Review article

Self-study in *Teaching and Teacher Education*: Characteristics and contributions

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Ten of 24 *TATE* articles on self-study of professional practice are analyzed.
- Ten self-study characteristics are identified.
- Three broad self-study research contributions are highlighted.

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The author analyzes self-study research in *Teaching and Teacher Education* (*TATE*). An introduction to self-study of professional practice as scholarship and methodology is followed by descriptions of 10 selected articles. Next is a presentation of 10 self-study characteristics identified in the articles. The final analysis shows three broad self-study research contributions: a) teachers and teacher educators advance the education field by becoming accomplished practitioner-researchers, b) a self-directed professional learning paradigm is advantageous for teachers' and teacher educators' professional development, and c) when teachers and teacher educators commit to their professional growth in supportive environments, they benefit themselves and others.

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Teaching and Teacher Education (*TATE*) is an international research journal focusing on teachers, teaching, and teacher education (https://www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education). *TATE* is multidisciplinary and not bound by any methodology or paradigm. The journal focuses on teachers and teaching in various settings, including early childhood, primary, and secondary education, as well as teacher education and professional development. Established in 1985, *TATE* has expanded scholarly boundaries for over three decades and opened new frontiers of theory, research, and practice in the international field of teaching and teacher education (Kleinsasser, 2013).

On *TATE*'s twenty-fifth anniversary, then editors-in-chief, Clandinin and Hamilton, initiated a series of *TATE*-focused review articles. Authors of the articles select a topic, draw together, and analyze *TATE* publications on the subject. According to Clandinin and Hamilton (2011), these analyses should place contemporary *TATE* research in its historical contexts, that is, in the scholarly and practical circumstances in which it originated. Turning chronologically backwards is meant to map the development of *TATE*'s research contributions over time and, in doing so, offer authors and readers possible future directions for moving the international teaching and teacher education field forward. Over the past decade, *TATE*-focused review articles have covered a variety of topics, including teacher knowledge (Ben-Peretz, 2011), equity and social justice (Kaur, 2012), teacher efficacy (Kleinsasser, 2014), teachers and emotions (Uitto et al., 2015), and teacher discourse (Lefstein et al., 2020). However, even though *TATE* has consistently published papers featuring self-study research over the past 20 years, a *TATE*-focused review article on the topic has not yet been produced.

This article analyzes self-study research published in *TATE* to chart the traits and impacts seen when selected papers are looked at concurrently. To begin is a brief overview of the evolution of self-study of professional practice as a unique area of scholarship and research methodology. Following are summaries of 10 chosen *TATE* articles. Ten self-study characteristics identified in those publications are then discussed. The final section looks at how the self-study scholarship has impacted the more extensive teaching and teacher education field, highlighting three significant areas of contribution.

1. The development of self-study as a body of scholarship and scholarly community

Self-study of professional practice was activated as a distinct body of scholarship in the early 1990s. It began with teacher educators studying themselves in action within their educational contexts to improve their professional practice, advance their professional understanding, and contribute to public debates about improving teacher education for the common good (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; Loughran, 2004; Samaras & Freese, 2009). This new movement in educational research, an outgrowth of earlier forms of practitioner inquiry, such as action research (e.g., Elliott, 1987) and teacher research (e.g., Rudduck, 1985), was formalized in 1993 with the establishment of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), a prominent international professional organization. The S-STEP SIG quickly evolved into an active global community comprising several hundred scholars seeking to contribute to teacher education theory and practice and self-study research design (https://www.aera.net/SIG109/Self-Study-of-Teacher-Education-Practices).

Self-study scholarship has been fostered by the annual AERA meetings and other initiatives, including a biennial conference, two handbooks, and a journal. The first S-STEP International Biennial Conference was held in 1996 at the Queen's University International Study Center at Herstmonceux Castle, England (https://www.castleconference.com/conference-history.html). The conference focused on exploring, sharing, and supporting forms of self-study research for teacher educators. Since then, it has been convened regularly, becoming inclusive of scholars in and outside of teacher education studying their professional practice using a self-study research design.

The first *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Loughran et al., 2004) was a comprehensive collection of self-study scholarship, documenting developing characterizations, theoretical influences, and pioneering approaches. While mainly focused on teacher education, it included self-study in school teaching. The second international handbook (Kitchen et al., 2020) reexamined self-study of teaching and teacher

education practices research 16 years after the first edition. It provided an extensive global review and surveyed contemporary critical self-study scholarship in teaching, teacher education, and other academic and professional fields. Overall, the two international handbooks (Kitchen et al., 2020; Loughran et al., 2004) offer comprehensive information on the trajectory of self-study research and in-depth examinations of influential studies.

In 2005, the peer-reviewed journal, *Studying Teacher Education: A Journal of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices* (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cste20/current), was launched to disseminate high-quality research and dialogue in self-study of teacher education practices. The journal also publishes research by individuals whose primary role is not teacher education but whose work has an educational focus and who use self-study to understand the educator-researcher self and the relationship between self and practice (Berry & Kitchen, 2021). *Studying Teacher Education* complements the two handbooks by presenting current advancements and topics in self-study research.

2. The development of self-study as a research methodology

Self-study involves inquiring into the researcher's own professional experiences to improve their practice. The methodology provides an in-depth understanding of professional practice by reflecting upon, critically analyzing, and evaluating it through interaction (LaBoskey, 2004; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009; Samaras, 2011). Self-study interaction can take on many forms; it may involve local and distant colleagues, students, and various types of text (LaBoskey, 2004). The emphasis on the researcher's self and experiences distinguishes self-study from other methodologies for researching professional practice (Feldman et al., 2004; Pithouse et al., 2009; Samaras, 2011). A fundamental requirement of self-study scholarship is revealing and studying one's experiences and practices to learn from them and improve. This critical and challenging course of action demands self-awareness, candor, and openness to feedback (Hamilton et al., 2020; Pithouse et al., 2009; Samaras & Freese, 2006).

Influential scholars have described self-study as a stance researchers take, using many techniques to look at themselves and their professional experiences from various theoretical and contextual perspectives (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; LaBoskey, 2004; Loughran & Northfield, 1998). Because there are no prescribed self-study methods or theories, self-study researchers choose and develop appropriate approaches and understandings to advance their inquiries (Loughran, 2004; Samaras, 2011). Thus, methodological and theoretical inventiveness and change are prevalent in self-study scholarship (Craig & Curtis, 2020; Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras, 2020; Tidwell & Jónsdóttir, 2020; Whitehead, 2004).

Guidelines for the validity, trustworthiness, and quality of self-study have developed over time (see, among others, Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Feldman, 2003; Hamilton et al., 2020; Samaras, 2011). According to these guidelines, self-study research processes must be meticulous and transparent, value relational ethics, involve critical collaboration and self-inquiry, give evidence of impact, and be made public to support robust conclusions and implications.

Professionals working in and outside teacher education take up self-study because it allows them to better understand themselves and their work environments (Kitchen, 2020). This enables them to reassess their work and consider the ramifications of their efforts in specific and broader contexts. Educators and other practitioners from various disciplines and professions are increasingly conducting self-studies to improve the quality of shared human experience and shed light on educational and social issues (Kitchen,

2020; Samaras & Pithouse-Morgan, 2020; Taylor & Diamond, 2020).

2.1. Putting myself in the picture

My position as the author of this review is significant because of the self-aware nature of self-study. A similar study conducted by another scholar with a different background and viewpoint would not yield precisely the same discoveries. I have worked in education for 28 years, first as a schoolteacher and now as a university-based teacher educator. For over a decade, I have taught graduate courses in professional learning and supervised graduate student research, focusing on better understanding and supporting teachers as self-directed and self-developing learners. My students include new and experienced teachers from different educational backgrounds who teach various subjects in schools and higher education. For the past two decades, I have studied my professional practice through self-study research (see, for instance, Pithouse, 2005; Pithouse-Morgan, 2016; Pithouse-Morgan, 2021). Partnerships with members of the international self-study community have been core drivers of my scholarship and my teaching of self-study methodology to graduate students and colleagues (for example, Pithouse et al., 2009; Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2016; Samaras & Pithouse-Morgan, 2021). Serving as the AERA S-STEP SIG secretary (2012—2014) and chair (2019—2021) allowed me to experience and be a close witness to the development, interactions, and generativity of the global self-study community.

3. Tracing self-study in *Teaching and Teacher Education*

A steady flow of articles published in *TATE* has supported and extended the growing knowledge base of self-study over the past two decades. An online SCOPUS database search of *Teaching and Teacher Education* articles with "self-study" in the title, abstract, or keywords produced 25 papers published between 1999 and 2022. An appraisal of those articles revealed that 24 dealt with self-study as scholarship and methodology to some degree or other. These papers were primarily written by teacher educators, with some contributions from student teachers and schoolteachers (see Table 1). Given the origins of the self-study movement in the AERA, it was not surprising that much of the research was conducted in the United States. Nevertheless, there was significant representation from other geographical regions, and the articles addressed diverse research questions and aims in different settings.

My analysis focuses on 10 articles representing purposeful contributions to self-study as a distinct, international body of knowledge. They were selected to exemplify a variety of time periods, geographical locations, professional roles and perspectives, topics, and contextual differences (see Table 2). I also considered each article's citations as determined by SCOPUS. Six of the papers I chose were among the 10 most-cited of the original 24. The four less-cited articles were selected because they brought different viewpoints and offered clear, detailed discussions of self-study as scholarship and methodology. And, three of them represented more recently published work.

The following section comprises a description of each article, organized chronologically. I chose the chronological order to trace the trajectory of self-study in *TATE* over two decades. Each account addresses the "who," "where," "why," "how," "and "so what?" of the paper. After that, I discuss 10 self-study characteristics identified by reexamining the articles as a set. My analysis then considers the distinctive contributions of self-study to broader *TATE* subject matter, with references to other *TATE* scholars who have investigated related topics.

Table 1
Overview of the 24 identified TATE self-study articles.

Year of publication	Number of articles per year
1999	1
2000	1
2001	1
2002	2
2004	1
2005	2
2006	1
2007	1
2008	4
2009	2
2010	1
2011	2
2015	1
2017	1
2020	2
2021	1

Geographical locations	Number of articles per location
Australia	3
Canada	3
Chile	1
England	1
Netherlands	1
Netherlands & United States	1
Norway	2
Spain	1
United States	11

Author roles	Number of articles per role
Teacher educators studying their practice	15
Teacher educators studying their practice with student teachers	2
Teacher educators studying their professional growth	2
Schoolteachers studying their practice with teacher educators	1
Teacher educators facilitating others' self-study research	1
Teacher educators teaching self-study research	1
Teacher educators examining debates about practitioner research	1
Teacher educators examining influential scholars' contributions to self-study	1

Number of authors	Number of articles per number of authors
one author	9
two authors	7
three authors	3
five authors	3
six authors	1
seven authors	1

4. Descriptions of the selected self-study articles

4.1. Relearning the meaning and practice of student teaching supervision through collaborative self-study (Montecinos et al., 2002)

The article by Montecinos et al. outlined the process and outcomes of a collaborative self-study conducted by five Chilean teacher educators and a critical friend in the United States. They aimed to improve student-teacher supervision in the context of preservice teacher preparation in Chile.

To record their learning about supervision and reflection, each Chilean teacher educator first prepared a written or oral account of meaningful learning from the self-study and thoughts on the self-study process. The critical friend met with each teacher educator individually to listen and ask questions for clarity. Each conversation resulted in a written narrative, which the critical friend later translated from Spanish to English. The critical friend then read the narratives back to the teacher educators in Spanish, modifying any sections requested by the writer. After that, the teacher educators examined each record for recurring themes showing how the self-study process had helped them transform their interactions with their supervisees. The article presents six themes from the collaborative analysis of the written narratives.

The Chilean teacher educators discussed some of the problems they experienced as first-time self-study researchers who wondered if they were carrying out the study correctly, and how to fully and accurately reproduce for the reader the social interactions that enabled their learning and growth. The study's findings were presented as social and pedagogical interaction guidelines to scaffold student teachers' reflections. The authors concluded that their research exemplified how collaborative thinking and inquiry assisted them in increasing their knowledge about student-teacher supervision, being more conscious of their supervisees' and their own needs, and becoming more purposeful in their educational judgments. They described how hearing peers express their experiences, achievements, and mistakes prepared them to embrace an open and authentic discussion in which they could welcome the task of self-improvement. As a result, they suggested a model of teacher educator preparation that includes peer mentoring through collaborative self-study research.

4.2. Teacher educators as researchers: multiple perspectives (Cochran-Smith, 2005)

According to Cochran-Smith, a teacher educator's professional role entails both research and practice. This article in a themed *TATE* issue on teacher educators' expertise highlighted divergent perspectives on the need for research regarding teacher education performed by teacher educators themselves. On the one hand, Cochran-Smith pointed out that teacher educators were conducting more teacher education research than at any previous time in history. On the other hand, Cochran-Smith conceded that self-study and different types of practitioner inquiry are sometimes disregarded because they are deemed insufficiently rigorous or do not generalize across contexts. Drawing on a personal history of "working the dialectic of scholarship and practice" (2005, p. 219) in the United States for more than two decades, Cochran-Smith examined debates about practitioner research by the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education as an example of how these conflicting perspectives might play out. Given the variety and complexities of challenges in teacher education, Cochran-Smith concluded that there is a need for a multidisciplinary and multi-methodological portfolio of research endeavors. This portfolio should include self-study and other types of practitioner inquiry conducted by teacher educators. Besides being knowledgeable consumers of research, teacher educators must be accomplished researchers of their practices and programs. This necessitates self-examination and exploring the foundations of their behavior, values, and ideas. It also requires empirical research to understand the consequences of teacher preparation courses and field experiences for prospective teachers' learning, professional practice in schools and classrooms, and student learning. Overall, Cochran-Smith advocated for the need for self-directed research by teacher educators to develop local knowledge of practice and make that information accessible and useable in other circumstances, thereby converting it to public knowledge.

4.3. Modeling by teacher educators (Loughran & Berry, 2005)

In the 2005 themed issue of *TATE* on teacher educators' expertise, Loughran and Berry argued that a desired professional

Table 2
Main features of the 10 selected TATE self-study articles (in chronological order).

	Author	Year of publication	Primary geographical location	Professional roles of authors	Primary research purpose	Citations
1	Montecinos et al.	2002	Chile	Teacher educators	Aimed to improve student-teacher supervision in a preservice teacher preparation program	18
2	Cochran-Smith	2005	United States	Teacher educator	Examined debates about practitioner research by the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education	171
3	Loughran & Berry	2005	Australia	Teacher educators	Investigated modeling by teacher educators in a preservice teacher education program	163
4	Freese	2006	United States (Hawai'i)	Teacher educator (with a student teacher)	Followed the development of a student teacher over two years to better understand assisting student teachers in becoming teachers	122
5	Lunenberg et al.	2010	Netherlands	Teacher educators facilitating others' self-study research	Explored critical issues in assisting teacher educators conducting self-studies	34
6	Lunenberg & Samaras	2011	Netherlands United States	Teacher educators teaching self-study research	Examined cross-country experiences of teaching self-study research	37
7	Gallagher et al.	2011	Canada	Early-career teacher educators	Delved into the professional growth of pre-tenure teacher educators by forming a self-study group	62
8	Soslau	2015	United States	Teacher educator	Examined the development process of a self-created post-lesson observation conferencing protocol in an elementary teacher preparation program	12
9	Paravato Taylor et al.	2020	United States	Early-career schoolteacher (with teacher educators)	Studied an early-career teacher's chronicling of emotional episodes in their Grade 6 teaching	4
10	Hordvik et al.	2021	Norway	Teacher educators	Investigated how teacher educators at various career stages developed through cooperative teaching and research in a physical education course	5

competency of teacher educators is the capacity to openly model for students the ideas and behaviors that drive their educational approach. However, they cautioned that expressing knowledge of practice is a complicated and challenging process requiring both self-awareness and awareness of pedagogy and students. This paper investigated the nature and development of explicit modeling by Loughran and Berry as teacher educators in a preservice education program setting at an Australian university.

The authors drew on their mutual experiences and related data sources (journals, reflections on practice, written sketches of classroom experiences, and earlier publications) to delve into their ideas about explicit modeling. The data analysis was based on Berry's (2004) description of tensions arising due to teacher educators' attempts to balance their objectives for student learning with the expectations and anxieties that student teachers express. The idea of tensions was used to conceptualize the complexities involved in modelling.

The article demonstrated how, via collaborative self-study, the authors began to conceive a "pedagogy of teacher education… based on learning from the experience of 'being explicit'" (Loughran & Berry, 2005, p. 193). Loughran and Berry offered their developing approach to modeling as a spur for others to explain their pedagogy of teacher education. They argued that modeling could contribute to building an appropriate knowledge base for teacher education. Finally, they recommended that teacher educators be at the forefront of generating, explaining, and presenting new knowledge about teacher education for the benefit of others. They concluded that collaborative self-study allowed them to understand their practice in new and distinct ways and stimulated their modeling method, which helped unravel the problematic nature of teaching about teaching.

4.4. Reframing one's teaching: discovering our teacher selves through reflection and inquiry (Freese, 2006)

This self-study, done at a university in Hawai'i by a student teacher (Ryan) and a teacher educator (Freese), followed Ryan's development and evolution over two years. The research looked into the difficulties of learning to teach and the complexities of supporting student teachers on their path to becoming teachers.

Data were gathered from various sources, including Ryan's

action research/self-study paper and video recorded teaching, Freese's journal reflections and field notes, and conversations between Ryan and Freese. Freese reviewed and reread the data and applied an inductive data analysis method to find recurring themes and personal constructions arising from Ryan's observations and analysis of his experiences. Findings from the data sources were combined to create a profile of Ryan's learning and progress over two years.

The findings shed light on how student teachers think, the difficulties they face, their anxieties, and the benefits they gain by carefully assessing their teaching and their students' learning. The article highlighted various attitudes and dispositions that can affect growth and development. It also presented a range of activities that promote teacher contemplation and inquiry. For Freese, this research was noteworthy because it followed a student teacher's development and progress through an extended period. Freese argued that the study's findings could motivate teacher educators to be sensitive to the breadth of student teachers' experiences and emotions when they enter the school culture and transition from student to teacher. Freese asserted that the study could assist future student teachers and teacher educators in understanding the complicated process of learning to teach. The article concluded that Ryan's journey was a mirror through which Freese self-reflected. Similarly, the collaborative nature of the self-study may encourage readers to draw parallels between their own experiences and Ryan's and Freese's.

4.5. Critical issues in supporting self-study (Lunenberg et al., 2010)

This article focused on examining essential concerns in assisting teacher educators undertaking self-studies. Lunenberg et al. explained how they launched the first Dutch self-study initiative. Lunenberg et al. invited five participating teacher educators to work on their professional development by conducting self-studies resulting in practice improvement and a research report. The authors noted that teacher educators who begin a self-study are frequently seasoned professionals. At the same time, in terms of research, they may be inexperienced. As a result, experienced teacher educators embarking on a self-study must be willing to reveal themselves as learners and become vulnerable. Lunenberg et al. spent a year working with five teacher educators who

confronted this problem by doing self-study. The authors' challenge was to become facilitators of this process and assist participants in their path to becoming teacher educator researchers. They chose to make this issue the emphasis of their collaborative self-study.

Lunenberg et al. used digital logbooks written by the participating teacher educators as data, as well as the results of the interviews held at the end of the support process and a six-month follow-up questionnaire completed by the participants. The authors examined the data using inductive and deductive techniques. Based on individual coding of the texts, categories were created. Two researchers independently conducted each analysis. The disparities in the results were then discussed and settled.

Lunenberg et al. identified seven essential issues to increase the likelihood of self-studies being beneficial to teacher education practice and the future development of a knowledge foundation for teacher education. In addition, the study identified four areas of conflict and struggle in their processes as facilitators. The authors offered these insights for further research and examination. They concluded that supporting self-studies should be taken seriously to increase the likelihood of self-studies being beneficial to teacher educators' practices and the continuing development of a knowledge base for teacher education grounded in practice.

4.6. Developing a pedagogy for teaching self-study research: lessons learned across the atlantic (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011)

This article described a collective, cross-country self-study by Lunenberg and Samaras based on their diverse and distinct experiences of teaching self-study research in their own practice and environment, framed in academic debates on teaching and learning. Lunenberg's research focused on facilitating a professional development group of teacher educators in the Netherlands. Samaras's study was conducted in an advanced research methodology course for doctoral students in the United States.

Participant interviews, digital logbooks, and a follow-up questionnaire were used to gather information for the Dutch study. Deductive and inductive reasoning was used in the analysis. For the study in the United States, a diverse data set was used, including participants' narrative assessments of each course project individually and across the entire data set, as well as individual written accounts addressing the critical research questions. Inductive analysis methods were used.

Using dialogue and advice from a critical friend, the authors integrated what they gained from their individual studies, resulting in six pedagogic guidelines for teaching self-study research. The study's findings stress the significance of giving emotional support, balancing between support and taking over, developing a supportive research community, and modeling what is taught. Without suggesting that these criteria would fully apply to all educational situations, Lunenberg and Samaras discussed the difficulties and benefits of structuring a self-study research pedagogy. They contended that by making their teaching public and studying it, others might benefit from the lessons they learned along the way. This self-study provided a conceptual, theoretical, and practical foundation for future research in other contexts to create a knowledge base for teaching self-study research. The study benefits both the self-study community and the wider research community by educating about self-study as a qualitative research genre and teaching qualitative research more broadly.

4.7. Establishing and sustaining teacher educator professional development in a self-study community of practice: pre-tenure teacher educators developing professionally (Gallagher et al., 2011)

This paper portrayed the professional growth of five pre-tenure

teacher educators at a Canadian university through forming a self-study group. The authors described the experiences and procedures of the self-study group of new faculty members.

Field notes, written reflections, meeting minutes, and transcripts of audio-recorded group discussions were among the data sources. Each of the authors coded and categorized the data independently. They then collaborated to establish the data analysis categories. Common categories and categorical clusters were collapsed to shape general patterns.

Reflection on three memorable events offered insights into how the pre-tenure teacher educators participated in self-study and experienced enrichment as a community of academics. Evidence showed how pre-tenure faculty might collaborate through self-study to create a culture that connects teaching practice to scholarship within an organizational framework for group interactions. The article demonstrated how authentic conversations are essential to creating a learning community where new faculty members are respected and supported as instructors and scholars. Thus, the research contributed to the public discourse of communities of practice. Another significant finding was that new teacher educators are responsive to and benefit from collaborative self-study as professional growth. Overall the study demonstrated how participation in self-study groups as a form of professional development could enhance commitment to teacher education as teaching and scholarship. Furthermore, the study contributed knowledge about new professor induction by presenting a self-directed, collaborative, and enabling professional development paradigm.

4.8. Development of a post-lesson observation conferencing protocol: situated in theory, research, and practice (Soslau, 2015)

Soslau argued that because student teaching experiences are so critical, the development of teacher educators' field-instruction practice should be studied. This retrospective self-study examined the five-year development process of Soslau's self-created post-lesson observation conferencing protocol in an elementary teacher preparation program at a United States university's school of education. Story line methodology, personal/practical narrative inquiry, and email exchanges with a critical friend were used to juxtapose key events with changes to the protocol over time.

The data were derived from the author's prior research, six iterations of the conferencing protocol, slides and notes from presentations, a self-written story line narrative, and the critical friend email correspondence. Two coding schemes aligned with the theoretical framework were created to direct data analysis.

Soslau shared four selected vignettes to show how engaging with research, theory, and a critical friend resulted in changes to practice, building local knowledge, and contributing to the field. Demonstrating how practice continued to evolve over time, the vignettes were chronologically organized to highlight the juxtaposition between the evolution of Soslau's thinking and the actual changes enacted in practice. The study's analysis revealed gaps between Soslau's developing theoretical understandings and existing practice. Recognizing these misalignments had two primary consequences: (a) additional improvements to the protocol and practice and (b) developing a conceptual framework and protocol for collaborating with student teachers. Soslau demonstrated how the self-study process could free teacher educators from practices that do not afford suitable learning opportunities for teacher candidates, replacing them with working methods backed up by research, theory, and practice. The paper contributed to the body of self-study research by providing a framework for field-instructor self-education through self-study. And, more broadly, Soslau's study showed how practitioner-researchers could use self-study to retrospectively examine how their continuing research

agendas contribute to knowledge generation and evaluate how their practice corresponds with this new knowledge.

4.9. Patterns and progression of emotion experiences and regulation in the classroom (Paravato Taylor et al., 2020)

This self-study focused on a United States early-career school-teacher's chronicling of emotional episodes in Grade 6 teaching. Paravato Taylor's transcribed in-the-moment voice recordings and analytic memos were analyzed with the help of a trusted teaching colleague as a critical friend, leading to the discovery of patterns of emotional responses. Through intense reflection and analysis of these patterns with the help of a critical friend, Paravato Taylor understood how initial emotional reactions frequently covered up deeper emotional issues that implicated the teaching self. Those issues were recognized and contextualized, resulting in a better understanding of self, leading to a change in approach to future emotional episodes and better classroom environments. Identifying deeper emotional issues enabled Paravato Taylor to self-manage and manage students in more emotionally healthy ways. This research supported the argument that teacher education programmes and school leaders should emphasize promoting teachers' emotional health. It showed how teachers could engage in personal and collaborative reflection on practice to identify emotional triggers and underlying causes. Notably, the paper demonstrated how schoolteachers could use self-study to develop critical, collaborative thinking for emotionally productive classroom practice, adding to a broader understanding of emotionally complex situations.

4.10. Using collaborative self-study and rhizomatics to explore the ongoing nature of becoming teacher educators (Hordvik et al., 2021)

Hordvik et al.'s collaborative self-study investigated how teacher educators at various career stages built and engaged in multiple relationships through cooperative teaching and research in a physical education course in a Norwegian teacher education program. Four authors were critical friends working in a Norwegian university's physical education teacher education department. Based at a Canadian university, the other author provided a second layer of critical friendship by serving as a critical friend to the group and, at times, to individuals within the group.

The data comprised audio recordings of group and pair meetings and personal reflective diaries. The analysis was a non-linear process with three main phases that were approached in various ways and through numerous iterations. The authors listened to and read meeting transcripts as well as their own and each other's reflections during the first phase. They held a joint meeting and took notes during this process. A group discussion was the format for the second stage. Finally, two authors collaborated on a third analytical technique of memo drafting.

The findings highlighted how collaborative self-study produced evolving and meaningful practices, learning, and relationships that resulted in the researchers developing as cooperative, committed, and innovative teacher educators. This research demonstrated the power of collaborative self-study using relational and non-linear conceptual frameworks such as rhizomatics to reveal diverse and continuing understandings of becoming teacher educators. The paper showed the value of collaborative self-study in developing cooperative relationships among teacher educators to facilitate their individual and collective practice and improve their understanding. These processes can then contribute to the learning of other teacher educators by sharing data-driven insights and results. Importantly, these collaborations can enable teacher educators from various (and similar) career stages and departments to cooperate and progress in their commitments to improving their own and others' practices. Hordvik et al.'s conclusions have implications for policies and practices relating to teacher educators' ongoing professional learning, identified as an area needing special attention in many international contexts. Their research can provide direction and evidence for others who want to launch similar initiatives.

5. Characteristics of self-study in the selected *TATE* articles

The two international handbooks (Kitchen et al., 2020; Loughran et al., 2004) and several methodological guidebooks (e.g., Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009; Samaras, 2011; Samaras & Freese, 2006) have recorded how self-study traits have evolved since the 1990s. But I thought it would be interesting to think about the self-study characteristics I could see in reading the chosen *TATE* self-study papers as a bounded body of research. These attributes have roots in the larger body of self-study scholarship, but they have not been previously identified as a group of 10 self-study traits. Of course, a reader's perspective would influence how similar qualities are described, but while reading and rereading the selected papers, I distinguished the following features:

- Self-study research begins with a sense of curiosity rooted in practice.
- Self-study researchers are both self-aware and focused on their practice.
- Researchers doing self-studies examine themselves in context.
- Self-study research entails making a positive commitment to change.
- Self-study scholars pursue ongoing professional growth.
- Self-study researchers benefit from community support and shared accountability.
- Experience-based knowledge serves as the epistemic foundation for self-study scholarship.
- Theory guides self-study scholars who, in turn, influence theory development.
- Self-study scholars make their self-focused learning public.
- Self-study research requires bravery and resilience.

5.1. Self-study research begins with a sense of curiosity rooted in practice

Self-study researchers start with a question that piques their interest and is emotionally and professionally meaningful to them; their excitement for the subject drives them forward and keeps them focused on their inquiry (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). The trigger might be a difficulty, challenge, or concern in the teacher or teacher educator's own practice. However, the research does not have to be about a problem or a shortcoming; it can be about any element of practice that needs greater in-depth understanding (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). By approaching one's practice with a self-identified, purposeful line of inquiry, one may begin to examine it with inquisitiveness and openness to being aware of one's habits, perceptions, and emotions in action—allowing for greater creativity and sensitivity (Freese, 2006; Soslau, 2015; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). Curiosity is one of the most critical aspects of self-study. Researchers who conduct self-studies must be open-minded, willing to try new things, and committed to continuing discovery.

5.2. Self-study researchers are both self-aware and focused on their practice

Self-study researchers agree that they must appreciate themselves as teaching and teacher education practitioners to progress in their field. This emphasis on understanding and valuing the nature of being and becoming a practitioner is known as self-study scholars' necessarily ontological involvement in their research (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, as cited in Soslau, 2015; see also Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Teachers and teacher educators who do self-studies begin by inquiring into their own experiences, attitudes, and behaviors as a foundation for dedicating their attention to others' learning and growth. Placing and sustaining the self at the center of educational research might be challenging, as Lunenberg et al. (2010) described. However, because their goal is to comprehend the "I" inside (rather than apart from) their practice, self-study researchers must be aware of themselves and develop strategies for maintaining that self-awareness while focusing on their work (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). The dual emphasis of self-study research creates a twofold learning path: self-study scholars come to better understand themselves and their field (Cochran-Smith, 2005). They can use their increased self-awareness to evaluate their own experiences and perspectives and what is most important professionally.

5.3. Researchers doing self-studies examine themselves in context

The self is not a solitary figure in self-study. Self-study researchers view themselves as interrelated and enmeshed in a web of interactions in the world (Hordvik et al., 2021). Rather than studying the self in isolation, self-study scholars see themselves as part of a network connected by diverse relationships (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). Everything from interactions with students, co-workers and others, to field notes, to research papers is part of this dynamic ecosystem (Gallagher et al., 2011). Teachers and teacher educators cannot study themselves apart from others or their educational settings, whether their investigations are collective or individual (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). Self-study scholars need to be connected to understand themselves in context and take context-responsive action to benefit others in practice.

5.4. Self-study research entails making a positive commitment to change

The self is fluid and dynamic in self-study, overflowing with possibilities. A crucial requirement for the quality of self-study research is evidence of the benefit of change in practice (Hordvik et al., 2021; Soslau, 2015). Self-study encourages teachers and teacher educators to experiment with new and innovative teaching, learning, and research methods. This means that self-study involves a confident commitment to discovering new paths and reinventing one's practice in the service of others (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). In self-study scholarship, the self is multidimensional and sensitive to internal and external environmental changes (Hordvik et al., 2021). Although both external and internal forces affect the self, enhanced self-awareness allows the self to act purposefully and respond appropriately (Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). Self-study research can help teachers and teacher educators become more cognizant of what promotes professional growth for themselves and others, allowing them to drive context-appropriate educational transformation (Gallagher et al., 2011; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011).

5.5. Self-study scholars pursue ongoing professional growth

An inherent imperfection in teaching and teacher education practice motivates self-study scholarship. As Lunenberg and Samaras (2011) pointed out, a self-study project begins with something that captures one's attention and needs concentration in one's professional context. Because it is improvement-oriented and transformative in character, self-study scholarship challenges the idea of excellent practice as acontextual and unchanging (Hordvik et al., 2021). Thus, when self-study researchers finish a project, they understand that their learning in and about practice continues, regardless of their level of competence or seniority (Cochran-Smith, 2005). As a result, self-study is a continual professional growth process that involves analyzing one's practice to improve—while understanding that flawless practice is an illusion.

5.6. Self-study researchers benefit from community support and shared accountability

To study and enhance one's practice, one must be ready to be open to others (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011; Montecinos et al., 2002). Whether researching individually or in a group, self-study scholars must seek input encouraging them to consider how others perceive their research efforts (Freese, 2006; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). As teachers and teacher educators begin to share their practice-based insights with others who hold divergent viewpoints, their understandings grow (Cochran-Smith, 2005). As a result, the importance of having an audience in developing one's work and making it meaningful to others cannot be overstated (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). Self-study researchers gain from interactions with others who share a sense of professional responsibility and are willing to give candid, constructive feedback (Gallagher et al., 2011; Montecinos et al., 2002).

5.7. Experience-based knowledge serves as the epistemic foundation for self-study scholarship

According to the core self-study concept of "the authority of a practitioner's experience," practice improvement is built on experience-based knowledge (Munby & Russell, as cited in Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011, p. 841). Practitioners themselves are most familiar with the contradictions, tensions, dynamics, and emotions associated with being and becoming a teacher or teacher educator (Freese, 2006; Loughran & Berry, 2005; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). The authority of a practitioner's experience may be regarded as a process of acquiring and reevaluating real-world knowledge that can be applied to and altered by new encounters or situations as they arise (Lunenberg et al., 2010). It might be challenging to hold these ideas lightly and be willing to amend or discard them if they are no longer helpful (Soslau, 2015). But, understanding the responsive, conditional character of experience-based knowledge brings with it the hopeful realization that change for the better is always possible (Hordvik et al., 2021; Soslau, 2015).

5.8. Theory guides self-study scholars who, in turn, influence theory development

Teachers and teacher educators who do self-studies employ various theoretical approaches to situate and orient their research. By identifying their theoretical foundations, they relate their learning to developing academic discussions inside and outside the self-study research community (Hordvik et al., 2021; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011; Soslau, 2015). They also contribute to theory building by developing and communicating experience-based

theoretical constructs (Loughran & Berry, 2005; Soslau, 2015). The experiential wisdom resulting from self-study has real-world applications that may be beneficial in many settings and give direction for future research (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

5.9. Self-study scholars make their self-focused learning public

Self-study researchers openly scrutinize their thoughts and behaviors, inviting feedback from others near and far (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). As Loughran and Berry (2005) indicated, genuinely seeking feedback is a challenge to the teacher educator's or teacher's traditional "expert" position. While there is an unavoidable discomfort in professionals making their challenges and continuing learning public and available to others, a visible willingness to assess one's expertise meticulously and honestly can fuel others' learning in service of more comprehensive educational change (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Freese, 2006; Montecinos et al., 2002).

5.10. Self-study research requires bravery and resilience

Recognizing that the self-study inquiry cannot be isolated from the inquirer necessitates ethical self-questioning about one's intentions and the potential repercussions of one's actions. Teachers and teacher educators must be prepared to experience discomfort and vulnerability when seeking self-observation and critique from others because this requires them to evaluate themselves and their practice (Lunenberg et al., 2010; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). This type of inquiry contributes to the advancement of teaching and teacher education by inspiring bravery through vulnerability so that teachers and teacher educators can discover themselves—their achievements, concerns, and aspirations—through public dialogue with others who are also on a self-study journey. It takes courage to be transparent and make one's self-focused learning public (Lunenberg et al., 2010; Montecinos et al., 2002). Consequently, self-study research must be done voluntarily (Gallagher et al., 2011; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). And partnerships with trusted peers and mentors who respond with compassion and care can offer a supportive foundation for becoming a resilient self-study scholar (Gallagher et al., 2011; Montecinos et al., 2002). Self-study scholarship provides a public space where bravery and vulnerability coexist as critical elements of building resilience for teachers and teacher educators.

6. Self-study contributions to broader *TATE* topics

The in-depth examinations and examples of self-study as methodology and scholarship in the selected articles, encapsulated in the 10 qualities described above, have provided generative contributions to self-study of professional practice as a body of knowledge. In addition, a SCOPUS analysis of their citations reveals that *TATE* publications written by self-study scholars have contributed to the teaching and teacher education field beyond self-study. To illustrate, Cochran-Smith (2005) has been cited in studies of student teachers' pedagogical learning during a practicum in special schools (Walton & Rusznyak, 2013), teacher education textbooks (Surma et al., 2018), and teacher educators' use of professional standards in their practice (Bourke et al., 2018). And Loughran and Berry (2005) have been referred to in studies of student teachers' professional identity (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010), physics teachers' beliefs about the goals and pedagogy of physics education (Belo et al., 2014), and teacher educators' conceptions of modeling (Montenegro, 2020). With this in mind, the final part of my analysis considers the impact of the *TATE* self-study scholarship on the broader teaching and teacher education field (with

references to other *TATE* scholars who have explored related issues in research not designated as "self-studies"). This analysis shows three notable areas of contribution:

- Teachers and teacher educators advance practice and knowledge by becoming accomplished researchers of their work.
- A self-directed professional learning paradigm benefits teacher and teacher educator professional development initiatives.
- Teachers and teacher educators help themselves and others when they commit to professional growth in supportive communities.

6.1. Teachers and teacher educators advance practice and knowledge by becoming accomplished researchers of their work

TATE has a rich history of scholarly discussions about teachers and teacher educators researching their practices and programs, dating back three decades. Browsing the early issues of *TATE* showed that this work has been referred to using various terms, including "action research" (Gore & Zeichner, 1991, p. 119), "reflective inquiry" (Adler, 1993, p. 159), and "teacher-initiated inquiry" (Atkin, 1992, p. 381). This extensive body of scholarship has assisted in breaking perceived barriers between educational research and practice to contribute to public knowledge about teaching and teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Self-study scholarship has contributed to the long-held understanding that when teachers and teacher educators become skilled, reflective researchers of their work, both they and others benefit (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Loughran & Berry, 2005; Soslau, 2015). The self-study focus on improving practice inspires teachers and teacher educators to conduct empirical research to explore their professional practice's efficacy, appropriateness, and consequences (Montecinos et al., 2002; Soslau, 2015). Teachers and teacher educators can use self-study to identify how their ongoing research agendas can contribute to experience-based knowledge generation and evaluate how their practice corresponds with their evolving knowledge (Loughran & Berry, 2005; Soslau, 2015). Furthermore, the characteristic emphasis on the researcher's *self* in self-study emphasizes the educational value of practitioners' self-examination and investigation into what underpins their behavior, ideals, and thinking (Hordvik et al., 2021; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). Overall, self-study encourages teachers and teacher educators to be more curious about themselves, their work, and the contexts in which they work (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). It is about being self-aware, contextually aware, and committed to personal, professional, and scholarly growth. Heightened self-awareness allows self-study scholars to focus on what they need to do to grow, be committed to change, and support the professional development of others (Gallagher et al., 2011; Hordvik et al., 2021).

The scholarly community of self-study has advocated for teachers and teacher educators to be at the forefront of creating, explaining, and disseminating new knowledge about teaching and teacher education for the benefit of others. *TATE* self-study research has helped build a solid, experience-based knowledge foundation for teaching and teacher education (Freese, 2006; Loughran & Berry, 2005; Soslau, 2015). Self-study in *TATE* has provided an international platform for teachers' and teacher educators' experiences to be shared, heard, and taken seriously in pursuing new knowledge. Drawing on various theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks, the self-studies add to a multifaceted understanding of the complex human experiences and situations of being and becoming teachers and teacher educators (Gallagher et al., 2011; Hordvik et al., 2021; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). By

sharing data-driven insights, results, and exemplars, these studies can contribute to the learning of other teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders, and policymakers (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Freese, 2006; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). Self-study research by teachers and teacher educators develops local knowledge of practice. It makes such knowledge accessible and useable in other situations, converting it into public knowledge available to academics, policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and others.

Furthermore, by educating about teaching and facilitating self-study as a practitioner inquiry genre, self-study scholarship has benefited both the self-study community and the larger *TATE* community. As Lunenberg et al. (2010) and Lunenberg and Samaras (2011) argued, purposefully teaching and supporting practitioner inquiry should be taken seriously to increase the likelihood that such research is beneficial. By making their self-study facilitation and teaching public and studying it, others could benefit from the lessons these self-study scholars learned along the way. These lessons could be used in teaching or facilitating other types of practitioner inquiry by teachers and teacher educators and contribute conceptual and practical knowledge in this area.

6.2. A self-directed professional learning paradigm benefits teacher and teacher educator professional development initiatives

All 10 articles chosen for this review demonstrate how self-study participation can increase personal commitment to and agency in professional learning. Self-study necessitates a commitment to one's professional growth (Loughran & Berry, 2005; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). A self-directed paradigm gives teachers and teacher educators more control over their learning by allowing them to pursue their professional interests and take action for change (Soslau, 2015; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020).

A search for "self-directed professional learning" and similar terms in *TATE* showed that, before self-study scholars took up this issue, Kremer-Hayon and Tillema (1999) started a *TATE* conversation on "self-regulation as a vehicle for learning in teacher education programmes" (p. 507) based on interviews with Dutch and Israeli teacher educators and student teachers. Even though the conditions for its implementation were not always satisfactory, the interviews revealed strong support for the concept of self-regulated learning. A subsequent study in the Israeli and Dutch teacher education contexts (Tillema & Kremer-Hayon, 2002) investigated how teacher educators conceptualized self-regulated learning and what they meant by actively using self-regulated learning in their professional development and to engage their students. Since then, issues concerning teachers' self-directed professional learning have been raised in several *TATE* discussions that do not reference self-study (see, for example, Carpenter & Staudt Willet, 2021; Lopes & Cunha, 2017; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). The *TATE* self-study scholarship has added to these deliberations by presenting a self-directed, interactive, context-responsive, and enabling professional learning paradigm for teacher educators and teachers.

Also, many *TATE* self-studies demonstrated a professional development model that incorporates learning through peer mentoring (Gallagher et al., 2011; Hordvik et al., 2021; Montecinos et al., 2002). Another significant discovery across several studies was that early-career teachers and teacher educators respond to and benefit from self-study as part of their professional development (Gallagher et al., 2011; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). The *TATE* self-studies thus have implications for policies and practices concerning induction and ongoing professional development for teachers and teacher educators. Self-study research has evolved into a powerful tool for professional development for teachers and teacher educators, and it is used in various settings. These studies' findings can provide direction and evidence for improving professional development initiatives within and outside self-study communities.

6.3. Teachers and teacher educators help themselves and others when they commit to professional growth in supportive communities

Self-study scholarship has furthered *TATE*'s longstanding scholarly deliberations on the educative value of teachers' and teacher educators' professional practice communities. To illustrate, early exemplars of *TATE* publications in this area (not designated as "self-studies") include a group of schoolteachers, teacher educators, and doctoral students in the United States whose "community of practice" focused on "engaging in inquiry-based science teaching" (Palincsar et al., 1998, p. 7), and two Canadian school teachers and a curriculum professor in a "critical community of inquiry… focused on the analysis and improvement of instruction to develop a scholarship of pedagogy" (Geddis et al., 1998, p. 95).

The *TATE* self-study scholarship shows a clear commitment to professional growth in supportive communities. It is evident that, for successful self-study research, one must be willing to develop professionally and support others' development (Gallagher et al., 2011; Hordvik et al., 2021; Montecinos et al., 2002). In self-study, shared thinking and inquiry help teacher educators and teachers expand their knowledge of practice, become more aware of their own and others' needs, and thus become more purposeful in and open about their pedagogical decision-making (Loughran & Berry, 2005; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). Self-study researchers such as Gallagher et al. (2011) and Montecinos et al. (2002) described how hearing peers express their experiences, successes, and mistakes prepared them for open, authentic, and critical discussions. They could thus explain and appraise their pedagogy and embrace the task of self-improvement. Collaborative self-studies (Gallagher et al., 2011; Montecinos et al., 2002) and interactions with critical friends (Soslau, 2015; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020) helped teachers and teacher educators understand their practice in a new light and stimulated new approaches. Similarly, the collaborative nature of self-study scholarship may encourage readers to draw parallels between their experiences and those of the self-study authors (Freese, 2006).

Furthermore, self-study collaborations and critical friendships can enable teachers and teacher educators from both different and similar career stages and departments to join forces to advance their commitments to improving their own and others' practice (Hordvik et al., 2021; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). And self-study can facilitate learning communities that value and support early-career professionals (Gallagher et al., 2011; Paravato Taylor et al., 2020). *TATE* self-study scholars have influenced international teaching and teacher education by practicing what they preach about professional learning communities and sharing this experience-based knowledge with others. Their dedication to professional development in supportive groups has influenced research and practice within, across, and beyond their communities.

7. Conclusions and future directions

Guided by the precedents for *TATE*-focused review articles (Clandinin & Hamilton, 2011), I mapped *TATE's* self-study research contributions over time. *TATE* self-study publications have encompassed various topics and educational contexts. The selected articles demonstrated how self-study could strengthen practice, develop accomplished, self-aware practitioner-researchers, build knowledge, and cultivate empowering educational environments that support self-directed professional growth in context-

responsive, community-supported, and globally connected ways.

According to the citation data for the chosen articles, some have had a considerable cross-cutting impact. On the other hand, others have yet to reach a broad audience with their in-depth examinations of self-study as scholarship and methodology. The analysis offered in this review could be a way to bring the *TATE* self-study characteristics and contributions into more comprehensive discussions on teaching and teacher education. I look forward to seeing more work done to evaluate, consolidate, and expand *TATE* self-study scholarship in new directions.

Analyzing the selected articles, individually and collectively, allowed me to identify and explain 10 self-study research characteristics. While their origins are firmly rooted in the established wider body of self-study knowledge, these characteristics have not previously been identified as a group of 10 self-study traits. Recognizing and articulating these qualities, supported by evidence from the *TATE* self-study articles, has given me a renewed sense of purpose and direction as a self-study scholar. And by making my analysis public, I want to provide another lens through which others in the self-study community or those interested in self-study can see opportunities for movement and growth. I hope this collection of self-study characteristics will be an accessible and flexible resource for advancing educational practice, research, and theory through self-study. I also hope others will modify and add to the list of traits and question or discard any they do not find relevant or useful.

In this review, I wore two hats: insider in the self-study community and contributor to the larger *TATE* discourse community. Because *TATE* is a multidisciplinary journal with no set methodology, the review also had to be relevant to readers other than those interested in self-study. As a result, I expanded my analysis of the chosen articles to consider the impact and influence of the self-study scholarship on broader *TATE* topics. That is where my most profound learning occurred. I recognized how self-study research has progressed and provided evidence for three central precepts: a) teachers and teacher educators advance the field of education by becoming accomplished practitioner-researchers, b) a self-directed professional learning paradigm is advantageous for the professional development of teachers and teacher educators, and c) when teachers and teacher educators commit to their professional growth in encouraging environments, they benefit both themselves and others.

Credit statement

Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan — sole author.

Declaration of competing interest

No conflicts of interest.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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