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From Rigor to Vigor: The Past, Present, and Potential of Inquiry as Stance

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From Rigor to Vigor: The Past, Present, and Potential of Inquiry as Stance

Abstract

Over the years, practitioner research has been both marginalized and trivialized within the larger educational research landscape. This article challenges that exclusion by tracing the emergence and development of the inquiry stance construct. Understanding the origins of teacher inquiry can contribute to its cultivation and ultimately lend a necessary rigor—or better yet, vigor—to practitioner research. Indeed, inquiry as stance endures because it is far more than a best practice or ready-made technique. Deeply ontological and epistemological, an inquiry stance enables educators to transform their teaching for the sake of all learners in the face of an ever-changing educational landscape.

On January 20, 2017, Donald Trump delivered his inaugural address as his audience watched with the rapt attention of rabid followers, the morbid curiosity of staunch opponents, or the passive indifference of citizens awash in the incessant, ubiquitous news cycle. The reality show host's campaign was unprecedented and historic, yet his first speech as president preserved the status quo in at least one way—paying scant attention to education. To observant ears, however, even the passing mention conveyed a significant message. When Trump briefly described “an education system flush with cash but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge” (Will, 2017), he implicitly articulated his view of knowledge as static, objective, and transmittable.

If knowledge is objectified, it can also be commodified. The education system thus becomes a network of transactions: elite academics produce or discover knowledge; pre-service teachers attend college to obtain it; and as certified graduates, mistaken for “finished products” (Rubin & Land, 2017, p. 190), they go forth to dispense their goods to K-12 pupils, whether unwitting recipients or willing customers. This insensate assembly line creates “consuming citizens” marked by “an overwhelming degree of homogeneity and conformity” (Darder, 2015, pp. 31, 59). The factory-like system works, Eisner (2002) argues, because of society's devotion to economy and efficiency. Education is unmistakably institutionalized and intractably hierarchical, pitting professor over practitioner (Grant & Murray, 1999), and theory over practice.

Practitioner inquiry offers an alternative path: as Wolk (2008) suggests, “inquiry is the opposite of transmission” (p. 118). Not limited to the field of education, practitioner research and its forerunner action research help nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, and other such

practitioners glean constructive understandings of their work and how to make that work better (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007; Ravitch, 2014). Within the education realm, inquiry enjoys a likewise vast array of applications, all of which promote “systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, pp. 23-24). Inquiry, as a “technology for producing understanding,” operates from the core premise that practitioners are in the best position to do so (Allwright, 2005, p. 354). At once a distinct methodological approach (Stevenson, 1995), an indication of the relationship between researcher and researched (Schaenen, Kohnen, Flinn, Saul, & Zeni, 2012), and a theoretical orientation (Benade, 2015; Pine, 2009), practitioner inquiry defies the notion of knowledge as fixed and transmissible.

Grounded in constructionist epistemology (Copeland, Birmingham, de la Cruz, & Lewin, 1993; Klehr, 2012; So, 2013), inquiry conveys teachers’ attempts—whether pre- or in-service—to make sense of their teaching (Amond, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Snow-Gerono, 2003). The process can be time- and labor-intensive (Baumann, 1996; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992), but the researcher’s insider status is celebrated and valued (Schaenen et al., 2012). Although practitioner research, teacher research, practitioner inquiry, and teacher inquiry operate quite successfully as interchangeable terms despite their distinct histories (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014), *inquiry* honors the epistemological and ontological perspectives at work by conjuring both a worldview and a way of knowing and being (Cochran-Smith & Demers, 2010; Fitts Fulmer, 2012; Ritchie, 2014). Inquirers see the world as “something to study, to explore, [and] to wonder about,” and “when teachers breathe inquiry as a part of their lives,” they contagiously invite students to do likewise (Wolk, 2008, pp. 116, 118). Far from depriving children of all knowledge, they affirm students’ capacity to produce it.

School- and district-wide cultures of inquiry do not magically appear; they derive from the same systematic, intentional, and iterative effort at the root of inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Both teachers and students benefit from having a cyclical framework to guide their investigations and keep them focused on an ever-evolving goal (Clayton, Kilbane, & McCarthy, 2017; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Ermeling, 2010; Wolk, 2008), but guidelines are often “open by design” (Klehr, 2012, p. 127). Teacher researchers acknowledge that “findings are a beginning,” leading both to new questions and “reflection on past practice in order to inform and change future practice” (Nelson, Slavitt, & Deuel, 2012, p. 19). Practitioners with an inquiry stance thoughtfully look back and intentionally look forward.

Formally labeled by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), inquiry stance as a construct has deep and enduring roots, supporting “a radically different view” of knowledge and practice (Fiorentini & Crecci, 2015, p. 10) by honoring the transformational agency of teachers (Irvin, 2005; Rowe, 2015; Schaenen et al., 2012). Nevertheless—or perhaps precisely because of its powerful potential, teacher inquiry has been both marginalized and trivialized within the larger educational research landscape (Foshay, 1998; Snow-Gerono, 2003). In response, advocates have argued teacher research is “rigorous” in spite of its unconventional intermingling of theory and practice and predilection for qualitative methods (Hamilton, 2017; Hymes, 1977; Klehr, 2009). The inquiry stance construct enriches these efforts and lends a necessary rigor to teacher research, although it is more appropriate to think of it as vigor.

While *rigor* connotes objectivity, certainty, and stasis, *vigor* embraces a more fluid and dynamic view, mirroring how the “stance” of teacher researchers is “contrary” to traditional—and dominant—modes of investigation (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011, p. 54). Garte (2017), for instance, envisions an educator gathering “data from the classroom with the rigor of a scientist” (p. 15), whereas others maintain that teacher inquiry, like teaching, is more akin to art (Burnaford & Hobson, 2001; Klehr, 2009). This article affirms practitioner research as inherently creative, tracing its evolution and celebrating its survival in the Age of Accountability. By focusing expressly on the emergence and development of the inquiry stance construct, this article aims to inspire teachers and teacher educators to cultivate and maintain an inquiry stance, reflecting rearward for the sake of change (Ravitch, 2014) while conscious of “the immediate and continuous present” (Benade, 2015, p. 110). As the Romantic poet Percy Shelley (1985/1816) eloquently expressed, “Nought may endure but Mutability” (p. 41). Teachers with an inquiry stance—and the teacher educators who prepare them—relish this paradox that change is the only constant and use it to propel their visions of more vibrant and equitable teaching and learning.

Inquiring into Inquiry’s Origins

Examining the origins of the inquiry stance construct echoes Huberman’s (1996) belief in the value of historicizing teacher research writ large. Though McFarland and Stansell (1993) trace practitioner inquiry all the way to Aristotle, the concept has more familiar roots in the work of John Dewey, who first encouraged teachers to act as both “consumers and producers of knowledge about teaching” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 9). Knowledge, in this case, is “itself inquiry—as a goal *within* inquiry, not as a terminus outside or beyond inquiry” (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, p. 97, emphasis theirs). In other words, students cannot

possibly be deprived of all knowledge, so long as they are curious, which is more likely to be the case when they have curious and reflective teachers.

Because White (2013) urges attention to the difference between Dewey's actual beliefs and the criticisms sometimes lodged against him, it is instructive to turn to his words directly. Here, Dewey (1910) arguably lays the groundwork for the yet-to-be-named inquiry stance:

Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short, means judgment suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely to be somewhat painful. [...] To maintain the state of doubt and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry—these are the essentials of thinking. (p. 13)

This disposition, rife with chaotic disturbance and systematic order, paradoxically unites motion and stasis. Although the exercise is systematic, it is vigorous and active, not rigid and inert. Dewey's acknowledgment of the seeming pain in this process highlights the perplexity he believed to be a prerequisite for learning (Ermeling, 2010). Growth, in other words, can arise from confusion. As a pragmatist, Dewey grounded this Socratic abstraction in the activity of everyday life, advocating collective, scientific deliberation as democracy's guide (Hammersley, 2004). Moreover, Dewey idealized educators as "society's most potentially powerful agents of change" (White, 2013, p. 40), but only when they trouble the alleged gap between theory and practice to find the overlap of "common sense knowing" and "scientific doing" (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, pp. 188-189). Dewey firmly maintained a need for both.

Critical Contributions

Ostensibly taking a cue from Dewey, and likewise inspired by the work of John Collier, psychologist Kurt Lewin also pondered and promoted the intermingling of theoretical and practical knowledge in the 1940s (Winter, 1987). As Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Collier had sought, through collaborative action research, "to reverse deeply discriminatory, racist, and destructive practices [...] and to implement more democratic policies" in U.S. dealings with Native Americans (Pine, 2009, p. 38). He thus brought a critical edge to the nascent and still nameless philosophy of practitioner inquiry, echoing Dewey's belief in the "inherently reflexive" and incomplete nature of knowledge (Winter, 1987, p. 50). Action research, for Collier, united epistemic humility and collective action for social change.

As a Jewish émigré who had fled Europe in the 1930s, Kurt Lewin was drawn to Collier's emphasis on the social justice potential of action research, particularly in the milieu of World War II (Benade, 2015; Kemmis, 1980). Challenging the hegemonic force of both basic science and the burgeoning social science fields, Lewin's tolerance for ambiguity and willingness to employ qualitative methodology brought attention to the concept of action research as he further defined it (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; McFarland & Stansell, 1993; Pine, 2009; Winter, 1987). Although he was working in psychology rather than in K-12 education, Lewin shared Dewey's vision of a more harmonious relationship between theory and practice, achievable through an iterative spiral of hypotheses and actions (Hammersley, 2004; Noffke, 1995). Beyond striving for practical efficiency, these efforts truly sought participatory, democratic social change (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), a discernible continuation of Collier's work.

Action Research Goes to School

Inheriting these philosophical threads from Dewey, Collier, and Lewin, Stephen Corey (1953) wove them together in a classroom context, recommending practitioners' "continuous and thoughtful" evaluation of their pedagogy (p. viii). Privileging scientific approaches over common-sense problem-solving techniques, Corey held a decidedly positivist orientation (Hammersley, 2004), but his emphasis on cooperative practitioner research continued the legacy of his forebears (McFarland & Stansell, 1993). Indeed, Hodgkinson (1957) sees Corey's version of action research as the "direct and logical outcome" of Progressive education (p. 139), and his efforts to simplify the process made it more accessible (Dodman, Groth, Ra, Baker, & Ramezan, 2017). Thus, Corey undoubtedly contributed to the explosion of interest in action research in the 1950s.

However, heightened awareness also brought increased scrutiny, including demands for a clearer definition of the practice as well as fierce methodological and epistemological concerns related to a perceived lack of rigor (Hodgkinson, 1957; Kemmis, 1980; Wiles, 1953). Corey's (1949) determination to upend the pernicious hierarchy of educational research, whereby experts dictate to educators who feel "qualified to consume research, but not to engage in it" (Corey, 1952, p. 478) nevertheless anticipated the high philosophical standard of the inquiry stance even as his era constituted another chapter in the historic marginalization of practitioner research (Irvin, 2005), a woeful trend that continued for some time.

Growing Pains and New Beginnings

Despite Corey's ambitions, educational action research declined in the late 1950s in favor of top-down and therefore allegedly top-notch practices (Efron, 2005). The Cold War context fostered concerns about education as an issue of national security, effectively promoting a back-to-basics approach (Rudolph, 2002; Wong, 2005). Practitioner inquiry survived, in part, by dividing into two strains. Some scholars celebrated the grassroots aspect of action research as markedly different from sterile, formal research (Hammersley, 2004; Odell, 1976; Shumsky & Mukerji, 1962), while others held fast to the language of scientific—even clinical—inquiry, encouraging teachers to begin with “a diagnosis of the priority needs for change” (Jung & Lippitt, 1966, p. 25). What united these factions was an endorsement of the transformational potential of teacher research, necessarily at odds with schools' remarkable stability and conservatism. That itself was “a phenomenon to be explained and understood” (Hinely & Ponder, 1979, p. 136), particularly with the help of postmodern and feminist lenses (Pine, 2009). Though teacher researchers employ a diverse range of methodologies (Klehr, 2009), the gradual acceptance of qualitative approaches and multiple perspectives revived action research, endowing its adherents with new resolve.

Lawrence Stenhouse carried practitioner research out of the shadows and into the 1980s, readily embracing more interpretive, dialectical modes (Huberman, 1996; McFarland & Stansell, 1993). Confronting generalizability concerns head-on, Stenhouse demonstrated how teacher research might transcend classroom walls through constructive dialogue (Stevenson, 1995). Kemmis (1980) endorsed such attention to the “lived experience” of schooling (p. 3), and together, Carr and Kemmis (1986) advocated for richer discussion of the epistemology of practitioner research, to “arm it against criticism and promote its future progress” (p. 1). The best defense—the inquiry stance—was yet to come.

Coalescing and Critique

By the 1990s, teacher research had proliferated enough to be considered mainstream (Huberman, 1996; Noffke, 1995; Snow-Gerono, 2003), yet widespread and watered-down went hand-in-hand. Throughout the decade, critics consistently attacked along epistemological, methodological, and political fronts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). The first two battle lines echoed earlier concerns about credibility and rigor (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Huberman, 1996; van Manen, 1990), and the “eclectic” approaches of teacher researchers continue to be “a point of tension within the community and a point of criticism outside of its borders” (Klehr, 2009, p. 37). In the 1990s, proponents with a disdain for overly technical

approaches to teaching and learning resisted imposing a requisite formula on teacher research, not wanting product to supersede process (Allwright, 2005; Pine, 2009; Stevenson, 1995). Consequently, the potential for teacher inquiry as an organic form of professional development came more fully into view (Sardo-Brown, Welsh, & Bolton, 1995), subverting “remedial” forms by honoring teachers “as generators, not merely consumers, of significant knowledge” (Lytle, 1996, pp. 85-86). When the goal is a more fully developed professional—an improved practitioner, the nuance and narrative of qualitative inquiry are especially suited to those aims (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007; Fiorentini & Crecci, 2015; Hymes, 1980; Nelson et al., 2012; Richardson, 1994). Still, epistemological and methodological concerns definitely gained an audience during the 1990s. Patterson and Shannon (1993) forcefully called for a “redefined rigor [that] requires teachers to take responsibility for their work and to be changed by their research” (p. 10). The imminent inquiry stance, with its vim and vigor, would answer that call.

Epistemological and methodological criticisms also incorporated ethical dilemmas endemic to teacher research. Challenging Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1993) bold unwillingness to privilege research over teaching, Wong (1995) disapprovingly cited tensions associated with simultaneously attempting two roles, reinforcing the historically low status of teacher research (Hammer & Schifter, 2001; Sardo-Brown, et al. 1995). Conversely, inquiry advocates embraced tension as a source of “more salient and honest questions, more responsive methods, and more compelling findings” (Baumann, 1996, p. 33), ultimately more capable of inciting real and lasting change (Richardson, 1994).

Various qualms about teacher inquiry, including suspicions about the validity of qualitative research, were amplified in the Age of Accountability (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Massey, 2002; McFarland & Stansell, 1993). As demands for higher-quality education catalyzed preferences for narrowly defined best practices and standardized curricula, school culture often inhibited teacher research and its attendant professionalization (Baumann, 1996; Hursh, 1995; Sugimoto & Carter, 2016), pitting practitioners against “established conceptions of how teachers and students, or students and students, ought to behave in a classroom setting” (Wong, 1995, p. 27). This, then, was the third battle line: an inherently political critique of teachers as researchers.

Acknowledging the paradox that teachers require supportive administrators in order to engage in work that seeks to critique the very institutions they inhabit, Stevenson (1995) nevertheless cautioned against “depoliticized” iterations of action research (p. 205). Others likewise celebrated inquiry’s power to contest the status quo, viewing the political nature of teacher research as inextricably bound to its

epistemological, ontological, and methodological foundations (Anderson & Herr, 1999). As a means by which “practitioners make full use of what they know” (Foshay, 1998, p. 109), teacher research required a distinct “set of political commitments [...] and a moral and ethical stance that recognizes the improvement of human life as a goal” (Noffke, 1995, p. 4). At the dawn of the twenty-first century, as the practitioner research movement began to coalesce around a central critique of the sociopolitical climate in schools, the construct of inquiry as stance supplied powerful lifeblood.

Reinvigoration through Inquiry as Stance

As the matriarchs of the current moment in inquiry’s life history, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) insist teachers are “deliberative intellectuals,” capable of navigating the “productive and generative tensions” that result when boundaries blur (pp. 2, 94). Their vision for inquiry honors the deep roots of teacher research, in that a practitioner’s wondering “stimulates, intensifies, and illuminates changes” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 51), yet the inquiry stance for a new millennium requires an “underlying cultural change” (Rinke & Stebick, 2013, p. 72). Rather than connoting a rigid, inflexible, position, the inquiry stance is a disposition, at once active and meditative, ontological and epistemological, microscopic and macroscopic, and personal and political (Benade, 2015; Fitts Fulmer, 2012). Inquirers must continually challenge the status quo, especially when surrounded by deskilling directives and short-lived, technique-obsessed reform movements (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Bennett, 2013; Efron, 2005; Ermeling, 2010; Fecho, Price, & Read, 2004). By definition, the inquiry stance resists hegemonic grand narratives of teaching (Hulburt and Knotts, 2012), telling a very different story of practice.

For the teacher researcher with an inquiry stance, the word *problem* is no longer pejorative (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008). Paradoxically, then, the inquiry stance makes teaching more challenging (Cochran-Smith & Demers, 2010), but in a way that fosters deep, professional learning and honor Dewey’s vision. Dana (2015) explains:

teacher inquiry is a continual cycle that all educators spiral through throughout their professional lifetimes—a professional positioning or stance, owned by the teacher, where questioning, systematically studying, and subsequently improving one’s own practice becomes a necessary and natural part of a teacher’s work. (pp. 163-164)

Necessary and natural, intentional and flexible, grounded yet “animated [and] evolving” (Klehr, 2009, p. 5), the inquiry stance enables teachers to harness happy “praxidents” in their day-to-day work (Schiera, 2014, p. 108). By collecting

authentic data, teachers with an inquiry stance persevere in the Age of Accountability with “a reinvigorated sense” of evidence-based practice (Ravitch, 2014, p. 6) in living, breathing classrooms.

What happens as a result of that evidence is a vital part of the vigorous inquiry stance. Whereas traditional action research has noticeably neglected its potential for “advancing social justice and emancipatory change” (Kinsler, 2010, p. 172), the inquiry stance provides a way to take action research “to the next level,” beyond “an event or task” and towards a fully embedded mindset that views professional development and social justice as inextricably bound and mutually reinforcing (Irvin, 2005, p. 9). Extending far beyond the boundaries of a teacher preparation program, the inquiry stance actively promotes sustainable, authentic professional learning for a lifetime (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001; Dana, 2015; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010). It bears repeating that the very words *inquiry stance* capture the inside-outside, push-pull, grounded and dynamic qualities of the teacher researcher, whose short-term goal is local change in the sense of improved practice, but who ultimately exercises a sort of “epistemological power” (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 17), ready and willing “to expand possibilities for practice” writ large (Burns Thomas, 2004, p. 18).

Though scholars have noted the invisible nature of the inquiry stance (Copeland et al., 1993; Dana, 2015; Rowe, 2015), studies have also documented the inquiry cycle at work (Amond, 2008; Hulburt & Knotts, 2012; Snow-Gerono, 2003), evincing claims that inquiry is far more than mere reflection (Fiorentini & Crecci, 2015; Lawton-Sticklor & Bodamer, 2016). Rather, exemplary inquirers exhibit critical self-awareness, courage, confidence and a keen sense of the connections between their reflections and the larger sociopolitical world (Benade, 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Pine, 2009; Schaenen et al., 2012). True to its roots in Dewey, the inquiry stance amounts to an “attitude toward understanding classroom life,” marked by “a teacher’s continuing responsiveness” towards problems of practice (Copeland et al., 1993, p. 349), which are celebrated, named, and systematically studied (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014).

Dewey, however, has a tendency to describe the teaching profession “as a solitary, disassociated activity” (White, 2013, p. 39), whereas the inquiry stance is fundamentally dialogical, such that “even a teacher doing solo research in the classroom can engage others: students, parents, outside observers, in a dialogue about research in progress” (Schaenen et al., 2012, p. 80). Ideally, collaboration occurs in communities of practice, marked by a high degree of sustained and even transformational negotiation (Grant & Murray, 1999; So, 2013). These groups share “habits of mind or ways of being” (Nelson et al., 2012, p. 5) that further reveal

the inquiry stance as epistemological and ontological at its very core. When inquiry communities acknowledge and own this philosophical foundation, they “regard educational problems and issues not solely as individual matters but also as social, cultural, and political concerns that may require collective action” (Lytle, 1996, p. 93). Through a literal co-laboring, practitioner researchers are positioned—and *dispositioned*—to transform schools and society.

Inquiry Endures

As schools and society have shaped the construct of inquiry as stance, practitioner research also stands to influence the contexts in which it occurs, a process Snow-Gerono (2003) describes as “reculturing” (p. 4). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) have long believed, “the ultimate purpose of inquiry as stance—always and in every context—is enhancing students’ learning and life chances for participation in and contribution to a diverse and democratic society” (p. 146). Accomplishing this moral imperative requires practitioners to take Theodor Adorno’s advice of “allowing oneself to be a stranger in one’s own home” (Richert, 2005, p. 298). As fish more fully aware of the water in which they exist, teacher researchers may feel that they are swimming upstream (Fecho et al., 2004; Lippitt, 1981), for the inquiry stance is not always well received.

Lone inquirers in hostile school environments are particularly prone to backlash if they appear “too confident, ambitious, and knowledgeable” (White, 2011, p. 322). Institutional resistance can also arise if others fail to realize that practitioner researchers produce knowledge in addition to rather than in lieu of staying abreast of traditional education research (Odell, 1976; Schiera, 2014; So, 2013). In the face of this antagonism, the inquirer’s persistent stance is crucial, supporting a belief that the ambitious project of problematizing “current arrangements of schooling; the ways knowledge is constructed, evaluated, and used and teachers’ individual and collective roles in bringing about change” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 18) is well worth the risk.

Far too often, “adverse consequences” result when teachers engage in a “critique of prevailing educational ideologies and policies” (Hines, Conner, Campano, Damico, Enoch, & Nam, 2007, p. 79), and yet, that is the only way they can transform the status quo. Scholars have advocated for inquiry-oriented action research as a way to empower teachers to join critical policy conversations (Meyers & Rust, 2003; Rust & Meyers, 2007; Sinnema, Meyer, & Aitken, 2017), recognizing the authentic contributions practitioners can make. Ravitch (2014), for instance, highlights the potential for practitioner inquiry to be “a tool of social, communal, and educational transformation” amidst a backdrop garishly bedecked

with “top-down policy, mandates and standardization” (p. 5), and White (2013) underscores the power of teacher research to “make teaching more visible, more public, and more resistant” to such pernicious sociopolitical forces (p. 45).

To date, the Trump administration has done little to inhibit or reverse the perilous tide of neoliberal education reform (Green, 2018). As the Accountability Era rages on, educator preparation programs have also faced market-driven calls for standardization and measurement (Rubin & Land, 2017). Given the history of practitioner inquiry, teacher educators must vigorously resist these forces and empower their teacher candidates to do the same. To do so, Kim (2013) turns to action research, expressly at odds with “a narrowly defined [...] measurable objectivity that might result in quick fixes” (p. 380). Other teacher educators have experienced similar outcomes in a range of applications across diverse contexts (Baker & Milner, 2016; van der Heijden, Geldens, Beijaard, & Popeijus, 2015; Wamba, 2011), suggesting that “learning to teach and learning to research can happen simultaneously” (Bower-Phipps, Cruz, Albaladejo, Johnson, & Homa, 2016, p. 3) to foster lasting and laudable change.

Because the inquiry stance—as a worldview and a way of knowing and being—resists rigid prescriptions, it “cannot be transferred in a banking mode” (Darder, 2015, p. 110). On the contrary, Schulte and Klipfel (2016) remind us that the development of teacher researchers happens “from the inside out” (p. 457), a process that flourishes with intentional support from educator preparation programs (Fulmer & Bodner, 2017). Inquiry as stance endures because it is far more than a best practice or ready-made technique. Deeply philosophical, inquiry as stance enables teachers to “see themselves as leaders [...] and as makers of knowledge” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 135). Indeed, the inspiring accounts of inquiry-oriented teacher leaders ably testify to that end (MacDonald & Weller, 2017; Storm, 2016). Practitioner researchers with an inquiry stance—and the teacher educators who guide them—embrace a lifelong process that reclaims teaching and learning, evolving from transmission to transformation, and from rigor to vigor.

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