester. My students try with their little students and I find out what to teach. New problems arise all the time. I change. In the portfolio that I create with my students for each course, I have the record of what I do as a professor. I keep these portfolios and share them with my students. They see my development as a teacher of this reading course. I take a whole class period to share my portfolios because my students need time to ask questions about me.

Hopefully this will help them see themselves as "forever learners," also. This stance is what Donna Alvermann calls for in the very last phrase of the last sentence of the final paragraph of her chapter in the 1990 *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education.* Donna wrote, "there is a need for classroom research that unites teachers and students as a community of learners." This call, however, runs contrary to the standard behavior in some teacher education programs where students do not even know the names of the other students in their classes, much less their foibles and the degree of emotional angst they invest in their teaching efforts. For confusions to become propelling forces, we often need a group to help us reflect and focus us ahead.

Craig Hill was part of such a group at National-Louis University, and writes about his research in his college prep chemistry class in Forest Park, Illinois. My story of Craig comes from a conversation with him and his chapter in a book by Burnaford, Fischer, and Hobson (1996). Ninety-nine percent of the graduates of the school where Craig teaches go to college, but many of his students, in the midst of successfully memorizing scientific facts ask, "Why do I need to know this stuff?" (Hill, 1996, p. 117).

Craig worried, read, and came upon a new term for him—constructivism. He contemplated its three facets:

> (a) knowledge is constructed from previous experiences, (b) teachers cannot transmit knowledge to their students, and (c) learners are responsible for all that they learn. This theory suggests that teachers should teach science by letting the students *use the process of science to learn science.* A person has to *experience* the knowledge and let it soak into previous concepts in order for knowledge to either be gained or dismissed. (Hill, 1996, p. 118)

This new theory prompted Craig to rethink his course, in the belief that his students would begin to answer the question, "Why do we have to know this stuff?" for themselves.

Similar to Camille with her elementary education students, he wanted the coursework to be real for his students. This meant, as with her, that he took on a new role in his teaching. He began by reflecting:

> It seems as though I had been an actor on a stage performing and the students were my audience. Each day, four shows in all, I performed chemistry. Sometimes the audience loved it and at other times my performance flopped. I began to investigate how to alter the "shows," based on the constructivist principle that each student is different. (Hill, 1996, p. 118)

He began his classroom research with a unit on nuclear energy, in which each student has a great deal of "autonomy, a major tenet of contructivism" (Hill, 1996, p. 118). This freedom, Craig predicted, would cause

> pain: pain of not knowing how to demonstrate understanding through means other than a paper-and-pencil-test, pain of having the rules changed in the middle of the schooling game, and pain of having no clear sense of what the teacher expects. I was challenging not only their existing knowledge of an academic subject, but also their existing idea of schooling!

Craig created the following research questions:

> Will the students take ownership?
> Will they find what they are learning to be meaningful?
> Is this too much at once?
> Will they understand these new roles for teacher and students, or will they feel manipulated? (Hill, 1996, p. 119)

Craig knew his teaching methods will challenge the status quo (Kincheloe, 1991) and, with this in mind, chose the forms of data he used. His students kept notes in journals throughout the unit, and completed a questionnaire at the end of the unit. Craig invited one of his colleagues to observe his teaching, look at some of the materials he and his students created, converse with him, and write him a letter about what he saw. He kept his own journal and, finally, his students' work provided him with insights.

On the first day of the unit, Craig gave his students a pretest to find out what knowledge they had about nuclear energy. He used the results to create a list of what the students needed to know by the end of the unit. Each student designed the assignments he or she would pursue to learn the information, and created a portfolio that showed his or her own understanding of the objectives. Their portfolios included movies they made, maps and flowcharts, and reports of original experiments.

Along the way, Craig began to collect answers to his questions: One student asked Craig where he fit in with all of this and "I told him I was like the coach. . . . In the constructivist classroom, the teacher coaches the students instead of playing the game for them" (Hill, 1996, p. 120). Another student helped Craig understand the complexity of this endeavor. She said:

> For some of us, it's very easy to make A's when you write stuff down for later processing. Later, you really think about it. Sometimes you actually listen to what is said in class, sometimes you just write it down and maybe think about it later. But when you have to both find the material and also think and learn, and you still want an A, it becomes complex. (Hill, 1996, p. 120)

In general, the students liked the "independence" this unit gave them, but felt the need for more "structure. Students felt they would have benefited from more checkpoints in order to keep themselves on task."

> Generally though, the students felt they learned a great deal. One boy wrote, "Now that I understand this, I could do it again. I understand more about nuclear energy than anything else we have done all year. When I am responsible for me, I know what I can and cannot do. Sure this new teaching method is a real pain in the behind, because it makes you really work, and it does become frustrating. But, it *is* successful." (Hill, 1996, p. 120)

"What could make it more successful?" is the question of a teacher researcher. In addition to more checkpoints, as suggested by the students, Craig's colleague commented, "I think the toughest part of this approach is to enable the students to get started" (Hill, 1996, p. 121). As Craig plans ahead, he took what he learned from his research into consideration:

> I will introduce increased autonomy next year much more slowly. From the first day, my students will gain experience setting educational goals, and they will have more regular checkpoints. Ultimately, my students will experience chemistry labs in which they explore *their* questions and not someone else's. (Hill, 1996, p. 122)

As it turns out, Craig now has administrative duties with a reduced teaching load. Someone else teaches all the chemistry sections, and Craig teaches a course called Senior Topics: Current Issues in Science. His students are in the college track, but not necessarily in science. Presently, they have chosen as their class issue the paranormal, and have a question: "Is paranormal legitimate science?" As Craig explains it:

> They gather the information I'd gather as a teacher before I'd begin a unit. They have to create a way to present their learning, and they chose to create a debate. I've gotten away from lectures. . . . I started the year with this method, gradually. I stepped them through where to find information, the various sources. I have them write self-evaluations on What did you learn? and What are some of your insights?

Craig says he feels more comfortable now than when he first started out as a researcher. "Trying different things" has become his way of teaching. He explores his own questions about ways to improve his teaching; he searches.

TEACHER RESEARCHERS SEARCH FOR THEIR STUDENTS' CUTTING EDGES

My last two teacher researchers tend to stand on their tiptoes, look over their students' shoulders, and listen with perked ears to spot a student(s) who is going off in a direction that surprises and excites the teacher. Their students' actions and insights nudge these teachers' thinking. Their students' "Aha's!" propel these teacher researchers forward.

Jill Ostrow is one of these teachers. She teaches a multiage, Grades 1 through 3 classroom in Oregon. I read her book (Ostrow, 1995), held a phone conversation with her, and heard her present at the National Council of Teachers of Education in November 1995. She writes:

> I am a teacher, but I am also a . . . teacher researcher. . . . I think the difference between the two is that a teacher researcher thinks about her teaching. She does something with the information she gets from her students. . . . I've been in a research group for five years . . . with people from a teacher researcher class we took together. There are six of us, and we meet once a month. I'm the only primary teacher. Three are high school, and two are middle school. (Ostrow, 1995, p. 2)

Groups of teacher researchers, such as this one of Jill's, seem to be important to teachers to keep their ongoing momentum (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). It is not easy to work research into our lives as teachers, especially time to write.

Jill continues, "My book is *not* a 'how-to' or 'should-do' book. I simply describe what works for me and my students. You may wonder whether what I do will work in your classroom. It probably won't, but the *philosophy* underlying what I do will" (Ostrow, 1995, p. 2).

When Jill first taught a class of first-, second-, and third-grade children, she listed all the qualities she wanted to watch in the children as they progressed over time. Choice, challenge, independence, and respect appeared high in her priorities, and received her attention regardless of the theme of study, similar to Vicki Swartz's (1992) emphasis on the emotional, social, and attitudinal selves of each child in her "three-year classroom."

During the year of Jill's book, she and her students created an island to live on for their nine months together, and studied as much of their curriculum as possible in the context of their island home. In the year after her book, they turned their classroom into a Civil war setting, and this year their classroom is a town named Kidsville:

> We have a cafe, which was my idea. . . . Kids from our class work in a local doughnut shoppe every Wednesday after school. Watching them work in a different setting blows my mind. They take orders, fill them, and bus tables. It's exciting to see them take this responsibility. And, they have readings there. Anyone in town can read.
>
> My students make the phone calls to arrange everything. In Kidsville we also have a bank, which we had to establish because the doughnut shoppe gives us 20% of all the profits on the days we work. The children made all the phone calls to the bank to arrange our field trip there next week so we can open a bank account.

As Jill explains the activities of her students to me, and I read her book, I learn more about the environment she considers essential for teaching:

> The only effective way to accomplish this kind of learning is to support *movement* and *choice*. . . . Independence is knowing how and where to learn best . . . I hate teaching in rooms with desks. Desks make . . . learning with others . . . almost impossible. Talking with others about what you are learning, asking questions, giving advice to others, and making choices about whom to work with are all essential. (Ostrow, 1995, p. 29)

Jill's students learn a great deal from each other, and she facilitates this. One day,

> Kyle was drawing a picture of a Power Ranger. I knew he was drawing it because he had told me, but I couldn't see the shape of the figure at all. "Kyle, how are you doing that drawing?" I asked him a bit amazed. . . .
>
> "Oh, I always start from the eye."
>
> . . . I wanted the other kids to see how Kyle did this so they would have another option when they were drawing. I asked him if he would give a (mini-lesson) for kids who were interested.
>
> After Kyle's lesson, other children decided that they too had things they wanted to teach. Now, on Fridays we have mini-classes taught by the kids. . . . On Wednesday or Thursday I ask if anyone wants to teach a mini-class. After we list about five classes, the kids sign up for the one they want to be in. (Ostrow, 1995, p. 72)

The children teach, and they teach well. "I have very high expectations of all my students. I expect them to go beyond what is expected of them. I expect them to challenge themselves, I expect them to challenge each other, and I expect them to surprise me with what they are capable of doing" (Ostrow, 1995, p. 126). This is the main thing

that guides Jill as a teacher researcher. What her students are capable of doing always exceeds her expectations, excites her. She watches for their unexpected thoughts (Murray, 1989) and uses these ideas of her students to pull herself and the class forward.

My own teaching, I discovered this fall, is similar to Jill's. As a teacher researcher, I stand in awe, as Jill does when she looks at her little 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds. Oftentimes I am caught off guard by what the teachers in my classes do. I use what I learn from them as I plan my next session, or my next course, which is always different from the previous. My teaching unfolds as I set up my classes as studios in which my students surprise me with their performances.

My summer school class, which I wrote about in the beginning of this chapter got excited about the goals they were working on and started, much to my surprise, to refer to them as their research projects. They next realized that they would have to continue to work on their research projects in the fall when they were back on their jobs. Before I knew what was going on they were calling themselves teacher researchers, a notion implicit in our summer program. Seven of our instructors are teachers who have published books about their own teaching: Tom Romano (1987, 1995), Susan Stires (1991), Maureen Barbieri (1995), Jack Wilde (1993), Ellen Blackburn Karelitz (1993), Linda Rief (1992), and Karen Ernst (1994). In doing so, they have let my students and me study them as teachers.

I started, however, to feel self-conscious about what I did in my book (Hansen, 1987), where I wrote about other people's classrooms. I did the classic "researcher-as-researcher" thing, not the "teacher-as-researcher" thing. I started to worry about my ability to teach the course I was in the midst of, but my students did see me as a researcher of myself. I studied my class notes after each session and my daily Dear Class letter to them was my reflection on my notes, our class, and my plan for what we would do. They did not, however, know that I was writing an article about my class the previous spring, a 1995 update of the same course I wrote about 5 years earlier (Hansen, 1992), and they probably did not know what JoBeth Allen and I (1986) wrote about our university classes several years ago.

Richard Bullock (1987) writes, "Publishing must be an ultimate base on which any classroom research rests, as publication determines the integration of teacher research into the professional lives of teachers." Personally, I look forward to the day when more of us professors publish books about their own teaching. At the present time, an overwhelming percentage of the books written by teacher researchers about their own teaching have been written by elementary and secondary teachers. A great deal of what I do in my classes I have learned from these publications.

And, I learn from my university colleagues. Beverly Moss (1994) wrote about the mini-ethnographies her all-white, homogeneous, multicultural freshman composition class writes about groups on their campus and in their communities. I wish I had read her article before I taught freshman comp in the fall of 1994. I may have asked my almost-all-white class to do likewise. Her work may still redirect my own.

From Portalupi (1995), who writes about a graduate course she teaches, I continue to learn about the timing of information. She does not necessarily give her students ideas of what to write about when she tells them to begin their journals. She waits until they have written some entries, studies their entries, and then points out to them the

different types of entries they have been writing. From this lesson, they receive confirmation about what they are doing and may stretch their repertoire if they decide to try types of entries written by their classmates.

Portalupi teaches when her students already know some of the information she has to offer. This is similar to what Camille Allen (discussed earlier) does when she teaches her mini-lessons based upon the information she finds in her students' folders. She knows they are already thinking about the topics before she decides to address an issue in class.

From these and many other articles by professors as teacher researchers, my teaching and scholarship become enriched, as does that of elementary and secondary teachers when they can see inside the classrooms of *many* teacher educators, not only the ones they are in as students. They learn from many university teachers across the country, as they learn from many elementary and secondary teachers across the country. Our doctoral students learn a great deal from views inside the classrooms of professors across the country.

On NRCEmail during the last few weeks, someone suggested that we exchange syllabi. I thought of mine for my Introduction to Elementary Reading class this fall, a class for seniors who hope to enter our Teacher Education program in the fall as Master's students. We do not have an undergraduate degree in education at the University of New Hampshire, so these students are getting degrees in psychology, history, or any one of many majors. While they are still undergraduates, many of them plan ahead and take required courses for the graduate programs they hope to enter. I have a class of these hopefuls.

In the course, my students write six narratives, three about their personal histories and three about their educational histories. They reflect on the complexity of their experiences and what they would like to see as different in the classrooms they want to create someday. They teach groups of children for 16 sessions, and strive to make a difference in these students' lives. They learn how difficult teaching is. In their course evaluations they write that I accomplished my goal for them. The first two sentences of my syllabus read: "My goal for this course is that you will go away knowing you don't know how to teach reading, and you never will. You will learn, as I have, that the teaching of reading is an art we work on for our entire careers."

It is this uncertainty that propels us forward in our mission to become better teachers, teacher educators, and teacher researchers.

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