Tandem research: Analysis as data for self-study research

Ann Gervasoni
Australian Catholic University

Robyn Brandenburg
Federation University, Australia

Context of the study

This paper explores the findings of self-study research (LaBoskey, 2004; Loughran, 2006; Samaras, 2010; Samaras & Freese, 2006) that emerged from a separate *Teacher Identify* research project in which both authors were engaged. The *Teacher Identity* research project explored the professional identities of 192 pre-service teachers who were enrolled in the first year of their course at two Universities in a regional Australian city. As part of the data collection phase of the *Teacher Identify* research in 2010, we invited the pre-service teachers to produce a visual representation of a teacher. The representations were produced in the first weeks of their respective courses to minimize any influence of the program and our teaching, on their initial visual representations of themselves as a teacher. It was during the sorting and coding of these visual representations that we realised we had initiated a self-study without deliberately setting out to do so. The process of data analysis had become a context that deeply challenged our assumptions about our teaching and our students' learning. We had both 'turned to self' (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). This realisation prompted us to formalise the self-study research that was emerging and then to purposefully collect data about the critical moments (Brandenburg, 2008; Brandenburg & Gervasoni, 2012; Kosnik, 2001; Tripp, 1993) that arose as we analysed the *Teacher Identify* research data. Reflecting 'in and on action' (Schön, 1985; 1991) provided the framework to enable us to identify critical moments in our analysis of the *Teacher Identity* data and to further understand the implications of this new knowledge for our practice as teacher educators, and for self-study methodology.

Aim of the study

This self-study research has two aims. The first is to explore the insights that emerged from analysing the critical moments arising from our analysis of students' visual representations of a teacher, together with the implications for student learning and our teaching. The second was to consider the broader application of the context initiating our self-study for self-study method. The following three questions focus the self-study:

1. What are the insights that emerge from analyses of critical moments for our teaching and pre-service teachers' learning?
2. How can analyses of data for 'separate' research generate data for self-study research?
3. How does our model for data analysis have broader application for self-Study research and researchers?

The focus of this paper is how the self-study led to methodological insights for self-study.

The power of tandem research projects: Generating new data in, after and as a result of research

The participants in this self-study are the two authors who are teacher educators at two Universities in regional Australia. It is critical to note that the data collected for this self-study research arose from our analysis of data for a separate but tandem research project that involved 192 pre-service teachers at these two universities. These students were enrolled in a Bachelor of Education Degree. Whilst undertaking the analysis for this tandem research, we recognised that an important opportunity for self-study research had arisen. We chose to pursue this opportunity and conduct the new self-study in tandem with our original *Teacher Identity* research. Table 1 shows the timeline for the tandem research projects.

Timeline For Tandem Research Projects			
Date	Teacher Identity	Date	Self-Study
Mar 2010	Data collection images		
May 2010	Initial Sorting of rep, content analysis –frequency, coding categories and themes; discourse analysis (Rose, 2007)	May 2010	**Critical Incident** Process led to numerous surprises. We decided we needed to act upon these for our teaching. **Lake Walk/Talk** – Realisation that this is a self-study. Commitment to maintain journal.. Critical incidents described in journal – see Table 2
		Jun 2010	How do we use our reflections arising from data analysis to improve student learning and challenge the dominant discourses? Decision to select 6 images that represented challenge for changing practice and student learning.
Nov 2011	Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) presentation Themes. Teacher power and authority		
Dec 2010	AARE paper and presentation		
2010/2011	Transcription of interviews	2010/2011	Surprises emerged, challenging assumptions about data, new learnings
Mar 2011	EDMA201/EDMA202 development and teaching		
Jul 2011	International Study Association of teachers on teaching (ISATT) Conference Portugal 4-8 Jul 2011	Jul 2011	Changes in practice/teaching & learning?
Aug 2011	EDBED4004 development and teaching	Aug 2011	Changes in practice/teaching & learning?
Aug 2012	EDBED4004 development and teaching	Aug 2012	Changes in practice/teaching & learning?
May 2013	Working on Paper		
July 2013	Working on Teacher Identify paper	July 2013	Working on Castle Proposal Paper -August Critical incident analysis – Researcher B Data and self-study
		Aug 2013	Critical Moment –analysis as data for self-study research Discussion and Initial development of model
		Jan 2014	Castle Paper development Refinement of model.

Table 1. Research Time-line for the Tandem Research Projects

The impact of analysing visual representations of a teacher

The process of analysing Bachelor of Education students representations of a teacher in a tandem research project led to the self-study explored in this paper. Figure 1 shows examples that represent key themes that emerged from the analysis, along with descriptions of critical insights we gained as part of our self-study.
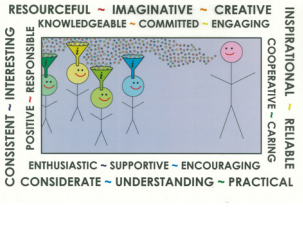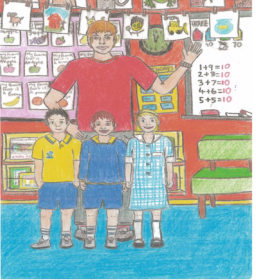

Dominant: Teacher as Knowledgeable Critical Insight: Realisation that a dominant image was the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge, as depicted in this example. Many representations also included the word knowledgeable as part of their description of a teacher.	
Silence: Diverse Learners Critical Insight: Realisation that no drawn images reflected the multicultural face of Australia, nor included students with physical disabilities.	

Figure 1. Two Themes Emerging from Representations of Teachers

Critical incident analyses

An important component of our self-study was completing three Critical Incident Analyses each. This process helped us to learn about our own assumptions and to identify possible changes to our practice as teacher educators that could improve student learning. As examples, Table 2 and Table 3 show a Critical Incident Analysis for each researcher, followed by examples of how we each enacted changes in practice.

Enacting shifts in practice

One of the underlying concepts we wanted to explore in our tandem longitudinal Teacher Identity Research Project was the role of teacher education in pre-service teacher (pst) identity formation, and a key question was: How do conceptions and constructs of a teacher and teaching change as a result of undertaking a teaching education degree? As a response to the data in both tandem research projects, we began considering the ways in which we could use the outcomes of the self-study to improve our teaching and curriculum development, and thereby challenge not only the psts' assumptions about teachers and teaching, but also our own. Two examples of our shifts in practice follow.

Robyn: Analysing the rich data collected during this self-study led to Robyn identifying opportunities for enacting changes in curriculum and practice that she anticipated would improve student learning in 4th year elective course as part of the Bachelor of Education program, EDMA201 Numeracy in the Early Years. In particular, Robyn aimed to focus on several themes that emerged from analyses of the visual images in the tandem teacher identity research that she had analysed in the critical incident analysis (see Table 2). These were: silences related to diverse learners and child-centred classrooms; dominance of stereotypical images of teachers (for example, the teacher being situated by a chalkboard); and the teacher represented as the all-knowledgeable one who transmits knowledge to students.

Robyn organised learning experiences for the psts that she anticipated may challenge assumptions about teachers and teaching, and provide deeper learning. In contrast to the traditional unit structure of a one-hour lecture followed by a workshop, Robyn took the two-hour workshop into two economically disadvantaged communities for 10 weeks to enable the psts to conduct two after-school Maths Clubs for Grade 3 and Grade 4 children. Following a curriculum framework explored in the one-hour lectures, the psts experienced teaching small groups of children from diverse backgrounds in a non-traditional setting. The psts needed to personalise the Maths Club curriculum for

each group based on the particular needs assessed for the individual children. Further, the students needed to identify games and activities that would enable the students to construct mathematical concepts as opposed to memorise procedures. It was anticipated that this Maths Club experience with the addition of the assessment tasks for the unit would challenge the silences in the themes related to diverse learners and child-centred classrooms, and the dominance of stereotypical images of teachers being situated by a chalkboard and represented as the all-knowledgeable one who transmits knowledge to students.

Components of the Critical Incident Analysis	Researcher Journal notes
Date	Friday 21 May 2010
Context	Examining data analysis for self-study Meeting with co-researchers
Detailed description of event as it occurred	As we sorted and grouped the images, I was surprised at the variety of images, but also that so many of the images depicted teachers in very traditional ways. Teacher at the front of a class, or more especially, teachers at the front of a class with no students depicted. Also there were many with ABC and sums on BB. It is rare to see this in a classroom today. I was stunned that there were multiple images of Doris Day copied and pasted into the representations. I asked myself why a young person would think this was a relevant representation for the new millennium. I asked myself what type of experiences they would need to change and develop their views further. Another surprise was that the group of students at one University used words almost exclusively to represent a teacher with hardly a pictorial representation to be seen. I asked myself why this was the case? I was impressed with the rich meaning and detail included in some images.
What was my response to the event saying about me?	• I have a lot of assumptions about the type of images that younger people would use to depict teaching and I have particular beliefs about teaching and what might be in an image. • I want to lead and motivate many of the psts to change
What are the values inherent in my decision and the situation?	• Traditional views of education are limited and need to change • Inclusion. • Constructivism • Social capital • Equity • Relevant curriculum and instruction • Teacher education needs to shape beliefs and values as well as pedagogical actions
Actions and understandings and issues/questions for teacher educators/ education	Psts need to have many high quality experiences that challenge their beliefs about teaching and education What experiences best challenge beliefs but also support psts to construct new beliefs that can be enacted? Does the curriculum and experiences we provide in a course both challenge and support? There are a number of silences – technology, inclusion, quality. How are these issues highlighted in our course? Why do so many psts characterise learning with images of ABC and sums? Why do some teachers create such rich images and meanings? Does this distinguish effective teachers or not? Why did some students use only words or mainly words?? Do the words used distinguish effective teachers?

Table 2. Extract from Critical Incident Analyses for Robyn

Ann: As a response to the data, Ann began questioning the ways she could include the outcomes of the self-study in her teaching, and thereby challenging not only the psts' assumptions about teachers and teaching, but also her own. She introduced the "Visual Representation" activity used in the tandem Teacher Identity research into the Course, Professional Policy, Practice and Responsibility (EDBED4004) – a compulsory 4th Year Bachelor of Education Course and used the responses to highlight the dominant and the marginalised discourses that were represented by the research and contrasted this with the cohort response. The first cohort for this intervention was the first year cohort that had completed the visual representations activity in 2010 as part of the tandem research, and this created rich discussions and new learning. The silences that we had originally noted– for example, catering for the needs of diverse students – was less marginalised and psts had explicity represented their new understandings and student needs; technology was now much more obvious and iPads, computers and iPhones were evident. The comparison between the two sets of visual representations of a teacher was remarkable, and the discussion

provided a focused opportunity to address stereotypical representations of teachers and teaching and challenge our assumptions. The activity also provided a model for psts to transfer to their own teaching contexts and highlighted the ways that research can impact practice and thereby encourage new graduates to research their own practice.

Components of the Critical Incident Analysis	Researcher Journal notes
Date	Tuesday August 28 2013
Context	During our planning session for the Castle Proposal and following lengthy discussion, I realised that the data analysis process was revealing more than data. We had identified that through revisiting our data set in multiple ways and over a period of time we were beginning to develop a certain disposition. We created a framework for data analysis
Detailed description of event as it occurred	Meeting with co-researcher in preparation for castle proposal and shaping of research presentation
What was my response to the event saying about me?	I am a self-study researcher with an orientation to asking the questions – what impact will this have on my teaching? And what impact will this have on student learning? I question the outcomes of research and ask what might be enacted in practice as a result of this research
What are the values inherent in my decision and the situation?	• The values that are inherent for me relate to a determination to understand and improve my practice as a teacher educator • I am a life-long learner • I value data gathering and analysis as evidence • Collegial relationships are not only important but essential • I am committed to challenging and disrupting the status quo to improve pedagogy for teachers and learners • I enjoy contributing to educational research, using self-study as a methodology and embrace my responsibility to adapt and modify practice
Actions and understandings and issues/questions for teacher educators/education	I have a responsibility to embrace new approaches to teaching and to adapt and modify practice when required Approaching the data analysis phase with a self-study orientation – more than one pass- multiple analysis can reveal new understandings (for example, data sorting, content analysis, discourse analysis) researchers may need to identify not only what is evident but what is hidden or not addressed Can a framework and/or model for data analysis be a useful tool for self-study researchers? Focus on the methodology of self-study and look at the intersection of where research projects and self-study research intersects – data analysis

Table 3: Extract from Critical Incident Analyses for Ann

Methodological and epistemological implications of tandem research

A focus of this paper is considering the methodological and epistemological implications for self-study that arise from our notion of tandem self-study research, an idea that emerged as we met to prepare our Castle Conference paper. Ann analysed this critical incident in Table 3.

Tandem self-study research arises from the context of a discrete research project that provides an opportunity to engage in a self-study. For example, we described earlier how the process of data analysis during the Teacher Identity Research led to a critical incident that initiated a self-study. As a result, we intentionally collected and analysed data for a tandem self-study (see Table 1).

Perhaps our greatest epistemological insight as a result of our self-study is the knowledge created from our 'turn to self' (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). The data from this self-study provided insights that have had an impact on our research and teaching practice as teacher educators in regional universities. The self-study was initiated as a result of our reactions to the pre-service teacher's visual representations of a teacher. Examination of the data during the initial sorting of these representations revealed imposing and traditional teacher stereotypes that caused both authors to question our assumptions and practices as educators. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the self-study data enabled us to identify refinements for our practice and our teacher education courses that had potential to improve student learning. These themes included: silences related to diverse learners, technology and child-centred classrooms; dominance of stereotypical and conservative images of teachers (for example, being situated by a chalkboard); and teacher as knowledgeable. The identification of these themes has led to modifications in each of our teacher education courses, whereby we explicitly address the dominant and marginalised discourses about conceptions of teachers and teaching.

A further outcome of this self-study research has been the development of a model for self-study research that emerges from the context of "tandem" research and that may have broader application

for self-study research and researchers. The model includes: the identification of the critical moments that arise when analysing tandem research data; applying the embedded lens of critical incident analysis; and the action-enactment-evidence cycle of implementation in courses.

Conclusion

A key finding from this self-study is that most research involving teacher educators can integrate self-study, so that the analysis process for tandem research becomes a context for the collection of data for a self-study that can have the additional benefits of improving practice and enhancing student learning. We also recognised during this self-study that critical moment identification and analysis has become an embedded and powerful practice in our self-study research (Brandenburg & Gervasoni, 2012) and that we now naturally 'notice' (Mason, 2002) and evaluate these moments and events as critical data with potential to improve practice. Our research collaboration has become a partnership that demands that we ask two questions continually: 1) what are the implications of an incident or event for me as a teacher educator; and 2) what are the implications for my students' learning? The imperative for us is action leading from insight (Loughran, 2006).

One reviewer of the proposal for this paper stated, "What a wonderful surprise to stumble into such a large self-study without meaning to do so." An important insight from our research is that we need no longer stumble. We now intentionally plan to engage in self-study research in tandem with our other research programs.

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Confronting the hearing teacher in deaf education: A collaborative self-study

Karen Rut Gísladóttir & Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir
University of Iceland

Context of the study

Two conflicting discourses on deafness and literacy, the clinical and sociocultural perspectives, have coalesced to shape the institutions of deaf education (Brueggemann, 1999, 2004; Jankowski, 1997; Ladd, 2003; Lane, 1984, 1992; Valente, 2011). From the clinical perspective, deafness is perceived as a disability that needs to be treated or fixed. The educational goal is to intervene using strategies that effectively remediate the condition of deafness. From the sociocultural perspective, deafness is seen as just another way of being in and understanding the world. The educational goal is to draw on students' unique ways of being to facilitate their development into multilingual, multicultural, deaf adults.

Karen entered the teaching profession as a teacher of children who are deaf in Iceland. She had completed a teacher certificate as a literacy educator. She had not received special training in teaching Icelandic to children who are deaf, as no such training was available in Iceland. She had taken a year of Sign Language Studies as an undergraduate at the University of Iceland where she got to know the Icelandic Sign Language and the deaf community in Iceland. Shortly after entering the field of deaf education, Karen began to experience these contrasting ideological forces as conflicts within herself. These conflicts raised so many questions regarding deaf students' literacy learning that by the end of the first year she left the classroom to find some answers. Although she began naively searching for the 'right' methods for teaching literacy, she ended up finding something quite different. During her search she was encouraged to think beyond 'school-based' literacy – that is, learning to read and write by acquiring specific sets of skills. Instead, she learned how to discover that which students bring into the school setting. When she returned to the classroom, it was as a teacher researcher equipped with two bodies of sociocultural literature, but one who needed a critical friend to support her research process.

Theoretical framework

Karen found two bodies of literature that spoke to her concerns. First, sociocultural theories about deaf children's literacy education emphasized the importance of uncovering and basing literacy instruction on students' literacy practices (Andrews & Gonzales, 1991; Brueggemann, 1999; Livingston, 1991; Williams, 1994). From that literature emerges the image of hearing professionals who consciously and unconsciously impose their worldview upon deaf students (Brueggemann, 1999; Humphries, 2004; Lane, 1992, 1997). When these impositions have failed, these professionals have tended to assign negative characteristics, the "psychology of the deaf," to deaf individuals (Lane, 1988). Secondly, she read sociocultural theories of literacy, particularly the New Literacy Studies (NLS).

NLS researchers have expanded on the traditional definition of literacy. Rather than defining literacy exclusively as a set of neutral or technical skills, NLS researchers contextualize literacy within individuals' social and cultural experiences (Gee, 2000; Street, 1984, 2001a). This understanding of literacy, the "ideological" model, is considered more sensitive to culture and context (Street, 2001b). This ideological model declares that literacy is not a neutral 'thing,' transferrable from one setting to another; rather, it varies from one context to the next. In other words, there are many literacies, or "multiliteracies" (Gee, 2008). Thus, literacy education should encompass the skills needed to explore the multiple literacies students bring to the classroom.

To further develop the idea of multiple literacies, researchers working from the perspective of NLS have introduced new concepts and redefined traditional literacy concepts such as *text, reading,* and *writing* (Kress, 2003, 2005). From this perspective, text goes beyond the printed word; rather, texts exist within students when they come to our classrooms. That is, texts can be seen as students' experiences of the world, and teachers need to encourage them to use multiple means of expressing or 'writing' these understandings: e.g., through drawing, dance, art, play, and spoken and written language.

When teachers attempt to develop students' understanding of the world through written language, and get them to read and write, they need to negotiate students' texts, experiences, and understandings through the multiple ways students have of expressing them, and help convert these into the written word. As she delved into the theoretical ideas of the New Literacy Studies, Karen realized that she needed to return to the classroom and learn to identify and base her literacy instruction on students' literacy practices, which might be outside of her hearing perspective on what counts as literacy.

In this presentation, we illustrate how unpacking the image of the hearing professional, and adopting the idea of multiple ways of understanding the world through a dialogue with a critical friend, helped Karen recognize how her frame of reference worked to hinder students' use of their literacy practices within the classroom. The following questions guide our study:

1. How does a hearing teacher of students who are deaf confront her living self in order to base her instruction on literacy practices beyond her hearing perspective?

2. What is the role of a critical friend in facilitating that process?

Method(s)

In this study we use self-study to investigate how Karen developed an NLS perspective to recognize literacy practices beyond her hearing understanding of what counts as literacy, and the role of a critical friend in that process. Data collection extended over three years, from August 2006 to May 2009. It included participant-observation, a teacher-research journal, formal and informal interviews with parents and students, students' literacy work and artifacts, and minutes from monthly conversations with a critical friend. Our collaboration opened a space for pedagogical dialogue in which we could critically reflect on Karen's practice and create new understandings. This process was questioned, clarified and extended through separate, but integrated dimensions of self-study: first, Karen's self-study of her practice, and second, the role of a critical friend in this self-study.

In analysing the data we read and reread it. Through this process we narratively coded the data by naming characters, setting, scene, plot, tension, end point, narrator, context, and tone present in literacy events that looked puzzling to us. Our goal was to identify patterns, themes, or narrative threads within and across different data resources; threads that could make visible the process Karen went through to create a space within the classroom for her students to bring in and develop literacy practices better suited to acquiring written Icelandic. We further explore the role of our ongoing dialogue through the study in that process. Reframing, including the commitment to checking data and interpretations with others, is one way that self-study goes beyond reflective practice (Samaras, 2011).

Living the research process

Karen: When I entered this study I was idealistic and a bit naïve about the complexities of teacher research. Prior to returning to the classroom, I had developed a research focus, a research question, and had a clear idea of what data I was going to collect. Despite all this

preparation, it was not until I was faced with the daily work of teaching that I could really begin to confront, negotiate, and redefine my position as a hearing teacher researcher.

Initially, my greatest challenge was to tune all my senses to my new surroundings. This included noticing what I saw, listening carefully to what I heard, and paying attention to how I felt in everyday situations. I wrote constantly in my teacher journal. I described my teaching experiences, what I was trying to accomplish in my teaching, and how it went in practice. I also wrote down all the thoughts, considerations, and questions that arose during my teaching.

I expected to see my journal fill up with descriptions of my students' literacy practices; I was confused when, instead, they filled up with painful descriptions of the great resistance I was meeting from students. I was an inexperienced teacher, and these moments inevitably made me doubt my capabilities. I wondered whether I could be a teacher and a researcher at the same time, or if I had to develop a stronger teacher identity before I could add research to my agenda. Further, I wondered if the researcher's identity was taking my focus off what should be my main concern -- that is, students' learning; or if it would grant me a deeper understanding of their learning and the complex nature of the classroom. At this moment in my study I looked for a critical friend for support.

Hafdís: I came into the research process with 26 years of experience teaching in the elementary schools. I had also conducted action research and self-study of teacher education practices for 17 years. I met Karen for the first time at S-STEP in San Diego 2004. We had an enjoyable conversation, but I went back to my work in Iceland and Karen went back to grad school in Madison. Two years later, when she returned to Iceland to do her teacher research, she contacted me. She was looking for someone familiar with teacher research with the intention of creating a learning community around her study. She came to me after she had tried and failed to establish this kind of community in her school.

As teachers often do, Karen began telling stories from her classroom. I found these stories interesting, but I was concerned that she saw only mistakes. I also heard something else in those stories: a teacher who cared for her students and wanted to respond to them individually, while at the same time trying to coordinate the goals from the national curriculum and her pedagogical knowledge. The teacher in me saw hope in what she was trying to do. I saw a teacher who resisted assimilation into a system that appeared unresponsive to students' needs, and had the courage to search for answers by reflecting on her experiences. This was something with which I could identify. Therefore, I tried to get her out of this self-critical mode and to explore her stories from different angles.

Karen: It was important for me to talk about the challenges I was experiencing in the classroom. Although I had set out to research my practice, it was hard to make sense of the conflicts I was having with students. The conversations with Hafdís inspired me to continue my work. I took these conversations into the classroom, and they increased my awareness that there was more in my practice than appeared in the living moment. From that point, I began to grow into my role as a teacher researcher, and before I knew it, the researcher in me began to identify incidents to explore in more depth.

In trying to get a different perspective on my practice, I was reading sociocultural theories of language and literacy learning and teaching, working mainly with the NLS idea of multiliteracies. I also kept in mind the sociocultural literature on language and literacy education of children who are deaf in which the hearing professionals are blamed for consciously and unconsciously trying to impose their worldview upon deaf students. Reflecting upon concrete classroom experiences from the NLS perspective helped me make connections between theory and my classroom reality. The following vignette describes a confrontation with one of my students that played a significant role in that process.

I bring in a self-assessment form for students to assess their work ethics. They do not give me an opportunity to explain the instructions written on the form. Melkorka stares at the form on her table, claiming that she is paying attention. She completes the first part of the assessment. I am about to explain the written instructions for the last part of it when she says, obviously offended, 'I am deaf, not illiterate' (Research Journal, October 23, 2006).

The meaning of Melkorka's words represented one of the most puzzling moments in my research process, and they kept echoing in my head. In my discussions with Hafdís I kept returning to this incident over and over again, not sure what to make of it.

Hafdís: Again I experienced an enthusiastic teacher wanting to do her best for her students, but at the same time not capable of considering students´ capabilities within the complex reality of the classroom. Instead of allowing students to begin the task according to their abilities, she struggled with this need to be in control of the situation. This is common for teachers, especially those who want to do a good job. They are unaware of how their concern for students' learning can sometimes limit students' opportunities to flourish and bring their resources to bear. This is even more common with teachers working with students with impairment, and the outcome is often learned helplessness. However, in this incident Melkorka had the strength to make the teacher aware by pointing out her capability. I saw that Karen got the message and was ready to think over her actions, but she had a hard time analysing them, relating them to her readings, and figuring out how to respond -- and how to create literacy instruction that responded to what students brought into class.

Karen: I kept wondering about what Melkorka's words implied; whether something about the role of the teacher that I embodied and enacted was creating and sustaining the dominant deficit image of deaf students as literacy learners that I had set out to deconstruct. Through extensive reflection on Melkorka's words and other incidents describing conflicts with students, I began to experience a change in my understanding of the theoretical work I was reading. These were no longer theories to be supported or opposed. Rather, from then on, my academic reading described the reality found within *my* classroom. In other words, this incident forced me to confront the reflections of the oppressive hearing teacher as these emerged in my practice, and in turn caused my students to act in the role of the oppressed deaf student.

This was a critical moment in my study. I realized that being aware of the oppressive history of deaf education is not enough to make the ideological changes needed to alter this reality. Additionally, I realized that using one set of theoretical perspectives to help me see students' literacy practices *emerge* within the classroom would not get me very far. To be successful in changing my literacy instruction, I needed to systematically deconstruct instructional practices that marginalized students' resources and create a communicative space that encouraged students to build their learning on their existing resources.

After Christmas break, I returned with a plan. I asked students to return the books I had handed out in the beginning of the school year. I knew I was doing the right thing when Viktoría returned her books with the words *Good! 100% children's books!* Instead of having students work on predetermined spelling and grammar exercises and read books I had prepared for them, I decided to emphasize independent reading and creative writing. I had decided the steps I needed to take to implement my new plan. I had also asked the assistant principal, who was deaf herself, to sit in on my classes while I was transforming my practice. Despite my plan, I was undeniably anxious about making these changes. I wondered what would happen if students did not take on the responsibility that I expected of them.

Hafdís: I admired Karen's courage. After almost 30 years of teaching, I understood the difficulties and the courage required to completely change your practice. In my journal I wrote:

This could go both ways, she could lose her authority as a teacher. Her students might feel that she doesn't know what she is doing and therefore she cannot make up her mind for how she is going to teach them or they might feel that she is listening to them and planning her teaching according to their comments. Whatever, I support this way of teaching. (Research journal, January 27, 2007)

Karen: Soon I began to observe some significant changes in students' attitudes toward their learning. In creative writing, students would ask me as soon as I entered the classroom whether it was time for writing. Often, they would already have their writing tools on the tables or be at the computer ready to begin working. Slowly, the instructional space began to fill up with their questions. These ranged from simply how to write words they needed, such as hringja (call) or rafmagnsinnstunga (electric outlet), to asking for assurance that they were spelling words such as miðvikudagur (Wednesday) or hissa (surprised) correctly.

Hafdís: Karen and I discussed these changes and I began to see her transformation. I realized that the two roles of teacher and researcher were beginning to inform each other. I noticed the interplay between the research journal and her practice, how the reflection was helping her understand how she could change her practice. She was not just trying different ideas, but analysing her teaching, relating the findings to theories and knowledge, and then making decisions for changing her practice.

Discussion

The findings illuminate that, to recognize her frame of reference, Karen needed to begin by tuning her senses to her surroundings: what she saw, heard, and felt in everyday situations within the setting. She could then begin to make connections between theory and her classroom practice. The final step was to use her reflections to create a learning community that would preserve students' agency in developing their identities as readers and writers. Through this process, dialogue with a critical friend played an important role. It gave her a space to share her concerns and victories from the classroom, and the discussions nested in her subconscious, continuing to transform her understanding of her educational practices and who she was as a teacher and researcher. The dialogic and reconstructive partnerships in inquiry and action described here were based on changes in prevalent assumptions about the discourse and methods of practitioner inquiry.

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