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Editorial: Poetic Self-Study Research

Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan ^{a b} (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8858-8213>) and Anastasia P. Samaras ^c (<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1102-2507>)

^a *University of Nottingham, UK*

^b *University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

^c *George Mason University, USA*

Contact: Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan: Kathleen.Pithouse-Morgan1@Nottingham.ac.uk

Through self-study research, teacher educators, teachers, and other professionals reimagine their practice to contribute to new ways of knowing and doing. Self-studies can be performed in a multitude of ways and from a variety of viewpoints. Self-study's methods and modes continue to evolve due to the methodology's inherent freedom for exploration and discovery. This fundamental elasticity has encouraged self-study researchers to combine techniques and explore and design novel approaches as they create improvement-focused exemplars. This special issue presents diverse experiences and perspectives on poetry as methodological and epistemic inventiveness, demonstrating poetic self-study exemplars and processes as resources for others. The contributors include novice and more experienced self-study scholars working across professional and academic contexts in diverse regions of Australia, Brazil, Iceland and Japan, South Africa, and the USA. We invite you to read their poetic self-study research and to step back as we did to see what this collective tapestry adds to the self-study knowledge base.

We are self-study teacher educators who have been co-creatively collaborating to extend self-study methodology through inventive arts-based methods. For the past decade, we have led transdisciplinary learning communities of university faculty and graduate students engaged in self-study research, both individually and collectively, within and beyond our home countries of South Africa and the United States of America (USA). Our first conference presentation together, "Thinking in Space" (Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras, 2014), described a new type of research for us, playing virtually across continents and oceans with not only ideas but with methods to generate methodologically creative work and particularly with a focus on using the arts. Since then, we have experimented with multiple out-of-the-box ways of studying our professional practice as self-study scholars and methodologists working with colleagues and students in reimagined ways (e.g., Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2016; Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras, 2019; Samaras et al., 2015). The alternative methods allowed us to explore our facilitation in polyvocal self-study professional development communities, enabling learning for ourselves and

others. Moreover, they allowed us to support each other's research as complementary colleagues from different contexts who share a common purpose.

Although we didn't fully realize it at the time, we were supporting and daring each other to take risks and step outside of the given methods. Giving each other permission to play on new platforms activated fresh thinking and fed our professional souls. Working with colleagues and students validated that using the arts in self-study research resulted in a more profound understanding of what we did, why we did it, and for whom. Multiple art forms offered various epistemic and methodological options to bring us to new professional knowledge. We played and learned prolifically, prioritizing this arts-inspired work, and we flourished professionally. Seeing the potential of our experimentation, we enthusiastically enacted poetic self-study with others, often in virtual bricolage combining poetry with other methods (Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras, 2020).

Recently, we decided to take a retrospective look at what we had been doing in an arts-inspired method that stood out in much of our work, poetic self-study. Our portfolio of poetic self-study research publications (solo, duo, and with other co-authors) spans eight years, from 2015 to 2022 (Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras, in press). We gathered this published work and juxtaposed it with other poetic self-study scholarship. We saw how Allender and Manke's (2002) and Hopper and Sanford's (2008) collaboratively creative work demonstrated the poetic movement's roots in self-study research. We also noticed a recent surge in poetic self-studies, such as Buchanan et al. (2020), Gísladóttir and Óskarsdóttir (2020), and Edge and Olan (2021). We saw how, over the past two decades, self-study scholars have used poetry in working with data and enhancing openness, reflexivity, and critical collaborative inquiry. While recognizing this vital work, we remarked that it was spread out over time without concentrating attention on its potential. Acknowledging that many of the publications were our own, we knew we wanted to encourage and support others in this realm. We saw the need for a dedicated space for poetic innovation to showcase the cutting-edge poetic inquiries of self-study scholars. The editors of *Studying Teacher Education* welcomed our proposal for a themed issue on poetic self-study research. We sent out our call to open a path for poetic self-study and mark and document this turn in the Self-Study School. There was great interest in the call, with many more submissions than one issue could accommodate.

The issue begins with "Sparkling Reflection in Future Educators: Haiku Self-Study" by Megumi Nishida. In this piece, Nishida, a Japanese self-study researcher working in the Icelandic education system, uses Haiku poetry as a culturally responsive way to respond to Japanese students' critical reflection needs in a self-study research workshop. This article demonstrates the value of cultural and poetic resources when researching pedagogical innovations. Tamar Meskin and Tanya van der Walt, South African theater-makers, university teachers, and researchers, used poetic inquiry and reciprocal found poetry to examine their teaching experiences in "Looking for Anchors": Using Reciprocal Poetic Inquiry to Explore the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Our Educator-Artist Selves." Their method of creating reciprocal found poems and their use of dialogue as a mode of analysis and meaning-making provide a unique approach. Carlson H. Coogler, Shelly Melchior, and Stephanie Anne Shelton (higher education teachers in the United States) present a collaborative poetic self-study in "Poetic Suturing: The Value of Communal Reflexion in Self-Study of Teaching Experiences." This article investigates reflexivity in practice, shedding light on what becomes possible when self-study becomes communal, and reflection (as engagement with the self) becomes reflexion (as engagement with the self/ves in relation). Marguerite Müller and Frans Kruger composed

poetry to articulate a collaborative object inquiry at a South African university in “Engaging in Arts-Based Poetic Inquiry: Generating Pedagogical Possibilities in Preservice Teacher Education.” Their article demonstrates collaborative arts-based methods to create pedagogical opportunities for critical self-study aimed at socially and ecologically just futures. “Diary of a Critical Friendship: Anthropoetic Implications of Self-Study in the Teacher Education of a Physical Education Teacher-Researcher” by Ewerton Leonardo da Silva Vieira, Samara Moura Barreto de Abreu, and Luiz Sanches Neto grew out of a collaboration between teacher-researchers from a high school and two higher education institutions in Brazil. Using a reflective anthropoetic diary, the authors discovered how critical friendship contributed to the self-study process through interactive and creative communication. Their poetic self-study points to various paths for learning and professional growth, highlighting the value and impact of using published poetry in understanding research findings. South African teacher educators Linda van Laren and Lungile Masinga used found poetry and reflective letter-writing to revisit their completed self-study doctoral projects in “Creating Poetic Expressions for Professional Learning in the HIV and AIDS Context.” Their article demonstrates how collaborative poetic self-study allows for renewing and reinvigorating one’s research interests to extend professional learning and social responsibilities. Finally, Sharon McDonough’s article, “Daring Not to Lead: A Poetic Self-Study Examining the Tensions of Teacher Educator Identity,” illuminates poetic inquiry’s methodological and conceptual potential in self-study. McDonough explores her identity as a mid-career teacher educator and leader at an Australian university, using tensions as a conceptual framework in her work with found poems. This article exemplifies poetic self-study as a vehicle for representing the embodied, emotive aspects of identity development and sharing authentic experiences and understandings of identity.

Taken as a whole, this issue of *Studying Teacher Education* considers impetus and implications – both for and beyond the self – to answer questions such as, “What difference can poetry make to self-study scholarship?” and “How does poetic self-study research contribute to the larger good and broader professional and social responsibilities?” The articles demonstrate how poetic self-study can increase professionals’ self-awareness, empathy, social consciousness, and motivation and provide insights into their lived experiences. The authors experimented with poetry and self-study in unprecedented ways concerning unique and timely topics. Notice how their work addresses critical tensions and challenges facing scholars in the academy and society, complicated by the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This pioneering poetic self-study scholarship merits your keen attention.

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