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A CASE STUDY OF INQUIRY AS STANCE AMONG TEACHER CANDIDATES
CONDUCTING PRACTITIONER INQUIRY IN A PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Teacher educators broadly agree upon the need to prepare teachers who, as lifelong learners, are poised to meet the perpetually changing demands of teaching. One widely cited approach to addressing this need is to promote the development of an inquiry stance among teacher candidates by engaging them in the cyclical process of practitioner inquiry—the systematic, intentional study of their own professional practices. Although practitioner inquiry has become a common pedagogy within preservice teacher education programs, little is known about how the empirical dimensions of the construct, inquiry as stance, actually play out among teacher candidates as they inquire. In response, this case study was conducted in order to characterize inquiry stance among teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry during clinical internships in the context of a professional development school (PDS).

This study features a case analysis of inquiry as stance within a PDS in which practitioner inquiry served as a signature pedagogy. Six teacher candidates each participated in a series of five semi-structured interviews as the study’s primary data source; documents and field notes from participant-observations served as secondary data sources. Interpreting these sources through a four-dimensional framework for inquiry as stance, the data were analyzed in a four-cycle, theory-led thematic analysis. This analysis led to the generation of themes and frameworks to describe the characteristics of each dimension of inquiry as stance as it played out in the study’s context.

The study’s findings indicate the diversity, complexity, and richness within the inquiry stance construct. The findings suggest the need for teacher educators, particularly those working within PDS contexts, to engage in ongoing professional learning in which
the purposes of practitioner inquiry and inquiry as stance are continually questioned and deliberated. In addition to suggesting avenues for future research about inquiry stance, the study provides a warrant for expanded research on the learning of teacher educators, supervisors, and professional developers as well as the contributions of PDSs to the characteristics of teacher candidates’ inquiry stances. The study affirms the perennial relevance of promoting an inquiry stance as a worthy aim of teacher education.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation study investigated how the construct of inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, 2009) played out among teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry during clinical internships within the context of a professional development school (PDS). The study sought to expand the literature on practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education programs through an empirical analysis of one manifestation of inquiry as stance. The study also sought to create some useful and potentially transferrable tools that could inform the work of teacher educators, supervisors, and other people who are responsible for supporting the development of teacher candidates. To achieve these aims, the researcher adopted a case study methodology and developed a case analysis that was synthesized from the perspectives of the study’s participants as revealed through interviews, documents, and participant-observations. Six teacher candidates who were conducting practitioner inquiry—the systematic, intentional study by educators of their own professional practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009)—participated in this study during their clinical internships in a PDS in which teacher educators widely regarded practitioner inquiry as a signature pedagogy (Shulman, 2005) for developing teacher candidates’ inquiry stances.

Chapter 1 opens the dissertation with an explanation and justification of the research problem that was addressed by this study. Next, the study’s purposes and research question are presented, followed by an overview of the research design. Then, the study’s significance is situated within the fields of teacher education and PDS
scholarship. The chapter concludes with a brief summary and an overview of the dissertation’s subsequent chapters.

**Background and Statement of the Research Problem**

Teacher education in the United States has been labeled the “pauper of scholarly fields” (Burns, 2012, p. 2). One reason for the field’s ailing reputation is its failure to forge a durable consensus about the nature of the problem that teacher educators should seek to address through their work. According to Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005), teacher education researchers over the past century have variously framed teacher education as a curricular problem (1920s to 1950s), a training problem (late 1950s through 1970s), a teacher learning problem (early 1980s to early 2000s), and a policy problem (mid-1990s to present). Despite the implication of these sweeping and categorical problem framings, teacher educators have never actually arrived at common understandings of what it means to prepare teacher candidates for the “special case of teaching” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 3) that involves teaching children in a public school.

Teacher educators’ dilemma of professional problem framing parallels the lack of public consensus about the proper aims of schooling in the United States. Given the absence of widely shared normative purposes for the schools for which teacher candidates are being prepared, it is unsurprising that 21st century preservice teacher education programs operate from radically conflicting sets of assumptions. University-based colleges of education have embraced a “pivot toward clinical practice” (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2018), emphasizing the value of preparing teacher candidates through intensive, multi-year sequences of supervised clinical internships that are situated within school-university partnerships such as PDSs.
However, such robust programs of clinically based teacher education have struggled to survive in recent years (Rutten & Cunningham, 2019; Wolkenhauer et al., 2020), in part due to generally declining teacher candidate enrollments (United States Department of Education, 2021). Alternative programs, such as Teach for America, have attracted those seeking quicker pathways into the classroom (Cochran-Smith, 2008). Combinations of private and public funding have produced new graduate schools of education (nGSEs) in the form of state-approved teacher education programs that may be unaffiliated with any university or college (Cochran-Smith, 2021). These divergent examples illustrate how, far from working within a broad consensus, teacher educators actually work in silos characterized by incommensurable ideas about how, where, and to what ends teachers ought to be prepared.

Despite their differences, teacher educators have recognized a need to prepare teachers who can meet the perpetually changing demands of teaching. Teacher educators broadly agree on their responsibility for preparing teachers to be lifelong learners and “adaptive experts” who know how to learn by studying their own teaching practices in a systematic, evidence-informed manner (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hammerness et al., 2005). Organizations that accredit teacher education programs, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2019) and its predecessor organizations, have formalized this responsibility using the language of standards and accountability. CAEP has tasked its accredited preservice teacher education programs with ensuring that teacher candidates know how to “use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students’ progress and their own professional practice” (p. 1).
As one way of responding to CAEP’s charge, some teacher educators (e.g., Coon-Kitt et al., 2019; Higgins, 2018; Wolkenhauer & Hooser, 2020) have adopted the goal of promoting an inquiry stance toward teaching. In their earliest theorization of the inquiry stance construct, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) explained that “an inquiry stance provides a kind of grounding within the changing cultures of school reform and competing political agendas” (p. 289). In one of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) more recent theorizations, an inquiry stance was explained as:

A worldview and a habit of mind—a way of knowing and being in the world of educational practice that carries across educational contexts and various points in one’s professional career and that links individuals to larger groups and social movements intended to challenge the inequities perpetuated by the educational status quo. (p. viii) …The ultimate purpose of inquiry 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)

In this conception, an inquiry stance is a distinctive mindset or set of perspectives that teachers can intentionally cultivate and, presumably, that teacher educators can attempt to promote among teacher candidates. Promoting an inquiry stance satisfies CAEP’s demands because it normalizes teachers’ use of research and evidence to understand their own practices, but it also cleverly subverts CAEP’s potentially deprofessionalizing approach by positioning teachers as creators of worthy knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

While acknowledging that developing teacher candidates’ inquiry stances is but one among many worthwhile goals for preservice teacher education, this study started
from a place of agreement that promoting an inquiry stance ought to be one of the aims of any teacher education program. The goal of “grounding” teachers in an inquiry stance is not about preparing teachers who will resist change. On the contrary, preparing teacher candidates to work from an inquiry stance is a prime manifestation of a pragmatic outlook on the future of teaching. A pragmatic outlook rejects the quest for the one, best way to frame the problem of teacher education. It resists the temptation of making ideologically driven commitments to any single philosophy or theoretical framework. Instead, teacher educators who work from a pragmatic worldview find value in the search for tools that might be useful in preparing teachers who can navigate constant change in increasingly informed ways.

The goal of developing an inquiry stance among teacher candidates is intimately linked but not synonymous with practitioner inquiry. Since its rise to prominence during the 1990s, practitioner inquiry has been labeled a powerful form of professional learning (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Wolkenhauer & Hooser, 2020). It has become a common pedagogy within preservice teacher education programs (Anderson et al., 2007; Delane et al., 2017; Rutten, 2021; Willegems et al., 2017), and facilitating practitioner inquiry is a well-established task within the scope of instructional supervision (Burns, 2012; Glickman et al., 2018).

Practitioner inquiry is a conceptual umbrella term that subsumes practitioner research, teacher inquiry, teacher research, action research, and self-study (Dana, 2016; Rutten, 2021). Each of these terms is associated with its own intellectual tradition, and various models exist within each tradition. These models typically feature a cyclical process (e.g., Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Glickman et al., 2018; Noffke, 1995) or a
spiral process (e.g., Carr & Kemmis, 1986) as a conceptual framework to guide practitioners’ inquiries. The cycle or spiral systematically guides teachers (often working collaboratively) through the processes of developing compelling questions about their practices, gathering and analyzing data about their practices, taking informed action, sharing their learning with others, and beginning the process anew.

A growing body of evidence appears to affirm the potential of practitioner inquiry as a powerful pedagogy for teacher candidates. A few of the numerous recent examples of claims made for practitioner inquiry projects within preservice teacher education programs include increased teacher candidate self-efficacy (Kinskey, 2018), broadened conceptions of professionalism (Willegems et al., 2018), and greater skill with culturally relevant pedagogies (Clayton, 2017). However, relatively little research has specifically investigated the relationship between teacher candidates’ engagement in practitioner inquiry projects and their development of an inquiry stance, which, as a worldview and habit of mind, is supposed to transcend any particular project.

Despite the slim empirical basis for the claim, scholars have maintained that a practitioner inquiry project can support the development of an inquiry stance. According to Nolan and Hoover (2004), “The project is really a vehicle for adopting an inquiry stance toward teaching on a daily basis” (p. 143). The process of developing an inquiry stance supposedly involves coming to the complex understanding that inquiry is a powerful practice for studying and critiquing other practices (Smith, 2012) as well as a particular way of being as a teacher. Similar understandings are widely cited as one of the aims of engaging teachers or teacher candidates in practitioner inquiry (Bransford et al.,
During the 2000s, however, scholars began to conduct empirical research that called into question the purported linkages among practitioner inquiry, inquiry projects, and the development of an inquiry stance. Snow-Gerono (2003) studied the perspectives of veteran teachers in a PDS where practitioner inquiry was widely practiced. Snow-Gerono concluded that a teacher could have an inquiry stance without necessarily engaging in a formalized inquiry project, while a teacher who engaged in a formalized inquiry project would not necessarily have an inquiry stance. Amond (2008) reached a complementary conclusion in a study of the graduates of a PDS-based teacher education program in which practitioner inquiry was a signature pedagogy. She reported that although all but one of her participants claimed that they had an inquiry stance, none of them actually engaged in systematic study of their practices on a regular basis. For most of the teachers Amond interviewed, having an inquiry stance meant that they reflected on their teaching and had memories of reflecting regularly while they were teacher candidates. Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) reported a particularly worrisome conclusion from a preservice teacher education program where teacher candidates’ inquiry projects were treated as a high-stakes summative assessment. Cochran-Smith et al. reported that many teacher candidates inquired primarily with the purpose of fulfilling the high-stakes project’s extensive list of requirements.

More recently, Barnatt (2009), Braaten (2011), Smith (2012), Bennett (2013), and Butville (2020) have written dissertations attempting to address the problem of the continuing lack of evidence about the relationship between practitioner inquiry and the
goal of promoting an inquiry stance within preservice teacher education programs. Still, such studies have been few and far between, and the empirical dimensions of inquiry stance remain poorly understood, especially among teacher candidates. This gap in the practitioner inquiry literature is noteworthy, given that promoting an inquiry stance is, for some teacher education programs, a key part of the strategy for meeting the CAEP accreditation requirement that all teacher candidates learn how to use research and evidence to understand and assess their own professional practices.

Far more important than meeting accreditation requirements, however, is that the purpose of equipping teacher candidates with an inquiry stance is ultimately, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) theorized it, about enhancing the learning of all students and improving their life chances for contributing to the ongoing project of American democracy. A stronger empirical grounding for the inquiry stance construct could provide practical assistance to teacher educators whose work involves developing teacher candidates’ inquiry stances because, as Nolan and Hoover (2004) claimed, “most people need help and support in developing such a stance” (p. 144). It could also help to address the problem of university-based teacher education programs’ weakened position within the broader field of teacher education. By illustrating the complexity involved in preparing teacher candidates to teach from an inquiry stance, research about inquiry stance may buttress the argument that more intensive and rigorous clinical preparation, rather than quick and cheap preparation, is needed if 21st century teachers are to teach all students effectively. This study responded to the need for empirical research on inquiry stance, specifically among teacher candidates who conducted practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships within the context of a PDS.
Statement of Purposes and Research Question

Informed by the Holmes Group’s (1986) vision for teacher education and by Goodlad’s (1994) postulates for education in a democracy, a small number of mentor teachers from the Rainy Valley School District (RVSD, pseudonym), faculty in teacher education at Rainy Valley State University (RVSU, pseudonym), and elementary teacher candidates from RVSU piloted a PDS during the late 1990s. As one of the core activities within this school-university partnership, the RVSU-RVSD PDS developed a clinically rich teacher education program (Dennis et al., 2017) that has, since its inception, maintained a commitment to practitioner inquiry as a signature pedagogy for teacher candidates and a powerful form of learning for all partners. Several journal articles, books, and dissertations have been written about practitioner inquiry and its prominent role within the RVSU-RVSD PDS. Some of these publications have become among the most frequently cited documents in the contemporary practitioner inquiry movement.

Teacher educators within the RVSU-RVSD PDS have long espoused the development of an inquiry stance as an important goal for teacher candidates’ engagement with practitioner inquiry in the PDS. At least three follow-up studies have been published about the perceptions of PDS alumni of the impacts practitioner inquiry had upon their preparation as teachers. Still, to date, no study has systematically examined the characteristics of inquiry as a stance among teacher candidates during their clinical internships in the RVSU-RVSD PDS. This absence of local research on inquiry as stance among teacher candidates, particularly within the context of an award-winning PDS where an inquiry stance is so widely espoused as a desirable goal, mirrors the gap in research on the inquiry stance construct more generally.
In response to the gap in the literature on inquiry stance among teacher candidates, this study capitalized upon the unique context presented by the RVSU-RVSD PDS in order to address three distinct but interrelated research purposes (Maxwell, 2013). The primary, intellectual purpose of the research was to characterize how the construct of inquiry as stance played out among teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in the context of a PDS. The secondary, practical purpose of the research was to develop some useful and potentially transferrable tools that could inform the work of teacher educators, supervisors, and other people who are responsible for supporting the learning of teacher candidates. Although this dissertation will explicitly address the first two research purposes, it also served the tertiary, personal purpose of informing the researcher’s own practices as a teacher educator, a supervisor, and a professional developer. To achieve these purposes, the researcher pursued the following overarching research question:

- How do the dimensions of inquiry as stance play out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS?

**Overview of the Research Design**

To develop a deeper understanding of the study’s research question, a qualitative case study methodology was adopted in conjunction with a moderate constructivist epistemological perspective. Researchers working from this perspective derive meaning from study participants’ individual perspectives even as they recognize the social situatedness of these perspectives (Crotty, 1998; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). When paired with a holistic, single-case approach to case study as a qualitative research
methodology (Yin, 2018), a moderate constructivist orientation challenges a researcher to synthesize participants’ diverse perspectives into a transparent, warranted interpretation (American Educational Research Association [AERA], 2006) of the theoretical construct of which the case selected for the study represents one instantiation.

This study was designed to explore a single, holistic case of inquiry as stance. The case itself was purposefully selected as a critical manifestation of inquiry as stance within a PDS context that supported a clinically rich teacher education program in which an inquiry stance was widely understood as a desirable outcome for teacher candidates. The case was bounded by time (the Spring 2020 academic term), context (a PDS in which practitioner inquiry was a core component of the curriculum for clinical education), and by participant selection criteria (a stratified, purposefully selected set of six teacher candidates who had self-identified with differing numbers of characteristics of an inquiry stance and who were conducting practitioner inquiry in the PDS).

**Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to the scholarly literature about practitioner inquiry within preservice teacher education programs. In particular, the study addresses a need for empirical research that explores the role, significance, and characteristics of practitioner inquiry for teacher candidates. The study also adds to the PDS literature by offering a rich description of how inquiry as stance played out in one PDS.

This study responds to a gap in the teacher education literature by deriving new understandings, on the basis of an empirical investigation, of how an inquiry stance played out among teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry over an extended period of time during their clinical internships. This contribution is significant
in that it offers a case-in-point of what it could mean for teacher educators to promote an inquiry stance as a means of addressing CAEP (2019) standards and, more importantly, for developing teachers who are prepared to learn from their own teaching. This study is also well positioned to contribute evidence that could problematize or reframe recurring ideological debates within the practitioner inquiry movement. In addition, the study contributes a new perspective to ongoing scholarly discussions of the proper roles, the requisite knowledge, and the necessary skills that are required of teacher educators who undertake the responsibility of shaping the inquiry stances of teacher candidates.

This study is also poised to contribute to the literature about the nature and role of practitioner inquiry within PDS contexts. This literature has grown in recent years through localized descriptions of how practitioner inquiry is implemented within PDSs. However, this literature has tended to emphasize programmatic descriptions and reflective descriptions of specific inquiries, rather than systematic investigations of the processes and outcomes of practitioner inquiry. Through a detailed description of practitioner inquiry’s role and significance in one PDS, this study could expand the PDS literature, but it could also contribute a different perspective on practitioner inquiry in PDSs, one that offers an illustration of the characteristics of teacher candidates as learners. In this way, the study may support PDS-based teacher educators in considering the characteristics of their own teacher candidates in relation to inquiry as stance.

Dissertation Overview

Chapter 1 has introduced the study that will be reported in the following chapters. The chapter opened by situating the study within the contested field of 21st century teacher education and by establishing the need for an empirically grounded study of the
inquiry stance construct as it plays out among teacher candidates. Next, the purposes of this research were explained, and the research question was presented. Then, an overview of the study’s research design was connected to the research purposes and question. This chapter concluded by exploring how the study contributes to the literature on teacher education, particularly within PDS contexts.

The rest of the dissertation’s chapters will respond to the study’s research purposes and question by presenting a case study of the inquiry stance construct as it played out among teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in the context of a PDS. Chapter 2 will review a selection of relevant theoretical and empirical literature, culminating in the analytic framework that guided the study’s investigation of inquiry as stance. Chapter 3 will present the study’s methodology, research design, and methods. Chapter 4 will provide a systematic description of the case’s context. Chapter 5 will present the study’s key findings through a case analysis of how inquiry stance played out among the teacher candidates who participated in the study. Chapter 6 will conclude the dissertation with a discussion of the study’s contributions and its implications for practice and future research.
CHAPTER 2
A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study asked how inquiry as stance played out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS. The decision to investigate this question, as well as key decisions about how to pursue it, emerged from the researcher’s ongoing review of the practitioner inquiry literature and from two reviews in particular: a broad, systematic review of empirical studies that were focused upon practitioner inquiry within preservice teacher education and a narrower, integrative review of publications that were focused upon the inquiry stance construct. Key insights from these reviews are synthesized within this chapter, which provided a basis for the rest of the study through a representative, though not utterly exhaustive, review of recent practitioner inquiry literature.

Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the definitions, the terminology, and the historical underpinnings of the contemporary practitioner inquiry movement as it was conceptualized for this study. Next, recent empirical research on practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education is synthesized through a description of the characteristics of practitioner inquiry as a form of professional learning for teacher candidates. Then, the inquiry stance construct itself is conceptualized, and a review of recent empirical research specifically about inquiry stance is presented. In response to some of the theoretical and methodological limitations identified within the literature about inquiry as stance, the chapter culminates in a reconceptualization of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) framework as a way to understand inquiry stance as it played out among the teacher candidates who participated in this study. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.
The Practitioner Inquiry Movement

The contemporary practitioner inquiry movement owes its existence to a long history of various forms of research conducted by practitioners within the contexts of their own practices. Both the conceptual scholarship and the empirical research on practitioner inquiry are characterized by divergent terminology and contested frameworks. To establish the basis for further review of the literature, the following subsections offer an overview of the movement as it was conceptualized for this study. Practitioner inquiry is defined, its terminology circumscribed, and its historical and conceptual antecedents briefly surveyed.

Demarcating the Movement: Definitions and Terminology

Practitioner inquiry has been defined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, 2009) as the systematic and intentional study by educators of their own professional practices. Inquiry is systematic when it involves “ordered ways of gathering and recording information, documenting experiences inside and outside of the contexts of practice, and making some kind of written record,” and it is intentional when “planned and deliberate rather than spontaneous” (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006, p. 510). Through practitioner inquiry, educators deliberately construct local knowledge to inform their own and others’ practices. This “inside” knowledge constructed through practitioner inquiry is informed by “outside” knowledge from other contexts, but practitioner inquirers regard other people’s knowledge as deliberately as their own, treating it as potentially useful but always subject to local interrogation and verification (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Consequently, educators engaged in practitioner inquiry do not uncritically accept outsiders’ agendas as legitimate bases for their inquiries. They define their own inquiry
intentions on the basis of the “felt difficulties and real-world dilemmas” (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020, p. 27) that characterize their practices.

Practitioner inquiry takes various forms and orientations; however, many of its forms are structured by some kind of cyclical or spiraling conceptual framework. In the framework that had the greatest influence within this study, practitioner inquiry is characterized by a cyclical process as shown in Figure 2-1. A cycle of practitioner inquiry begins when educators reflect deeply on the difficulties and dilemmas they are experiencing within their practices. From their reflections, educators develop inquiry questions or “wonderings” (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020). To address these questions, they develop and execute plans for data collection and analysis. Informed by their analyses, educators take action, often by initiating a change or improvement within the contexts of their practice. They also make the results of their inquiries public by sharing their learning with others. This act of sharing is critically important in legitimizing practitioner inquiry as a form of research, which was famously defined by Stenhouse (1979) as “systematic inquiry made public” (p. 6), because sharing subjects practitioners’ insider knowledge claims to outsiders’ scrutiny.
A lack of shared terminology and conceptual frameworks has haunted the practitioner inquiry movement for many years. Over two decades ago, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) cautioned that a lack of any parameters to circumscribe the practitioner inquiry movement may ultimately be the movement’s undoing. Cochran-Smith and Lytle explained, “The growth of the teacher research movement hinges on a paradox: As it is used in the service of more and more agendas…it is in danger of becoming anything and everything” (p. 17). A few years later, Snow-Gerono (2003) expressed a similar concern. She observed, “When teacher inquiry is thought of as anything and everything, it takes on a meaning of nothingness” (p. 2). The ever-expanding range of approaches to teacher inquiry has generated no fewer than 21 different terms referring to inquiry processes that, at their core, share the feature of educators engaging in systematic, intentional study of their own practices (Campbell & McNamara, 2009).
To avoid rendering the practitioner inquiry movement meaningless through terminology proliferation, scholars attempting to review the practitioner inquiry literature can opt to place some reasonable boundaries around the terminology that they consider to be representative of the movement, even as they respect the legitimacy of terminology that falls outside the boundaries they have constructed. One potentially useful approach to bounding the terminology for practitioner inquiry can be derived from a recent essay in which Dana (2016) listed, by way of example, six terms that are commonly used to refer to educational practitioners’ engagement in the systematic, intentional study of their own practices. Dana’s terminology, which appears in Table 2-1, overlapped to a significant degree with the terms that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) included in their review of practitioner inquiry genres. This strong overlap in the writings of well-established scholars of practitioner inquiry suggests that although other terms certainly exist, a relatively durable, if not totally definitive, list of terminology can be used as one approach to demarcating the movement’s boundaries, and it was the approach adopted in this study.

Like Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), Dana (2016) noted that the core idea of practitioner inquiry—the positioning of practitioners as generators of worthy knowledge—is more important than the particular tradition or terminology used to label this idea. Despite the otherwise strong overlap between the examples mentioned by Dana and the genres reviewed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle, Dana’s examples excluded two of the genres that Cochran-Smith and Lytle included: “scholarship of teaching” and “using practice as a site for research” (p. 39). These terms and their associated genres were also excluded from this study’s conception of the practitioner inquiry movement because of
their emphasis upon research conducted by university faculty within the sites of their practices, rather than upon the inquiries of school-based practitioners, which were of greater interest for this study.

The terms “practitioner inquiry” and “practitioner research” serve as “conceptual and linguistic umbrellas” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 38) for several historically, epistemologically, and ideologically distinct traditions of practice-based inquiry. The term “practitioner inquiry” is used as consistently as possible throughout this study because the term avoids engaging narrow definitions of legitimate research. “Practitioner inquiry” is more-or-less interchangeable with “practitioner research,” which can sometimes be used to emphasize the potential transferability of practitioners’ findings and their rejection of knowledge-practice hierarchies. The term “practitioner inquiry” is generally preferable to its subsumed terms “teacher inquiry” and “teacher research” because it is more inclusive of educational practitioners beyond teachers, even though teachers’ inquiries are surely at the core of both the past and the present of the practitioner inquiry movement. These terms intersect with the related terms “action research” and “self-study,” which represent distinctive—though not monolithic—traditions of practitioner inquiry. To situate the distinctions among these various strands of the contemporary practitioner inquiry movement, a brief historical and conceptual survey is necessary.
Table 2-1: Terminology for practitioner inquiry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonym for Practitioner Inquiry</th>
<th>Narrower Terms for Practitioner Inquiry</th>
<th>Terms for Distinctive Traditions of Practitioner Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>practitioner research</td>
<td>teacher inquiry</td>
<td>action research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teacher research</td>
<td>self-study</td>
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**Underpinnings of the Movement**

The practitioner inquiry movement is a contemporary manifestation of a long history of approaches to scholarship by educators who, through the act of conducting research within their sites of practice, have asserted the worth of their own professional knowledge. The terms, approaches, genres, or variations subsumed by the umbrella term “practitioner inquiry” lack definitive boundaries and have overlapped throughout history and across international borders. The underpinnings of the terms from Table 2-1 are reviewed here in order to situate subsequent reviews of empirical literature that has emerged from the practitioner inquiry movement as it was demarcated for this study.

The practitioner inquiry movement’s intellectual origins are often attributed to the pragmatist philosopher and progressive educator, John Dewey (1929, 1933). Dewey theorized inquiry in education as a process that positions teachers as worthy knowers. Dewey’s conception of inquiry invited teachers to identify and address the practical problems that arose within their own classrooms. In doing so, they constructed valuable knowledge and challenged existing arrangements for schooling.

The idea of educators as researchers within the sites of their own practices gained traction under the banner of action research, a term for a distinctive tradition of practitioner inquiry that is commonly grounded in collaborative efforts to advance social
justice (Pine, 2009). Action research emerged in the mid-1940s not from educational research but in the context of efforts to improve intercultural relations in the United States in the aftermath of World War II. Among the earliest known sources to link the words “action” and “research” to refer to practitioners’ studies of their own work was a 1945 publication, “United States Indian Administration as a Laboratory of Ethnic Relations.” Its author was the sociologist John Collier, who served as the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs during Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s presidential administration. Collier wrote that, when planning a social improvement program, “Research and then more research is essential to the program, that in the ethnic field research can be made a tool of action essential to all other tools, indeed, that it ought to be the master tool” (p. 275). Collier emphasized that research for social improvement should be “impelled from central areas of needed action” (p. 275) and that these areas should be determined and the research undertaken by the practitioners who would actually be carrying out the actions for improvement.

The precise term “action research” is commonly attributed to the social psychologist Kurt Lewin. In the wake of Adolf Hitler’s rise to power in 1933, Lewin, a Prussian Jew, had emigrated from Germany to England and then onward to the United States. As he worked to develop the emergent field of group dynamics, Lewin sought to enhance intercultural groups’ efforts to support their members’ learning and improvement of their practices. In “Action Research and Minority Problems,” a 1946 article that is widely credited as an origin of the contemporary term “action research,” Lewin proposed that “Rational social management...proceeds in a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action”
Lewin then described a workshop in which he had implemented this action research spiral to support the Interracial Commission of the State of Connecticut, which had convened fifty community workers involved with intergroup relations. Reflecting on the successes and lessons learned from early applications of action research, Lewin asserted the power—and the moral responsibility—of social science to advance democracy.

Action research was adapted within the field of education from the 1950s through the 1980s. At Teachers College at Columbia University, Stephen Corey (1953) noted the complexity of teaching and concluded that a new research paradigm was needed for school improvement. Corey envisioned this new paradigm as capable of generating insights that were specific and local—potentially transferrable, though not widely generalizable. In Corey’s conception, the concerns of practitioners ought to be the impetus for action research, which he defined as “the process by which practitioners attempt to study their problems scientifically in order to guide, correct, and evaluate their decisions and actions” (p. 6). Corey’s ideas, however, lost ground amid the 1950s’ growing interest in process-product research on teaching and the accompanying framing of teacher education as a problem of training (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005).

Across the Atlantic, another action research tradition began to take root in the 1960s even as action research fell out of favor in the United States. At the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE), housed at the University of East Anglia, Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) developed a British variation of action research that would become known as the “teacher as researcher” movement. Stenhouse was a prolific scholar, historian, and philosopher of curriculum. He sought to involve teachers as fellow
researchers in action research, staff development, and ongoing development of curriculum. Stenhouse’s colleague, John Elliott (1991), carried forward Stenhouse’s work by continuing to expand action research into the area of curriculum development.

The British teacher as researcher movement directly informed the development of an emancipatory variation of action research. In their 1986 book, Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge, and Action Research, Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis built upon Stenhouse’s work at CARE by promoting action research as a vehicle for advancing social justice. They situated action research within a paradigm of critical theory and developed a series of action research projects in Australia. This orientation toward action research has been elaborated through the work of scholars such as Joe Kincheloe (1991) and Susan Noffke (1995). In the 21st century, Bridget Somekh and Ken Zeichner (2009) have continued to theorize this critical vein of action research.

Back in the United States, action research returned to prominence during the 1980s and 1990s, often under the terminology of teacher inquiry or teacher research, as research in teacher education began to reject the prevailing process-product paradigm. In the wake of the inflammatory language heaped upon teachers and schools by A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), a teacher professionalization movement emerged, along with the school restructuring and PDS movements and a range of writing projects (Barnatt, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). At the University of Pennsylvania, Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle consolidated and extended the contemporary practitioner inquiry movement, now centered primarily upon teacher inquiry or teacher research, on the basis of their work with teacher candidates involved in Project START and inservice teachers with the
Philadelphia Writing Project. With the publication of their 1993 text, *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*, Cochran-Smith and Lytle drew upon Lawrence Stenhouse’s definition of research, defining teacher research as “systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers” (p. 7). Cochran-Smith and Lytle theorized teacher research as a unique paradigm of inquiry, owned by teachers themselves and distinct from either the process-product or interpretive paradigms of university-based research on teaching. They argued that teacher research is a special way of knowing, that teacher researchers should be regarded as producers of worthy knowledge about teaching, and that this knowledge could be the basis for powerful improvement of teaching and learning.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1993) view of teacher research as a paradigm of its own directly informed their 1999 conceptual framework on the relationships of knowledge and teaching practice. First, they theorized knowledge-for-practice as a form of university-generated knowledge intended for teachers’ consumption and application. Second, they described knowledge-in-practice as the knowledge teachers develop through daily practice and reflection. Third, they described knowledge-of-practice as a distinct form of knowledge that rejects the formal-practical knowledge dichotomy in favor of treating all knowledge as potentially problematic and teaching as a process of learning through inquiry. In this 1999 article, Cochran-Smith and Lytle also coined the synonymous phrases “inquiry stance” and “inquiry as stance” to refer to a particular kind of professional positioning toward practice as inherently problematizable and worthy of questioning, although the inquiry stance construct was, at that point, still in its infancy.
Through the late 1990s and first decade of the 2000s, Cochran-Smith and Lytle continued to popularize the use of the umbrella terms “practitioner inquiry” and “practitioner research.” In their 2009 text, *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation*, Cochran-Smith and Lytle reflected upon the continued expansion of the practitioner inquiry movement, within which they included both the relatively mature variants of action research and the self-study movement, which had emerged more recently. According to Samaras (2011), self-study is “a personal, systematic inquiry situated within one’s own teaching context that requires critical and collaborative reflection in order to generate knowledge as well as inform the broader educational field” (p. 10). Self-study, which is predominantly associated with higher education, involves practitioners studying their practices in relation to their values to determine whether these are in alignment. While the focus is on the self and individual practice, self-study is not exclusively introspective. It requires practitioners to elicit multiple perspectives on their practice and often emphasizes the alignment of practice with espoused values (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). Through collaboration, publicization of the inquiry, and conceptual linkages to the work of others, self-study is another distinctive variation of practitioner inquiry. Self-study has generated its own discourse communities among teacher educators (Dinkelman, 2003; Loughran et al., 2004), although some scholars also include within self-study various forms of inquiry conducted by teachers or teacher candidates (e.g., Samaras, 2011).

**Research on Practitioner Inquiry in Preservice Teacher Education**

The various historical and contemporary strands that comprise the practitioner inquiry movement offer the bases for powerful professional learning for both preservice
and inservice educators. However, competing perspectives exist about how to describe and study practitioner inquiry’s role within preservice teacher education. The characteristics of practitioner inquiry for teacher candidates have only recently begun to be systematically examined.

A recent systematic review (i.e., Rutten, 2021) of 35 papers about practitioner inquiry among teacher candidates led to the expansion and refinement of an existing framework (i.e., Willegems et al., 2017) for understanding practitioner inquiry within preservice teacher education. The review examined peer-reviewed empirical publications representing research that took place in nine different countries. In addition to identifying a range of purported outcomes of practitioner inquiry for teacher candidates and a host of methodological and theoretical limitations in the reviewed literature, one analysis conducted within the review led to the identification of five core features of practitioner inquiry, which have been reframed in terms of recommendations for high-quality implementation of practitioner inquiry within preservice teacher education contexts: process orientation, collaboration that encourages risk taking, reflection, dedicated time, and skilled facilitation.

Teacher educators should frame and facilitate practitioner inquiry as an ongoing process that is systematic throughout each of its phases. Practitioner inquiry is, by definition, a systematic and intentional process. While teacher candidates readily comprehend that the process of practitioner inquiry as a whole is systematic, they do not necessarily possess sophisticated understandings of how systematicity can be an ongoing characteristic of every aspect of the inquiry cycle. Faikhamta and Clarke (2015) described the necessity of interrupting teacher candidates’ perceptions of practitioner
inquiry as a one-shot, time-bound project to be completed as a university requirement. Part of this interruption, in Faikhamta and Clarke’s context, involved presenting practitioner inquiry as a process that could be systematic without necessarily being framed as either a quantitative mode of inquiry or as a hypothesis-testing activity.

Parker et al. (2016) also noted teacher candidates’ tendency to favor quantitative approaches to systematicity, and they developed three continua of quality to describe how teacher candidates engaged with the practitioner inquiry process. A content analysis of inquiry assignments suggested that teacher candidates readily adopted language associated with systematic inquiry but that they varied greatly in the extent to which they actually engaged in systematic approaches to data collection and analysis. This finding indicated the importance of teacher educators’ efforts to sustain systematicity as part of the inquiry process, not merely as a characteristic of the inquiry cycle itself. Davis et al. (2018) reached a similar conclusion about the importance of a process orientation, not a product orientation, to engaging teacher candidates in practitioner inquiry.

Teacher educators should structure practitioner inquiry such that teacher candidates engage in collaboration that encourages them to take risks with their teaching. Although the significance of collaboration within inquiry has long been acknowledged, and scholars have described a variety of approaches to structuring collaboration (e.g., Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Mule, 2006), collaboration that supported teacher candidates’ efforts to try something new—and to struggle or fail—was a prominent characteristic reported in the reviewed literature. Klein et al. (2015) observed the value in framing students as potential collaborators with teacher candidates, while Ulvik and Riese (2016) emphasized collaboration both among teacher candidates themselves and
between teacher candidates and their mentor teachers. In Ulvik and Riese’s study, mentor teachers, in particular, were revealed as significant collaborators because they not only possess the potential to experiment with new methods of teaching but also can collaborate directly with teacher candidates in the process of inquiry. Amir et al. (2017) underscored the importance of collaboration within teacher candidates’ processes of framing questions for their action research, and they urged teacher educators to build trusting, supportive environments in which teacher candidates are encouraged to explore the tensions that arise from their clinical experiences.

Teacher educators should purposefully and systematically devise opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in reflection throughout the entire practitioner inquiry process. Within the reviewed literature, both written and oral approaches to reflection featured prominently. Reflective journals were a common approach to promoting written reflection. For Atiles and Pinholster (2013), reflective journals were the primary mechanism through which Pinholster, a teacher candidate, engaged with the process of action research. As Pinholster developed her reflective journal, she began to notice her own negative self-talk about her teaching. Through the noticing made possible by her consistent reflections, Pinholster was prompted to develop strategies for becoming more positive in her self-talk, upon which she continued to reflect throughout her action research.

Oral approaches to reflection are particularly common within clinical practice seminars or other university-based coursework for which practitioner inquiry is a component of the curriculum. Teacher educators who plan oral approaches to reflection sometimes combine written reflection with either unstructured or structured reflective
talk. For example, Dodman et al. (2014) adopted a highly structured approach to reflective talk through the use of critical friends groups that met regularly within teacher candidates’ clinical settings to support the teacher candidates’ development of action research projects. Adams (2016) required teacher candidates to develop written blogs and individual video-based reflections but also required them to use these as the basis for class discussions as they developed their inquiries. Betts et al. (2017) adopted a similar approach, blending a wide range of individual approaches to written reflection with informal times for teacher candidates to discuss their reflections as they engaged in practitioner inquiry.

Teacher educators should carve out dedicated time for teacher candidates to engage in inquiry. This recommendation addresses two separate time-related dilemmas that were reported in the reviewed literature. First, both Stern (2014) and Faikhamta and Clarke (2015) asserted that their teacher candidates struggled to set aside the necessary time to engage in the activities that would support their developing inquiries. Stern described how her teacher candidates struggled to find time to write in their reflective journals and to analyze their journal entries after the end of a long day in the classroom. They also complained about the delays to their inquiries that resulted from interruptions related to school holidays and assemblies. Faikhamta and Clarke reported a different time dilemma—that of teacher candidates struggling to find time within their busy teaching schedules to carry out the data collection activities they had proposed for their action research. Both studies, however, noted that this time dilemma was linked, at least in part, to teacher candidates’ perceptions that inquiry was an activity, to use Dana and Yendol-Hoppey’s (2014) words, “apart from” teaching rather than “a part of” teaching (p. xxi).
Teacher educators can assist teacher candidates in developing inquiries that are truly integrated with their practices; nevertheless, teacher candidates still require time to engage in activities such as collating, reading through, and analyzing data.

Finally, teacher educators who expect their teacher candidates to engage in practitioner inquiry must, themselves, be skilled facilitators of practitioner inquiry. Hostetler et al. (2013) provided extended reflections upon the knowledge and skills required of teacher educators who facilitated teacher candidates’ self-studies. They noted that the necessary skills go well beyond advising teacher candidates on approaches to data collection and analysis. Through their study, Hostetler et al. realized the importance of creating a collaborative, community environment and structures that support teacher candidates in exploring the purposes of their self-studies. They also commented on the deep understandings teacher educators must possess of the contexts in which teacher candidates are inquiring. For example, teacher educators must be able to create space for teacher candidates to express their concerns about their clinical settings, but also to direct their concerns in productive ways due to the inherent tensions involved in asking teacher candidates to question prevailing assumptions about teaching and learning within a given school context. Shanks (2016) also noted the significant role required of skilled teacher educators as facilitators and supervisors of action research. Shanks described how, in one PDS context, a professional learning community (PLC) model combined with cycles of clinical supervision served as key mechanisms through which teacher candidates developed their action research. Teacher educators drew extensively upon the supervisory skills of group development and direct assistance to support teacher candidates’ action research.
The characteristics of practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education have been increasingly well documented in recent years. The literature abounds with descriptions of how practitioner inquiry has been implemented or enacted in various contexts, and evidence continues to mount that practitioner inquiry can, though does not automatically, support a wide range of worthwhile outcomes for teacher candidates. Still, relatively little is known about one key outcome of practitioner inquiry—what it means for teacher candidates to develop an inquiry stance toward teaching.

**Practitioner Inquiry and Inquiry as Stance**

As indicated by the preceding overview of recent literature on practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education, the characteristics of practitioner inquiry are at least somewhat established, even if the potential outcomes remain rather poorly understood by comparison. Worthwhile outcomes for teacher candidates have indeed been attributed to practitioner inquiry, but very little is known about what it means for an inquiry stance to emerge among teacher candidates. Since the primary purpose of this study was to understand more fully how inquiry as stance played out among teacher candidates, the following subsections describe the four dimensions of the inquiry stance construct, review recent research on inquiry stance, and develop an analytic framework to guide an empirical study of inquiry stance.

**A Conceptual Framework for Inquiry as Stance**

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) proposed the term “inquiry stance” or “inquiry as stance” to capture the idea that practitioner inquiry is about more than the outputs of its underlying processes. The construct of inquiry as stance suggests that learning how to conduct a cycle of practitioner inquiry is not the same as coming to view inquiry as “a
part of” rather than “apart from” practice (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014, p. xxi). In their original conceptualization of the construct, Cochran-Smith and Lytle explained what it means for inquiry to be an educator’s stance:

The construct, inquiry as stance, is intended to offer a closer understanding of the knowledge generated in inquiry communities, how inquiry relates to practice, and what teachers learn from inquiry. In everyday language, “stance” is used to describe body postures, particularly with regard to the position of the feet, as in sports or dance, and also to describe political positions, particularly their consistency (or the lack thereof) over time...In our work, we offer the term inquiry as stance to describe the positions teachers and others who work in inquiry communities take toward knowledge and its relationships to practice. We use the metaphor of stance to suggest both orientational and positional ideas, to carry allusions to the physical placing of the body as well as to intellectual activities and perspectives over time. In this sense, the metaphor is intended to capture the ways we stand, the ways we see, and the lenses we see through...Across the life span, an inquiry stance provides a kind of grounding within the changing cultures of school reform and competing political agendas. (p. 288-289)

Through this extended corporeal metaphor, Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s early description of inquiry stance emphasized the individual aspects involved in adopting inquiry as a stance toward practice. This original formulation remains powerful because it clearly distinguishes the notion of inquiry as a one-shot project from a much broader understanding of inquiry as a way of conceptualizing teaching in terms of reflection, questioning, analysis, interpretation, and action for change.
A decade after they initially proposed the inquiry stance construct, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) published a new book, *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation*. Building upon their 1999 formulation, in this text, Cochran-Smith and Lytle offered a more complex interpretation of inquiry as stance in which they emphasized the interplay of the individual and local aspects of inquiry stance with the communal and global aspects. They promoted an agenda for inquiry stance that was more explicitly dedicated to advancing ideals of democracy and social justice.

According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) expanded formulation, inquiry as stance is much more than an individual educator’s positioning or orientation toward educational practice. Inquiry as stance became “a grounded theory of action that positions the role of practitioners and practitioner knowledge as central to the goal of transforming teaching, learning, leading, and schooling” (p. 119). Within this new understanding of the construct, the theory of action for inquiry as stance encompasses four specific theoretical dimensions, which were the object of this study. Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s diagram of these dimensions (p. 126) is adapted below.
Figure 2-2: Conceptual framework for inquiry as stance (Adapted from Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 126).

The Knowledge dimension of inquiry stance represents a particular perspective about the knowledge of educators. This perspective “rejects the formal knowledge—practical knowledge dualism and instead puts forward a conception of local knowledge in global contexts” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 126). This perspective positions educators as worthy knowers, people who are already knowledgeable and who have the potential to generate worthwhile knowledge. Educators working from an inquiry stance understand research as both “an entitlement and a responsibility” (p. 127). They understand that the issues they face are influenced by broader contexts (e.g., state and federal policies, discourses about the purposes of schooling, devaluation of local perspectives in favor of increased globalization, etc.) but that these issues are always experienced locally. This dimension of the inquiry stance construct makes clear that
educators working from an inquiry stance are willing to be informed by knowledge generated elsewhere but that they continually problematize both their own and others’ knowing.

The Practice dimension of inquiry stance advances “an expanded view of practice as the interplay of teaching, learning, and leading, as well as an expanded view of who counts as a practitioner” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 126). In this view, “Practice is not limited to what a practitioner does or says. Rather practice encompasses students’ learning as well as students’, teachers’, and leaders’ ongoing investigations into the social, cultural, intellectual, relational, and political aspects of knowledge construction” (p. 133). The practice dimension of inquiry stance indicates that educators working from an inquiry stance regard their own practices as sites for investigation, but that the practices that are subject to interrogation are not merely those within the four walls of their classrooms. Instead, all aspects of curriculum are systematically problematized as educators who have assumed positions as worthy knowers claim responsibility for interrogating all the influences that shape their practices. Teachers practicing from an inquiry stance therefore take on new relationships of heightened professional responsibility to students, colleagues, parents, community members, and society.

The Community dimension of inquiry stance represents “an understanding of practitioner communities as the primary medium or mechanism for enacting inquiry as stance as a theory of action” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 126). This dimension of the construct illustrates that inquiry as stance, though it has substantial aspects at the individual level, also entails community aspects. When teachers who regard themselves as knowers and their practices as complex and problematic come together in inquiry
communities, “they work together to uncover, articulate, and question their own assumptions about teaching, learning, and schooling” (p. 141). Though they take responsibility for developing their own knowledge, they are open to—yet critical of—all potential sources of knowledge, including university research and the investigations of other practitioners.

The outer ring of the diagram of inquiry as stance represents “the position that the overarching purpose of practitioner inquiry is to provide education for a more just and democratic society” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 126-127). The Purpose dimension accounts for the aims of inquiry stance as envisioned by its originators. Cochran-Smith and Lytle were clear that “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). Thus, even if practitioner inquiry begins as a practical approach to solving local problems in a classroom, it can never remain an end in itself. Rather, educators working from an inquiry stance “are committed to taking action to improve the day-to-day school lives and futures of the students and families with whom they work (p. 150). Cochran-Smith and Lytle emphasize that working for a more just, democratic society does not require that practitioners adhere to a singular ideological conception of social justice. Instead, it requires that practitioners be willing to “form and reform the interpretive frameworks that guide their moment to moment actions” (p. 151). As they do so, practitioners necessarily struggle amid the inherent tensions that exist between divergent conceptions of justice. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle, educators working from an inquiry stance commonly find themselves torn between equity and recognition—between liberal
democratic conceptions of justice that emphasize ideals such as the quest for equality before the law, equitable opportunities to access and influence civic life, and the contributions of free individuals to a mutual, common good; and an identity politics of difference rooted in wider recognition of marginalized groups.

**Empirical Research on Inquiry Stance**

Although recent research has documented a range of worthwhile outcomes of practitioner inquiry for teacher candidates, few studies have considered whether and in what ways practitioner inquiry actually supports the development of the inquiry stance envisioned by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). Those studies that have advanced claims about the inquiry stance construct have sometimes done so in a cursory manner focused upon making binary assertions about whether or not individuals have acquired an inquiry stance. Braaten (2011) explained this distinction in a dissertation on the development of an inquiry stance among inservice science teachers:

> ...Although both the concept of “inquiry stance” and the importance of supportive professional communities are central to studies of teacher learning, the development of inquiry-as-stance within these groups is not well-understood. Instead, the focus of research tends to center on the existence, or not, of such a stance. (p. 40, emphases original)

Braaten’s observation was substantiated by the limited range of publications that were revealed in a review of literature addressing how an inquiry stance develops, and by the superficial ways in which most of these studies linked their empirical analyses back to the construct theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009).
To review the literature on the development of an inquiry stance, an integrative review approach (Torraco, 2016) was adopted. The Google Scholar and ERIC ProQuest databases were initially queried for the terms “inquiry stance” or “inquiry as stance.” These initial searches, however, yielded many thousands of publications, many of which appeared to make only passing references to inquiry stance. The search terms were therefore restricted to “development of inquiry stance,” “development of an inquiry stance,” and “development of inquiry as stance” in order to locate only those publications that were focused specifically upon how an inquiry stance develops or plays out. The decision to employ these rather restrictive search terms was justified because it immediately yielded a focused selection of obviously relevant publications. It surely also excluded some potentially relevant publications that had used different terminology to refer to the development or emergence of an inquiry stance.

To address this limitation, as publications were identified, a snowball approach was employed in which the reference lists of each article were searched in order to identify publications that may not have been revealed through database searching. Google Scholar’s “cited by” function was also used to locate any potentially relevant articles that had cited the articles identified during the initial searches. Finally, at a conference held during Fall 2019, four senior scholars who have published extensively within the practitioner inquiry movement were consulted in a further effort to determine whether any particularly significant or recent publications specifically about inquiry stance had been overlooked. The consulted scholars agreed that the search process had located most, if not all, of the relevant literature. Ongoing review identified one additional dissertation (i.e., Butville, 2020) that examined, at least in part, the inquiry stance construct.
As publications were located, they were evaluated for relevance according to four criteria. First, each publication was dated from 2009 to present and had cited Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) book, *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation*. Second, each publication was deemed empirical, in a broad sense of the term, because it relied upon some form of evidence from direct observation or experience, rather than solely upon evidence derived from other scholarly literature. This criterion excluded reviews of literature as well as theoretical and historical papers about practitioner inquiry. Third, each publication consisted of research that was undertaken to investigate inquiry stance among either teacher candidates and/or inservice teachers. This criterion excluded publications that merely made passing mention of inquiry stance, those that cited the construct without exploring it in detail, those that merely described teacher candidates’ completion of a practitioner inquiry project as the sole evidence of an inquiry stance, and those that explored inquiry stance primarily among other populations, such as teacher educators. Finally, each publication was actually available through the researcher’s university library or accessible through an interlibrary loan.

This process of searching and screening the inquiry stance literature led to the identification of 12 empirically grounded publications that explicitly examined what it means for an inquiry stance to develop among teachers or teacher candidates. The publications included five journal articles, five dissertations, one book chapter, and one conference paper. The publications were individually reviewed with a focus on three areas: their key findings about the development of an inquiry stance, their methods for generating evidence about the inquiry stance construct, and the extent to which their approach explicitly reflected the dimensions of an inquiry stance as theorized by
Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). Since relatively few publications were ultimately located and included in the review, a simple thematic structure was selected (Torraco, 2016) in which the results were organized into three groups on the basis of the extent to which they connected their empirical analyses to the inquiry stance construct theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle. The studies were broadly grouped into three categories: studies of inquiry stance that were “inspired” by the construct, studies of inquiry stance that were “derived” more specifically from the dimensions of the construct, and studies of inquiry stance that were “tightly coupled” to the four dimensions of the construct.

Several studies investigated inquiry stance in ways that were clearly inspired by Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) framework but that were only minimally connected to the construct’s dimensions because they did not advance an analytic framework. Lamb (2009) conducted an investigation of how teachers developed an inquiry stance through collaborative teacher research that was centered upon K-3 students’ mathematics thinking. Lamb (2009) explained that Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) theorizing about inquiry stance informed her study, although she did not connect their framework to her analysis. Instead, Lamb wrote that evidence of an inquiry stance was “...inferred, and although one might reasonably conclude that those who provided evidence of a robust stance of inquiry likely held a robust stance, those who did not provide evidence may or may not have held one…” (p. 6, emphasis original). Lamb then labeled teachers based upon her perceptions of the strength of their inquiry stances. Describing the limitations of her exploratory study, Lamb acknowledged how challenging it was to “measure” teachers’ inquiry stances.
In an elaboration of Lamb’s (2009) paper, Lamb et al. (2009) also studied the concept of inquiry as stance. However, like Lamb (2009), the authors provided limited explanation of their analytic approach, and they made almost no connection to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s conceptualizations as they analyzed their data. Lamb et al. reported that they employed a grounded theory methodology to explain the development of an inquiry stance among a community of teachers who gathered regularly to explore student work in mathematics. Their approach involved analyzing teachers’ responses to students’ written work on multiplication problems and to video clips of a mathematics classroom. Lamb and colleagues reported that they looked for instances (primarily in field notes and interview transcripts) where teachers used obvious “wondering” language like “I am curious about…”, where teachers used tentative language to interpret students’ work, or where teachers showed curiosity by proposing hypotheses about students’ mathematical thinking. On the basis of these criteria, Lamb and colleagues claimed that some teachers had exhibited a “robust stance,” others had a “limited stance,” and the majority of teachers had “no evidence of a stance of inquiry” and offered percentages (p. 28). For Lamb et al., an inquiry stance seemed to mean, primarily, that a teacher had exhibited signs of curiosity.

Two papers about the development of an inquiry stance were clearly inspired by Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) theorization of the construct, but, because they were structured primarily around written reflections rather than systematically analyzed data, they offered no analytic framework to link their claims about the development of an inquiry stance back to the dimensions of the construct. Wolkenhauer et al. (2011) described a graduate teacher education program in which practitioner inquiry was framed
as a powerful mechanism for teacher leadership and school improvement. Within this description was embedded Wolkenhauer’s written reflection on her experiences with developing an inquiry stance through the cycles of practitioner inquiry she conducted during her time in the program. Although the authors were obviously steeped in Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999, 2009) conceptions of inquiry as stance, Wolkenhauer et al. offered no analytic framework that could link their claim that Wolkenhauer’s experiences represented the development of an inquiry stance back to the construct as theorized in the literature. Lawton-Sticklor and Bodamer (2016) adopted a similar approach—framing two reflections on the process of developing an inquiry stance within a broader description of how the two authors had engaged in practitioner inquiry together. Like Wolkenhauer et al., Lawton-Sticklor and Bodamer were obviously inspired by the inquiry stance construct, but their paper offered no analytic framework to link their interpretations back to the relevant theory.

Dodman et al. (2017) and Butville (2020) offered additional examples of studies that, although they investigated inquiry stance, did not use any framework for linking their analysis back to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) work. Through a combination of program description, descriptive statistics from surveys of recent teacher education program graduates, and excerpts from interviews, Dodman et al. explored study participants’ perceptions of the influences of action research on their teaching and described how, a year after their research, participants “were clearly using data, asking questions about their practices, acting for their students, monitoring impact, and reflecting” (p. 41), which they interpreted as evidence that teacher candidates had begun to develop their inquiry stances. Butville’s dissertation reached a similar conclusion about
the graduates of a PDS-based teacher education program in which practitioner inquiry was a signature pedagogy. Butville asserted that the program’s graduates could describe not only what it means to have an inquiry stance but also how they were enacting an inquiry stance in their teaching.

While some of the reviewed papers advanced claims about teachers’ inquiry stances without making substantive analytic connections to the construct, the analyses presented in other papers were at least partially derived from the dimensions of the construct theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). In her dissertation, Braaten (2011) studied 16 inservice science teachers who participated in a yearlong video club. The club met regularly to analyze student work and video clips from participants’ science classrooms. At each meeting, a “Featured Teacher” presented video clips and student work from his or her science classroom while the other teachers (“Critical Friends”) analyzed the classroom data in reference to both the teacher’s practices and evidence of students’ scientific thinking. Braaten recorded these regular meetings, transcribed the recordings, and analyzed the transcripts by assigning a value from one to four to represent the degree to which she felt each participant exhibited “unproblematic” or “problematic” stances toward scientific knowledge, student learning, classroom practices, and the socio-professional work of teaching. “Unproblematic” stances tended to uphold the status quo, while “problematic” ones tended to question and reimagine it.

Braaten (2011) did not state her basis for determining the codes and categories she developed. However, some of the dimensions of the analytic framework she proposed to capture the work of the video club were clearly derived from the concept of inquiry stance as articulated by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). For instance, the participants’
problematic stances toward science aligned with the Knowledge dimension of inquiry stance, since the teachers in Braaten’s study had treated the school science curriculum as open to investigation. The participants’ problematic stances toward student learning, classroom practice, and the work of teaching could be similarly understood as stances toward practice aligned with the Practice dimension of the inquiry stance framework. Braaten’s analysis did not explicitly consider the components of educators’ stances toward communities and stances on the democratic purposes and social justice ends of practitioner inquiry. Thus, although she provided an in-depth analysis that aligned with a couple of the dimensions of inquiry as stance, Braaten’s dissertation still offered only a partial picture of the process by which it develops.

Nelson et al. (2012) conducted a study that was challenging to assess. These authors facilitated professional learning communities (PLCs) of teachers who had gathered to analyze student work. Taking the PLCs, rather than individual teachers, as their primary analytic unit, Nelson et al. developed an analysis of PLCs’ talk and derived two dimensions for the inquiry stance construct as it played out at the group level: epistemological stance toward student-learning data and the group’s stance toward dialogue during their analyses. They developed categories within their two dimensions, each of which was subdivided into four levels to create an analytic framework in the form of a rubric that could be used to assess a group’s inquiry stance. Several of these categories and levels clearly overlapped with the Knowledge, Practice, and Community dimensions of the inquiry stance construct theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), and at least part of their analysis was derived from the inquiry stance construct. Nelson et
al., however, did not explicitly make this connection back to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s framework.

Most recently among the studies that were partially derived from Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) framework for inquiry as stance, Bennett’s (2013) dissertation provided yet more evidence that the inquiry stance construct is poorly understood. According to Bennett, “While the construct of inquiry stance has been defined, very little work has been done to open the ‘black box’ and examine what it looks like as it develops in educators over time” (p. 15). Bennett explored many of the characteristics of an inquiry stance theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle, yet her own analysis focused primarily upon characteristics that could be linked to the Knowledge dimension. She developed a table of indicators to signal teachers’ knowledge and responsiveness across four domains: content, learners in general, the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and data literacy. Bennett then linked these domains to four processes associated with practitioner inquiry: selecting a research focus, collecting data, analyzing data, and adapting lessons based upon these processes. Her analysis of these various indicators concluded, perhaps unsurprisingly, that teachers adopted a wide range of practices associated with an inquiry stance. Bennett derived the list of practices, however, not from the characteristics of an inquiry stance but from the processes of completing an inquiry project that were promoted in the teacher education context where Bennett had completed her dissertation: developing questions, collecting and analyzing data, focusing upon particular students’ learning, describing contexts, reviewing literature, and so on.

Dana (2015) identified the same tension as Braaten (2011): much has been written about the process of practitioner inquiry, but little has been written about the relationship
of practitioner inquiry to the development of an inquiry stance. In response, Dana undertook a small-scale investigation of one teacher. Dana recorded a video clip of the teacher’s instruction of conceptually-based mathematics in an ESOL classroom. Dana provided no basis for her analysis of the video. She did, however, propose that the teacher in the video exhibited three components of the inquiry stance construct, each of which was clearly derived from Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s conceptualization of inquiry stance: collecting data as a part of teaching (not apart from teaching), researcher and teacher roles seamlessly blended, and the underlying premise of advancing equity for her students.

Dana’s (2015) article was not presented as a comprehensive or systematic study of how an inquiry stance develops. However, Dana clearly supported the position that more thorough and systematic studies of the inquiry stance construct would be needed in the future. Dana explained, “While it is possible that engagement in inquiry as a project can lead to the development of inquiry as a stance, there is no guarantee that this will occur” (p. 165, emphasis original). Dana then teased out another key tension in the research on practitioner inquiry that merits attention:

Several collections of teacher researchers’ reports on their work illustrate the ways the concept inquiry as project might look like in practice…However, it is more difficult to find illustrations of inquiry as stance in practice—what it looks like and what it means to approach inquiry as a way of teaching and being. (p. 165)

Dana’s paper thus raised key methodological questions about what it would mean to study inquiry stance in a systematic and transparent manner.
Relative to the other two sets, the final set of publications tightly coupled their empirical analyses to the inquiry stance construct as described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). One of Cochran-Smith’s own doctoral students, Barnatt (2009), wrote a mixed-methods longitudinal dissertation on practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education. A substantial portion of Barnatt’s dissertation examined the inquiry stance construct as it played out in the cases of two teachers who had been prepared in a teacher education program framed by practitioner inquiry. In order to develop longitudinal case descriptions of the teachers “Mara” and “Craig,” Barnatt did not merely purport to have analyzed the dimensions of inquiry as stance. She explained some of the criteria she was looking for in order to assess the inquiry stances of Mara and Craig, criteria which were derived from two complementary conceptual frameworks:

…I used Noffke and Zeichner’s dimensions of practitioner research, as well as Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s concept of inquiry as stance, as frames for systematic exploration of teacher candidates’ development over time and their understanding of inquiry and its role in teaching. In particular, I looked for examples of teachers’ questioning practice from the personal, professional, and political dimensions, as well as how they understood and used theory and research to understand and frame problems of practice. I looked for instances of the teachers’ systematic and intentional examination of pupil work to improve practice, as well as how they used evidence about pupil outcomes to modify practice. In looking for examples as well as the lack of examples of these behaviors, I also analyzed the contexts, people, and situations that influenced the work of teaching and learning. (p. 195)
Barnatt’s analysis of the cases of Mara and Craig was structured around Zeichner and Noffke’s (2001) framework of the personal, professional, and political dimensions of practitioner research, rather than around Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) dimensions of Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose within the inquiry stance construct. However, as she had explained, Barnatt looked for examples and non-examples of indicators aligned with each of the inquiry stance dimensions, which she wove throughout her case analyses.

Despite the rich case analyses she had developed, and despite the tight interweaving of the theoretical characteristics of an inquiry stance throughout her descriptions of her participants, Barnatt’s (2009) study of inquiry stance was, in the final analysis, reduced to the use of a yes/no binary. Barnatt explained:

While their stories differed, neither [Mara nor Craig] undertook formal inquiry during their first two years of teaching in the sense of posing a question and collecting classroom data. Neither developed what could be called inquiry as stance, or a way of knowing about teaching and learning based on constant questioning of the assumptions underlying practices and policy with the goal of social change and social justice. On the other hand, for one of the two teachers, there were indications of a developing inquiry stance that grew over time. Overall, then, the two case studies…represent two quite different experiences of learning to teach for two teacher candidates who were part of the same preparation program with a strong focus on inquiry. One teacher displayed an inquiring stance along the personal, professional, and political dimensions, which was encouraged and supported by her school context. The second teacher generally did not
demonstrate an inquiry stance in the first years of teaching and was not encouraged along these lines within the school context. (p. 196)

As this extended passage indicates, Barnatt asserted that neither Mara nor Craig had successfully developed an inquiry stance, even though Mara showed signs of developing one. Rather, Barnatt emphasized the importance of support from Mara’s school in supporting her emergent inquiry stance and her commitment to social justice—support that was generally lacking at Craig’s school. Even as Barnatt’s study illustrated the immense complexity of the factors that might influence how an inquiry stance emerges and develops (or not), Barnatt reduced teachers’ inquiry stances to an either/or proposition.

Of the reviewed studies, Smith (2012) took the one of the most transparent approaches to studying the development of inquiry as stance. In his dissertation, Smith explored the evolving perspectives of preservice teachers who were engaged in a form of practitioner inquiry that he called “classroom research” (p. 17). Smith conducted a narrative analysis of 84 essays written by teacher candidates at the end of their program of preservice teacher education. Smith referred to these essays as “inquiry synthesis essays” (p. 66). Each essay was between 2,000 and 3,000 words and was written as a required end-of-course assignment in a course called *The Teacher as Leader*. The essays asked the preservice teachers to reflect and describe what they felt they had learned as a result of classroom research, how their research had affected their students and themselves as teachers, and their plans for future inquiry. The preservice teachers were asked to illustrate each claim they made with specific examples of work they had
completed for their classroom research. They also described aspects of their experiences with classroom research that they felt had facilitated or obstructed their research.

Smith’s (2012) analysis led him to propose that the preservice teachers with whom he worked had developed their perspectives on research through three kinds of narratives that were embedded within the inquiry synthesis essays. All the preservice teachers constructed what Smith called a “Life-Long Narrative” about their development and growth as teachers throughout their time in their preservice teacher education program. These narratives featured a variety of dilemmas the preservice teachers encountered, along with the ways the preservice teachers went about addressing their dilemmas. As such, the Life-Long Narratives constituted a form of reflection, which is a first step toward a cycle of inquiry. However, some preservice teachers’ inquiry synthesis essays reported that the dilemmas they faced as novice teachers served as the basis for intentional reflection and action to address the dilemmas. Smith referred to these narratives as “Inquiry Narratives” because they demonstrated use of some of the components of the inquiry cycle. However, only a few students whose Life-Long Narratives also included Inquiry Narratives also reported that they had developed the cycles of reflection into what Smith called “Classroom Research Narratives.” These narratives discussed the full cycle of inquiry from reflection and development of a question, through data collection and analysis, to action, and evaluating and sharing the results of the research with others. According to Smith, these narratives that included the full inquiry cycle represented evidence of an inquiry stance.
Toward an Analytic Framework for Studying Inquiry as Stance

Scholars have begun to acknowledge the conceptual and methodological shortcomings of previous empirical research on inquiry stance. Even before Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) published their conceptual framework for inquiry as stance, Amond (2008) posed a key question: “How do you tell if a teacher has an inquiry stance toward teaching?” (p. 40). Amond posed this question because she wanted to identify and then study the graduates of a teacher education program in a PDS where the development of an inquiry stance was a goal. Amond generated an initial list of eight characteristics that she felt appropriately described teachers with an inquiry stance. In Amond’s view:

Teachers with an Inquiry Stance:

1. Reflect upon their practice
2. Ask specific questions about their practice
3. Search for answers/solutions to those questions
4. Try the solutions out and adapt them to best meet their needs
5. Are able to articulate their findings and why they do the things they do
6. Share their work with others (informally and/or formally)
7. Remain open minded to new ideas
8. Continue to utilize these concepts throughout their careers (Amond, 2008, p. 40)

Although Amond had previously summarized the ways in which Nolan and Hoover (2004) and Snow-Gerono (2003) conceptualized inquiry stance, she offered no other explanation of how she derived this list of criteria. Thus, like Dana (2015), Amond was clear in naming the framework that guided her study, but there were tenuous linkages
among her framework, existing theory about inquiry as stance, and Amond’s empirical analyses.

Yendol-Hoppey et al. (2019) offered yet another approach to thinking about inquiry stance. Yendol-Hoppey et al. were not attempting to operationalize the concept for the purposes of a research study. However, their chapter illustrates the ongoing need for a framework that could enable this concept to be studied. Yendol-Hoppey and colleagues imagined inquiry stance as a three-legged stool, the legs of which are: knowing the inquiry process, having an epistemology of inquiry, and having habits of inquiry. In their chapter, Yendol-Hoppey et al. cited Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) original work on the concept but did not acknowledge their 2009 reconceptualization. They wrote that “there are many key components required to enact an inquiry stance” (p. 513), but they did not articulate what those other key components might be. Through this recent handbook chapter, Yendol-Hoppey et al. offered yet another framework for thinking about inquiry as stance but provided no practical basis for conducting a study of the construct.

In the absence of a clear framework to permit a transparent study of the inquiry stance construct, Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) four-dimensional framework continues to offer the strongest sense of direction about how to proceed. Cochran-Smith and Lytle theorized four dimensions of an inquiry stance, and they described some of the theoretical characteristics of each dimension. However, since literature reviewed in this chapter has indicated that an inquiry stance can develop with support over time, it would be inappropriate to assume that the dimensions of an inquiry stance play out or develop in the same ways for all people across all contexts. Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s theorizing
therefore cannot be taken at face value as a representation of how an inquiry stance plays out among actual teachers or teacher candidates. Instead, by reconceptualizing the four dimensions of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s framework, a modified version of the framework can be used to guide an empirical investigation.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) conceptual framework can be adapted into an analytic framework by retaining and relabeling each of its four dimensions—Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose—as shown in Figure 2-3. The new labels transform Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s framework by changing it from a set of propositions about what it would mean to have an inquiry stance into a set of analytic dimensions that could guide an investigation of how the construct actually plays out. The Knowledge dimension is changed from “local and global contexts” to “stance toward inquiry and knowledge.” The Community dimension is changed from “catalysts for teacher learning” to “stance toward inquiry and community.” The Practice dimension is changed from “interplay of teaching and learning” to “stance toward inquiry and practice.” The Purpose dimension is changed from “democratic purposes, social justice ends” to “stance toward inquiry purposes.” These transformations embed an assumption that teacher candidates’ emergent inquiry stances are likely to reflect some, although not necessarily all, of the characteristics of the dimensions as they were theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle—and that the process of growing into the robust inquiry stance they theorized entails an ongoing effort to adopt and maintain inquiry as one’s lifelong positioning.
Reconceptualizing the dimensions of the inquiry stance construct provides some direction about what questions to explore in an empirical investigation of inquiry stance. However, the transformed analytic framework was still too abstract to permit an investigation to proceed, and it ran the risk of departing too far from the framework’s original meanings. The framework’s four dimensions needed to be operationalized as transparently as possible.

One approach to operationalizing a qualitative construct like inquiry as stance is to isolate and extract key terms and salient phrases in relevant literature, while being as transparent as possible about how and from what sources the terms and phrases were extracted. These extracted terms and phrases can then be used as indicators or a priori codes within an analytic framework that explicitly ties units of empirical data back to the
construct of interest. This process of converting a conceptual framework into an analytic framework that is linked to a code book can permit a complex construct to be studied in a transparent manner.

Coburn and Woulfin (2012) employed a similar approach to developing an analytic framework in their qualitative study of the ways in which instructional coaches in Massachusetts mediated reading teachers’ implementation of a new policy on reading instruction. To conduct a transparent study, Coburn and Woulfin needed to operationalize the ideas about good reading instruction that were contained within policy and associated curriculum documents. From relevant documents, Coburn and Woulfin extracted phrases that described the ways in which Massachusetts teachers “should or must teach reading” (p. 9, emphasis original). They grouped these phrases into concise “messages” about reading instruction (e.g., “Reading instruction should emphasize phonics and phonemic awareness”). Coburn and Woulfin then conducted interviews with reading coaches and teachers, observed professional development seminars and teachers’ reading instruction, and collected documents. They analyzed their data by applying the codes representing the messages they had previously identified in the policy documents. This analysis, combined with other analyses, provided the basis for tracking changes in the teachers’ practices of reading instruction over time in relation to the messages of the policy and the messages teachers were receiving from their reading coaches. By clearly describing how they translated concepts into codes and how they defined their codes, Coburn and Woulfin’s qualitative analysis was both systematic and transparent.

For this study, the construct of inquiry as stance was operationalized through a process of deriving an initial analytic framework from the reconceptualized conceptual
framework in Figure 2-3. This process followed an approach similar to Coburn and Woulfin (2012) and described by Miles et al. (2020) in order to translate the concept of inquiry as stance into an initial set of a priori codes that could be applied to qualitative data. The reconceptualized inquiry stance construct has four dimensions: Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose. Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) idealized descriptions of these dimensions were frequently so abstract, however, as to render them challenging to distinguish or imagine in practice, reflecting the same problems identified by Dana (2015). However, through a close reading of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s description of each dimension, key words and phrases were extracted as representations of the corresponding dimension of the inquiry stance construct. Similar words and phrases were clustered and condensed until there were five indicators for each dimension of inquiry as stance, each of which was linked to a specific assertion about the construct from Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s theorizing. Following the recommendations of Creswell and Poth (2018), these indicators were converted into a coding scheme, which was useful for both developing interview questions and the first phase of coding the study’s qualitative data, as will be described in the next chapter. The indicators and corresponding codes that were linked to the analytic framework in Figure 2-3 appear and are elaborated in Appendix A.

**Chapter Summary**

The practitioner inquiry movement is one contemporary strand of a history of educators who have engaged in systematic and intentional studies of their own practices. The movement can be bounded according to six terms—practitioner inquiry, practitioner research, teacher inquiry, teacher research, action research, and self-study. A review of
the literature on practitioner inquiry within preservice teacher education identified five core characteristics of practitioner inquiry. However, the inquiry stance construct at the heart of the practitioner inquiry movement and that is widely espoused as a goal of preservice teacher education has received relatively little focused investigation, and few studies have made systematic use of the dimensions of the construct as theorized by its originators.

This study was designed as a systematic and transparent investigation of how the inquiry stance construct actually played out among teacher candidates who were conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS context. This investigation was rooted in a belief that developing an inquiry stance is a worthwhile goal for preservice teacher education because it represents a way to prepare teachers who know how to learn from their own professional practices. In order to conduct a study that was grounded in both historical and contemporary understandings of practitioner inquiry and inquiry as stance, this chapter reviewed a selection of the practitioner inquiry literature. Specifically, the chapter surveyed the terminology and history associated with the contemporary practitioner inquiry movement. It reviewed recent scholarship about practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education contexts. Next, a conceptual overview of the inquiry stance construct was presented, followed by a focused review of research on inquiry as stance. Recognizing some of the limitations of the existing literature, the chapter proposed a modified version of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) inquiry stance framework and translated this conceptual framework into an analytic framework. The following chapter will present the study’s methodology.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Contemporary social research has been widely criticized for its “rampant subjectivism” (Crotty, 1998, p. 48). Qualitative educational researchers, in particular, have drawn criticism for embracing subjectivism at the expense of research that is valid or trustworthy (Lagemann, 2000; St. Pierre, 2006). Chapter 3 seeks to forestall such criticism of this study by explicitly articulating the perspectives that undergirded the research, then explaining how these perspectives shaped the study’s methodology, research design, and methods.

This study was not beholden to postpositivist methodological conceptions of reliability and validity (e.g., Campbell & Stanley, 1963); however, it sought to address the standards of the American Educational Research Association for trustworthy reporting of empirical social research. A trustworthy report is both transparent in its logic of inquiry and warranted in the claims it advances (AERA, 2006, p. 33). The characteristic of transparency means, in part, that the report outlines the connections among a study’s research purposes, perspectives, methodology, and process of generating claims or interpretations. Transparency requires that a study be reported in a manner that would permit other people to appreciate the perspectives that informed a study, to understand as clearly as possible how these perspectives shaped the study’s methodology, and to scrutinize the claims or outcomes being reported. Transparency is a necessary but insufficient condition for producing a research report that is warranted. Typically evaluated through processes of peer review, the characteristic of being warranted means
that the report adduces a body of evidence that is both germane and adequate to the claims it advances.

When attempting to be transparent about the perspectives that shaped a study, social researchers often employ terms such as “paradigm,” “perspective,” and “interpretive framework” (Patton, 2002). The core idea of such terms is that researchers need to articulate the philosophical perspectives that have informed their processes for generating knowledge. Even when they do articulate their perspectives, however, researchers are not always explicit about how they have gone about connecting these perspectives to their research design and methods. This problem of weak linkages between epistemological assumptions and instantiation of methods can produce research reports with tenuous connections among perspectives, methods, and the resulting knowledge claims. As Koro-Ljungberg et al. (2009) explained:

When researchers do not make as explicit as possible their (e)pistemologies, theoretical perspectives, justification/argumentation systems, and methodologies, as well as the alignment of their research designs within the decision junctures that guide research processes, their research designs can appear random, uninformed, inconsistent, unjustified, and/or poorly reported. (p. 688)

To avoid creating a study that appears “random” or “unjustified,” researchers may choose, when describing their methodological decision making, to adopt a framework through which they explicitly illustrate how they have connected their perspectives to their research designs.

This study adopted Crotty’s (1998) four-element framework for conceptualizing the foundations of social research. Crotty’s four elements include: epistemology,
theoretical perspective or interpretive framework, methodology, and methods. A clear conceptualization of these elements and how they relate to one another is necessary because, according to Crotty:

In social research texts, the bulk of discussion and much of the terminology relate in one way or another to these four elements. What one often finds, however, is that forms of these different process elements are thrown together in grab-bag style as if they were all comparable terms…Yet they are not truly comparable. Lumping them together without distinction is a bit like talking about putting tomato sauce, condiments, and groceries in one basket. One feels compelled to say, “Hang on a moment! Tomato sauce is one of many forms of condiment. And all condiments are groceries. Let’s do some sorting out here!” (p. 3)

In response to Crotty’s critique of process elements being “thrown together in grab-bag style,” the rest of Chapter 3 systematically explores each element of Crotty’s framework as a way to make transparent the process of “sorting out” the study’s perspectives, methodological choices, design, and methods. As shown in Figure 3-1, the elements of epistemological perspective and interpretive framework provided this study’s foundations.
Figure 3-1: Crotty’s (1998) four-element framework for social research, synthesized with Yin’s (2018) five elements of case study research design.

Working from the bottom layer to the top layer of Figure 3-1, this chapter opens with a discussion of the study’s guiding perspectives. Next, the study’s frameworks are linked to the decisions to develop a qualitative case study methodology and to work within Yin’s (2018) conception of case study research design for this study of the inquiry stance construct. Then, working through Yin’s five elements of case study research design, which appear as the five boxes at the top of Figure 3-1, the study’s research design and methods are presented. In this way, the study’s methodology is articulated and explicitly illustrated from the ground up—from its most basic, foundational assumptions to the concrete details of its methods for generating knowledge about inquiry as stance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of issues of research ethics and a brief summary.
Epistemological Perspective

The first element of Crotty’s (1998) framework is an epistemological perspective—a theory of knowledge “embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology” (p. 3). Empirical research requires a statement of epistemology in order to explain the researcher’s approach to advancing knowledge on the basis of observable phenomena. Such a statement provides the grounds upon which a study’s knowledge claims can be assessed as warranted or unwarranted.

This research was shaped by an epistemology of constructionism. According to Crotty (1998), constructionism is the broad epistemological perspective that “all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42, emphasis original). Researchers working from constructionist epistemologies reject objectivism—the position that knowers can impartially extract knowledge from their objects of inquiry. They also reject subjectivism—the position that knowers impose meaning, often derived from a collective such as culture or society, upon their objects of inquiry. Instead, constructionist researchers hold that knowledge is the product of interaction between subjects and objects, knowers and known, which are intertwined and embedded within social contexts. The constructionist epistemological position constrains the range of legitimate interpretations of the object of an inquiry to those interpretations that are defensible because they are valid, rigorously derived, trustworthy, or useful (Crotty, 1998, p. 48).
Just as there are many versions of objectivism and subjectivism, there are many approaches to constructionism (Hatch, 2002). This study was shaped by a variant of constructionist epistemology known as moderate constructivism (Van Den Belt, 2003), which constitutes a dualist variant of constructionism because it implies a strong position of ontological realism paired with a moderate degree of epistemological relativism.

Maxwell (2013) defined ontological realism as “the belief that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions and theories. This world doesn’t accommodate to our beliefs; believing that global warming is a hoax will not keep the Earth from warming” (p. 43). When, as in this study, ontological realism is extended to social phenomena, the perspective entails the belief that “social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the world—and that some reasonably stable relationships can be found among the idiosyncratic messiness of life” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 5).

While embracing the realist premise that the world exists “out there,” independent of any human consciousness, moderate constructivists also admit some degree of epistemological relativism because they also hold that knowledge is actively constructed by individuals who make sense of the world through their experiences of it and by building upon their prior conceptions. Individuals’ experiences are mediated by social, cultural, and developmental factors (Fosnot & Perry, 2005), and so knowledge can never be impartially “discovered” or unproblematically transmitted from one person to another. Individuals’ prior knowledge and beliefs, as well as their membership in socially defined categories such as race or class are all regarded as potentially significant at any given moment of knowledge construction. Moderate constructivists tend to emphasize “the meaning-making activity of the individual mind” rather than “the collective generation of
meaning” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127) as is more common in social constructionist or sociocultural views of knowledge, in part because they maintain that one individual’s constructed meanings could well be more valid or defensible than those generated by another individual or within a collective.

The moderate constructivist emphasis on understanding individual perspectives informed this study’s research design at key methodological decision-making junctures (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). For example, when deciding how to approach interviewing as a research method, the moderate constructivist perspective shaped the decision to conduct one-on-one interviews rather than, for instance, focus group interviews. It shaped the decision to transcribe interviews verbatim (in the belief that reliable transcriptions are possible when completed in a systematic manner) and the decision to deploy primarily a confirmatory approach to member checking. It further played out through the researcher’s decision to conduct independent analyses and interpretations of participants’ perspectives.

**Interpretive Framework**

The second element of Crotty’s (1998) framework is a theoretical perspective, which is sometimes also known as an interpretive framework. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined an interpretive framework as a “philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (p. 3). The interpretive framework that shaped this research, pragmatism, was adopted because it pairs well and proceeds logically from the assumptions of moderate constructivism. When considered as an interpretive framework, pragmatism is broadly concerned with
the testing of humans’ constructed meanings against their practical outcomes or usefulness in the real world.

Though indebted to European philosophies, including British empiricism and German idealism, pragmatism is a thoroughly American school of thought. Its founding fathers were Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), a natural scientist and philosopher; William James (1842-1910), a psychologist and philosopher; and John Dewey (1859-1952), the philosopher, psychologist, and educator (Biesta & Burbules, 2003).

Pragmatism’s most controversial and enduring sentiment is encapsulated by Peirce’s (1955) pragmatic maxim: “Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object” (p. 31).

Pragmatist researchers often live out the pragmatic maxim by committing to the quests for validity, trustworthiness, truth, and the accumulation of knowledge through systematic inquiry, even as they recognize the inherent tentativeness and fallibility of all human knowing (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Although it is a truism and an oversimplification to say that there are “many pragmatisms” (Crotty, 1998, p. 72), most variations of pragmatism tend to be more committed to identifying approaches to inquiry that are well-suited to addressing a given question or problem than they are to any single theoretical orientation or ideology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is not to say that pragmatists have no vision of the good. Pragmatists’ purposes for inquiring often derive from values that they hold externally to any given project and that are not necessarily explicitly embedded within their research frameworks. These values commonly include a commitment to the ideals of liberal democracy (McGowan, 2012) or democracy more
generally, described by Dewey (1916) as “more than a form of government; it is primarily a form of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 119). Even in an eminently unjust world, the pragmatist struggles to remain “essentially optimistic and progressivist,” viewing the world as a place to be critiqued and improved but also “to be explored and made the most of” (Crotty, 1998, p. 74).

This study’s pragmatic interpretive framework guided several aspects of the research. For example, the study’s attempts to address the AERA (2006) standards such as transparency, systematicity, and trustworthiness were aligned with pragmatism’s ideals of rigorous inquiry. In the pragmatist’s spirit of optimism and genuine desire to explore the world, the researcher sought primarily to understand and interpret the meanings that were being constructed by the study’s individual participants. Similarly, the study’s analysis remained closely rooted in the process of systematically characterizing the meanings that were being constructed by participants. Further, embedded throughout the study was an overarching concern for the useful and practical above the overtly ideological. The study sought to construct plain-language understandings and frameworks that teacher educators, at least those who agree that an inquiry stance is one worthwhile aim for teacher education, might find to be helpful for understanding or promoting the development of an inquiry stance among teacher candidates.

**Linking Moderate Constructivism and Pragmatism to Qualitative Case Study**

The third element of Crotty’s (1998) framework for conceptualizing social research is methodology. In line with the researcher’s pragmatic interpretive framework, a qualitative research methodology was selected not as a rejection of quantitative research methodologies but as the research orientation that was best-suited and most useful for
addressing this particular study’s purposes. Qualitative research methodologies are fundamentally interpretive in character. They are concerned chiefly with the interpretation of meaning and are particularly appropriate when a researcher seeks to characterize complex meanings or processes within naturalistic contexts, as opposed to controlled laboratory settings (Maxwell, 2013, p. 30). A qualitative research methodology can therefore be adopted when the researcher’s goal is to generate new understandings of a poorly understood phenomenon. Since the multi-dimensional inquiry stance construct is comprised largely of perspectives and processes that remain poorly understood among teacher candidates, qualitative research was deemed appropriate for this study.

Although qualitative research was selected for this study, there were also many different qualitative methodologies that could have been employed. A wide range of options was considered for this research. Case study was ultimately selected as the most pragmatic option because, rather than being indelibly permeated by any particular set of philosophical or interpretive commitments, it is highly flexible. A case study can be aligned with an emergent conceptual framework, and it can be adapted as a study’s assumptions and purposes shift throughout its duration.

In the context of research methodology, the term “case study” refers to a distinct “mode of inquiry” (Yin, 2018, p. xx) and “an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 15). Case study is a particularly appropriate mode of inquiry when a researcher’s questions start with “how” or “why,” when the researcher seeks in-depth understanding of a contemporary phenomenon, and when the researcher does not exercise
control over the behavior of participants (Yin, 2018, p. 9). Accordingly, case study was
deemed appropriate for this qualitative study of the how the dimensions of inquiry as
stance played out among teacher candidates in a PDS—a contemporary phenomenon in a
context where the researcher had some degree of influence but did not directly exercise
control over participants’ behavior.

What makes case study methodologically distinctive and uniquely powerful,
according to Creswell and Poth (2018), is the identification of a particular case (or cases)
and the purposeful bounding of the case(s) to a specific place, time, or set of participants.
That is, case study research constitutes an investigation of a particular case or cases of
something—one or more concrete manifestations of an abstract phenomenon of interest.

When the case is of interest for its own sake, as is often the case in evaluation research,
such a study is sometimes known as an intrinsic case study. In contrast, as in this study,
an instrumental case is of interest not merely for its own sake but also to build theory that
may be transferrable beyond the case’s boundaries (Stake, 2003). Case study is
characterized by the use of multiple data sources; an in-depth analysis of these sources;
and representation of the analysis, typically through themes, patterns, frameworks,
explanations, or assertions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin 2018).

Yin (2018), Stake (1995, 2003), and Merriam (1988, 1998) are three case study
methodologists whose approaches to case study rose to prominence during the 1980s.
These scholars have described divergent conceptions of case study because they hold
distinct philosophical commitments. Yin (2018) was trained as an experimental
psychologist and has been involved with evaluation research since the 1960s (Yin, 2003).
He has self-identified as a realist even as he acknowledges the value of what he calls
“relativist” and “constructivist” approaches to case study (Yin, 2018, p. 16). Like Yin, Stake also worked in evaluation in the 1960s and is still known for his theories of responsive evaluation and his critiques of curriculum and evaluation pioneer Ralph Tyler’s emphasis on examining prespecified program outcomes (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Both Stake and Merriam, who is perhaps best-known for her work in adult education, have primarily adopted relativist and social constructionist perspectives. However, appropriate labels for all three methodologists’ perspectives continue to be debated in the methodological literature (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yazan, 2015).

Each case study methodologist’s approach offers different possibilities; however, this study’s perspectives of moderate constructivism and pragmatism were deemed to be most closely aligned with Yin’s (2018) affirmations of both ontological realism and epistemological constructivism within case study research. These perspectives were deemed less well-aligned with Merriam’s (1988, 1998) clear emphasis on social constructionism and with Stake’s (2003) strong relativism. Yin’s (2018) five-component framework for designing case study research therefore formed the basis for this study’s research design and methods.

**Research Design and Methods**

A research design translates the perspectives that are embedded within a study’s methodology into a more concrete structure that can be enacted through a particular set of methods—the fourth element of Crotty’s (1998) four-element framework for conceptualizing social research. A research design is “a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the set of questions to be addressed, and there is some set of conclusions about these questions” (Yin, 2018, p. 26, emphasis original).
According to Yin, a strong design for a case study consists of five components: the case study’s questions; its propositions or purposes; the definition and boundaries of its case(s); the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 27). Methods, a term referring to “techniques and procedures for gathering and analyzing data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1), can be embedded within a research design. In the following subsections, the five components that comprised this study’s research design, which appeared from left to right in the top layer of Figure 3-1, are described in tandem with the methods that were used to enact that design.

**Research Question**

Research questions are the first component of a research design for a case study (Yin, 2018). However, research questions can evolve or deepen in meaning during the course of a study as the researcher continues to review relevant literature, collect and analyze data, and write an interpretation of the data (Maxwell, 2013). For this reason, qualitative research questions are commonly written in a manner that can simultaneously provide a clear sense of direction but also the flexibility to explore unanticipated aspects of the phenomenon of interest or to change directions as warranted by evolving circumstances during the time of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Research questions for a case study incorporate both substance and form (Yin, 2018, p. 11). The substance of a research question stipulates the object of inquiry, which, for this study, was the four-dimensional inquiry stance construct. The form addresses the question’s wording. A research question beginning in the form of “what,” “how many,” or “to what extent” often signals the need for a survey or quantitative research, while a research question beginning with “how” or “why” tends to warrant qualitative case study
or historical research focused on processes (Yin, 2018). A “how” question can seek at least two distinct types of understanding. First, when “how” is understood to mean “in what ways,” a “how” research question can seek a rich description of a phenomenon, without seeking to establish causal or explanatory processes. Second, when “how” is understood to mean “through what processes,” a “how” research question can seek a hypothesis-generating explanation. Since this study sought to characterize an instance of the inquiry stance construct, the first type of “how” question was selected, and the following question was posed to guide the study:

- How do the dimensions of inquiry as stance play out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS?

**Research Purposes**

Research propositions or purposes are the second component of a research design for a case study (Yin, 2018). Propositions are more appropriate when the study’s theoretical framework clearly indicates areas that warrant the testing of an explanation, hypothesis, or prediction about a phenomenon. Purposes are more appropriate when a case study is exploratory in character and when testable propositions cannot yet be established. In such cases, generating propositions for testing through future research is a worthy purpose for a case study (Yin, 2018).

This study was more exploratory than explanatory in character; thus, the research design emphasized purposes instead of propositions. Maxwell (2013) identified three types of goals, or purposes, that can drive a qualitative research study: practical, intellectual, and personal. Practical purposes attempt to use a research study to achieve
some particular outcome, while intellectual purposes drive research that seeks to develop new insight or understanding of a phenomenon. Personal purposes are the private reasons a researcher pursues a project, which may be unimportant to other people, such as individual curiosity or a desire for career advancement.

Although this study included some personal and practical dimensions, its chief purpose was intellectual. As described in Chapter 1, the intellectual purpose of this research was to characterize how the construct of an inquiry stance played out among teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in the context of a PDS. The study sought to understand and describe this phenomenon, rather than control it or make causal claims about the processes or mechanisms that drive it. The research’s practical purpose was to develop some useful and potentially transferrable tools that could inform the work of teacher educators, supervisors, and other people who are responsible for promoting the learning of teacher candidates. The research’s personal purpose was to inform the researcher’s own emerging practices as a teacher educator, a supervisor, and a professional developer.

**Case Definition and Boundaries**

Case definitions and boundaries are the third component of a research design for a case study (Yin, 2018). The process of defining and bounding a case is closely linked to the specific type of case selected for study, and it carries implications for data collection and analysis. Yin divides case studies into single-case or multiple-case designs, each of which can be analyzed in terms of holistic or embedded analytic units. A holistic design entails grouping together all data from each case and analyzing each case as a whole. An embedded design entails analyzing and comparing multiple units within each case. Cases
are sometimes defined in terms of a particular person or people. They can be defined in terms of an identifiable event or entity, such as an organization or a social movement. As for this study, a case also can consist of one or more instances of a particular phenomenon of interest.

As illustrated in Figure 3-2, this study examined a single, holistic case of a phenomenon of interest—ink inquiry as stance—about which relatively little empirical evidence exists. For this reason, it was necessary to bound the case clearly. This study explored a case of inquiry as stance among specific people, during a specific time period, and within an identifiable context. This case was bounded according to people meeting particular criteria (teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships), a particular span of time (January 2020 through June 2020), and a distinctive context (a specific PDS).

Figure 3-2: Holistic, single-case study design, adapted from Yin (2018, p. 48).
Identification of Case and Study Context

As they define and bound a case for investigation, case study researchers typically adopt purposeful approaches, rather than randomized or convenience approaches, for identifying their contexts of interest and the participants within those contexts who are well positioned to inform the study’s research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Durdella, 2019). This study employed a purposeful approach to identifying a common case (Yin, 2018) and its surrounding context for study. A common case can build theory through an examination of the particulars of an everyday instance of a phenomenon of interest. The case that was selected for this study—an instance of the inquiry stance construct—was chosen in a manner that proceeded from the assumptions of the study’s conceptual framework, which suggested that this phenomenon, instead of being something that someone either has or lacks, is multi-dimensional. In that sense, the case is exceedingly common because any teacher candidate could be said to exhibit the dimensions of an inquiry stance in some way. The case is also common because of a key aspect of its context: a clinical practice seminar or course involving practitioner inquiry is a common requirement in preservice teacher education programs, and the inquiry stance construct is both widely recognized and connected to practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education in the theoretical and empirical literature (Anderson et al., 2007; Delane et al., 2017; National Association for Professional Development Schools [NAPDS], 2008; Rutten, 2021; Willegems et al., 2017).

Although the case itself was selected as an illustration of the commonplace, the PDS context surrounding the case was selected because this context exhibited features of a critical case (Yin, 2018). A critical case is typically identified based upon testable
theoretical propositions that the theory would predict to hold true. As previously discussed, given the lack of empirical evidence or extant theory about inquiry stance among teacher candidates, this case study was more exploratory than explanatory or theory-testing. Thus, specific propositions were not tested and the case itself was not deemed critical. However, the context that surrounded this case—a long-standing PDS partnership in which practitioner inquiry and the inquiry stance construct are explicitly taught and widely espoused—was selected under the logic that if an inquiry stance is going to emerge for teacher candidates anywhere, this particular PDS ought to be one such place.

**Identification of Participants**

This study employed a purposeful approach to identifying participants within the case of interest. Participants were identified through a stratified and purposeful approach to participant identification, which is sometimes known as “stratified purposeful sampling” (Durdella, 2019). Stratified purposeful participant identification can be employed within case study research when the researcher’s goal is to ensure that a variety of perspectives and diverse experiences with a phenomenon are represented within the case, making it more likely that the study will reveal the depth and breadth of variation that exists within the phenomenon of interest. In this study, identifying teacher candidates who had differing perspectives on inquiry and different experiences developing their inquiry stances helped to ensure that the analysis of this case did not merely reflect the characteristics of an inquiry stance among teacher candidates who had similar experiences with practitioner inquiry or similar perspectives on their inquiry stances. That is, stratification was a key strategy for ensuring that there was meaningful diversity
across participants’ perspectives specifically as these related to the construct that was of interest for this study. Before stratification could take place, however, a pool of prospective participants needed to be identified.

**Purposeful identification of prospective participants.** To qualify for inclusion in the study, participants were required to meet several criteria. First, all potential participants needed to be teacher candidates in the PDS that was purposefully selected as the critical context for this study. Second, all potential participants needed to be actively involved in practitioner inquiry through a clinical practice seminar in the PDS for which practitioner inquiry was a core strand of the curriculum. Third, potential participants needed to self-identify with some or all of the characteristics of someone with an inquiry stance, as listed on the reflection checklist in Appendix B. Fourth, potential participants were required to self-identify an interest in participating in this study. The first two criteria were purposefully designed to include only those people who were current teacher candidates in the PDS. Applying the second two criteria required a more in-depth process of obtaining prospective participants’ informed consent to participate in this study.

In January 2020, this study formally commenced when the researcher recruited and identified prospective participants through a face-to-face invitation-to-participate meeting. This meeting was held at the PDS’s day-long spring semester orientation program which, like the PDS’s fall orientation, took place several days before the official start of the university’s spring semester. During the invitation-to-participate meeting, all 12 current teacher candidates in the PDS were introduced to the purpose and participation requirements of this study, as well as to two other studies that ran concurrently with this
study. All the teacher candidates were offered copies of the study’s informed consent paperwork. They were informed that they could sign the paperwork if they wished to consent to confidential field notes being taken about their activities during their clinical practice seminar meetings and that they would have the further option to participate actively in the study’s more in-depth data collection, including the interviews and document collection processes. Next, the teacher candidates were given paper copies of a form that included a box to tick to indicate whether they would be interested in participating actively in the study, if they met all the study’s criteria. The researcher then left the room to allow the teacher candidates to sign the informed consent paperwork and indicate their interest in participating in the study if they wished to do so. This paperwork was collected in a manila envelope.

When the researcher opened the manila envelope, of the 12 teacher candidates, 11 had indicated, via the simple paper form, their willingness to participate actively in the study. Further, all 12 had chosen to sign the informed consent paperwork. This was significant because it permitted field notes to be generated about all the teacher candidates’ activities during their regular clinical practice seminars.

**Stratifying and inviting the qualified participants.** All 12 teacher candidates who had signed the informed consent paperwork were offered a checklist of 20 characteristics of an inquiry stance (Appendix B) to use as a basis for reflection and self-assessment, with the option to turn in this checklist if they wished to participate actively in the study. This checklist asked teacher candidates to tick the characteristics of an inquiry stance they felt applied to them at the beginning of the spring semester. During the lunch hour of their day-long spring orientation, and on the basis of their responses to
the checklist, the teacher candidates were ranked in terms of the order of the number of inquiry stance characteristics with which they identified using the checklists. PDS teacher educators then gathered to discuss the teacher candidates’ indications of their willingness to participate in the three studies that were taking place and to consider whether any teacher candidates would likely experience excessive demands upon their time through their participation in one or more of the studies. The information about the teacher candidates’ identification with the characteristics of an inquiry stance was shared, and the teacher educators agreed that six teacher candidates—the three who identified with the most and the three who identified with the least characteristics—could be invited to participate in this study. This approach to participant identification allowed for a robust illustration of how the dimensions of inquiry as stance developed both in teacher candidates who already identified strongly with an inquiry stance, as well as in teacher candidates who identified less strongly with the characteristics of an inquiry stance at the time this study formally commenced.

At the conclusion of the day’s orientation activities, the six teacher candidates who were identified through the stratification procedure were invited to participate in the full study for which they had already signed informed consent paperwork. All six agreed to participate and granted permission for the researcher to contact them via email about their participation in the study. Arrangements for initial interviews were then made via email, and data collection for this study began the following week.

**Case Logic**

Case logic is the fourth component of a research design for a case study (Yin, 2018). The logic of a case is the process by which the empirical data that are generated or
collected are ultimately linked to propositions about the case. Yin offers four “general strategies” (p. 168) that can link data to propositions: relying on theoretical propositions, working data from the “ground up,” developing a case description, and examining plausible rival explanations. Researchers can choose to mix-and-match these general strategies with a wide range of specific analytic techniques. Data collection for this study was guided by the questions and areas of focus suggested by the analytic framework, described in Chapter 2, that was used to conceptualize and examine the inquiry stance construct. Data analysis involved creating a description of the case context, then linking data that were relevant to the inquiry stance construct to specific claims by analyzing data both by working from theory through a priori coding methods and by working from the “ground up” through inductive coding methods.

Data Collection

Case study research has neither prescribed nor proscribed methods for data collection, although all three of the leading case study methodologists—Yin (2018), Stake (1995, 2003), and Merriam (1988, 1998)—broadly concur on the types of data that are appropriate for case studies. Yin, in particular, legitimates a wide variety of approaches to data collection. He urges case study researchers who are determining data sources to reflect upon the epistemological perspective guiding their research and to consider accordingly how to balance data collection between observable human behaviors and the perspectives of study participants. Yin advocates the use of multiple data sources and describes six primary data sources that are appropriate for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts.
This case study was guided by a moderate constructivist epistemological perspective, which operated at multiple levels for data collection within the study. At one level, moderate constructivism led to an emphasis on methods of data collection that could characterize the perspectives of individuals, rather than groups, within the case, such as one-on-one interviews and collection of documents linked to individual participants within the study. At a second level, it shaped key decisions around how data were collected. For example, interviews were audio recorded; paper documents were photographed for interpretation at a later date; field jottings were written primarily using a low-inference approach. These decisions reflected the perspective of ontological realism and the belief that the phenomenon of an inquiry stance, though constructed by human beings, nevertheless entails empirical dimensions about which more-or-less valid or trustworthy interpretations can be constructed. This perspective was embedded throughout the process of data collection, which included three of Yin’s (2018) six primary data sources—interviews, documents, and participant-observations—as well as analytic memos that were generated as a secondary data source accompanying each of these primary sources (Miles et al., 2020).

**Interviews.** Interviews are among the most valuable data sources for case study research and are irreplaceable when the insights and perspectives of individuals are central to a phenomenon. Case study interviews can be prolonged, multi-hour exchanges; shorter, focused exchanges over a series of meetings; or tightly structured survey interviews (Yin, 2018). For this study, a series of medium-length, semi-structured interviews (Durdella, 2019) was deemed most appropriate for the research purposes and constituted by far the single largest source of data.
Within a semi-structured interview, the interviewer must strike a balance between structure and flexibility; between eliciting detailed responses to prepared interview questions derived from the study’s conceptual framework and pursuing participants’ own lines of thought. The interviewer must simultaneously pursue topics directly related to the case study’s research question while translating these into clear, friendly questions and follow-up probes to participants (Yin, 2018, p. 118). Thus, although a semi-structured interview may exhibit some of the features of a lively conversation, the roles of the interviewer and the participant are distinct. The interviewer guides the participant to the topics of interest to the case study, while the participant provides information and perspectives relevant to these topics. The interviewer’s task involves intense listening, which enables prompt follow-up probes where more detail may be helpful or to follow a participant’s unanticipated line of thought.

For this study, since interviews were such a significant data source, a structured yet flexible interview protocol was necessary to develop an in-depth understanding of each dimension of inquiry stance as it played out for each participant. For this reason, a protocol was developed and included a series of questions intended to elicit information relevant to each component of the study’s theoretical framework for the inquiry stance construct (i.e., Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose). This protocol was piloted with four university-based teacher educators before the study began. The university-based teacher educators were familiar with the inquiry stance construct and provided feedback on the protocol’s clarity and any potentially overlooked aspects of the inquiry stance construct. They also provided feedback on the interviewer’s skill in building a comfortable rapport and probing for more detail when necessary. Throughout
this process, a number of questions that elicited redundant information were removed from the original protocol, and other questions were slightly reworded or rearranged within the protocol’s sequence. The final protocol appears in Appendix C.

Using this protocol, a series of five semi-structured interviews was conducted with each of the study’s six participants, for a total of 30 interviews. As the protocol in Appendix C illustrates, the core interview questions remained consistent across the five-interview sequence, with additional self-identification and demographic questions at the initial interview and additional questions at the final interview to prompt participants to reflect holistically on their experiences with practitioner inquiry and developing an inquiry stance in the PDS. This protocol was employed flexibly during each interview. For instance, when a participant had already answered or partially answered a question from later in the interview protocol, the question was omitted, or probing questions were asked. When participants offered particularly unique or unexpected information, probing and follow-up questions were asked. As rapport developed and participants became more comfortable being interviewed, the interviews became increasingly conversational and friendly.

Yin (2018) admonishes case study researchers to give explicit consideration to the decision whether to record interviews and, if the decision to record is made, to have a clear plan for the mechanics of recording that gives careful attention to the ethics of recording. Researchers cannot allow recording to replace active listening during an interview. In particular, to uphold the highest ethical standards, researchers must have an explicit plan for obtaining consent each time an interview is recorded, even when participants have already given consent to participate in the case study as a whole. The
interviews for this study were recorded using Zoom audio-video conferencing’s audio recording feature on the researcher’s laptop, with a backup recording created using the voice memo feature of the researcher’s smartphone. At the start of each interview, each participant was asked for consent to record.

The first two interviews in the five-interview series were conducted in-person, in the elementary school classrooms of participants’ mentor teachers. However, during the course of this study, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the study’s context caused all instruction and research to shift to Zoom videoconferencing software. Thus, the remaining interviews were conducted remotely. Rounded to the nearest minute, the 30 recordings ranged in duration from 38 minutes to 72 minutes, with a mean of 54 minutes and a standard deviation of 9.46 minutes. 1,612 minutes of interviews were recorded altogether, which immersed the interviewer and participants in conversation about inquiry stance for nearly 27 hours in total.

As an initial analytic and interpretive step, as soon as possible after each interview, the interview recordings were transcribed, with occasional analytic memos also jotted during this process. Zoom’s audio transcription feature was used to provide a rough initial transcript of the words that were spoken during each interview; however, this feature also generates numerous transcription errors. Since transcription is an interpretive act, misunderstandings and transcription errors are common and can distort participants’ intended meanings, especially when the transcriptionist speaks a different dialect of the language of the interview. For this reason, although an utterly exhaustive description of the transcription process is beyond the scope of this section, all interviews
were transcribed using a three-phase, systematic process that was adapted specifically for this study. This process is represented by Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3: Systematic transcription process.

In the first transcription stage (creation and preservation of the raw transcript), the raw transcripts from Zoom were copied into a Microsoft Word document and saved, along with the original and backup audio recordings, in order to preserve an unedited copy of the raw interview data. In the second transcription stage (systematically processing the raw transcript), all interviews were re-transcribed verbatim into a fresh Microsoft Word document from the original audio, which was played back at half speed while edits and corrections to the Zoom transcript were made and all aspects of the Zoom transcript checked, or, when necessary, re-checked against the original audio to ensure fidelity. During this phase, the basic transcript editing guidelines of the Minnesota Historical Society (2001) were applied. These freely available guidelines were used for the purpose of standardizing the transcription conventions that were employed during the verbatim transcription. This standardization permitted the researcher, as transcriptionist,
to remove crutch words (e.g., “like,” “um,” “yeah,” “you know”), add punctuation and paragraph breaks, and make other light editing decisions in a consistent, predictable manner such that another transcriptionist would have a reasonable chance at replicating the transcription of any given interview.

In the third transcription stage (rendering the processed transcript confidential), the processed transcript was copied into a third Microsoft Word document, from which all identifiers, which most commonly included words naming specific people and places, were replaced by participant-selected pseudonyms or by titles/names of professional roles. This final transcript was spellchecked and proofread, then saved as the copy to be used for further analysis. This process resulted in a set of 30 transcripts totaling 226,297 words and approximately 730 double-spaced pages.

**Documents.** In case study research, documents can serve as primary data sources, although they are often used as secondary data sources in order to “corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin, 2018, p. 115). The advantages of documents include their stability and specificity, which allows a researcher to review details repeatedly over time. Their disadvantages include potential difficulties in retrievability and access, as well as biased processes of selection and inclusion for consideration in the case study.

In this study, documents were regarded as a secondary data source, used mostly for the purpose of corroborating information shared by participants in their interviews and to substantiate details about the context in which the case was embedded. The researcher collected documents that were freely available to all participants in the context of the study, such as handouts, course syllabi, publicly available emails, rubrics, and
presentations. Further, all participants were asked for access to a Google Drive folder that existed for each teacher candidate in the PDS context in order to store information and data related to their practitioner inquiries. They were also asked for access, both throughout the study and at the conclusion of their final interviews, to any documents or other pieces of evidence they felt comfortable sharing and that they felt would illustrate their developing inquiry stances.

Participants gave extremely generously of their time and effort to gather and share potentially relevant documents. Several participants spontaneously emailed documents to the researcher throughout the study when they had felt that they created documents that were related to their inquiry stances. One participant shared reams of data from both her practitioner inquiries and from throughout her entire PDS internship (e.g., lesson plans, teaching evaluations, meeting notes, and much more), providing a level of detail that went well beyond the scope of this study. At the conclusion of their final interviews, each participant agreed to check her computer and paper files for any further documents she felt were relevant to her inquiry stance, and several participants sent additional documents. Since the number and type of documents ranged widely across the participants, these were used as supplemental information to confirm key pieces of information or interpretations offered by participants. The wide range of documents deemed potentially related to this study (excluding unrelated documents) and that was shared by participants or collected by the researcher appears in Table 3-1.
Table 3-1: Relevant documents by source and type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Source</th>
<th>Number of Files</th>
<th>Overview of the Files</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>4 documents with calendars/dates; 17 publicly available emails sent from RVSD superintendent during COVID-19 remote learning transition; 5 documents about the annual inquiry conference; 2 course syllabi; 2 journal assignment descriptions; 8 documents about course assignments; 2 PowerPoints for Spring 2020 internship orientation; 28 documents used to support the clinical practice seminar (e.g., handouts, presentations); meeting agenda; inquiry rubric; list of teacher candidate inquiry wonderings; COVID-19 inquiry wonderings document; concept map; meeting notes; clinical practice seminar field notes; document with analytic memos; 32 PDFs with field jottings from clinical practice seminar; 12 PDFs of signed informed consent paperwork; 7 PDFs of invitation-to-participate survey; copy of permission letter from RVSD assistant superintendent; 12 PDFs with completed participant surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1 (&quot;Cordelia&quot;)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Inquiry brief; inquiry reflection; Spring 2020 inquiry presentation; Email; Inquiry survey data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2 (&quot;Charity&quot;)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inquiry brief; Inquiry reflection; Meeting notes; Student rubric scores; Planning document; Inquiry survey data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3 (&quot;May&quot;)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Inquiry reflection; Inquiry brief; 25 documents related to assignments for clinical practice seminars; 15 photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4 (&quot;Aurelia&quot;)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Letter of application; Inquiry reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5 (&quot;Hope&quot;)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Inquiry brief; Inquiry reflection; Set of screenshots from a Google Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6 (&quot;Rachel&quot;)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2 sets of screenshots from Google Sites; Set of screenshots from a Google Form; 3 reflective journal documents; 7 clinical practice seminar assignments; Video of classroom; Data analysis memo; 3 inquiry survey data files; Letter of application; Inquiry calendar; Wondering development activity; 2 audio files of student interviews; Scripted student inquiry lesson plan; Mindfulness activity sheet; Observation notes; List of interview questions; Inquiry proposal; Inquiry questions reflection; Reading notes; Wondering litmus test and data collection plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Participant-observations.** Yin (2018) uses the term “participant-observation” to refer to “a special mode of observation in which you are not merely a passive observer. Instead, you may assume a variety of roles within a fieldwork situation and may actually participate…” (p. 123). For this study, such participant-observations were conducted during each meeting of the clinical practice seminar—initially in person, and, after COVID-19 closed RVSD’s school buildings, via Zoom. They were informed by the guidance of Emerson et al. (2011) on how to “look in order to write” (p. 24), a loose framework for participant-observation that involves creating “jottings” while in the field by attending to initial impressions of a setting, the researcher’s own sense of what is significant in the context, and paying close attention to what participants seem to regard as significant, as well as routines for organizing activity. These observations focused upon the six participants in the context of a clinical practice seminar, but with specific attention to discussions related to practitioner inquiry and inquiry as stance.

A routine clinical practice seminar activity involved teacher candidates meeting in small groups and engaging in a discussion protocol to support the development of their inquiries. In such activities, the researcher commonly participated in the discussion with one or more of the small groups in which study participants were present, recording significant ideas presented by participants related to their inquiries or inquiry as stance, as well as ideas or moments that seemed significant to the researcher on the basis of the study’s research question and conceptual framework. In several instances, these jottings corroborated information offered during interviews, while in other instances, the jottings prompted the researcher to follow up for more information after the conclusion of the clinical practice seminar or during a scheduled interview.
After each observation, the jottings that were generated in a paper notebook in the field were scanned into a computer file for safekeeping, then written into field notes. Field notes, according to Emerson et al. (2011), can be used to expand jottings, initially into more comprehensive accounts for the researcher’s own use but eventually into “accounts framed and organized to be read—eventually—by some other, wider audience” (p. 92). In this study, field notes, like documents, were less significant sources of data than interviews, but they provided essential contextual information, much of which now appears in the description of the PDS and participants in the next chapter.

**Analytic memos.** On each day on which data were collected or generated, brief analytic memos were written to accompany the data. For days when field work was completed, field notes synthesized key ideas from the day’s observations. For each interview, paper jottings taken during the interviews were typed up into more substantial notes about potentially significant themes, as well as ideas to follow up or pay closer attention to in future interviews or observations. These analytic memos often connected explicitly to the study’s conceptual framework, noting components that had gone unmentioned or underexplored within an interview or an observation or noting what seemed particularly significant to a participant. These analytic memos served as memory aids and guides to potentially significant pieces of data to consider during formal data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

A primary goal of qualitative data analysis is to “construct credible and trustworthy meaning…through analytic methods that are practical and will generate knowledge…others can rely on” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 3). In qualitative research, this
process is necessarily interpretive, “more a creative craft than a slavish adherence to methodological rules” (p. 6). Nevertheless, systematicity and transparency (AERA, 2006) are of the utmost importance during qualitative data analysis. Researchers conducting a case study can mix-and-match Yin’s (2018) analytic strategies, allowing them to analyze data either deductively or inductively. Since this study sought to describe, rather than explain, the characteristics of an inquiry stance, data analysis featured a combination of deductive and inductive methods to characterize the construct of interest for this study.

There is no specific moment when data analysis for a qualitative study begins; however, the creation of brief analytic memos following each interview was one way that data analysis began for this study. Following Maxwell (2013, p. 105), the acts of typing up handwritten field jottings into more elaborate field notes and of transcribing interview recordings were also important first analytic steps. These notes, memos, and transcriptions provided the basis for the more systematic and elaborate case description that appears in Chapter 4. As just one example, one of the “jottings” dated March 4, 2020 was related to the agenda of a clinical practice seminar and reads, in part, “Technology training, then initial inquiry data analysis, then social justice activity…Seating is the same again.” This jotting then served as a reminder to the researcher, when drafting the descriptions in Chapter 4, about some of the key components of the curriculum of that clinical practice seminar that was dedicated, at least in part, to the development of an inquiry stance. For instance, this jotting facilitated recall of the fact of the participation in the PDS of two of the technology coaches from RVSD. It prompted a recollection of the various people who were involved in that particular clinical practice seminar meeting, as well as their roles as they might be described through the framework adopted in Chapter
4. The field notes and memos afforded the possibility of describing the contexts in which the case of the inquiry stance construct was situated among the participating teacher candidates, but without directly involving all participants in the PDS as participants in the study itself.

In order to conduct a systematic analysis of the inquiry stance construct itself, and in order to manage the sheer quantity of data that might potentially be relevant, the processed interview transcripts, scanned images of handwritten field jottings, typed field notes, digital photographs, and documents were imported into MAXQDA 2020 Plus Student (VERBI Software GmbH, 2020), a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package. Qualitative research methodologists representing a range of orientations toward social research (e.g., Miles et al., 2020; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2018) widely agree that caution is required when making the decision to use a CAQDAS package. Although CAQDAS packages, such as MAXQDA, often include basic features for quantitative analysis of qualitative data, they cannot code or analyze qualitative data for the researcher. Instead, they serve as databases with specialized tagging and retrieval functions designed to assist with but not replace the process of coding qualitative data.

The process of analyzing the case itself—that is, determining which data were directly relevant to the inquiry stance construct and then analyzing those data systemically—involved multiple rounds of coding both deductively and inductively. Assisted by MAXQDA’s coding functions, data that were deemed to be subsumed by the inquiry stance construct were analyzed, as illustrated by the process shown in Figure 3-4, in a four-cycle, theory-led thematic analysis (Hayes, 1997).
Figure 3-4: Process of four-cycle, theory-led thematic analysis.

In the first analytic cycle, units of data that were deemed to be directly linked to the inquiry stance construct were separated from other data through the application of the a priori codes (Miles et al., 2020, p. 74) as shown in Appendix A, in combination with a holistic approach to unitizing the data (Miles et al., 2020, p. 69). This process sorted segments of inquiry stance-related data that appeared to “hang together” (e.g., units of similar meaning, a paragraph all about the same idea or topic, an anecdote used to illustrate a key point) into the domains of Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose, as these domains were theorized in Chapter 2. Segments of data that were deemed outside the scope of the inquiry stance code book were simultaneously separated into three categories: data that might be useful for describing the context of the case (i.e., the PDS), data that might be related to inquiry but that were deemed out-of-scope or
outside the boundaries of the case that was of interest for this study (e.g., extended explanations of the experience of learning the process of practitioner inquiry during the Fall 2019 semester), and data that were deemed irrelevant to the context of the case (e.g., comments about the weather, discussions about participants’ pets, etc.). The irrelevant and out-of-scope data were set aside for possible future analysis. The data deemed potentially useful for describing the case context were retained, reviewed, and excerpted throughout the process of writing Chapter 4.

After first-cycle coding had been completed, second-cycle codes were applied to the units of data that had been deemed relevant to the inquiry stance construct. Second-cycle coding initially began with line-by-line, in vivo coding (Miles et al., 2020). The intended purpose of this approach was to force the researcher to remain as close as possible to the data and study participants’ own ways of describing inquiry stance. However, with only half of the line-by-line coding complete, this approach had already generated so many codes (well in excess of 10,000) that the MAXQDA software began to crash repeatedly. After revisiting the study’s research question and purposes and noting the admonition of Miles et al. (2020) that “too many codes suggest a vague handle on the research questions and the study’s purpose,” (p. 73), a more focused and purposeful sub-coding approach (Miles et al., 2020, 72) was adopted to replace the original line-by-line coding approach. In the new sub-coding approach, in vivo codes were extracted from each holistic unit of data that had been previously identified during first-cycle coding. This simultaneously reduced the number of codes to a manageable number and allowed the researcher to regain a more holistic focus upon the broader units of data that were
related to the dimensions of the construct of interest rather than upon the minutiae of each line of data.

After the second cycle of coding was completed, third-cycle coding entailed extracting all of the in vivo codes and associated units of data into four tables, one for each of the four dimensions of the inquiry stance construct. Similar in vivo codes were then clustered and condensed into categories of similar meaning. Fourth-cycle analysis involved the development of thematic phrases (e.g., “perceiving inquiry as a requirement”) to label each of the clusters of in vivo codes and then organizing these phrases for visual display. By exploring a range of “methods of describing” such as thematic matrices and conceptual webbing, as well as several “methods of ordering” such as sequencing and mapping (Miles et al., 2020), these labeled clusters were arranged and rearranged into various configurations. Ultimately, in keeping with one of the study’s goals of producing findings that might be practically useful to those who facilitate practitioner inquiry, simple graphics (i.e., continua, a coordinate plane, concept webs) were selected to represent the core thematic findings within each domain of the inquiry stance construct, and illustrative quotations or other excerpts from documents were chosen to represent the meaning of each finding. All interpretations were refined as the data were continually re-read through the lens of the developing themes and graphics for disconfirming evidence. For instance, one category was relabeled slightly, while another category was eliminated altogether because it overlapped so strongly with another.

**Interpretive Criteria**

Interpretive criteria are the fifth component of a research design for a case study (Yin, 2018). In a qualitative case study, researchers sometimes establish a priori
interpretive criteria by anticipating and attempting to eliminate rival explanations for the study’s results (Yin, 2018, p. 33). This approach can be appropriately paired with a moderate constructivist epistemology. It entertains the possibility that the researcher’s interpretations may be wrong, unhelpful, or biased. A priori interpretive criteria, however, are more appropriate for explanatory than for exploratory case studies. In particular, since this study sought to explore and characterize, rather than explain, the inquiry stance construct, interpretive criteria rooted in efforts to establish valid causal explanations and eliminate invalid causal explanations were ill-suited to the study’s overarching purpose. Instead, the study sought to establish transparent and warranted claims that could characterize a case of inquiry as stance in a particular context. The study therefore engaged a variety of approaches to increasing the reliability and credibility of the claims it advances, including extensive description of the researcher’s perspectives and methods, long-term involvement in the context of the study, the use of multiple and converging data sources (Yin, 2018), and member checking transcriptions with study participants.

Reliability in qualitative case study research requires theoretical replicability of research methods. What makes a qualitative case study reliable is “demonstrating that the operations of a study—such as its data collection procedures—can be repeated, with the same results” (Yin, 2018, p. 42). Of course, a qualitative case study, bounded by its temporal and local contexts, cannot actually be repeated. However, the procedures for data collection and analysis should be well-documented such that another researcher would have the information that would be needed to generate, or, at a minimum, reanalyze the same data using comparable procedures and, ideally, come to similar
conclusions. This study approached the concept of reliability primarily through efforts to document and justify the assumptions, methods, and key decision-making junctures involved in the research. The appendices, in particular, contribute to the reliability of this study because they document the protocols that were used for interviews and participant identification and the code book that was developed for systematic analysis of qualitative data.

Long-term involvement in the context of the study (Maxwell, 2013) further contributes to the credibility of this study’s claims. The researcher had already been actively involved in the PDS context, in one capacity or another, for approximately two years at the time of this study. Thus, although the study reported in this dissertation relies upon data collected as part of the study’s formal data collection methods, the entire study was only made possible by the researcher’s extended engagement in the PDS context. This engagement allowed for the gradual development of trusting relationships with the people who were appropriately positioned to grant the researcher access to the PDS not only as a research site but also as a community for professional learning as a teacher educator. Extended engagement allowed for much richer and more thorough descriptions of the PDS context than would otherwise have been possible. Further, through service and involvement with the PDS community in a non-researcher role over a period of approximately three academic years, such as by co-teaching lessons, facilitating small group discussions, engaging in small talk before and after PDS classes and activities, and attending weekly meetings, the researcher was able to build a relationship with the study’s participants and be regarded as a trustworthy colleague by many of the study’s prospective participants by the time this study officially began. In fact, 11 of 12 potential
participants expressed their willingness to be active participants in the study, and all 12 agreed to allow field jottings to be generated about their activities.

One of the strengths of case study research is the potential for the researcher to use multiple, converging sources of evidence, a principle sometimes known by the term “triangulation” (Yin, 2018, p. 126). This principle was particularly salient in the connection between interviews and participant-observations. As one example, on several occasions during this study, perspectives shared by participants during interviews were also expressed during small group discussions that took place during the clinical practice seminar. Field jottings thus were able to corroborate interpretations that were generated through analysis of interview transcripts. The use of documents further supplemented these interpretations, often being used to confirm what participants had said during interviews or provide more concrete illustrations of specific examples they had shared.

Member checking is another approach to increasing the credibility of case study interpretations. In this study, member checking took place at multiple levels. First, to the extent possible, confidential transcripts were emailed to all participants within a few days after each interview, with an open, optional invitation to read the transcripts, confirm that they appropriately represented what was said during the interview, and add additional commentary or share new insights if desired. Participants were also asked about these transcripts at the start of their next interviews. In some instances, participants replied via email or affirmed orally during an interview that they felt the transcripts were honest, appropriate representations of what had been said. In most instances, however, participants chose not to return the transcripts or simply agreed, during casual check-ins outside the formal interview setting, that the transcripts were appropriate.
A key analytic juncture at which loss of credibility was a real possibility was the first round of theory-led thematic analysis. It was necessary to establish that the code book used in this analysis gave reasonable consideration to construct validity, which, in case study research, entails the identification of appropriate indicators for the concept being studied (Yin, 2018, p. 42). Construct validity refers to the need to demonstrate that the study was, in fact, a study about what it purported to study. Addressing construct validity in case study research entails a two-pronged test (Yin, 2018, p. 44). First, the researcher must define the construct of interest in terms of the concepts it subsumes. In this study, the construct of interest was the construct of inquiry as stance, which subsumes the concepts of Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose as articulated by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). Second, the researcher must operationalize these concepts through specific measurements or qualitative analytic procedures, such as a code book derived from the relevant theory. Ideally, case study researchers will match their operationalization of concepts in the same way as other studies on the same topic, but, where this is not possible, the case study’s code book can become one of the study’s contributions to the scholarly literature.

In this study, the inquiry stance construct was operationalized through a code book (Appendix A) designed for theory-led thematic analysis using a process informed by the work of Coburn and Woulfin (2012) and described in the previous chapter. The code book was further informed by the principles of code book design that were articulated by Creswell and Poth (2018). The code book itself included the name of the code, its definition, a description of when the code might be applied, and an example of an instance when the code was applied. In addition, for some codes, qualifications or
exclusions, as well as any non-examples, were stored within the coding scheme in MAXQDA. As one example, the code “PR_INQUIRY PLACE TIME,” which was derived from the practice dimension of the inquiry stance construct, was defined in terms of viewing “everywhere and anytime as a potential context for inquiry” and was applied anytime a participant described the contexts or locations or times where she perceived that her inquiry or inquiry stance was playing out. The “PR_INQUIRY PLACE TIME” code had no specific qualifications, exclusions, or non-examples. It was applied to this segment from an interview in which a participant shared where she engages in the “share with others” phase of the inquiry cycle: “I’ve done multiple places. I mean, I even share with my boyfriend or my sister what I’m doing, which is really nice. So, I mean, I think I’ve shared in multiple ways and in multiple different places” (Cordelia, Interview 3/5, 3.24.20).

For other codes, qualifications were added to the code in MAXQDA to distinguish the code from other codes that might be similar. For the “K_LOCAL AND GLOBAL” code, which was derived from the knowledge dimension of the inquiry stance construct, the code book included the qualification “not the same as PR_INQUIRY PLACE TIME” because this code was focused upon the perception that the knowledge generated through inquiry could matter or have an impact both within and beyond the walls of a single classroom, rather than upon the specific places or times where inquiry could occur as a part of practice.

**Issues of Research Ethics**

This study was designed and executed with an ethic of benevolence in the belief that participating in the study could be both educational and enjoyable for teacher
candidates. By choosing to participate in interviews about their developing inquiry stances as part of this study, teacher candidates were engaged in regular, focused, and systematic reflection on their learning through practitioner inquiry. However, to conduct this research in an ethical manner, it was necessary to obtain several approvals.

In December 2019, this study underwent review by a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher’s university. The study was determined to be exempt research and was issued a formal letter of approval to proceed. That same month, the study was also presented to the PDS’s formally designated university coordinator, as well as to the PDS’s teacher educators, during one of the teacher educators’ weekly meetings. The PDS coordinator then issued a formal letter endorsing the study. In accordance with the partnering school district’s school board policy on research, this letter from the PDS coordinator, along with another letter of recommendation from the researcher’s dissertation chair and the IRB’s letter of approval, was submitted, along with a copy of the proposed study, for review by the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education. This administrator, pursuant to board policy, made a determination whether the study required approval by the full school board or could be issued administrative approval, since the study would only partially take place on school district premises and would not involve children from the school district. The administrator determined that the study met the requirements for administrative approval and issued a letter of formal approval for the study to proceed on the grounds and in the buildings of the partnering school district. The study commenced, as previously described, in January 2020 with the process of obtaining consent from participants.
All research presents some risk of harm. The primary risk for this study was anticipated to be the risk of loss of confidentiality. To mitigate this risk, all paper records were maintained in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. All electronic files were stored securely in cloud servers behind two-factor authentication. An electronic data management plan describing this storage system was submitted to the researcher’s university IRB office for review and was approved. Names of all people mentioned in the study were replaced with pseudonyms, some of which were self-selected by participants, and others of which were generated by the researcher at the request of participants who indicated no preference. Since the researcher’s academic advisor and dissertation committee chair served as the instructor of record for the clinical practice seminar that constituted one of the contexts for data collection, the advisor was consulted about conceptual and procedural issues during the study, but the names of the teacher candidates who participated in this study were never disclosed.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 has described the methodology that guided this case study, which examined how the dimensions of the inquiry stance construct played out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS. The chapter opened with a discussion of the need for a framework to delineate a study’s research methodology in a transparent and systematic manner. Working through Crotty’s (1998) four-element framework for conceptualizing social research, the chapter provided brief overviews of moderate constructivism and pragmatism as the epistemological and interpretive frameworks that shaped the decision to adopt a qualitative case study methodology to study inquiry as stance. Next, the chapter explained how Yin’s (2018)
approach to conceptualizing case study research was chosen because of its alignment with the study’s philosophical assumptions. Then, the chapter described the research question and purposes, the case definition and boundaries, the methods of data collection and analysis, and the study’s interpretive criteria. The chapter concluded with a discussion of issues of research ethics that were considered throughout the study.

The next two chapters, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, will contextualize and then report this study’s findings. Drawing upon a framework for describing teacher education programs that are situated within PDSs, as well as the study’s data sources, Chapter 4 provides a systematic description of the context in which the case of interest for this study was embedded. This description provides the basis upon which others can consider whether and what ways the inquiry stance might play out similarly or differently in other contexts. Then, Chapter 5 directly addresses the study’s research question by presenting the findings of the thematic analysis of the inquiry stance construct within the context described in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

CASE CONTEXT

This study asked how inquiry stance played out among teacher candidates who were conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS. The previous chapter, Chapter 3, explained how the study was designed as an analysis of a single, holistic case of inquiry stance as it manifested itself among a set of people meeting specific criteria, during a particular span of time, and within an identifiable context. The case of inquiry as stance, not the surrounding case context, was the object of inquiry for this study. However, understanding the case’s context is necessary for understanding an analysis of how it played out. Therefore, drawing upon field notes, documents, and interviews, as well as insights developed through the researcher’s extended participation in the PDS where this study took place, Chapter 4 presents a rich and systematic description of the context that surrounded the case of inquiry as stance.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, will provide a systematic analysis of the case itself.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the need for researchers to adopt a framework for describing preservice teacher education contexts in a systematic fashion. Next, building upon an existing framework and drawing from the study’s data sources, the chapter describes the historical legacy, the roles and relationships, the beliefs and principles, the support structures, and the curriculum for teacher education in the PDS where this study was conducted. Then, the backgrounds of the study’s participants are described. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.
A Useful Framework for Describing a PDS as a Teacher Education Context

Scholarly descriptions of preservice teacher education programs, and those situated within PDSs, in particular, have long suffered from a lack of shared frameworks that could permit meaningful cross-contextual comparisons. Summarizing the results of a review of research on the nature and impact of preservice teacher education programs, Zeichner (2006) excoriated the teacher education literature’s incommensurability. He observed scholars’ tendency to describe teacher education programs in terms of relatively superficial features, such as their duration or the type of degree they award to program graduates. Zeichner therefore proposed a more detailed and comprehensive conceptual framework for describing teacher education programs. His framework included the characteristics of the teacher candidates; the university- or college-based program’s political and institutional contexts, as well as its formal curricula; the federal, state, and local policy contexts of schools partnered with the university; and the characteristics of teacher and student learning within the partnered schools. Zeichner recommended that his conceptual framework, which appears in Figure 4-1, be widely adopted for descriptions of teacher education programs.
Building upon Zeichner’s (2006) framework, Burns (2012) reported a case study of an instance of novice supervision within a preservice teacher education program that was situated within a PDS. In conceptualizing what it meant to describe the PDS that served as the context of her study, however, Burns critiqued Zeichner’s framework for focusing more upon the characteristics of the separate institutions involved in preservice teacher education (i.e., universities/colleges and schools) than upon the connections that bridge these institutions and create the unique clinical contexts in which supervision takes place in a PDS. Burns argued that the framework needed to be modified for descriptions of preservice teacher education programs situated within PDSs. Burns therefore proposed an addition to Zeichner’s framework: a magnified focus upon the PDS as a connecting link between the university and the school. Synthesizing the work of Nolan et al. (2007), Burns conceptualized this link in terms of a PDS’s guiding beliefs and principles, support
structures, roles and relationships, and curriculum. Burns’s connecting link is marked within Zeichner’s framework in Figure 4-1 and is magnified in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2: Burns’s (2012) magnification of the connecting link in Zeichner’s (2006) framework.

Focusing upon this link obviated the need for Burns (2012) to engage in an utterly exhaustive description of the partnering institutions (i.e., a major research university and a public school district) that comprised her study’s context. Instead, Burns responded to Zeichner’s (2006) call for descriptions of teacher education programs to move beyond superficial institutional characteristics while systematically highlighting the critical features of the PDS in which her study took place. In the years since Burns’s study, however, the landscape of preservice teacher education in the United States has shifted, so Burns’s connecting link has been slightly modified, as shown in Figure 4-3.
The modifications to Burns’s (2012) connecting link reflect heightened consideration of the historical contexts of PDS work and an increased emphasis upon the relationships, more than the structural features, that sustain a PDS. During the time since Burns’s study, declining enrollments in colleges of education have led to the termination of long-standing PDS partnerships, with others struggling to survive (Rutten & Cunningham, 2019; Wolkenhauer et al., 2020). Faced with the threat of dissolution, the people who have carried on the work of historically successful PDSs have been forced to choose between abandoning their partnerships and building new kinds of relationships.

Even during times of growth, however, the history of a PDS is constantly present. School- and university-based partners may enter and leave the partnership, but their contributions live on through the structures they helped to create or perpetuate, and in the rituals, traditions, and stories handed down by those who remain. Conducting research within a PDS therefore requires that the researcher exercise exceptional sensitivity not
only to the contemporary contexts that shape the PDS’s work but also to its history (Badiali, 2019). Therefore, two modifications to Burns’s (2012) connecting link appear as an additional component (historical legacy of the PDS) and a rearrangement of Burns’s components to emphasize PDS roles and relationships before PDS structures. The components of this modified framework serve as the structure for the description of case context that follows.

**Case Context**

**The Historical Legacy of the PDS**

The term “professional development school” gained traction in Tomorrow’s Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group (1986). As was noted in Chapter 1, the Holmes Group was a consortium of deans and chief academic officers from research institutions across the United States. The consortium’s overarching purpose was to reform teaching and teacher education programs simultaneously. Throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, the efforts of the Holmes Group, along with a number of other reports and publications that sought to push back on the inflammatory language of A Nation at Risk, fostered a proliferation of PDSs and PDS scholarship (e.g., Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Clark, 1999; Levine, 1998; Teitel, 1998).

Inspired by the ideas of the Holmes Group and by Goodlad’s (1994) postulates for education in a democracy, the RVSU-RVSD PDS was piloted in the late 1990s (Rutten & Badiali, 2020). This partnership was conceptualized as a single community dispersed across RVSD’s elementary school buildings and RVSU’s campus. The partners structured their PDS in this way from the shared belief that collaboration across contexts can be a catalyst for renewal and inquiry. The PDS decided to make the preparation of
elementary teachers one of its core activities. Supported financially by both RVSU and RVSD, as well as some timely grant funding, the PDS grew steadily for a number of years.

As the RVSU-RVSD PDS continued to expand its work in preservice teacher education, enrollments of teacher candidates consistently reached 60 to 70. As many as 15 to 20 teacher educators were directly involved in co-teaching methods courses and supervising the teacher candidates’ clinical internships. The PDS gradually gained recognition as an exemplary partnership that also housed an outstanding preservice teacher education program. The PDS has received multiple national awards for its work, and numerous PDS alumni have gone on to receive awards for meritorious teaching and research.

Over time, however, the RVSU-RVSD PDS began to face threats to its continued existence. In recent years, the founding PDS partners have nearly all retired, left the partnership for other opportunities, or been assigned to other job responsibilities. Enrollments of teacher candidates had declined until, at the time of this study, 12 teacher candidates were enrolled. However, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that presented the most direct threat. In March 2020, COVID-19 forced the PDS to transition all its activities to remote work. Although the PDS was able to complete the Spring 2020 academic term, in June 2020, due to financial and other pressures, the formal structures of the PDS were placed on hiatus just days after the conclusion of data collection for this study.
Roles and Relationships in the PDS

PDSs rely upon participants who are willing to take on a variety of roles and relationships. In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, several roles and relationships had acquired unique and locally specific names. Some of these were formalized with specific responsibilities or job titles, while others remained nonformalized. For the sake of clarity, the standardized terminology currently recommended by AACTE (2018) has been adopted as widely as possible throughout this dissertation to describe people in both formalized and nonformalized roles and relationships in the RVSU-RVSD PDS.

Formalized Roles

At the time of this study, the RVSU-RVSD PDS included 12 people in formalized roles as teacher candidates, of whom six participated in this research. A teacher candidate, occasionally known as a “preservice teacher,” is “an individual enrolled in a teacher preparation program that leads to a recommendation for initial-level state licensure” (AACTE, 2018, p. 12). While the term “teacher candidate” includes individuals in any phase of a preservice teacher education program, the narrower term “student teacher” is sometimes used to refer to teacher candidates who are completing a full-time clinical experience in teaching toward the end of their teacher education programs. In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, all teacher candidates were undergraduate seniors at RVSU who were enrolled in a program leading to a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in elementary and early childhood education.

The RVSU-RVSD PDS also involved several people in formalized roles as teacher educators. The term “teacher educator” refers broadly to “educators who provide formal instruction or conduct research and development for educating prospective and
practicing teachers” (Association of Teacher Educators [ATE], 2007). The term includes any school or university faculty member who has some formalized responsibility for preparing teacher candidates. It includes the narrower terms “school-based teacher educator” and “university-based teacher educator.” A school-based teacher educator is “an individual involved in teacher preparation whose primary institutional home is a school” (AACTE, 2018, p. 12). This term includes but is not limited to people in the role of “mentor” or “mentor teacher,” terms that refer to “a teacher who serves as the primary school-based teacher educator for teacher candidates completing clinical practice or an internship” (p. 12). In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, school-based teacher educators included mentor teachers as well as other classroom teachers who were temporarily released from their classroom teaching responsibilities so that they could co-teach methods courses, supervise teacher candidates in the PDS, or co-facilitate the PDS’s activities.

A university-based teacher educator is “an individual involved in teacher preparation whose primary institutional home is a college or university” (AACTE, 2018, p. 12). In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, some university-based teacher educators were tenured, tenure-line, or fixed-term faculty whose primary, formalized responsibility was to co-teach coursework, along with school-based teacher educators, in math teaching methods, science teaching methods, social studies teaching methods, or classroom learning environments. Other university-based teacher educators were graduate students involved in co-teaching methods coursework or supervising teacher candidates’ clinical experiences. Still another university-based teacher educator had a formalized responsibility for co-facilitating the PDS’s activities.
Supervision in a PDS is a complex leadership function that is not restricted to people assigned to a formalized role (Burns, 2012). However, some of the teacher educators in this PDS did occupy formalized roles as supervisors. At the time of this study, both school- and university-based teacher educators were designated as supervisors. The people in these roles variously engaged in some or all of seven supervisory tasks for teacher educators in PDSs: teaching, collaboration and community, research for innovation, targeted assistance, curriculum development and support, individual support, and equity work (Burns & Baker, 2016).

Nonformalized Roles

Although some roles in the RVSU-RVSD PDS were formalized, most roles (including those that were formalized) were highly flexible. This flexibility often also created unique, nonformalized ways for people to participate in the PDS. For instance, inservice teachers from RVSD who did not participate through formalized roles nevertheless became important partners in the learning of teacher educators, university faculty, and graduate students. During the year this study took place, several inservice teachers who were mentoring teacher candidates in other teacher education programs collaborated with people throughout the PDS by engaging in practitioner inquiry through a graduate course offered by RVSU.

Several other graduate students, including the researcher, who wished to learn about teacher education and supervision, conduct research, or contribute to the PDS community, have also participated in the PDS through nonformalized roles. For example, one doctoral student who had, as an undergraduate student, prepared to teach within a different PDS, wished to conduct research in a PDS and found a community that
welcomed this collaborative research. In addition to the researcher, two other doctoral students, who had been involved in the PDS in both formal and informal roles during their time at RVSU, were conducting their dissertation research in the PDS concurrently with this study.

The researcher actively participated as a PDS partner throughout graduate school, in addition to his other university-based responsibilities. During his first years as a K-12 teacher, a series of both powerfully positive and powerfully negative experiences with instructional supervisors led him to pursue a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in curriculum and supervision. While earning that degree, the researcher was introduced to practitioner inquiry, and when an opportunity arose to pursue doctoral study and collaborate on research about practitioner inquiry in the PDS, the researcher entered a nonformalized PDS role. One year, the researcher co-facilitated small groups of teacher candidates who were engaged in practitioner inquiry. Another year, the researcher served as a research assistant and had the responsibility of interviewing teacher educators about their learning in the PDS.

During the year of this study, the researcher participated in the PDS in numerous capacities—co-planning with other teacher educators for a weekly clinical practice seminar that was designed to support teacher candidates’ learning in clinical practice, co-teaching some of these clinical practice seminars, supervising practitioner inquiry, community development, and both participating in and leading research. He also participated as a student in the practitioner inquiry graduate course and co-facilitated several meetings of a collaborative PDS structure, an “inquiry council,” that supported
the PDS’s commitment to collaboration, reflection, and innovation through practitioner inquiry.

**Relationships**

As with the roles in the PDS, some relationships are formalized, while many are not. One of the most significant formalized relationships was that of the “triad,” or the unique relationship among a teacher candidate, his or her supervisor, and his or her mentor teacher. The triad relationship is commonly focused upon promoting the learning of a teacher candidate; however, the triad can also serve as a powerful vehicle for the ongoing professional learning of all three members. The triad relationship has served as the context for university-based research in the RVSU-RVSD PDS, where triads themselves also sometimes engaged in collaborative inquiries.

Another formalized relationship in this PDS was the co-teaching relationship among teacher educators. As previously mentioned, school- and university-based teacher educators collaborated to co-teach methods courses in mathematics, science, and social studies, a course in classroom management and learning environments, and a clinical practice seminar. The co-teachers met regularly to co-plan for the next week’s instruction, and they developed an extensive repertoire of structures, tools, and processes to support both their relationships and their collaboration.

**Guiding Beliefs and Principles of the RVSU-RVSD PDS: The NAPDS Nine Essentials**

The National Association for Professional Development Schools (2008) issued a statement, “What it means to be a professional development school,” in which are outlined the nine essential characteristics of PDSs, each of which was exhibited by the
RVSU-RVSD PDS. As of the completion of this study, the statement’s second edition had recently been released (NAPDS, 2021); however, it was the first edition that had the shaped the case context during the time of this study. The first essential characteristic is a “comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity in schools and, by potential extension, the broader community” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 3). At the time of this study, the mission of the RVSU-RVSD PDS was “to create and maintain a community of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and teacher educators who strive to engage all partners, including K-4 students, in continuous learning, reflection, and innovation through respectful, collaborative inquiry.” This comprehensive mission statement also addresses the second essential characteristic of a PDS, “a school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 4). This essential was manifested through teacher candidates’ active engagement throughout the RVSD. For example, each year, teacher candidates were formally welcomed at the district’s opening ceremonies. Their engagement as full participants in the school community was recognized when they were provided with a school district identification card and email address, and when their names were prominently posted on classroom doors and websites alongside the names of their mentor teachers. Teacher candidates also participated in activities such as conferences, special education meetings, and faculty meetings.

The third and fourth essential characteristics of a PDS are “ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 4) and “a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants” (p. 5). In
the RVSU-RVSD PDS, inservice teachers were regularly invited to professional learning opportunities offered by PDS partners, such as literacy and technology workshops. University faculty also regularly offered graduate-level courses in practitioner inquiry and instructional supervision, and teacher educators met regularly to study their own practices as teacher educators.

The fifth essential characteristic of a PDS is “engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 6). Participants in the RVSU-RVSD PDS regularly shared the results of a wide range of inquiries during PDS meetings, during faculty meetings at schools, and through email. More formally, they shared inquiries at a local conference and at the annual NAPDS conference. University faculty and graduate students also regularly presented and published their peer-reviewed research conducted within the PDS.

The sixth and seventh essential characteristics of a PDS are “an articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved” and “a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 6). While most PDSs develop a formalized, written articulation agreement, this PDS essential has also been interpreted to encompass “implied mutual agreements” (Burns, 2012, p. 96). The RVSU-RVSD PDS existed for over 20 years without a written articulation agreement, preferring to locate the definitions of roles and responsibilities within the relationships of the PDS partners themselves. These relationships were sustained through regular, weekly meetings of the PDS partners, and governance was shared among all the school- and university-based teacher educators in the partnership but also with other stakeholders,
including school district administrators and mentor teachers. Regular meetings were also one way that the PDS lived out the eighth essential, “work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 7). In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, the roles of several teacher educators were designed to span institutional boundaries. For example, the tasks of supervision, teaching methods coursework, and co-facilitating the PDS were shared between school- and university-based teacher educators.

The ninth essential characteristic of a PDS is “dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures” (NAPDS, 2008, p. 8). In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, the sharing of resources took place in many ways. Perhaps the clearest example of sharing resources was the school district’s commitment to release classroom teachers each year to serve as teacher educators in the PDS. The school and university shared the costs to hire long-term substitute teachers for the reassigned teachers while maintaining the reassigned teachers’ salaries and benefits. As previously noted, RVSD provided each teacher candidate with an identification card, email address, and access to district resources. The PDS also established important rituals, celebrations, and reward structures to sustain its sense of being a single community geographically distributed across the school district and university campuses (Badiali, 2020). The PDS’s annual rituals began with the process of recruiting each year’s teacher candidates, who completed an application and interview process. Throughout the year, a series of meals, parties, and ceremonies marked key moments in the teacher candidates’ journeys toward becoming certified teachers.
Support Structures in the PDS

A variety of support structures sustained the PDS’s efforts to foster a single community. Nolan et al. (2007) generated a conceptual framework for understanding and describing PDS support structures, defined as “deliberate experiences in which colleagues engage in a common set of tasks, the accomplishment of which serves their mutual benefit and contributes to meeting common goals (p. 111). In the RVSU-RVSD PDS, these deliberate experiences typically took the form of regular meetings for a variety of activities.

One of the most prominent support structures in this PDS was a weekly meeting of the teacher educators. This weekly meeting, typically scheduled for a four-hour time period each Thursday, was an opportunity to co-plan instruction, discuss supervision, and deliberate a range of logistical considerations. The weekly meeting was scheduled to rotate its physical meeting location among the conference rooms of the elementary schools in the partnering school district, with the goal of sustaining the PDS’s commitment to being a single community. Each of these weekly meetings typically had a designated time period in which the school’s principal would join the meeting to share updates on building goals or initiatives, discuss the progress of the teacher candidates in that building, and consider any other issues related to the PDS.

A second support structure that was in place during the year of this study was the previously mentioned graduate course on practitioner inquiry. This course was held during Fall 2019 before data collection commenced and was taught by a tenure-line faculty member at the university with substantial expertise in practitioner inquiry. It brought together inservice teachers from the partnering school district in collaboration
with master’s and doctoral students from the university (including the researcher) as well as some of the university-based teacher educators. Several of the inservice teachers were mentor teachers in the PDS, while another inservice teacher was a mentor teacher for another preservice teacher education program. Similarly, some of the graduate students had formalized roles in the PDS, while others had no formally defined roles but joined the course to learn together in the PDS. This structure produced a range of new collaborations across the PDS and led to several presentations at national conferences.

A third support structure during the time of this study was an “inquiry council.” This structure was created by participants in the graduate course on practitioner inquiry who wished to continue their collaboration by writing about their experiences in the graduate course, collaborating on ongoing and new research, and support inquiry throughout the PDS.

A fourth support structure was a set of shared Google Drive folders containing key documents related to the PDS’s activities. Among these included weekly meeting agendas, lesson plans for courses and clinical practice seminars being co-taught, information about teacher candidates and mentor teachers, data and documents related to teacher candidates’ practitioner inquiries, and other documents. A significant amount of collaborative work took place through Google Docs, with teacher educators commenting on these documents asynchronously as they planned for meetings and instruction.

A variety of additional collaborative structures was also present in the PDS at the time of this study. These mostly took the form of routine meetings to maintain communication and collaboration throughout the partnership. For example, the PDS co-facilitators met regularly with school district administrators to address issues related to
the PDS. Each spring, a series of meetings was held for PDS partners to discuss how to place the next year’s teacher candidates among the school district’s elementary schools, and an elaborate series of rituals and traditions sprang up around this process. An advisory council comprised of a wide range of PDS partners also met occasionally with the PDS’s co-facilitators to engage in long-term planning.

**The Curriculum for Preservice Teacher Education in the PDS**

Teacher candidates who completed their clinical internships in the PDS made a substantial commitment to the community they were joining. Instead of following the RVSU academic calendar, teacher candidates agreed to abide by the RVSD academic calendar for an entire school year. This commitment required that teacher candidates make financial and other sacrifices to complete their internships. Many teacher candidates needed to procure special arrangements for local housing and transportation.

The internship year began with an intensive fall orientation program. Then, teacher candidates began working with their mentor teachers on the first inservice day for teachers in August and continued until the last school day for students in June. During the fall semester, teacher candidates worked with their mentor teachers four days per week. Each Tuesday, they spent the day in their co-taught coursework on social studies teaching methods, mathematics teaching methods, and classroom learning environments. One night each week, the teacher candidates took a science teaching methods course. Having already completed methods coursework on literacy instruction during their junior year, the teacher candidates continued to learn about literacy instruction through a variety of trainings provided both by the PDS and by the school district. On specifically scheduled days throughout the year, teacher candidates worked with a mentor teacher from a
different grade level and school building than their primary mentor teacher. These were referred to as “partner classrooms.” For example, a teacher candidate completing a clinical internship with a mentor teacher in a Kindergarten classroom might be partnered with a 4th grade classroom in a different part of the school district. As the academic year progressed, the teacher candidates gradually assumed increased responsibility for planning instruction and co-teaching with their mentors as well as with their partner classroom mentor teachers. The PDS urged that teacher candidates engage in a range of co-teaching arrangements (Bacharach et al., 2010; Badiali & Titus, 2010) instead of solo teaching for most instruction.

During the spring semester, the teacher candidates co-taught in their mentor teachers’ classrooms five days per week. Their university course load was reduced to the clinical practice seminar, which was formally designated by RVSU as a course in the “clinical application of instruction.” This seminar met each Wednesday during the late afternoon and early evening hours, in a classroom in one of the school district’s buildings. The seminar was historically organized around various thematic “strands” or questions that integrate the seminar’s activities. During the Spring 2020 semester, the clinical practice seminar was organized around four “essential questions” that were framed by the teacher educators who co-facilitated this weekly seminar. The four essential questions as they were listed in the course syllabus included:

1. In what ways does an evolving understanding of my beliefs and identity, in relation to my community and larger social structures, contribute to my development as a teacher leader? [identity development]
2. How do teacher leaders plan instruction in ways that embody their image as curriculum makers who negotiate and advocate for things that matter? [planning instruction]

3. How does my development as a teacher leader relate to an emergent understanding of teaching for social justice as one that consistently works toward the eradication of inequalities in and of public schooling? [social justice]

4. How does my evolving inquiry-stance relate to my development as a teacher leader? [inquiry]

As the teacher candidates explored these essential questions, they also participated as fully as possible in all school and school district activities including but not limited to back-to-school night; student-led goal-setting conferences in the fall and spring; school-wide faculty meetings; weekly grade-level meetings; and periodic unit planning meetings with mentors, other teachers, and curriculum support personnel.

Teacher candidates’ clinical practice was supported by instructional supervision and by people in formalized roles as supervisors. Two widespread supervisory practices in this PDS at the time of this study were direct assistance and community development (Burns et al., 2016; Glickman et al., 2018). The specialized teacher educators who were formally assigned supervisory responsibilities within the PDS engaged in the direct assistance task of supervision on a weekly basis, observing each teacher candidate at least two hours per week and engaging in post-observation conferences, or “one-on-ones.” Supervisors also met regularly with all of the teacher candidates they supervised to engage in the community development task of supervision in a PDS. During the time of this study, these small group meetings often involved sharing and addressing personal
and community concerns related to COVID-19 and remote instruction, discussion of specific problems of practice, and a series of book studies.

Participation in university- and school-based research was another significant aspect of the curriculum for preservice teacher education in this PDS. During the time of this study, several additional studies were also taking place. Some of these did not involve any of the current year’s teacher candidates. Other studies involved mentor teachers and other inservice teachers. Three other studies did directly involve the current year’s teacher candidates. One such study was a large-scale, grant-funded study of an intervention involving small-group discussions to promote critical-analytic thinking. Another dissertation study engaged teacher candidates in small-group discussions about their identities in relation to various social justice topics, while still another dissertation study involved teacher candidates in lessons, interviews, and cycles of clinical supervision related to social justice topics.

From the inception of this PDS, practitioner inquiry was at the core of the partners’ collaboration and was regarded as a signature pedagogy (Shulman, 2005) within the curriculum for preservice teacher education. The teacher candidates in the PDS engaged in multiple cycles of practitioner inquiry and reported their findings to the larger community at an annual teacher inquiry conference. Mentor teachers also engaged in inquiry on an annual basis. Inquiry in the PDS was not limited to mentors and teacher candidates. Principals, curriculum coordinators, graduate students, and university faculty also conducted their own inquiries each year. Teacher candidates were expected to become actively involved in inquiry both as inquirers and as participants in the inquiries of others.
As a signature pedagogy, practitioner inquiry in the PDS was not limited to a single, one-shot project. The foundations for practitioner inquiry were laid from the beginning of the internship year. In particular, the classroom learning environments course that met on Tuesdays during the fall semester served as the introduction to practitioner inquiry. During the academic year of this study, teacher candidates in the PDS began the course with a common inquiry into the ways they, as teacher candidates, could contribute to building a classroom learning environment in their mentor teachers’ classrooms. In November, they publicized their learning from this first semester of inquiry by sending a letter to the partnering school district’s board of directors, the district’s principals and administration, and other PDS partners to describe the impacts that they, as teacher candidates, are having within the PDS. The teacher candidates’ second cycle of inquiry was called an Inquiry into the Learning of an Individual (ILI). In this cycle, the teacher candidates studied one of their students to learn more about his or her learning. They presented their findings from these ILIs at the end of the fall semester in December 2019.

As previously described, in the spring semester that served as the temporal boundary of the case for this study, all 12 teacher candidates participated in a weekly Wednesday evening clinical practice seminar focused upon four essential questions related to the clinical application of instruction in elementary education. Practitioner inquiry was at the core of the four essential questions that wove together the various professional issues addressed in the seminar. Throughout the seminar, the teacher candidates undertook their own, self-selected cycles of inquiry into questions that emerged from their teaching practices. They were supervised in this process by a
university faculty member with substantial expertise in practitioner inquiry and by supervisors with varying levels of knowledge of practitioner inquiry, many of whom had participated in the Fall 2019 practitioner inquiry graduate course. Through the process, they expanded their knowledge about the inquiry cycle and, the PDS partners hoped, developed their inquiry stances. At the end of a more typical school year in this PDS, all the teacher candidates completed the cycle of inquiry by publicizing their practitioner inquiry at an annual inquiry conference. This conference was also an important ritual that marked the upcoming completion of the teacher candidates’ intensive PDS internships and their graduation with a bachelor’s degree from the partnering university. Due to COVID-19’s impact on the PDS during the year this study was conducted, the teacher candidates shared their inquiries in a variety of unique ways, ranging from sharing informally during the last Wednesday clinical practice seminar meeting to sharing at virtual faculty meetings in their schools.

**Case Participants**

As indicated in the initial month’s interview protocol (Appendix C), each participant in the case was invited to describe herself at the outset of this study. The participants’ descriptions of themselves are synthesized in the following paragraphs, buttressed by evidence from field notes and documents.

**Cordelia** described herself as a 21-year old White female from a middle class socioeconomic background. Before attending RVSU, she reported that she had spent her entire life in another community not far from the university. During her PDS internship, Cordelia and her family continued to reside in her hometown, where Cordelia held a part-time job in a local small business. Cordelia had been employed since age 15 and
continued to work 40 hours each week throughout most of her university education, although she had significantly reduced her working hours and her income during her internship year in the PDS. Cordelia explained that making these sacrifices in order to complete an internship as a teacher candidate in the RVSU-RVSD PDS program was a particularly important aspect of her identity. As COVID-19 began spreading across the Rainy Valley region, Cordelia experienced intense stress as she was asked to work increased hours at her job while navigating the transition to a remote internship in the PDS. After graduating from RVSU, Cordelia hoped to obtain a teaching position in the same region.

During the time of this study, Cordelia was completing a year-long internship in a first grade classroom in RVSD. The students in this classroom were, in Cordelia’s perception, predominantly White and middle- to upper-class in their socioeconomic backgrounds. Asked to describe the context of her internship in greater detail, Cordelia explained:

I would say my mentor’s classroom is full of lovely first graders who are so very accepting of everybody. I would also say they’re very vocal about their thoughts, and even their needs, which I love. I would say our class is very boy-heavy, so I think there’s 12 boys and nine girls, and there’s 22 [sic] kids in our classroom. We have a paraprofessional that I adore, and I know that the kids adore as well. She’s been with my mentor teacher for 27 years now, so they have a very tight bond, and they work very, very well with each other. I’m so lucky to be in that classroom. (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20)
In Fall 2019, Cordelia was introduced to practitioner inquiry. Like all the PDS teacher candidates during the Fall 2019 semester, Cordelia completed a cycle of practitioner inquiry, her “ILI,” in which she studied an individual student about whose learning she had become curious. For her ILI, Cordelia posed the question, “In what ways can I support my student throughout the day?” Cordelia explained that, through this cycle of inquiry, she had learned that the focus of an inquiry doesn’t necessarily need to be about students but that it could be about her own professional practices. Consequently, during her Spring 2020 participation in this study and before the onset of COVID-19, Cordelia was focused upon developing a wondering about her own practices. She wondered, “In what ways will building professional relationships within my professional communities influence my teaching beliefs and teaching practices?”

Charity described herself as a 21-year old, Caucasian, White, non-Hispanic female from an upper-middle class socioeconomic background. She also noted that her hometown was not located in the same state where RVSU is located but in a neighboring state. As COVID-19 began spreading across the Rainy Valley region, Charity returned to her parents’ home in the neighboring state and continued her PDS internship remotely from a desk in her childhood bedroom. After graduating from RVSU, Charity planned to attend another university in her home state to obtain a master’s degree before seeking a teaching position. During the time of this study, Charity was completing a year-long internship in a second grade classroom in the RVSD. The 19 children in this classroom were, in Charity’s perception, middle class, “pretty much all” White, and “more than half” girls (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20).
For her ILI during Fall 2019, Charity focused upon how she could support the mathematics learning of a student in her class whom Charity had identified as someone struggling with number sense. Through her ILI, Charity felt that she had developed in her ability to identify student needs and to adjust her instruction in response. She became increasingly interested in how she could adjust existing instructional practices to support the wide range of writing abilities in her class. Therefore, during the time of her Spring 2020 participation in this study and before the onset of COVID-19, Charity asked, “How might targeted writing strategy small groups impact students’ writing knowledge, product, and independence?”

May described herself as a 22-year old, White female and her ethnicity as “Irish, and a little bit of Polish” (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20). Her hometown was located in another region of the same state as RVSU, and she described herself as coming from an “average middle class” (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20) socioeconomic background. May elaborated on the distinction between her parents’ socioeconomic status and the struggle of supporting herself through her university education, including the ongoing sacrifices she had to make to participate in the PDS program:

I take out a lot of loans. I’ve worked since the first day of freshman year. I currently still have a job. I work for the [RVSU student union building]. I work at the info desk. I’m not working as much right now, because of student teaching, and I’ve had to cut back my hours even more this semester than I did last semester. But I’ve been working since I was 15. I babysit. I tutor. I try to support myself. I take out a lot of loans. I don’t know. Maybe I’m middle class, but I’m a college student…I just don’t know how to say it. And that affects so many things.
That will affect your [i.e., the researcher’s] understanding. Sometimes people who are in higher or lower or middle, they’ll have different understandings of the world, or the people they experience, too, so that will have a big effect on stuff.

(May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

During the time of this study, May was completing a year-long internship in a second grade classroom in the RVSD. As COVID-19 began spreading across the Rainy Valley region, May returned to her parents’ home in another part of the state and continued her PDS internship remotely. May described her perceptions of the salient demographics of the classroom where she was completing her internship. These demographics shifted several times throughout the academic year and the duration of this study as students enrolled or moved away from the RVSD. As May described:

At the current moment, there are 22 students. It’s about half girls, half boys. It’s a pretty even split. They are in every demographic. Every race, every gender, every ethnicity, every language. Not really every language, but you know what I’m saying. I have kids who speak English and kids who don’t speak English. We have kids who are definitely the lower end of [socioeconomic status]…and we have higher. I know I have kids whose parents work for [RVSU], and I also know that I’ve had kids in the past and their parents have been unemployed. So, I would say they hit every single check mark, like everything. So, I think I’m very lucky and very fortunate in that because I get to learn everything. Oh! I have kids who have one-on-one supports. I have kids who get pulled for reading and math support. I have kids who get pulled for language support, like ESL. I have kids who get pulled for emotional/social support from counseling. We’ve got it all.
They’re great. I have kids who get pulled for speech. I have kids who are doing speech and ESL, and they’re getting pulled for speech. I think it’s really cool. I’m really lucky. (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

In Fall 2019, May struggled to identify a focus for her ILI. She described how she had changed her question at least three times but ultimately sought to understand how she could support a particular student in achieving his goals for writing. During her Spring 2020 participation in this study and before the onset of COVID-19, May, like Charity, broadened the focus of her inquiry from meeting the needs of an individual student to addressing learning needs throughout her class. In relation to a perceived need throughout her class, May identified her own lack of knowledge in reading instruction as an area for her own professional growth. She ultimately posed the question, “How can I use conferring to support student and teacher growth?”

Aurelia described herself as a 21-year old White female who was “about to turn 22” (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20) at the time this study commenced. She described her ethnicity as “pretty much fully British, English. Maybe some Irish in there” and further identified herself as “Jewish by ethnicity but not Jewish in religion” (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20). Aurelia described her own socioeconomic status as “in the lowest class possible” due to being a student; however, in describing her family’s wealth, Aurelia explained that she considered her family as part of the “1 percent” (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20).

During the time of this study, Aurelia was completing a year-long internship in a fourth grade classroom in the RVSD. She described her partner classroom as an ESL classroom where she worked with children in Kindergarten through fifth grade. As
COVID-19 began spreading across the Rainy Valley region, Aurelia remained in her apartment home in the Rainy Valley region, where she continued her PDS internship remotely.

As asked to describe the salient demographics of her mentor teacher’s fourth grade classroom, Aurelia shared that her students were:

…probably 80 percent White, Caucasian. There’s probably 12 to 15 percent Asian or Asian origin of some kind. I think we have an array. I don’t know ethnicities. I don’t know people’s background that well. SES, I feel like we have an array of kids. Probably some that are in that 1 percent, probably a handful. And then some that are definitely on the lower end. (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20)

In Fall 2019, Aurelia was introduced to practitioner inquiry. For her ILI, she explored how she could use instructional technology to support student engagement. During her Spring 2020 participation in this study and before the onset of COVID-19, Aurelia continued to broaden and deepen her same inquiry question from the previous semester. She asked, “In what ways can I use technology resources as a tool to enhance comprehension of instruction and increase student engagement?”

Hope described herself as a 21-year old White female and her ancestry as American, noting that “I’m a bunch of different [ethnicities]. However, I was born here and raised here, and those ethnicities have influenced who I am, but American…I am Caucasian American” (Hope, Interview 1/5, 1.27.20). During the time of this study, Hope was completing a year-long internship in a Kindergarten classroom in the RVSD. As COVID-19 began spreading across the Rainy Valley region, Hope returned to her parents’ home in a suburban area in another part of the state, where she continued her
PDS internship remotely from her childhood bedroom. Asked to describe the salient characteristics of the children in her mentor teacher’s classroom, Hope shared:

In this Kindergarten class, we are predominantly White. And as far as class goes, I don’t really know how to distinguish between each student, but I would say they’re all around the same class, that I know of. I’m not totally into information about their personal life or anything, or what they’re like. They all have very supportive parents. You can tell parents respect education, and they want what’s best for their kids, so, it’s a very positive class. And they all work so hard. They’re hard working. (Hope, Interview 1/5, 1.27.20)

In Fall 2019, Hope was introduced to practitioner inquiry. For her ILI, she ultimately posed the question, “What is the role of teachers when students experience trauma?” During her Spring 2020 participation in this study and before the onset of COVID-19, Hope was pursuing an inquiry that had evolved from her Fall 2019 inquiry. She asked, “What is my role as a beginning teacher in noticing and appreciating the joy in teaching?”

Rachel described herself as a 22-year old, White, working class female. During the time of this study, Rachel was completing a year-long internship in a fourth grade classroom in the RVSD, with additional experiences in a second grade partner classroom. As COVID-19 began spreading across the Rainy Valley region, Rachel returned to her parents’ home on a farm in a rural area of the state and continued her PDS internship remotely. Asked to describe the salient demographic characteristics of the children in her mentor teacher’s fourth grade classroom, Rachel reported that her students were “more than 50 percent White. Maybe 70 percent?” and that “there’s actually more boys, but not
by a lot” (Rachel, Interview 1/5, 1.28.20). Rachel was unsure of her students’ socioeconomic backgrounds:

I would like to figure out more. For the most part, I can tell they’re all very similar. I don’t think there’s any outliers either way, but I also could be wrong. Yeah, they don’t show it… I know what some of the parents do, some of their jobs. It’s hard, but I don’t know all of them… I want to say more on the upper end, but I also could be wrong. (Rachel, Interview 1/5, 1.28.20)

In Fall 2019, Rachel was introduced to practitioner inquiry. For her ILI, she ultimately posed the question, “In what ways can I support [student] to participate in class?” During her Spring 2020 participation in this study and before the onset of COVID-19, Rachel asked, “How can we, as a fourth grade classroom, practice self-acceptance using positive self-talk?”

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 has described the PDS context that surrounded the case of inquiry as stance that was investigated in this study. Building on a modified version of Burns’s (2012) framework for describing PDSs as contexts for preservice teacher education, the chapter described the historical legacy, the roles and relationships, the beliefs and principles, the support structures, and the curriculum for teacher education in the RVSU-RVSD PDS. Then, the backgrounds of the study’s six participants were described as part of the context of the case since they constituted key informants about the case but were not, in and of themselves, the units of analysis for the study. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will directly respond to the study’s research question by presenting the results of a case
analysis of how the dimensions of inquiry as stance actually played out among the six teacher candidates.
CHAPTER 5
CASE ANALYSIS

This study posed the following research question: How do the dimensions of inquiry as stance play out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS? This question implicated four theoretical dimensions, which were delineated in the analytic framework at the end of Chapter 2: stances toward inquiry and knowledge (Knowledge dimension), inquiry and community (Community dimension), inquiry and practice (Practice dimension), and inquiry purposes (Purpose dimension). Addressing the study’s research question therefore required that the researcher systematically describe how each of these dimensions played out within the case selected for this study. To do so, as detailed in Chapter 3, the researcher conducted a four-cycle, theory-led thematic analysis of interviews, field notes, and documents to understand the four dimensions of inquiry as stance as these played out among teacher candidates within the study’s PDS context, which was described in Chapter 4.

Since inquiry stance was theorized in terms of four dimensions, this chapter, Chapter 5, responds directly to the study’s research question by presenting the results of the thematic analysis. The chapter is divided into four principal sections, each of which corresponds to one dimension of the inquiry stance construct. Each section is then subdivided according to the themes and frameworks that were constructed to describe how that dimension played out. The chapter concludes with a concise summary.

The Knowledge Dimension of Inquiry as Stance

As theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), the Knowledge dimension of inquiry as stance involves educators claiming positions as knowledge generators. The
Knowledge dimension further suggests that educators working from an inquiry stance consider knowledge and perspectives that have been generated in other contexts as potentially informative, yet they also weigh such knowledge carefully in light of the evidence they generate through local investigations. As the Knowledge dimension played out in the context of this study, teacher candidates pursued highly varied inquiries, and they exhibited a range of perspectives on the relationships between their inquiries and knowledge generation.

Six teacher candidates participated in this study. The teacher candidates had already conducted two cycles of practitioner inquiry during the Fall 2019 semester, including an inquiry into their roles as contributors to their mentor teachers’ classroom communities and an Inquiry into the Learning of an Individual (ILI). During the time of this study, the Spring 2020 semester, the teacher candidates had more latitude to pursue inquiries that were aligned with their interests and passions. Cordelia chose to investigate how professional relationships and community might shape her beliefs about teaching. Charity was exploring how she could use small writing groups to support her students’ growth as writers, while May was studying how she could use conferring as a strategy to support her students’ growth as readers. Aurelia chose to investigate the use of technology to enhance student engagement. Hope was considering how she could notice and appreciate joy within her teaching, and Rachel wondered how she could assist her classroom in developing self-acceptance by using positive self-talk.

As they investigated these topics, teacher candidates adopted varying perspectives on the relationships between their inquiries and knowledge generation. The analysis of the teacher candidates’ perspectives within the Knowledge dimension of inquiry stance
yielded six themes. The process of exploring, interpreting, and arranging these themes led to the development of a “project-stance continuum” (Figure 5-1) that could be useful as a framework for understanding and describing how the Knowledge dimension of inquiry stance played out among the teacher candidates in this case. At one end of the continuum, teacher candidates regarded practitioner inquiry as a project or course requirement that was unrelated to the process of knowledge generation, while at the other end, teacher candidates claimed ownership over inquiry as a powerful means of generating worthwhile knowledge. A range of possibilities fell between these two extremes.

Figure 5-1: The project-stance continuum within the Knowledge dimension.

Because this study’s unit of analysis was the inquiry stance construct, regarded holistically, the project-stance continuum, like the other figures that appear in this chapter, should be understood as a framework that was synthesized from the perspectives that were widely shared within the case. It is not a representation of the specific perspectives of any particular participant. It was typical for a teacher candidate to exhibit multiple perspectives within and across interviews, which is why the same participant’s perspectives sometimes appear in multiple themes. Participants did, in some cases, appear
to shift their perspectives over time, but these shifts were not necessarily linear, stepwise moves along the continuum. Characterizing these kinds of shifts could be a promising direction for future research, but it was not among the aims of the present study.

Table 5-1 summarizes each point along the project-stance continuum with an illustrative quote. The following subsections present the continuum’s six points, moving from far-left (inquiry as project) to far-right (inquiry as stance).

Table 5-1: Project-stance continuum themes and illustrative quotations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuum Theme</th>
<th>Illustrative Interview Quotation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceiving inquiry as a requirement</strong></td>
<td>“You still have to do it, whether you like it or not!” (Rachel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceiving inquiry as a community expectation</strong></td>
<td>“Inquiry is very important for the PDS community.” (Rachel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Becoming curious about one’s own and others’ knowing</strong></td>
<td>“How do I learn more about this?” (May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claiming a direction for worthwhile inquiry</strong></td>
<td>“I decided to go back and fine tune.” (Hope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceiving inquiry as an activity that generates worthwhile knowledge</strong></td>
<td>“Analyzing the data helps you to answer your wondering.” (Cordelia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asserting ownership over the generation of worthwhile knowledge</strong></td>
<td>“You can change…at any time!” (Cordelia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Perceiving Inquiry as a Requirement**

At the far-left of the project-stance continuum, teacher candidates perceived practitioner inquiry as a requirement they were expected to fulfill. This perception was characterized by teacher candidates’ sense of responsibility toward their obligations for their clinical practice seminar, including the fact that they would be receiving an
academic grade for their work related to practitioner inquiry. Such perceptions of inquiry as a requirement were not connected to the Knowledge dimension’s notion of inquiry as a knowledge-generating activity, and they were often accompanied by teacher candidates’ doubts about the proper place and the worth of practitioner inquiry.

It is important to note that no teacher candidate perceived practitioner inquiry exclusively or even primarily as a course requirement. This finding is perhaps unsurprising, given that the teacher candidates were aware of the researcher’s passion for practitioner inquiry and, consequently, may have been unlikely to disclose such perspectives if they did, indeed, exist. However, such an interpretation would likely be unwarranted because some teacher candidates freely acknowledged that they perceived practitioner inquiry as a course requirement—at least some of the time. Their openness in sharing suggests that teacher candidates who participated in this study felt comfortable disclosing their skepticism about inquiry to the researcher.

Charity openly acknowledged her initial skepticism toward practitioner inquiry, emphasizing that, at least at first, she understood it as a course requirement for the clinical practice seminar. Charity began tentatively revealing her doubts about inquiry when she shared her struggle to conceptualize inquiry in relation to a writing unit she had been planning. Her skepticism seemed to arise, in part, from confusion about the relationship between inquiring into her own practices and using inquiry as a curricular or pedagogical framework:

…And to think, like, “How can I make writing as inquiry-based as possible?”

Because, right now, a little bit, I’m almost thinking that my unit isn’t entirely
inquiry-based. I’m trying my best, but part of me just kind of thinks, like, “Is this inquiry?” I’m just still kind of questioning. (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20)

This passage indicates how Charity was initially unsure that inquiry had much of a place in some areas of the school curriculum. She explained that she understood a clear connection between inquiry and science instruction, but Charity wondered whether and how inquiry was relevant to the rest of her teaching.

As her initial interview continued, Charity confided that she was also quite hesitant about the PDS’s expectation that she engage in inquiry into her own practices. Under further questioning, Charity acknowledged that this expectation sometimes felt like a project that was required for a course, even though she understood that it was intended as more than just a project:

Am I skeptical about inquiry? I guess so...It does feel like a project because I’m doing research...I’m collecting data, and then I’m presenting it, and I did something kind of like that in high school. And I know that was a long time ago. But at the same time, I don’t view it as a project because this is something that I do want to do more on an everyday basis...Like, I want to have writing groups, and conferring with kids, and seeing how that does affect them because I think that can really have a big impact on them. So, that’s where I kind of don’t see it as a project, but the rest—like the very concrete stuff, like collecting data, doing a presentation on it—that’s the part that I view as it being a project, if that makes sense. (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20)

Charity took care to distinguish the aspects of inquiry that she did not consider as a project, such as implementing writing groups within her teaching, from the aspects that
did feel more like the components of a research project for a course, such as collecting
and presenting data.

In contrast to Charity’s cautious description, when asked about her sense of
responsibility to inquire, Rachel was immediately forthcoming about her perception of
inquiry as a graded assignment for a university class:

I have a responsibility [to inquire]. I feel like I apply [sic] more to that because I
am a student. So, I would be interested to see if I would say “yes” once I actually
get a job and I’m in the real world, teaching…I feel like because I’m still in
school, it’s kind of like a requirement, in a sense. That’s what we’re learning. It is
part of my grade. It’s kind of like, “Oh, here’s something that we’re learning
about, but you still have to do it, whether you like it or not!” And I’m not saying I
don’t like it, but because I’m not running the entire classroom, and I don’t have
all the weight on my shoulders, I would be curious to know if I had the time and
the resources to do it if I was alone in a classroom. (Rachel, Interview 2/5,
2.28.20)

Rachel’s perception of inquiry as a project, coupled with her doubt about whether inquiry
would be a worthwhile, sustainable activity in her future role as a classroom teacher, was
initially reinforced by her mentor teacher.

The influence of her mentor teacher’s perceptions of practitioner inquiry upon
Rachel was complex, however, and over time, Rachel began to resist what she perceived
as her mentor teacher’s attempts to frame inquiry as a project or just another item on a to-
do list. As one aspect of her inquiry, Rachel had decided to incorporate a range of
activities and practices she believed would support positive self-talk, kindness, and
gratitude throughout her classroom. In her fourth interview Rachel maintained that, to her mentor teacher, inquiry was primarily a course requirement that was to be completed by teacher candidates in the PDS, which shaped how she related to inquiry:

I know when I would do other lessons, I would try and tell students [about kindness]. Even in different activities, I’d say, “Give yourself a compliment. If you were going to give someone else a compliment, what would you say?” And I am trying to do that through activities where they’re doing something, and I’m like, “Okay, now go back and compliment someone else’s work.” But I feel like, in [my mentor teacher’s] eyes, having an intern [i.e., teacher candidate], and having this inquiry, is just another thing on the plate that [my mentor teacher] has to do and fulfill because it’s like it’s “mandatory,” in a sense. But [my mentor teacher’s] ideas were more focused on the academic and not my inquiry. (Rachel, Interview 4/5, 4.30.20)

The perception that a mentor teacher regarded inquiry as a mandatory project was also reported by Charity, who had noticed by the time of her second interview that her mentor teacher had a tendency to confine any discussion of inquiry to the completion of Charity’s one-time project in the PDS:

I feel like [my mentor teacher’s] not a huge “inquiry guru.” I feel like the only times I hear [my mentor teacher] talk about inquiry is when it comes to me doing my inquiry project, and that’s probably where I’m coming...I’m kind of associating it with that, too. (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20)

Of the six teacher candidates who participated in this study, Charity and Rachel most clearly described how their mentor teachers’ perceptions of practitioner inquiry
influenced their own inquiry stances. These examples suggest that having a mentor teacher who values practitioner inquiry may have a powerful influence upon how a teacher candidate’s inquiry stance develops. As will be illustrated in a later section, in contrast to Charity’s and Rachel’s mentor teachers, Aurelia’s mentor teacher took a much more interested, active, and collaborative role in Aurelia’s inquiry, even though all three mentor teachers had previously served as supervisors and had supported practitioner inquiry within the PDS.

**Perceiving Inquiry as a Community Expectation**

A rightward shift along the project-stance continuum accounts for teacher candidates’ perceptions of inquiry as an expectation of a community (e.g., the PDS, the university) in which they sought to generate knowledge because they valued the opportunity to participate. For instance, in her initial interview—the same interview in which she also discussed inquiry as a course requirement—Charity also noted her observation that inquiry was something that was valued simultaneously within the PDS, at RVSU, and as a professional expectation for teachers. Asked whether she felt a responsibility to engage in research at some level, Charity shared:

> I just feel like PDS and [RVSU] itself are very research-heavy programs. And I’m just kind of used to it, and I do feel like I should be part of it. But do I feel like it’s anyone else’s responsibility? No. I think this is something you choose to do not necessarily like, “I’m responsible for conducting research.” But I feel like most teachers do research on certain strategies and approaches and techniques to bring into their classroom. So, I guess I’ll go more with “Yes, it is my responsibility to
conduct research.” But I’m still kind of wishy-washy on it. (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20)

Rachel shared a comparable sentiment:

Because I’m a student, I have the responsibility to learn, to grow. I feel like it’s part of our seminars, our learning, our [RVSU] community…is about research. And now, in PDS—I’m not sure if it’s just PDS. It probably isn’t, but inquiry is very important for the PDS community. I’m just assuming it’s branching into the normal curriculum for [RVSU]. (Rachel, Interview 1/5, 1.28.20)

Although other teacher candidates occasionally exhibited characteristics of this perspective, Charity and Rachel’s initial interviews offered some of the clearest examples of what it meant to perceive inquiry primarily as a project or expectation within the context of the PDS. This theme, like the preceding one, was relatively less prominent than the others along the project-stance continuum. However, it indicates the potential significance of teacher candidates’ sense of inquiry’s place and value within the communities where their inquiries are located.

**Becoming Curious About One’s Own and Others’ Knowing**

Another rightward shift along the project-stance continuum characterizes perspectives shared by teacher candidates who emphasized the relationship between their inquiry and their emerging curiosity about their own and others’ knowledge and knowing. When they adopted this perspective, teacher candidates expressed their drive to satisfy a sense of curiosity related to their own knowledge of teaching or their sense of wonder about the knowledge of others. Teacher candidates sharing this perspective underscored and illustrated their understandings of the importance of the process of
developing wonderings. They also discussed the value in seeing other educators ask questions about their practices.

In her initial interview, Cordelia stated that adopting an inquiry stance means being curious by “asking a bunch of questions” and “having a wondering and knowing that that’s what you want to really to look into” (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20). Cordelia’s Inquiry into the Learning of an Individual (ILI) from the Fall 2019 semester had led her to become increasingly curious as she started to explore professional literature as one source of data for her inquiry:

For the past inquiry, I read a lot of literature, and I learned a lot more, which I thought was really neat because I haven’t done much professional reading. So, it was really nice to be able to pick something specific that I really want to learn more about. (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20)

Charity shared a similar understanding to Cordelia’s emphasis on curiosity. She described how she realized, as she began to learn more about the process of practitioner inquiry, that her own knowledge in a particular domain was rather limited. This realization led her toward a new kind of curiosity about her own knowledge:

I’ve always kind of been interested in metacognition and self-awareness and also growth mindset and how that will affect my students, but I just feel like I didn’t have enough data for it, enough things to support it, necessarily. But now I’m kind of just asking myself, “What are some other things I can focus on that maybe my classroom is struggling with?” (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20)

Charity articulated the significance of becoming curious about her own knowledge of teaching. Aurelia, in her initial interview, emphasized the power of the wondering
development process. Asked to describe her thinking about the inquiry cycle, Aurelia shared, “I think it’s the most important part of the inquiry circle—having that question and that wondering to expand upon for the rest. Having that foundation” (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20).

The importance of “having that foundation” in the form of a clearly defined wondering and inquiry plan was a recurring theme for Aurelia, in particular, who described her desire for greater clarity within the inquiry process during several of her interviews. For other teacher candidates, however, becoming curious about their own knowing seemed to hold intrinsic value. May emphasized her belief that she could explore a wondering at any time and that an inquiry cycle could be initiated for nearly any reason. She explained:

I think that you can inquire about almost anything…You can inquire [sic] something for years…I think that if I have something I’d like to research, I should be doing it. I should be looking into helping and doing as much as I can and being involved in learning and growing in all the ways I can…Maybe it’s in your gut. Or, you want to know something, and you’re thinking, “I really want to know this,” if something happens. It doesn’t always have to be, but something happens, and I need to know. But sometimes it can be. Sometimes it’s like, “I’ve learned this, and I want to know more. But how do I learn more about this?” It can come from a lot of things. (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

May described a range of types of inquiry and how her own natural curiosity sparked inquiries in many areas of her life. For May, the process of becoming curious about her own knowing emerged from a specific, critical incident that took place during a
reading lesson. May had initially been wondering about how she could adapt her mentor teacher’s classroom library to support her students’ motivations to read. However, she became increasingly curious about her own practices during an incident when she noticed a shortcoming in her professional knowledge. May described how this moment had fueled her growing curiosity about her own knowledge of literacy instruction:

I realized that the reason I wanted to know why kids were motivated and what I can do with the library is because I want to know how to help them, how I can support them. All that jazz. But I was thinking it would help me in conferring, so now I’m focusing really on conferring. Like, what is it? How do you do it? I started to redo my whole brief and my plan. I don’t know if I ever shared my original brief with you. This one is new! I just threw the other one away. My plan for this one is: I want to know what conferring is, how to help students set reading goals during conferences, and how to help students follow through with the goals. How to teach students skills that will help them achieve their reading goals during small group conferences...Because I realized that I quote-unquote [sarcastically] “knew” how to confer. You bop around. You check out the white folder. See what they did last. You ask them to read to you, and, for example, I was working with one girl, and she was working on...What is it? Oh, on “retelling.” And I sat down with her. I asked her to retell. She got halfway through. The girl can’t retell to save her life. She’s like, “Well, this is the character.” And that’s all she had—one character. So, I try to help her out a little bit, but then I had her read three more pages. And then I stop her again. I’m like, “Okay, well, tell me what happened in these three pages!” And she can do that. And then, there’s only three or four
pages left in the story. Then, she can do that, but she has to do it in small chunks. And I’m like, “Okay, so I know to do that!” But then I go over there [i.e., to another student], and I’m like, “Oh, what do I do now?” It’s like, how do you close a lesson when you teach something, and you’re like, “…And that’s it!” I was like, “You know, I don’t know what advice to give her. What should I tell her to be doing? I don’t know…. ‘Learn how to retell!’” That is not advice. (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20)

May continued, emphasizing her emerging curiosity about knowledge and ideas advanced by other people that could potentially inform her own inquiry. As she described her curiosity about children’s ability to learn new languages, May wondered:

I’m now asking questions that are broader and you can do more to find out, and you can work on them, and there’s research. But you’re still testing it out on your own… If you’re talking about language development as a whole: How does it benefit students to have a first language and a second language? Or, why is it so much easier for kids to learn a language than it is for adults to learn a language? Because that is a proven fact. The research says that. I just haven’t looked that much into it. (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20)

May’s curiosity about “the research” echoed her perception of her mentor teacher’s commitment to reading as a form of professional development. She described her amazement when her mentor teacher referred to her professional reading during an interaction with a student:

[My mentor teacher]’s definitely always very curious and wondering what to do the best for kids in the classroom. And she’s always talking about “the research.”
I think that’s really cool. She always definitely goes into it. One of my favorite things is, we have this one little boy, and all he wants to do...He was an “H” at the beginning of the year for his reading level, and all he wanted to do was read books that weren’t an “H,” but he couldn’t read the books. And she’d be like, “You know, so-and-so, the research says that you have to read 30 good-fit books in your level before you can even try to move up.” So, she’s doing the research, and she’s looking into it. I think that’s part of it. She’s curious. So, she’s going and finding this information, and she’s using it in her classroom. (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20)

Where May remarked upon her own admiration and curiosity about her mentor’s use of research, Aurelia described her strong perception that her mentor teacher—in contrast to the mentor teachers of Charity and Rachel—as deeply curious about her own knowledge of teaching:

I think when [my mentor teacher]’s thinking of lessons, she’s constantly asking herself about how she could effectively give these lessons and how she should portray, for example, the mood of the story. And she’s asking a lot of questions all the time, and she doesn’t necessarily know the answers to them. But she’s using teaching as a learning experience to help formulate—maybe not answers—but ideas that could get her eventually to the answer. And she’s really involved with trying different things in the classroom and seeing what works and what doesn’t. Sort of like, trial, error. And she’s also doing her own inquiry on kindness right now. She has a grant for it. And these gratitude journals and seeing how kids evolve in their gratitude and kindness over the year...She has a definitive question
to the inquiry that she wants to possibly have answered or expanded on. And I think that she’s doing different types of research mechanisms, whether it’s using the students’ ideas that they’re doing and kind of studying them. Studying behaviors: what they think versus what they do. So yeah, I think that there’s a lot of studying involved. (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20)

Aurelia and May’s rich descriptions of their curiosities, as well as their observations of their mentor teachers’ efforts to pursue their own inquiries, provide clear examples of this theme within the project-stance continuum. At this point along the continuum, however, teacher candidates were describing curiosity about knowledge, not necessarily how they were using inquiry to address that curiosity.

Claiming a Direction for Worthwhile Inquiry

The process of developing a wondering provided an opportunity for teacher candidates to become curious about knowledge—what they knew and how they knew it, as well as what and how their mentors come to know. This process, however, also caused teacher candidates to struggle, sometimes intensely, as they attempted to define what kinds of knowledge were worth developing through their inquiries. Moving farther right along the project-stance continuum, teacher candidates described their efforts to refine and to claim a worthwhile direction for their inquiries. Teacher candidates described the challenge of continually reworking what was actually worth coming to know as a result of their inquiries, and why it was worth knowing. This theme was characterized by teacher candidates’ sense of a struggle that eventually yielded a direction that they felt was worth pursuing.
Initially, many of the teacher candidates’ struggles to define a direction for their inquiries were related to inquiry questions that were simply too broad or that lacked sufficient focus to be worth researching. May acknowledged that, at the beginning of the semester, she had felt a sense of pressure to narrow down an excessively broad wondering related to reading instruction. She confided, “I really think that at the moment my inquiry has not gone very far because I’ve really been trying to figure out what the heck I actually am working on” (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20).

May’s dilemma over how to identify a worthy focus for inquiry was widely shared, but once teacher candidates had resolved this dilemma, the struggle seemed to be worthwhile. In her second interview, Charity expressed her sense of growing confidence as she defined the focus of her inquiry. She shared, “Coming up with the foundation of something that you want to focus on. Since our last interview, I’ve kind of changed the wording, I guess, of my wondering, because I think last time was when I was just more broad, but now I feel like it’s more specific” (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20). Reflecting in her second interview about her difficulty with developing a focused wondering related to the use of instructional technology, Aurelia shared at length about how finding a clear focus began to fuel her passion for practitioner inquiry:

I feel like what I’ve learned…is that [an inquiry] needs to have more of a focus. And I think that once I focused it on just using one form of technology, one tool, that I’ve been more passionate about it. And I don’t think it’s just the tool itself, but I think it’s because I’ve narrowed down to what I’m doing. And it doesn’t seem as...It was “static-y.” I was like, “I don’t know what I’m going to use for this. I guess I’ll try this out and not fully understand the tool that I was using.” So,
I think being very specific in what I want my question to be and what my tools are that I use it in, is kind of how that’s changed for me…I think that’s helped me a lot because otherwise, I think I would just kind of been pulling random things, and, I mean, that’s fun to do, too, but I feel a lot more passionate about this now. I’m excited. I can see myself using this in my own classroom…I felt like, when it was broad, I was kind of lost. I wasn’t totally lost. I knew what I wanted to do, but I wasn’t as clear, and I didn’t have as many ideas popping into my head…And maybe you develop that inquiry stance over time with like a topic that you’re passionate about. But I feel like if it’s not something that you’re very passionate about, it’s going to be hard to do. Because you invest a lot of time, and when you’re passionate about something, you want to keep trying things. Even when you fail, you keep going, and you keep wondering, keep adding to it…I think that, in the beginning when my topic was very broad, I wasn’t that passionate about it. I was kind of like, “Yeah, this is going to be good. I’ll use some of these things in my own classroom, hopefully, and hopefully the kids like it.” But now that I narrowed it, I feel like I’m a lot more passionate, and I want to do these lessons all the time with them. And that’s really exciting. I go home, and I’m like, “I can’t wait to make a [technology-based lesson]. I’m so excited! I’m going to use this tool!” I’m like showing it off. My roommates probably think I’m ridiculous, but I’m so excited about it. (Aurelia, Interview 2/5, 3.5.20)

As this extended passage reveals, once Aurelia had worked through the struggle to define a worthwhile wondering, she became increasingly passionate about pursuing that wondering.
Aurelia’s transformation paralleled both Hope’s and May’s experiences. At her second interview, shortly after COVID-19 prompted her to return to teach remotely from her childhood home, Hope shared how a conversation with an instructional coach led her to struggle with how to define the scope of a worthwhile inquiry:

I met with [RVSD Instructional Coach] recently, and then it was that night when I decided to go back and fine-tune. So, now that we’re...I know where I’m going to be, for a while, I’ll probably revisit that information. And I think it’s always good to do this phase and redo this phase, just because it helps you really be more specific with how to communicate your wondering to other people. So, it’s important to keep in mind that not everyone thinks the same as you do. And so, if you fine tune your wondering over and over again, it helps communicate your message more effectively. (Hope, Interview 2/5, 3.16.20)

May described a similar experience in dramatic fashion during her second interview:

Developing a wondering [means] figuring out what you want to learn, why you want to learn it...I’ve fine-tuned. I’ve been in this spot for a while, but really I was here, I started to figure out how to collect data. I went back. Wait. So, I was here [developing a wondering], I started to go this way [around the inquiry cycle], and then I went all the way back because I had to fine-tune it. So, I’m to a point where I have my wondering, which is more confident...I have a better understanding of what my wondering is, because in “Phase A” [i.e., developing a wondering], you don’t know. You just have a question. That would be your wondering. This goes from a question to [whispered] a wondering. I feel like a
wondering… I don’t want to say it’s more “official,” but if you are planning on going through the inquiry cycle and doing it explicitly… This starts from me having a question to me figuring out what I want to do. (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20)

As she described her thinking, May illustrated her recursive struggle to define a worthwhile wondering by annotating the visual interview prompt that led her into this discussion:

Figure 5-2: May’s annotations of the inquiry cycle (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20).

As May’s annotations in Figure 5-2 indicate, teacher candidates at this point along the project-stance continuum—refining and claiming a direction for inquiry—were not emphasizing their perceptions of inquiry as a project or requirement. May’s perceptions of the process were especially non-linear. Through the recursive messiness and the
struggle of delimiting a worthwhile inquiry, teacher candidates became better positioned to move closer to the right of the project-stance continuum.

Perceiving Inquiry as an Activity that Generates Worthwhile Knowledge

Even as teacher candidates were immersed in the struggle of defining and refining what would count as worthwhile knowing for the purposes of their inquiries, some began to have experiences with inquiry that fueled their desire to inquire because they had seen how inquiry could develop knowledge that was significant or worthwhile in some way. In her third interview, within a week after COVID-19 prompted schools to shift abruptly to remote learning, Cordelia described how clinical practice seminar conversations about inquiry empowered her to ask questions that she felt would lead to worthwhile, valuable knowledge of teaching:

I found a lot of areas for evidence—data collection. I think that I have a lot more areas to look through than what I had initially thought. And something else that I’ve learned about inquiry is, I feel like the analyzing part of your data is extremely important. And I’m thinking that it can show many different things…I think the whole, entire inquiry process has made me more aware of the things I’m doing, and what I’m like, who I am as a teacher, and what I’m passionate about…Whenever we talked about inquiry during our seminar, I think that kind of sparked a new wondering that I have, which is still the same as what I have, but in terms of technology and remote learning. (Cordelia, Interview 3/5, 3.24.20)

Cordelia elaborated this point further, describing an experience with data analysis that helped her understand inquiry as a process of generating worthwhile knowledge:
I feel like analyzing is kind of answering your question… I know that we met in seminar, and we all had partners review our inquiry cycle and our inquiry, and we analyzed data together. So, I feel that I was involved in analyzing the data, but I also feel that my partner, [a fellow PDS teacher candidate]... She was also helping me to analyze my data… I think that analyzing the data helps you to answer your wondering, and I think it can help you to think about if you need to start a new wondering, or if you need to collect more data. (Cordelia, Interview 3/5, 3.24.20)

Cordelia’s description of the process of analyzing data illustrates how, by this point in the semester, she had already experienced inquiry as a generative process, one that could inform her wondering. In particular, Cordelia’s discussion of starting a new wondering or making a decision to collect more data, hints about the final theme along the project-stance continuum.

**Asserting Ownership Over the Generation of Worthwhile Knowledge**

The far-right of the knowledge continuum represents perspectives shared by teacher candidates that were strongly aligned with the Knowledge dimension of an inquiry stance. The perspectives that aligned with this theme provided strong evidence that teacher candidates were asserting or beginning to assert ownership over what it means to generate worthwhile knowledge, often by adapting the process of inquiry to suit their own needs or making plans for future inquiries. By her fourth interview, Cordelia demonstrated growing confidence as she began to take command of how she was engaging with the inquiry cycle:

I don’t know if I mentioned this last time or not, but I did change my inquiry question. I would say that I’m definitely realizing that you can change your
inquiry question at any time through the inquiry process, especially with the data
you’re collecting. That might change how you phrase your question, so mine was:
In what ways can building professional relationships and professional
communities influence my teaching beliefs and practices? But I changed that
ending part to “who I am as a teacher” because I think it not only affects my
practices and my beliefs, but also who I am…I’ve learned there’s always ways of
collecting data, and, like, my survey, I sent out a first round. And now I want to
send out a second round that is a little bit more concise. So, I think just not being
afraid to go back through your data after you analyze it and see if I need more
responses. Does my survey encompass everybody that I would like it to
encompass? (Cordelia, Interview 4/5, 4.24.20)

In her fourth interview, Aurelia described how, through the experience of
inquiring during COVID-19, she had not only taken on a more open-minded perspective
on inquiry itself but also began to regard the inquiry cycle as a vehicle for wondering
about the things that mattered most to her:

I feel like [my inquiry into instructional technology] was a really good stepping
stone into creating more inquiries. And I also think it helped me think differently
about things. I’m always wondering more now…I think that it’s definitely opened
my mind up a lot more. I feel like I was kind of closed off before. I wasn’t sure
what I should be wondering about, and now I kind of understand, like, you can
wonder about anything and everything. (Aurelia, Interview 4/5, 5.11.20)

By the time of her fourth interview, Aurelia was describing how she understood her
inquiry into instructional technology as a “stepping stone” to future inquiries. She felt
that she could pursue these future inquiries in any direction she desired, indicating a sense of ownership over the knowledge-generating process of inquiry—a stance far removed from Rachel’s sense that “you still have to do it, whether you like it or not” (Rachel, Interview 2/5, 2.28.20) at the other end of the stance-project continuum.

The Community Dimension of Inquiry as Stance

The Community dimension of inquiry as stance implicates communities of inquirers as a key mechanism for educators enacting an inquiry stance. As they inquire within communities, educators work together to identify and investigate their underlying assumptions they bring to their work. They may inquire either independently or collaboratively at any given moment, but their inquiries are never isolated or cut off from communities of other inquirers.

Within the context of this case, the Community dimension of inquiry stance played out through the wide variety of independent and collaborative experiences that teacher candidates recognized as supporting their inquiries within the broader PDS community. Analyzing the data that were linked to the Community dimension led to the development of eight themes that could be clustered along two continua—a continuum representing degrees of collaboration and a continuum representing degrees of structure.

When considered together, these continua were theorized as a “collaboration-structure compass” that could potentially be useful as a framework for situating and describing teacher candidates’ approaches to inquiring both within and outside of communities. This compass appears later in this section, in Figure 5-5. The subsections that follow describe first the collaboration axis, second the structure axis, and third how these axes were
combined to form a framework for understanding how the Community dimension of inquiry as stance played out among the teacher candidates in this case.

**The Collaboration Continuum**

The horizontal axis of the collaboration-structure compass represents a continuum of collaboration within inquiry as stance as it played out in this case study. The continuum appears in Figure 5-3. At the left of this continuum is independent inquiry, which represents specific inquiries, and inquiry-related activities more generally, that teacher candidates conducted totally or primarily alone. At the right of the continuum is collaborative inquiry, which represents specific inquiries, and inquiry-related activities more generally, that teacher candidates conducted totally or primarily in collaborative settings. The following subsections describe the continuum from left to right, moving from mostly independent to mostly collaborative approaches.

![Figure 5-3: The collaboration continuum.](image)

**Independent Inquiry**

Independent conceptions of inquiry were widespread within the teacher candidates’ earlier interviews. These conceptions commonly appeared when teacher candidates spoke about “implementing” or “incorporating” an intervention within their teaching in the PDS. As Charity began to describe her initial understanding of the inquiry...
cycle, it became clear that she was thinking about her inquiry in terms of independent work that needed to be completed within the span of her internship. The inquiry Charity was planning involved implementing small-group writing instruction in a classroom where whole-group writing instruction had been the mentor’s prevailing practice.

Although she described her willingness to receive input on her inquiry from other participants in the PDS, Charity also emphasized, “I’m the one implementing this” (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20). As she described her thinking about the inquiry cycle, Charity explained that data collection, in particular, was an activity she felt was “mostly something I do on my own” (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20). Data analysis was similarly “mostly myself because I’m the one conducting the research, but again, I could always have the eyes of other people involved in the PDS program involved in this, too” (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20). Charity felt that her inquiry was her responsibility to complete, and both her mentor teacher and her supervisor encouraged this conception as they helped her plan and execute her project.

May’s initial interview appeared to indicate a similar understanding of inquiry as an independent undertaking, albeit one linked to May’s strongly expressed desire to learn and grow as an educator:

Anyone can be involved, but I’m also sure that you [i.e., the person conducting the inquiry] would like to be involved in this. It can be you. [My mentor teacher] doesn’t need to be doing these things for me. I need to be doing these things for me. This is my motivation. This is my project. This is my inquiry. (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)
May exhibited this individualistic emphasis throughout her early interviews. In the first part of the Spring 2020 semester, she was struggling to conceptualize an inquiry related to reading instruction. The process of framing a wondering for an inquiry about reading instruction had helped May recognize her own lack of knowledge as a reading teacher. She felt a strong sense of personal responsibility for doing something about this lack of knowledge. However, May perceived her mentor teacher as an accomplished reading teacher who did not necessarily need to participate in May’s inquiry about novice reading instruction. May therefore framed a mostly independent inquiry as a way to improve her own practice as a reading teacher.

*Seeking Input for Independent Inquiry*

Teacher candidates regularly collaborated with others in the PDS by seeking input for inquiries that nevertheless remained primarily as their own, independent projects. Even the teacher candidates who espoused the most independent conceptions of inquiry during their initial interviews recognized the need for some level of collaboration within their inquiries. They all expressed their intentions to seek out the people around them for the purpose of gathering input. This approach to collaboration was widespread among the teacher candidates, who relied upon the advice of other participants in the PDS as they formulated and developed their otherwise independent inquiries. As May struggled to conceptualize her inquiry related to literacy instruction, she had been weighing the merits of pursuing an inquiry related to her mentor teacher’s classroom library. May described her intentions to seek the assistance of others to help her develop her individual inquiry:

You should be asking people who can support you. I talked to [my mentor teacher]. I talked to the ESL teachers. For my spring inquiry, I’d like to talk to
both [name of RVSD teacher] and [name of another RVSD teacher], who are the
two other second grade teachers about their libraries. I’m also wondering what
happens if I talk to a first grade or a third grade teacher to see how their libraries
are different because I know that I have kids reading at both those levels. Or also
[name of another RVSD teacher]. She is third grade, but she’s also our science
methods teacher. At some point she talked about in class, though very briefly. Her
kids organize her library. They set it up how they want it. So, why does that
work? Talking to people. (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

The loose, informal collaboration involved in the kind of “talking to people” that May
was envisioning emerged as one of the teacher candidates’ most common conceptions of
the function of community in relation to inquiry. May further explained how she sought
help from a fellow teacher candidate to support the development of an individual inquiry:

I talked about it with [name of fellow PDS teacher candidate]. I talked about it
with [name of fellow PDS teacher candidate] on the car ride from [name of
elementary school in Rainy Valley School District] to class. I was like, “I have
this idea, but I don’t know how to frame it.” (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

Seeking input to “frame” or conceptualize an independent inquiry was particularly
important for Rachel. During her initial interview, Rachel was contemplating expanding
an inquiry she had begun to pursue during the Fall 2019 semester, and she longed for
more time to talk directly with others about her inquiry. Like May, Rachel valued this
loose approach to collaboration because of its potential for eliciting multiple perspectives,
which she felt could be used to strengthen an independent inquiry that was otherwise
receiving little support or input from her mentor teacher. Rachel explained the value of seeking input from others:

> It’s hard to reach out to other people through email. I love to talk to people in-person about it, and it’s hard when we only have seminar once a week, and we really don’t have that much time. And we haven’t really been focusing on our inquiry, but I would love to start talking more about it and finding more ways to bring that into the classroom and even outside the classroom. And in my brief, five-minute conversation with [an RVSU faculty member], she already gave me an idea. And I was like, “Wow, that was so easy.” The conversation that other people can bring helps so much because having that conversation with someone else…They have ideas as well, not just me, and I feel like that’s important for myself because I’ve always been a big person on community and having discussions, and bringing in those different ideas from other people, really strengthens my own ideas. (Rachel, Interview 1/5, 1.28.20)

For Rachel and May, seeking input for independent inquiries remained a primary approach to collaboration throughout most of the semester. All the teacher candidates, however, engaged in this mode of collaboration at least some of the time. For Charity, seeking input was primarily as a means toward the end of completing her independent inquiry:

> Yeah, [my mentor teacher’s] definitely become more involved, lately, because now we’re kind of like, “All right, you need to start getting this done.” I’m like, “Yeah, that’s true.” So, yeah, we’ve talked about what the new unit is and what we’re going to do for that. I actually have it written right here [holds up sticky
note]. So, the new unit is kind of a strange one because some of the second grade teachers do it, and others don’t. It’s like a lab report, but we’re not doing that. We’re doing a mix of how-to writing and nonfiction. I’m going to choose a broad topic based off of something that they already learned. Originally, I thought it would have been perfect to do wetlands, but we’re not learning that until basically our inquiry happens, so…can’t do that. And [my mentor] agreed that would have been a really good one to do but just not an option. (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20)

As Charity and her mentor worked from an understanding that Charity needed to make progress on her inquiry, Charity sought her mentor’s input on the curricular context in which her inquiry could be situated. She sought input from her supervisor, who assisted her in planning out a calendar that would help her “get this done” in time to share at the annual inquiry conference. Although both her mentor and supervisor supported her through input, Charity’s inquiry remained a project to be completed independently.

**Cultivating Inquiry Relationships**

Some teacher candidates were more purposeful about collaboration as they cultivated new relationships for the specific purpose of supporting an inquiry. Cordelia’s initial interview offered a strong example of a relationship-cultivating approach to collaboration that was intended to support the development of an inquiry. At her initial interview, Cordelia was contemplating the possibility of pursuing an inquiry related to developing her professional relationships and growing her professional community. To pursue this kind of inquiry, Cordelia recognized that she needed to adopt a purposefully
collaborative approach. She described how she was thinking broadly about the relationships that could support her inquiry about relationships:

I’m from [a town near RVSU], but I know nothing about [Rainy Valley]. I’ve been here my whole life, and I just never thought about the [Rainy Valley] community. And now that I am here, I’m just thinking about all the different partnerships that could be available to the elementary schools with [Rainy Valley] having a relationship with [RVSU]. There’s one relationship with the greater community, and, of course, putting interns and student teachers into the classroom is what it’s used for, but I know here at [school in RVSD], they have a relationship with the [Rainy Valley Public Library], and they visit very often there. And that’s something that [school in RVSD] doesn’t do…I mean, I know that kids go outside of school to [the Rainy Valley Public Library], but they don’t visit it in school. So, I’m just wondering…I’m probably going to stay here my whole life. But if I were ever to venture somewhere else, I would want to know what ways I could get in touch with the greater community and how I can use that and bring it into my classroom. (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20)

Cordelia persisted with her inquiry into professional relationships and professional community throughout the Spring 2020 semester. As she developed this inquiry, Cordelia took time to get to know an RVSU faculty member by requesting a time to meet and talk about synthesis of qualitative data. Cordelia also purposefully cultivated an inquiry relationship with the principal of the school where she was completing her internship. Cordelia described this principal as someone deeply committed to supporting inquiry and who “saves time at faculty meetings to share inquiries” (Cordelia, Interview
Beyond merely seeking input, Cordelia developed a relationship with this principal, who took the time to review Cordelia’s survey of school faculty perspectives on professional relationships and community. As their relationship developed, the principal encouraged Cordelia to promote and share her inquiry through an interactive bulletin board about community, which hung in the school’s faculty lounge.

Hope, whose ILI from the Fall 2019 semester was related to cultivating joy within her practice, described her efforts to develop a professional relationship with an instructional coach she felt was well-positioned to shape her inquiry. In her second interview, which took place shortly after COVID-19 closed RVSD’s physical school buildings, Hope shared:

I did have the pleasure of meeting [RVSD instructional coach] before we got shut down. And so, she was very useful. And hearing another one talk about their experience with this, the impacts that it has with them…And since she’s not a [classroom teacher], what different areas of the school day she really looks for those moments of joy. It was really nice to hear her perspective on things. (Hope, Interview 2/5, 3.16.20)

For Hope, this purposeful cultivation of a new and specific professional relationship was critically important to refining her individual inquiry about joy, which related to a separate project her instructional coach was pursuing that was also related to joy:

I have a question. My definitions with the terms in my question are changing. So, as far as having a wondering, it’s there, but fine-tuning it is still a continuous cycle. Since our last interview, I’ve sort of been open to evolving that wondering
with discussion with [RVSD instructional coach], specifically, and resources…Talking to people that have done something similar, to sort of, you know, have someone understand my train of thought, and what it means to them, a different perspective. Since our last interview, myself and [RVSD instructional coach] have played a big part in developing our wondering. (Hope, Interview 2/5, 3.16.20)

In contrast to the “seeking input” approach to collaboration, Cordelia and Hope cultivated deeper, more purposeful relationships over time in order to support their otherwise independent inquiries. For Rachel, whose mentor had also participated in the PDS for many years, both as a mentor teacher and previously as a supervisor, cultivating a relationship with her mentor that specifically included an emphasis on developing Rachel’s inquiry enabled their collaboration. Rachel’s mentor took an active role in supporting Rachel’s developing inquiry:

I felt like a big reason why I was able to do my inquiry was because [mentor teacher] kind of was like, “Oh, I have an idea of things that you’re interested in. Maybe you do too.” So, her interest in the idea, I think, really sparked her interest in me doing it and letting me do it. And then she actually helps with it, so I feel like if this was something that she was not also passionate about, it wouldn’t be pushed and stressed as much as it is. But definitely having a couple days a week in the classroom where I was able to do a quick journal entry and a quick mini-lesson wasn’t always possible. I had to pick a specific time, and when we were in the classroom, I really didn’t do a whole lot, as much as I wanted to. (Rachel, Interview 4/5, 4.30.20)
Rachel’s mentor supported Rachel in framing a wondering for her inquiry and encouraged her to allocate time within the daily schedule to “incorporate” her inquiry, which explored a range of topics related to social-emotional learning. In contrast to Aurelia’s mentor, however, Rachel’s mentor played a supporting role without necessarily collaborating directly in the inquiry itself.

**Collaborative Inquiry**

Wholly collaborative approaches to inquiry were rare among the teacher candidates. Collaborative approaches featured an inquiry that involved direct and sustained participation by another person or people besides the teacher candidate, regardless of the particular level or type of structure the collaboration involved. In fact, Aurelia was the only teacher candidate who described a direct and sustained collaboration on an inquiry with another person—her mentor teacher. Aurelia’s mentor teacher had been involved in the PDS for many years, both as a mentor teacher and previously as a supervisor. She had conducted several inquiries of her own, supervised teacher candidates’ inquiries, presented her inquiries at local and national conferences, and regularly supported her elementary students in inquiry. When Aurelia began to develop her inquiry for Spring 2020, she initially posed a wondering about how she could support English language learners. This inquiry, however, was just one among several possibilities she had considered pursuing:

I had [an inquiry] that I kind of wanted to do, a mini-one about the ESL, international population. I think for me, having that initial inquiry started making me think about all the other things that I was curious about and wanted to learn
more about. I think it opened me, in my mind, to other problems or things that I could solve or wonderings. (Aurelia, Interview 5/5, 6.10.20)

As Aurelia continued to explore possibilities for inquiry, her mentor teacher provided the impetus for a different direction:

When I was thinking about inquiry, I wasn’t really sure what to do. And then [my mentor teacher] was kind of like, “Well, I don’t know a whole lot about technology, and I need to. So, are you interested in that? And would you want to do that? It would help you, and it would help me.” And I was like, “Yeah, sure. I like all the technology stuff, so why not?” So, I started with that. (Aurelia, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20)

Aurelia had already explored the use of instructional technology for her ILI during the Fall 2019 semester; however, her mentor’s suggestion provided new energy to continue and expand this inquiry. Ultimately, Aurelia and her mentor developed this inquiry, which they shared throughout the Spring 2020 semester, as an exploration of Nearpod (Nearpod, Inc., 2020), a form of instructional technology, as a means of increasing student engagement. As the inquiry developed further, Aurelia described how she collaborated with her mentor to collect and analyze data for her inquiry:

I’m sharing my things with [my mentor teacher], and so she’s going to give me feedback of maybe some other ways that I can incorporate [Nearpod], or just other activities I can use for it. We’re both kind of learning together with it. I think that she wants to use these in the future, is what she was saying. So, she has all of them, and the [Nearpod] codes that she can go back and maybe edit in, or whatever. But also we’re looking a lot for the assessment piece because it gives
such good...Just definitive, clear assessments that otherwise would take hours for
us to do and grade, and when it’s over, it’s all right there at the end. (Aurelia,
Interview 3/5, 4.2.20)

Aurelia’s mentor teacher took a keen interest in collaborating with Aurelia on this
inquiry. She not only supported the development of the inquiry but took an active role in
collecting relevant data:

For engagement, [name of mentor teacher] and I decided that I’m going to teach
two number corner lessons when I come back [from spring break]. The first one is
going to use Nearpod and the technology, and the second one, they’re going to be
both in the same thing, like, the problem strings. Same category. So, I’ll do a
Nearpod lesson, and I’ll do the paper-pencil one that the number corner has. And
she’s going to do an engagement survey of the kids, while I’m doing that, to see
“on task” and do all that so I can have that data to show if there’s more
engagement or not. (Aurelia, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20)

As data collection proceeded, Aurelia and her mentor continued to collaborate as
they analyzed the data and adapted their teaching in response. Aurelia described how she
and her mentor teacher used the data they had collected, both from the instructional
technology and the engagement survey they had devised, to create instructional groups.
She reported, “[My mentor teacher]’s been involved because we kind of analyzed a lot of
this together. And we pulled small groups of what we wanted to focus on with kids and
being able to kind of coteach at different times” (Aurelia, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20).

Although each teacher candidate described collaborating with others in some way
throughout the course of her inquiry, Aurelia’s detailed descriptions of purposefully
collaborating on a specific inquiry that emerged from a shared interest with her mentor were peculiar among the teacher candidates’ interviews. Aurelia and her mentor developed a specific structure for collaboration—a shared inquiry (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020)—that was unique among the teacher candidates who participated in this study.

The Structure Continuum

The vertical axis of the collaboration-structure compass represents a continuum of structure within inquiry as stance as it played out within this case study. The continuum appears in Figure 5-4. At the bottom of this continuum is inquiry that is unstructured, which represents specific inquiries, and inquiry-related activities more generally, that were conducted loosely or informally. At the top of the continuum is structured inquiry, which represents specific inquiries, and inquiry-related activities more generally, that were conducted within highly structured or organized settings. The following subsections describe the continuum from bottom to top, moving from mostly unstructured to mostly structured inquiry activities.
Unstructured Inquiry Activities

Teacher candidates engaged in an extensive range of unstructured inquiry activities that they felt were vitally important in supporting their inquiries. These unstructured activities often took the form of unplanned, impromptu conversations and spontaneous interactions with trusted members of the PDS community. In particular, the teacher candidates described the importance of unstructured inquiry activities through which they assisted one another in developing wonderings for their Spring 2020 inquiries. During her second interview, Cordelia described how a series of unstructured interactions over the past month had supported her in developing and focusing her wondering related to professional relationships and communities:

I think that always having people look at your inquiry and thinking about it—having a fresh perspective on it—can help…We have a PDS group chat, so I was
texting [my fellow PDS teacher candidates] in there, and I was telling them, “I
don’t know if I should change it or keep it as-is.” And I think just asking them
about it made me realize what I needed to change about it. I was internalizing it
all. But then, once I actually asked somebody about it, it made me realize some
things that I should be changing. And they also asked me questions, as well.
Because they weren’t sure about my purpose and all that stuff, so we had a
conversation about that… They asked me questions about it. I asked them, because
I had the development of the wondering I have now about professional
relationships, and then I had my previous one. And I just asked them, “Which one
should I choose to do?” And they were like, “Well, can you tell us a little bit more
about your purpose?” Then I told them a little bit more, and then one of the PDS
interns [i.e., teacher candidates] followed up with me to see what I actually
changed about it. (Cordelia, Interview 2/5, 2.24.20)

In this instance, Cordelia’s unstructured inquiry activity was enabled by the
existence of a separate structure—the PDS teacher candidates’ group chat. In other
instances, however, unstructured inquiry activities took the form of spontaneous
conversations, as when May described a discussion, during a shared car ride to clinical
practice seminar with another teacher candidate, about her struggles to frame her ideas in
terms of a wondering for inquiry. Still other unstructured inquiry activity took place with
people not formally or institutionally affiliated with the PDS. Hope, whose Fall 2019
inquiry had presented numerous challenges, described her broad view of data collection
as something that could be unstructured and seamlessly integrated with her other
activities:
Anybody can be involved in data. It can be a conversation over text, or a phone
call to mom, or whichever. It doesn’t have to be concrete, “Oh, at this time, so-
and-so did this. Let me put a checkmark in this column.” So, it can be very fluid.
(Hope, Interview 1/5, 1.27.20)

The “phone call to mom” as an unstructured inquiry activity echoed several
teacher candidates’ experiences with thinking and talking about inquiry with people who
were not formally affiliated with the PDS. Teacher candidates’ friends and family
members were sometimes involved in these unstructured conversations. In her third
interview, Cordelia described how she would “share with my boyfriend or my sister what
I’m doing, which is really nice” (Cordelia, Interview 3/5, 3.24.20). Similarly, Rachel
described how, as she contemplated a new inquiry related to antiracist teaching, a
conversation with her boyfriend led her to think more deeply about how she was
conceptualizing racism and working to counteract it through her teaching.

**Loosely Structured Inquiry Talk**

Although teacher candidates described the value of totally informal and
unstructured inquiry activities like discussing inquiry in a group chat or during a shared
car ride, they particularly emphasized the role of talking within loosely structured
conversations about inquiry. Loosely structured inquiry talk often took the form of
“check-ins,” or conversations that were purposefully designated for talking about inquiry
but that lacked any detailed agenda or protocol for structuring the conversation.
Reflecting in her final interview upon the inquiry activities she felt had been most
supportive of her evolving inquiry stance, Cordelia enthusiastically declared, “If I had to
choose anything out of all of those to be super-ooper-duper important, I would say check-
ins” (Cordelia, Interview 5/5, 5.22.20). By “check-ins,” Cordelia was referring to “one-on-one meetings” that were often initiated by her supervisor or another teacher educator. She continued, describing how check-ins were well-suited to her needs:

…Because I’m not always wanting to reach out when I need help, so sometimes it’s easier when people come to me. And then I’m like, “Oh, they want to help me, so I should probably ask for help now.” So, yeah, I would definitely say the check-ins and discussing anything that we might need help with, was really helpful. (Cordelia, Interview 5/5, 5.22.20)

Here Cordelia emphasized the importance of these loosely structured, yet purposeful, conversations about inquiry with her supervisor, in particular, but also with her mentor teacher. Cordelia did not report extensive collaboration with her mentor on her inquiry; however, she shared that her mentor teacher “has been asking me about my inquiry and how it’s going” (Cordelia, Interview 3/5, 3.24.20). These kinds of check-ins were vitally important for Cordelia, as well as for Charity, who, in her initial interview, exhibited a highly independent orientation toward inquiry, these check-ins assisted her in adopting a more collaborative approach by the time of her second interview:

I don’t know if this is answering your question correctly, but definitely talking to people that are more familiar with the process, rather than just trying to figure it all out on your own. Yeah, because [my mentor teacher] was definitely helpful with that. (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20)

By her third interview, Charity’s appreciation for loosely structured inquiry talk had continued to develop:
I just feel like I’ve been communicating this more, like with you and [name of fellow teacher candidate] and [name of mentor teacher] and [name of PDA] and even [2nd grade teacher at RVSD elementary school], [fellow teacher candidate]’s mentor teacher, [RVSU faculty member], like sharing what I’ve found so far with my support system. That’s what I like to call you guys. (Charity, Interview 3/5, 3.17.20)

In her final interview, Charity underscored the significance of these kinds of loosely structured conversations as she reflected back on the experiences that she felt had most supported her in developing her inquiry stance:

Being able to talk through it with people that are supportive and just genuinely curious about your life, I guess you could say. I know during certain seminars and stuff like that, [an RVSD faculty member] would try to talk to every intern [i.e., teacher candidate], and she had her iPad and would draw diagrams and webs, and seeing how this is connected to this, and kind of being able to visualize that. (Charity, Interview 5/5, 5.14.20)

Teacher candidates often mentioned the importance of support through these kinds of loosely structured conversations about inquiry, even when the people they were talking to were not necessarily participating directly in their inquiries. May described the importance of talking about her inquiry to anyone and everyone who was willing to support her:

I got to sit down with [fellow PDS teacher candidate], and I talked about it with [PDS coordinator] and [my mentor teacher]. But I don’t know. I feel like it’s really tough right now [due to COVID-19]. Because I don’t know where to go
about it. I don’t know what to do, necessarily. I don’t know. I feel like I won’t have any really good answers about sharing with others until a later date and time. Yes, I’ll talk with [fellow PDS teacher candidate] and [fellow PDS teacher candidate], or I’ll talk with you and [PDS coordinator], or even [RVSU faculty member]. But...Oh, I remember I had planned...I was talking to [RVSU faculty member]. I was like, “Hey, can I email you after break, and we can sit down and look at my data?” …Or, I was supposed to meet with [RVSD instructional coach]…to look at some different nonfiction strategies for these kids. (May, Interview 3/5, 3.20.20)

Hope echoed a similar sentiment about loosely structured inquiry talk:

You want to make sure that you’re considering everything while you’re analyzing it and trying to be really thorough, and I like to kind of talk about the data and just say, “Hey, what do you think of this?” to somebody else, too, because it’s nice to kind of get another perspective in order to take the best action you can…Reflecting on the whole school year, I think the most helpful thing for me is talking with colleagues, as far as what inquiry means to them, their experiences with it, how they’ve used it, how they choose to approach it. And then, I think all of those different perspectives helped, and still are, helping me kind of shape what I would like my inquiry to stance to be as I move forward in a career. (Hope, Interview 5/5, 5.26.20)

The teacher candidates offered countless examples in which they emphasized loosely structured inquiry talk, underscoring the amount of inquiring that was taking place throughout the PDS. As these examples illustrate, a wide range of PDS partners
was involved in this kind of talk—not merely those with formally designated roles as teacher educators. Through their inquiry talk, teacher candidates were, consequently, engaging other people throughout the PDS in the process of practitioner inquiry.

**Purposefully Structured Inquiry Talk**

Although teacher candidates spoke at length about the importance of unstructured and loosely structured inquiry activities and talk, they also noted the importance of purposefully structured talk about inquiry. Purposefully structured talk typically took the form of discussions that were supported by a discussion protocol and facilitated by a teacher educator. Many such discussions took place within the context of the clinical practice seminars. Through structured discussions, teacher candidates had the opportunity both to share about their own inquiries and to offer support for the inquiries of others. Cordelia, in particular, described during her second interview how important purposefully structured inquiry talk was in developing her inquiry:

I think that they [i.e., discussion protocols] have been extremely helpful. I think the one that we did for the inquiry brief was very structured and very specific as well, which I thought was very nice. I mean, I wish that we could talk about inquiry forever, but I know that’s not the case in seminar, but I think that it really helped. I mean, it gives us more opportunities and alleyways to continue the conversation after we read through the inquiry briefs because we can make comments and stuff like that. (Cordelia, Interview 2/5, 2.24.20)

Although in her final interview, Cordelia prioritized loosely structured check-ins about her inquiry, she reiterated and expanded upon the merits of protocols as a more structured approach:
I would also say the protocols that we’ve done, so, whenever we had a partner and we had like 10 minutes to share what we had already with our inquiry, and they were able to give us feedback. I felt like that was really helpful for myself, but I also really enjoyed hearing what others were doing and how I could help them. I also really enjoyed hearing…Like, for my inquiry, [fellow teacher candidate] was my partner, and some of the things that she was working on, also in relation to my inquiry, so that was kind of cool to hear, so I really enjoyed that. In terms of sharing, I think what helped me was having the guidelines. So, that PowerPoint that [RVSU faculty member] showed us, I really enjoyed having. Just something simple that we could follow, and then if people had questions afterward, and then we could answer questions if they had any. (Cordelia, Interview 5/5, 5.22.20)

In this example, Cordelia was describing how the processes of practitioner inquiry were intentionally organized by teacher educators in the PDS. The “guidelines” she referenced were simply a set of prompts that explicitly structured how the teacher candidates could talk about their inquiries during brief presentations they made at the end of the Fall 2019 semester. Thus, Cordelia emphasized the importance of both “very structured and very specific” protocols as well as “something simple” (Cordelia, Interview 2/5, 2.24.20) for structuring her inquiry talk.

**Structured Inquiry Activities**

Structured or formally organized inquiry activities represent the top of the continuum of structure within community. Teacher candidates described a range of structured activities (other than those that primarily involved purposefully structured talk) that they organized and pursued specifically in order to support their inquiries. When
asked to describe how she developed her wonderings for inquiry, May described the importance of a structured inquiry activity (“The Great Wondering Brainstorm,” Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020) that ultimately inspired her to engage in more loosely structured inquiry conversations with others, including her mother and her mentor teacher:

You can do it on the phone with your mom. That’s how I got my idea for part of my inquiry. My mom was asking me what I was doing. I was telling her that I had to start thinking about my inquiry because I had three ideas. We did this “great sticky note wondering” thing, and then I brought my top ones to [name of mentor teacher] and I talked them through to her a little bit. And I was telling my mom about it… (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

For Aurelia, developing a formalized structure to support her inquiry activities—a designated Excel spreadsheet—in collaboration with her mentor, was an important part of being systematic:

I’m, in a sense, systematic. [My mentor teacher] and I have an Excel spreadsheet, and we go and look at the students’ work every week just kind of periodically and put in like how they did on it. Like, who did it, who didn’t do it, like who maybe needs some more help on this topic, how many of the kids need help, type of thing. So, we have an Excel spreadsheet with that and with all the students’ names on it that we kind of input data. But yeah, that’s kind of what we’re doing right now with it. We’re doing it for everything that we do. It’s just kind of a periodic check-in here and there. (Aurelia, Interview 4/5, 5.11.20)
Although Aurelia’s work with this spreadsheet was not tightly scheduled, the process of recording and sifting through data related to student engagement became a routine part of how she and her mentor decided to structure their inquiry together.

For other teacher candidates, structured activities linked directly to their inquiries took the form of planning specific lessons or moments within their instruction when they would be inquiring. During her first interview, Charity had not yet developed a systematic plan for pursuing her inquiry. By her second interview, Charity had worked with her supervisor to develop an elaborately structured schedule of lessons and other activities that were intended to support her inquiry. By her third interview, Charity had begun to collaborate with her supervisor and another teacher candidate in order to plan inquiry-related activities:

We kind of have a new calendar. [My supervisor] helped me create a new calendar because I know [name of fellow teacher candidate]...I don’t know if you’re working with [fellow teacher candidate], too, but she’s kind of mimicking mine, a little bit, too. Her class is a little bit behind mine, but basically we’re kind of starting to long-term plan together, I guess, but my kids are just a lot more ahead than hers are, so I just don’t know how productive that’s going to be, but at the same time, [fellow teacher candidate] and I are close friends, so I want to be able to help her out. (Charity, Interview 3/5, 3.17.20)

Charity regularly engaged in the structured activity of planning an inquiry using a calendar. As with May’s experience of “The Great Wondering Brainstorm,” Charity’s initially structured activity (i.e., planning with a calendar) enabled her to engage in more loosely structured planning and collaborating over time.
The Collaboration-Structure Compass: Teacher Candidates Inquiring in Community

When the collaboration and structure continua are combined as in Figure 5-5, their intersection creates four quadrants, each representing a different orientation that teacher candidates could adopt toward inquiry within community, and each of which played out at one point or another during the course of this study. While these orientations depict four discrete stances toward inquiring in community, the teacher candidates’ inquiries blended together elements from each of the stances at various points throughout their clinical internships. The orientations should therefore be understood not as prescriptions but as descriptions of practice which could serve as the impetus for reflection, self-assessment, and greater intentionality about the types of collaboration involved in a given inquiry. Each descriptive orientation has been given an evocative label to assist in distinguishing it from the other orientations.

![Figure 5-5: The collaboration-structure compass within the Community dimension.](image-url)
The Colleagues (Quadrant I) combine high levels of collaboration with high levels of structure within their inquiry activities. In this study, teacher candidates commonly inquired as The Colleagues when they engaged in activities that were purposefully structured by teacher educators to support collaboration. For example, when Cordelia described the significance of discussion protocols—a form of purposefully structured inquiry talk—she was recalling an inquiry activity that positioned her and her fellow teacher candidates as The Colleagues. This orientation was also apparent when teacher candidates engaged in a structured approach to inquiry another person. Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2020) have described shared, parallel, and intersecting inquiries as collaborative structures. Each of these structures could potentially be used to support the collaborative, structured inquiry activities that are represented within Quadrant I. For instance, Aurelia and her mentor teacher engaged in a shared inquiry into instructional technology. When they met regularly to analyze Excel spreadsheet data generated within their shared inquiry, they were working as The Colleagues—two educators engaging in a collaborative and structured approach to inquiry.

The Hero (Quadrant II) combines low levels of collaboration with high levels of structure within his or her inquiry activities. In this study, teacher candidates inquired as The Hero when they worked alone and singlehandedly developed plans for their inquiries. For example, when they worked independently to write an inquiry brief describing their intentions for their inquiries, teacher candidates were working in the role of The Hero. Charity’s inquiry activities often fell within Quadrant II, such as when she described how she had created a calendar to “implement” her inquiry into small-group writing instruction.
The Wanderer (Quadrant III) combines low levels of collaboration with low levels of structure within his or her inquiry activities. In this study, teacher candidates inquired as The Wanderer on a regular basis throughout the semester. For example, when teacher candidates identified the significance of their unstructured or even spontaneous inquiry activities, such as May’s observation that thinking in the shower could be an important part of inquiry. In other instances, this may even be a primary mode of inquiring. For example, for her Fall 2019 ILI, Hope had struggled immensely with the challenge of developing a wondering about which she was truly passionate. She wandered through several possibilities but eventually realized that the data she had been collecting all semester as part of her regular, routine classroom activities, were the data that were most relevant to her emerging question about supporting students who have experienced trauma. These data had not been collected within a purposeful structure, but when Hope identified them as significant, they became a powerful basis for completing one cycle of inquiry and beginning another during the Spring 2020 semester.

The Companions (Quadrant IV) combine high levels of collaboration with low levels of structure within their inquiry activities. Teacher candidates regularly engaged in inquiry activities within Quadrant IV with their supervisors, teacher educators, and various participants in the PDS community. These people acted as professional companions for the teacher candidates’ inquiries, even if their interaction were informal or unstructured. For instance, when Hope sought out an informal conversation with her tech coach that would inform her Spring 2020 inquiry about joy within her teaching, she was engaged in a collaborative activity that was not necessarily structured. Similarly, when Cordelia identified check-ins with her supervisor as “super-ooper-duper important”
(Cordelia, Interview 5/5, 5.22.20), she was recognizing the value in collaboration that does not require a specific plan but that nevertheless was incredibly important for her inquiry.

The four orientations represented by the four quadrants on the collaborative compass—Colleagues, Hero, Wanderer, and Companions—provide some distinctive approaches to thinking about what it meant for teacher candidates to work within community as they developed their inquiry stances. Since all the teacher candidates engaged in inquiry activities within each of the quadrants at one point or another, these orientations should not be understood as neatly divided from one another. Further, some teacher candidates may tend to favor operating within one of the quadrants, while others may prefer a different approach. What the orientations offer is a basic framework for acknowledging and honoring the wide range of approaches to inquiring within community that were important to the teacher candidates who were developing their inquiry stances as they participated in this study.

**The Practice Dimension of Inquiry as Stance**

The Practice dimension of inquiry as stance, as theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), entails “an expanded view of practice” (p. 126). This expanded view indicates that educators working from an inquiry stance regard the sites of their practices as much broader than the four walls of their classrooms, or even their schools. They take on broad views of where inquiry occurs, and as they explore the many influences that bear upon their practices, they assume deeper professional responsibility for shaping these influences.
Within this study, there was, in comparison to the other dimensions, relatively little evidence that could be directly linked to the Practice dimension of inquiry stance. Nevertheless, as teacher candidates inquired, two themes were generated to describe how this dimension played out within the distinctive and expansive relationships they perceived between inquiry and their emerging professional practices. They drew upon the knowledge they were generating in order to problematize and shift their own emerging practices. As they problematized their own practices through inquiry, teacher candidates shared a broad understanding of inquiry as an “anytime, anywhere, anyone” activity—one that sometimes blurred the boundaries between their professional and personal lives. This expanding understanding is represented in Figure 5-6. The following subsections illustrate how teacher candidates used inquiry to problematize and reinvent their teaching and, in doing so, how they stretched their definitions of the legitimate contexts for inquiry.

Figure 5-6: Themes within the Practice dimension.
Problematising and Reinventing Practice Through Inquiry

Teacher candidates also began to use inquiry to problematize and reinvent aspects of their own emerging teaching practices. This positioning toward inquiry was summed up by May, who asserted, “I don’t need to change them [i.e., my students]. I need to change what I’m doing to help them…Because you shouldn’t be changing people. You want to support people and help them, but it’s like, ‘What am I doing? What can I do?’” (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20). As May’s inquiry evolved, she used inquiry as a way to make sense out of assessment data. By her fourth interview, she shared how her inquiry into reading strategy groups emerged from a struggle to support students who were learning how to retell what they had read. She shared, “I was really trying to figure out what I can do. I have this information. But what do I do with this information?…I want to figure out how to support them, what I can do” (May, Interview 4/5, 4.20.20). May realized, through her inquiry, that her existing practices were inadequate to support her students who were learning how to retell. She therefore sought out support from her mentor teacher and collected professional literature about literacy instruction in order to reinvent her own role during literacy instruction times. May underscored this understanding of using her inquiry to inform her planning for instruction in her final interview:

As a teacher, for my inquiry, I would say it looks like going into Zoom or planning things and trying to really think about what’s happening and being purposeful with my thoughts, but then trying to figure out, like, “What can I do to help support these kids?” (May, Interview 5/5, 5.18.20)
Problematizing and reinventing teaching through inquiry was a new experience altogether for Charity, whose inquiry focused on writing instruction within small groups. For Charity, the experience of collecting inquiry data through a writing assessment led to a decision to change her practices for assessing writing:

…taking note of what kids, particularly, are struggling with which sections. Is it an overall thing? Is it a small group thing? Is it certain students? I also had a student that, when I was collecting the data, she scored a 29 out of 30. And she needs to be graded on a third-grade rubric because she’s very advanced for her grade level…And I guess you could say a way that I’ve done this is kind of…I have to take [name of 2nd grade student]’s paper, and I need to grade her on a third-grade level. She is in third grade for reading, so that kind of makes most sense for her to be graded using a third-grade rubric. (Charity, Interview 3/5, 3.17.20)

Although assessments of student learning played a key role in how teacher candidates problematized and reinvented their emerging teaching practices, they were only one source of data within their inquiries. As teacher candidates worked within the other dimensions of inquiry as stance, they altered their practices in response to collaborations with mentor teachers, through discussions with teacher educators involved in the PDS, through reading professional literature, and more.

Anywhere, Anytime, Anyone: Stretching the Legitimate Contexts for Inquiry

From their very first interviews, each of the six teacher candidates exhibited broad and inclusive understandings of the contexts in which they could inquire. Their own emerging professional practices within the scope of their mentor teachers’ classrooms
were clearly employed as sites of inquiry. Aurelia described how inquiry, over time, became more and more seamlessly integrated with her professional practice as a site of inquiry:

Whenever I was doing my ILI stuff, I was like, “I don’t know how I’m going to set up these things to do research.” And I was thinking I had to be very specific with a strong intent of exactly what I was going to do. But it turned out more like the stuff that I used for the inquiry was just day-to-day, basic things that were happening in the classroom that was more of just a routine, than set up research and questionnaires. I mean, I did have a questionnaire that I sent out to the kids, but a lot of my stuff was just everyday teaching, like watching [name of Aurelia’s mentor teacher] teach, watching the kids go to their specials and what they were doing in the specials compared to myself. And that was things that I would have done anyways, as a PDS intern [i.e., teacher candidate], to go and just observe other people teaching. So, I didn’t consider that to be research for my technology inquiry, but it was! (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20)

Although teacher candidates emphasized their professional practices, primarily located within schools, as the contexts of their inquiries, many of them also asserted that the scope of inquiry was boundless. This broad understanding of legitimate inquiry contexts was clear from the very start of the interviews. It was aptly summarized by May, who, in her first interview, drew inspiration from a beloved children’s book to describe her understanding about where and when inquiry can take place:

Sometimes you can do it [i.e., inquire] in the classroom. You can do it on your sofa. You could do it in the shower. You could do it in the car. You can do it on
the phone with your mom…Anytime, anywhere. Doesn’t matter. It’s like *Green Eggs and Ham*, actually. You can do it anywhere, anytime, with anyone, any-who. (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

May’s thinking that inquiry—as well as the various phases of the inquiry cycle—was an activity for “anywhere, anytime, with anyone, any-who” was widely shared by the teacher candidates. Cordelia even hinted at the idea that her entire lives could be conceptualized as a legitimate context for inquiry or potential inquiry. She explained how she saw herself as inquiring “Everywhere. I’ve collected data *everywhere*…At school, at home…” (Cordelia, Interview 2/5, 2.24.20).

Teacher candidates’ broad conception of contexts for inquiry was only underscored as COVID-19 prompted a shift to remote instruction within their clinical settings. In her third interview, shortly after this shift, Rachel shared her belief that “inquiry can stem from anywhere at any time. I guess I’ve learned that inquiry doesn’t have to be in the classroom, but can be in our homes and our houses, especially during this time because we can’t be in school” (Rachel, Interview 3/5, 3.31.20). Aurelia added that, during the shift to remote instruction, inquiry was happening constantly, “in all of my online Zoom meetings that have involved curriculum and lesson planning…The Zoom meetings that occur like seven times a day!” (Aurelia, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20). In this sense, although COVID-19 prompted a shift in the physical location of teacher candidates’ professional practices (i.e., from physical classrooms in public school buildings to virtual classrooms headquartered in private homes), there was no significant difference, and, in fact, remarkable continuity, in teacher candidates’ understanding of inquiry as an “anytime, anywhere, anyone” activity within their professional practices.
The Purpose Dimension of Inquiry as Stance

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) were unambiguous that the Purpose dimension of inquiry as stance is always about “enhancing students’ learning and life chances for participation in and contribution to a diverse and democratic society” (p. 146). This dimension of inquiry stance, however, is far from straightforward. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle explained, the Purpose dimension encompasses conflicting conceptions of equity and justice, divergent understandings of democracy, and, in turn, conflicting purposes for educators’ inquiries.

The Purpose dimension of inquiry as stance was explored at each monthly interview when participants were asked a series of questions intended to elicit their understandings of the purposes both of inquiry in general and about the purposes of each phase of the inquiry cycle as described by Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2020). The five themes generated in the analysis of the participants’ responses to these questions indicated that the Purpose dimension of inquiry stance played out in this case through multiple, overlapping, and interconnected purposes that the teacher candidates’ espoused for engaging in the process of inquiry. It was for this reason that the webbed design in Figure 5-7 was selected as a framework that could be useful for understanding the themes that were linked to the Purpose dimension.
It is important to note that teacher candidates were interviewed about their experiences and understandings of inquiry in a broad sense, which included any place or time they understood themselves to be using inquiry. Although specific inquiries were often discussed, particular inquiry projects were intentionally deemphasized within the interview questions because this study was not seeking understanding primarily about teacher candidates’ experiences with a particular inquiry project but about their emerging inquiry stances. Consequently, during their interviews, teacher candidates shared widely about inquiry and their purposes for inquiring. They described some purposes that were explicitly linked to specific inquiries and other purposes that they had for engaging in inquiry in a more general sense.

As they related their experiences, teacher candidates frequently intermingled stories about completed cycles of inquiry, such as their ILIs from the previous semester,
with stories from a wide range of ongoing inquiries. The teacher candidates’ purposes for inquiring are therefore distinct from the inquiry “passion” profiles theorized by Dana et al. (2006) that may serve as triggers for specific cycles of inquiry because the purposes reported here were not necessarily connect to any specific inquiry. The analysis also revealed a disconnect between some aspects of the purposes theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) and the teacher candidates’ understandings of the purposes of their inquiries. Table 5-2 summarizes the five overarching purposes that were generated during data analysis, and the following subsections describe each of these purposes for inquiring that was commonly espoused by the teacher candidates.

Table 5-2: Inquiry purposes, definitions, and illustrative quotations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Illustrative Interview Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Completion</td>
<td>Teacher candidate inquires to finish a cycle of practitioner inquiry.</td>
<td>“You’ve gotta keep on truckin’, man!” (May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Teacher candidate inquires for the sake of learning.</td>
<td>“I want to learn!” (May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental/Efficiency</td>
<td>Teacher candidate inquires in order to achieve a desired outcome or increase effectiveness within a particular area of teaching.</td>
<td>“It was maximizing my lessons!” (Aurelia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Change</td>
<td>Teacher candidate inquires in the belief that the inquiry will advance a desired improvement in society.</td>
<td>“You’re challenging the status quo!” (Rachel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td>Teacher candidate inquires in order to teach in ways that respond to the characteristics of students as learners.</td>
<td>“I can use this to help that kid.” (May)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Process Completion Purpose**

During each monthly interview, an image of the inquiry cycle described by Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2020) was used as a visual aid to support teacher candidates in describing their understandings of inquiry and its processes. Some teacher candidates
described each phase of the inquiry cycle primarily as a means for accomplishing the next phase in the cycle. This linear, sequential understanding was focused upon successfully completing the phases of a cycle of practitioner inquiry. In her initial interview, Charity exhibited this purpose as she described the importance of developing a wondering:

Why should someone do this [i.e., develop a wondering]? Because this is just the foundation of the inquiry cycle, and without a question or a wondering you have about your class, I feel like you can’t do this cycle at all. (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20)

For Charity, a purpose of developing a wondering, at least as she described it during this interview, was to enable her to “do this cycle” of inquiry. Cordelia also exhibited the process completion purpose. As Cordelia described each phase of the inquiry cycle during her initial interview, the purpose of each phase seemed to be primarily to enable the completion of the rest of the phases that followed it:

Why should someone do this phase [i.e., develop a wondering]? Well, I think that it’s a very important part of the inquiry cycle. I wouldn’t say that it would have to be the very first phase that they start at. I mean, eventually, they’ll get to that phase and go through the rest of them. I think developing a wondering helps the person stay focused and not go off in other directions. It keeps them on the track that they need to be...Why should somebody do this phase [i.e., collect data]? Well, collecting data is a very important part. If you don’t have data, then you can’t analyze it and go through the rest of the steps, I guess. And, plus, it makes you learn more, and it also helps you to learn if that really is your wondering, or if something within the data that you collected is something that you’re more
interested in...Why should somebody do this phase [i.e., analyze data]? Well, I think it’s important because you will “find your findings,” and you’ll be able to move on to the next phase, or if you need to go back to phase one or phase two...Why should somebody do this phase [i.e., take action]? Well, I think that it’s going to prepare you to share it with others. And again, if you ever need to go back in your inquiry cycle, that taking action is probably going to help you realize that you need to go back. (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20)

It was only when Cordelia described the purpose of the fifth phase of the inquiry cycle, sharing with others, that she identified a substantive purpose for inquiry apart from simply completing the process:

Why should somebody do this phase [i.e., share with others]? Well, I think sharing is caring, and I think that it will help a lot of other people when you share it with others. And, I don’t know, for me I think that this phase is very important for me just to tell myself that I can do it, and others do care. I don’t know. I just think it’s very important to myself, professionally, to do it. And it’s a goal that I have for myself, but...Yeah, I just think it’s important to share everything that you learn because somebody else is probably going to need that knowledge as well. (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20)

May exhibited perhaps the strongest process completion purpose for engaging in the inquiry cycle:

Why should someone do this phase [i.e., develop a wondering]? It’s the start. Although, I guess you could, on a technicality, you could accidentally collect all this data and be like, “Wow, I have all this. But now what? Why is this
happening?” So, I would say, on a technicality, you can collect data and then, with this data, have a wondering about why this data has been collected or why there’s certain trends. But why should someone do this phase? Because you need a wondering. It’s like the start of it all. You have to start somewhere…Why should someone do this phase [i.e., collect data]? Well, you’re not going to get very far. You’re not going to get any answers to your question if you don’t collect any information…Why should someone do this [i.e., analyze data]? You’ve gotta keep trucking on, man. You collect your data. Now you’re looking at it. And this is going to help you to get the answer to this. Not that there’s always an answer. Not that it’s ever black and white. But to more understand your wondering…Why should someone do this [i.e., take action]? You’ve just got to keep going…You’ve already started, so just keep going with the process. Like, you do you. Don’t stop. Who knows what’s going to happen? (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20)

May’s response was typical of the process completion purpose, particularly for the initial interviews, yet similar purposes were espoused regularly throughout the semester. Hope, in her second interview, shared that “someone should do this [i.e., take action] because it serves as evidence for your wondering, why you’re doing it, and sort of paves the way for the following, the last stage, which is sharing with others” (Hope, Interview 2/5, 3.16.20). Even in her final interview, Charity maintained that the reason for developing a wondering was “because this is the foundation of where the inquiry cycle starts” (Charity, Interview 5/5, 5.14.20).
There were numerous additional examples of this process completion purpose for engaging in the cycle of inquiry, especially during the first two months of interviews. The manner in which interview questions were posed in relation to the inquiry cycle may have contributed to the way in which these teacher candidates described the purpose of each phase in relation to the completion of the entire cycle. However, the fact that teacher candidates also expressed a variety of other purposes for engaging in inquiry, particularly during the later interviews, indicates that they surely also had purposes beyond the process completion purpose but were emphasizing this purpose as they described the various phases of the inquiry cycle itself.

**Learning Purpose**

Some teacher candidates emphasized their understanding of the cycle of practitioner inquiry as a powerful tool for supporting their own learning. Learning as a purpose unto itself—an activity of intrinsic worth—was mentioned frequently as a reason for engaging in inquiry both generally and within the specific phases of the inquiry cycle teacher candidates were asked to describe during each interview. Teacher candidates spoke of deepening or arriving at more useful understandings of teaching through the process of inquiry.

In her initial interview, Charity explained that data analysis, in particular, was about deepening her own understanding and continuing to learn. She shared, “Maybe after you analyze data, you honestly could even branch off from here and develop more questions about what you’ve researched and figuring out what to do from there on out. I think it’s also just better understanding what you researched” (Charity, Interview 1/5, 1.21.20). This understanding seemed to persist, for during her final interview, Charity
shared that “I think [inquiry]’s important because it just keeps your mind going and constantly thinking, questioning, wondering, being skeptical, I guess, in certain ways, too” (Charity, Interview 5/5, 5.14.20). This purpose of continuing to learn was shared by Cordelia as she summarized her understanding of the purpose of inquiry during her final interview. Cordelia explained that inquiring with intentionality was a key aspect of adopting an inquiry stance:

I would say that the purpose of inquiry is to learn something new. Also, in terms of the mindset or the stance, I see it as you knowing that you’re doing inquiry. You’re conscious that you’re doing inquiry, and you’re following the inquiry cycle, or at least some part of the inquiry cycle. (Cordelia, Interview 5/5, 5.22.20)

May echoed Cordelia’s summation of the purposes of inquiry, adding that her learning through inquiry was valuable not only for herself but as an act of service to her students. Asked to summarize the purpose of inquiry as she understood it at the end of the semester, May shared:

It’s because I want to learn. I want to better myself for my students. I think that’s a big thing. It’s not just to better me because I want to better myself, but I want to be better for someone else. I want to learn, and I want to know how to help them and do these things, but also want them, by me having this inquiry mindset, this inquiry teaching style…It provides them with a way to better themselves and to be continued to be learners and growers and form these activities and these wonderings because I think that’s so important. And if you can do it in a fun way, it keeps school fun, and it keeps kids enjoying school, so that they don’t grow up to dislike school or dislike learning. (May, Interview 5/5, 5.18.20)
Hope’s final interview revealed yet another similar sentiment emphasizing learning and growth:

The purpose of inquiry is to challenge the way that you view yourself and how you view your occupation of teaching and how you approach your career and what you would like to grow with... It’s a way of looking at things, and I think the purpose of it is to grow as an educator. It’s one way to get better and better your skills, and it benefits everyone around you. It’s crazy. It benefits yourself, your kids, your personal life. It’s just a way of looking at things and a way to become a better person, mentally, and just utilize your skills and try to grow into the best teacher you can be, even though no one’s perfect. It’s a way to try to at least get better. (Hope, Interview 5/5, 5.26.20)

As Hope’s concluding perspectives indicate, teacher candidates who shared a learning purpose understood practitioner inquiry as a tool they could use to learn, to improve, and to grow. When sharing these perspectives, they did not necessarily specify, however, what it meant to them to learn and grow through inquiry, or to what other ends, if any, this learning would be directed.

**Instrumental/Efficiency Purpose**

As teacher candidates began to develop their inquiries, some also began to recognize the inquiry cycle as a tool that they could use to increase the efficiency of their instruction or solve some particular problem they had observed within the classroom.

This instrumental/efficiency purpose for inquiring was noticeable for teacher candidates like Rachel, whose inquiry sought to address problems she had identified which she felt related to kindness, gratitude, and the need to promote a growth mindset among her
students. During her second interview, Rachel described how she understood data collection as an important part of the inquiry process “because it’s very important to know that what you’re doing is actually doing what you want it to do. I feel like that’s important” (Rachel, Interview 2/5, 2.28.20). This idea of an inquiry “actually doing what you want it to do” was a consistent theme for Aurelia throughout her monthly interviews.

In her final interview, Aurelia summed up the purpose of inquiry:

I think that the purpose of like being able to do inquiry is, one, if something is going wrong in the classroom, or if you want to just better help the students. [Addressing] behavioral problems, or maybe not even problems, but just, I guess, increasing the educational experience for your students, is kind of why you should do inquiry. (Aurelia, Interview 5/5, 6.10.20)

For Aurelia, whose spring inquiry explored instructional technology, inquiry and, in particular, the technology she was exploring, made her feel that she was increasing the value of her students’ experiences in her classroom. She shared, “I think it [i.e., the use of technology] was maximizing my lessons” (Aurelia, Interview 2/5, 3.5.20). Aurelia elaborated on how she had used instructional technology to increase the efficiency of her instruction:

I like that [with instructional technology] I’m able to do multiple different strategies or incorporate different strategies to pull into their learning. For a math example the one paper/pencil, they were just, in the one station, doing symmetry and drawing it. But on the computer, it’s so much faster because it can give you just the straight lines to work with. And then we got so much more done in that time that had different aspects of it. It wasn’t just working on one section. It had
multiple different things, or, like, the grammar was like, “How many different ways can we incorporate these prefixes so that you have a really full comprehension of it?” So, we did, matching the prefix with what the definition of it was. Looking up words that have the prefixes and their meanings, and seeing how those words all, then, relate to each other, and then using those words in paragraphs to make sense in a sentence. I feel like I wouldn’t have been able to get that work done with paper/pencil time. (Aurelia, Interview 2/5, 3.5.20)

Throughout the semester, Aurelia continued to explore the many ways she could use instructional technology to increase the efficiency of her teaching. As previously described, Aurelia collaborated with her mentor teacher and used technology to increase the range of assessment data they had available to them.

Other aspects of Aurelia’s instrumental/efficiency orientation toward inquiry were directed toward solving problems or achieving particular kinds of changes she hoped to see within her students. In her fourth interview, she reflected on her beliefs about the instrumental purposes of inquiry:

The purpose of [inquiry] is to be able to formulate ways to answer questions, and I think that they’re not always questions like, “What year did Columbus sail?” You know, it’s deeper questions that kind of [inaudible] with… I almost want to say the psychology of people, in a sense, is a lot of what we’re doing. Like, how to get like a person engaged. It’s a lot of more mental things that we’re trying to work with and answer questions about and how to get on another person’s mental level, in a sense, to get them to do certain things or stop certain things. So, I feel like that’s kind of been like the purpose, I guess, in a sense, is being able to do
that. And understanding people more and what works with people and what
doesn’t. (Aurelia, Interview 4/5, 5.11.20)

For Aurelia, using inquiry as a tool to understand “what works with people” and
how “to get them to do certain things or stop certain things” was a goal for an inquiry she
had considered exploring before ultimately abandoning it to explore her inquiry into
instructional technology. Aurelia described how she had contemplated doing an inquiry
in order to change her students’ patterns of social interaction. This potential inquiry
emerged from a curiosity Aurelia had developed while observing English language
learners’ social interactions in the school where she was interning, and which she
described when asked to describe the purposes of inquiry during her final interview:

If you’re just curious about a certain topic. Like, “Why is this happening?” Like,
my one inquiry was like…Not the one that I did [about instructional technology],
but kind of my secondary [inquiry], that I thought about doing, was about, “Why
do certain social, ethnic groups only hang out with each other or only associate
with each other? How can we make them combined more?” We would have
Chinese kids all hang out together. The Arab children would hang out together,
and they never really mixed outside of ESL class. They kind of stuck together. So,
how can we break that wall down and have a more cohesive group? (Aurelia,
Interview 5/5, 6.10.20)

This description of an inquiry Aurelia was considering reveals an
instrumental/efficiency purpose. Here, Aurelia was describing inquiry as an instrument
she could deploy to “break that wall down.” She did not, however, justify why that would
be a worthwhile purpose for an inquiry, apart from the fact that she perceived a problem.
This example, in particular, highlights the significance of understanding teacher candidates’ purposes for inquiring because it illustrates the potential danger of the instrumental/efficiency purpose for inquiring in ways that could ignore or marginalize the cultures, needs, and characteristics of the learners affected by the inquiry.

**Social Change Purpose**

Several teacher candidates advanced purposes for inquiring that they felt were linked to advancing some type of broader social change. The social change purpose was sometimes, though not always, linked to a perception that inquiry could be used as a tool for supporting more equitable outcomes for students or advancing social justice in some way. In their initial interviews, this purpose for inquiring, for the teacher candidates who expressed it, often involved understanding the “develop a wondering” and “take action” phases of the inquiry cycle as ways to identify and then work toward some desired change. May explained, “I think you’re taking action because you want something to change” (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20). In her first interview, Hope elaborated the idea of change in relation to the importance of developing a wondering:

I do know about inquiry, now, that it’s used to better teaching. So, you use it to develop yourself and the community around you, to try to make it a little bit of a better place…It’s beneficial to be curious about the world around you. It’s how we can move society in a different direction, whether that’s good or bad. That’s a judgment call. And I think someone should [develop a wondering] because this initiates and snowballs findings or consequences to an event, or the way that, maybe, government looks at things. It can impact a lot. (Hope, Interview 1/5, 1.27.20)
Although for Hope, the framing of a wondering was a necessary first step to creating, over time, desirable social change, it was only a beginning. She felt that change could be initiated from her own classroom by working within the “taking action” phase of the inquiry cycle in combination with the “share with others” phase. Hope explained:

Someone should do this phase [i.e., take action] because I feel that may be the whole point of inquiry. It allows you to be a better teacher or a better person, or at least change some things—good or bad—about your practice. And I feel that in order to make inquiry effective, taking action is important…And in regard to sharing it with others…This means being open about talking about your inquiry with, maybe, some colleagues. It doesn’t have to be limited to colleagues involved; however, they’re the ones that understand the most about teaching or practicing, or they can even push you further. And it can also be shared with the community. Just to keep them updated on what’s going on, how things are moving. And if it’s a really great thing that’s helping so many children, let’s spread it to other schools so that they can see if it works for them…Someone should do this because, if it’s going to help other people and be a turning point for the community in the classroom or outside the classroom, it should be shared so that others can interpret it for themselves and see how it can be formulated to fit with either their own philosophy, or maybe it’ll just challenge their own thinking to allow them to initiate into the inquiry cycle. (Hope, Interview 1/5, 1.27.20)

By her third interview, Hope shared that although an equity concern may not initially have been the purpose of her inquiry, she was reflecting upon how her inquiry stance could evolve to consider issues of equity more explicitly. By this point in the
semester, COVID-19 had prompted a shift to remote instruction, and Hope reflected on an explicit clinical practice seminar discussion of the inequities of COVID-19 in relation to her thinking about inquiry:

So, challenging inequities…I really haven’t sat with it that long. And it was a new idea presented last night, which I really thought was interesting, and I’m glad it was because I think that it’s challenging my own inquiry stance as we speak, but I definitely think that part of the definition could apply to the definition of an inquiry, because of the fact that it’s sort of the idea behind inquiry is sort of taking something either you strongly believe in or want to improve on, and it’s developing a wondering and collecting data on that too, for the benefit of people. And so inequities have really been a prevalent issue now as far as the situation we’re in [i.e., COVID-19]. And so, I think that, you know, inquiry stance, maybe for the PDS interns [i.e., teacher candidates] and advisors, will change because of that. And so, it might include challenging inequalities long after even this is over, just because of the fact that we’re so cognizant of it right now. And I think that it’s really, really prevalent, and it definitely changes your inquiry stance. (Hope, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20)

Aurelia was also thinking more explicitly about how concerns about inequity related to her inquiry into instructional technology. Like Hope, her inquiry did not explicitly examine a question of equity, but she was nevertheless considering how issues of equity related to the lessons she was teaching with instructional technology.

I feel like, at least for my inquiry, in a sense, what I’ve been doing, I feel like the lessons that I give, I try to make them as equitable as possible for the students.
Like, I know that they all have computers, and they’ll have access to being able to do it but making sure that there’s parts in there that would be suitable for each level. And I feel like that’s important with inquiry stance is making sure that, when you’re doing an inquiry, that it’s all equitable for the students or at least that your analysis of it is equitable for students. And not just all having them on the same level because that’s not necessarily fair, but I guess being able to change ideas based on knowing your students. And I think you need to know your students to do inquiry. Like, really know them, to get an authentic view. (Aurelia, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20)

Cordelia, in her fourth interview, shared a similar approach. Like both Hope and Aurelia, Cordelia was not explicitly using her inquiry to tackle a problem of inequity, but she was questioning how and in what ways her inquiry into professional relationships and professional community could take questions of equity into consideration. For Cordelia, this entailed thinking carefully about the language she had been using to develop her inquiry and collect data:

I definitely think I’m more open-minded, and I know whenever I was creating the survey, and even my definitions for professional community and professional relationships, I knew that it was important to pick the right words. Like, I wanted to make sure that I was choosing words that encompassed who I had surveyed. So, yeah, I definitely think thinking about word choice has impacted me…And talking a little bit more about social justice and inequity. I know one of the first steps is just educating yourself. And that’s definitely what I’ve been trying to do. (Cordelia, Interview 4/5, 4.24.20)
By their final interviews, multiple teacher candidates expressed the understanding that one important purpose of inquiry can be to challenge the status quo. Rachel shared:

A big thing is challenging ideas, like we just talked about. You’re challenging the status quo, I guess. Because everyone has questions. Everyone has wonderings. But you’re actually pursuing those questions and those wonderings and finding an answer that fits you and your students. And that’s why, every year, you could have a different inquiry because your students could spark a different wondering and challenge your idea of what education looks like and learning looks like and what a classroom environment and the emotions that come with it, so I guess it’s just pushing the status quo of what normal is. (Rachel, Interview 5/5, 5.27.20)

May advanced the idea that not every inquiry will necessarily tackle a question of equity and social justice, while at the same time sharing that an inquiry might address equity to some extent even if equity were not the primary focus of the inquiry:

I would say…Not the animals [inquiry]. Not the reading [inquiry]. How to teach during the coronavirus, maybe. I would say, at the moment, I have not picked the wondering, or I have not had the wonderings or pursued the wonderings of those yet. I’m not saying I won’t. It’s just something I haven’t yet, but then at same time, I do think about, like, “Are my kids eating? How are we providing them with food? Who’s getting on and who’s not?” Those are equity; those are social justice…Like, who has access?…And that is part of the coronavirus one. So, yes, to a point, I feel like, is my answer. Like, they can. It has in small amounts, but I have not necessarily gone out and pursued one that is solely focused on ideas like that. (May, Interview 5/5, 5.18.20)
Although several teacher candidates espoused some kind of social change purpose for their inquiries, particularly when prompted to elaborate during interviews, this theme was relatively less prominent than others. Like the instrumental/efficiency purpose, this purpose highlights the significance of exploring teacher candidates’ purposes for inquiring. Teacher candidates’ social change purposes remained rather vaguely defined, suggesting the need for further exploration of how their understandings of social change are conceptualized in relation to practitioner inquiry.

**Responsive Purpose**

Teacher candidates expressed a responsive purpose for inquiring when they described how they understood inquiry as a way to adapt their teaching in response to new understandings of the characteristics of their students as learners—figuring out, as Charity put it, “what works for you and what works for your kids” (Charity, Interview 4/5, 4.14.20). Some of these responsive purposes were specifically linked to teacher candidates’ understandings of formative or summative assessments of student learning as forms of inquiry that they could use to inform their instruction. Other responsive purposes were broader, relating to wider understandings of student characteristics and needs. These broad purposes were aptly summarized by Cordelia in her second interview:

If we’re talking about many inquiries within the classroom as a teacher, if you’re not inquiring about your students and learning more about them, then what are you doing? I feel like it’s hard not to collect data from students, and that data will influence what you’re going to do next for teaching them. (Cordelia, Interview 2/5, 2.24.20)
May shared passionately about a similar understanding of inquiry as way to address students’ needs within her classroom:

Because what’s the point of...? I don’t want to say, “What’s the point of doing the inquiry?” but you’re looking, and you have these wonderings, and you want to know things. Now that you know things, what are you going to do with it? You are becoming a better human because you know these things now. So, take it and go. I now know that I can use this to help that kid. Why wouldn’t I help them? I don’t want to see you struggle. I want to see you grow!...I think, analyzing my data, after I figure out what I need to support students, or how I can use what I know to support them, that is me going and using this data that is taking action. I want to support these kids. I want to help them to grow… (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20)

For Aurelia, by the time of her second interview, inquiry had become a way to respond to her perception that her students were bored with their regular lessons on derivation and grammar. She described how her inquiry into technology had become a way to respond to that observation:

I think they were excited to learn something that’s, honestly...Grammar’s kind of boring. You know what I mean? Just being, like, “This prefix is ‘bio.’ It means ‘life.’ ‘Biology,’ ‘study of life.’” That’s kind of, you know, it’s kind of dull, in a sense, compared to science or social studies, you do cool projects. So, I think being able to engage them and excite them about a topic that’s normally bored them. It’s had a big impact. And now they’re looking forward to doing what they
thought was the “boring” lessons because it’s more fun and interactive. (Aurelia, Interview 2/5, 3.5.20)

Other responsive purposes for inquiring were more specifically focused upon inquiry to adapt teaching in relation to assessments of student learning. In her second interview, Aurelia shared that an important purpose for inquiring was “to look at where your students are at and see where they need to be. And if they’re not at where they need to be, how can you get them there?” (Aurelia, Interview 2/5, 3.5.20). Rachel similarly shared that inquiry can help teachers identify student needs, arguing that “if you’re not looking at your data and understanding it, then you’re not going to pick up on those red flags” (Rachel, Interview 2/5, 2.28.20).

In her second interview, May explained that teachers can use inquiry data to support students by demonstrating their own progress to them:

It’s important. It’s a good way to reflect, and you can see progress. Even if you’re not talking about inquiry, working with students you need the data so you can be, like, “Look at all this growth you’ve made…You’ve gone up, like, 1 point. You’ve gone up 50 points.” (May, Interview 2/5, 2.13.20)

The responsive purpose for inquiring was particularly intertwined with the theme of problematizing and reinventing practice through inquiry. As May and Rachel had both described, inquiry data can be used to “pick up on those red flags” but also “see progress” as they responded to students’ needs by adapting their teaching practices.

**Conclusion and Chapter Summary**

This study sought to understand how the dimensions of inquiry as stance played out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry in a PDS. Chapter 5 has
therefore presented a case analysis of inquiry as stance among six teacher candidates. Working within the framework that was presented at the end of Chapter 2, this chapter described teacher candidates’ perspectives within each of the dimensions of inquiry as stance—Knowledge, Community, Practice, and Purpose—in terms of the themes that were generated in the process of data analysis to describe that dimension. The themes generated in the case analysis indicated that the Knowledge dimension of the inquiry stance construct played out along a project-stance continuum, while the Community dimension played out along continua characterizing varied approaches to structure and collaboration within inquiry. The themes within the Practice dimension illustrated how teacher candidates held broad conceptions of the location of inquiry that could be used to problematize their practices, while the themes within the Purpose dimension revealed the varied purposes that the teacher candidates were pursuing as they inquired. Although the significance of these findings will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, the case analysis clearly indicates the richness, complexity, and variation within each dimension of the inquiry stance construct as it played out in the context that was selected for this case study. In the next and final chapter, Chapter 6, the significance of this case analysis is discussed in relation to relevant literature. Implications for teacher educators, teacher education programs, and PDSs are considered, and directions for future research are proposed.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Practitioner inquiry has become a common component of teacher education programs. While the processes involved with engaging teacher candidates in practitioner inquiry have been described across numerous contexts, few studies have specifically examined how an inquiry stance manifests itself among teacher candidates who are conducting practitioner inquiry. Therefore, as described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, a primary purpose of this study was to extend the limited body of research on inquiry stance by investigating how the dimensions of the inquiry stance construct played out among teacher candidates who were conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS. To inform a study of this question, Chapter 2 reviewed literature on practitioner inquiry and inquiry stance. Chapter 3 described how case study methodology, imbued with this study’s epistemological and interpretive frameworks, led to the development of new themes and frameworks that could be useful for understanding how the dimensions of inquiry as stance played out, at least within the context of this study. Chapter 4 described the case context, and Chapter 5 presented the findings that were generated through the process of data analysis.

Chapter 6 discusses the potential significance and the implications of some of the study’s key findings. In order to situate these discussions, the chapter opens with a brief recapitulation of the preceding chapters and findings.

Recapitulation

Chapter 1 opened with the observation that the field of teacher education has long struggled with a lack of consensus about the nature of the problem that teacher educators’
work should seek to address. It is therefore unsurprising that the goals of teacher education for the 21st century remain just as hotly contested now as ever. While many other important goals also exist, this study began from the position that one of the most worthwhile and enduring goals of teacher education is preparing teachers who know how to learn from their own teaching. Chapter 1 offered practitioner inquiry—when undertaken with the intention of developing an inquiry stance among teacher candidates—as one potentially powerful mechanism for pursuing this goal. While teacher educators widely espouse and cite the inquiry stance construct as a worthy aim for teacher candidates, few empirical studies have been conducted to illustrate how the construct actually plays out.

In light of the limited extant research on inquiry as stance, this study asked, “How do the dimensions of inquiry as stance play out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS?” The study’s primary purpose was to characterize how inquiry as stance played out among teacher candidates who were conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internship in a PDS. The study’s secondary purpose was to create some potentially useful tools to assist people whose work involves facilitating practitioner inquiry. Its tertiary, personal purpose was to inform the researcher’s own practices as a teacher educator, supervisor, and professional developer.

Although literature on teacher education and PDSs was important to justify and contextualize this study, practitioner inquiry and inquiry stance were at the study’s core. Therefore, Chapter 2 featured a review of relevant literature on practitioner inquiry. This review explored the historical underpinnings of the contemporary practitioner inquiry
movement, examined some of the key characteristics of practitioner inquiry for teacher candidates, and critiqued the limited research on inquiry stance. This chapter culminated in a reconceptualized analytic framework to guide a study seeking to understand how the dimensions of an inquiry stance play out.

Following the review of literature, Chapter 3 presented the study’s methodology. Congruent with the study’s moderate constructivist epistemological assumptions, and since an inquiry stance is, at its core, a professional perspective or positioning, the study relied heavily upon semi-structured interviews, supported by the generation of field notes and the collection of relevant documents, to probe teacher candidates’ perspectives in relation to the four dimensions of the inquiry stance construct. Chapter 4 described the PDS context in which this study was situated, while Chapter 5 reported the study’s findings. The findings were presented through a case analysis of one instance of the inquiry stance construct as it played out among teacher candidates conducting practitioner inquiry during their clinical internships in a PDS.

The case analysis led to several key findings about the dimensions of inquiry as stance. The construct’s Knowledge dimension played out along a project-stance continuum of six themes that characterized teacher candidates’ stances toward inquiry and knowledge generation. These themes ranged from perceiving inquiry as a requirement to asserting ownership over inquiry as an activity that generates worthwhile knowledge of teaching. The Community dimension played out along two continua—a continuum of collaboration and a continuum of structure—that were combined to form a collaboration-structure compass for understanding how teacher candidates engaged in inquiry within community. The Practice dimension was characterized by two themes
indicating that teacher candidates readily understood inquiry as a way to problematize and reinvent their practices, and that they could inquire anytime, anywhere, and with anyone. The Purpose dimension played out through five interconnected purposes that the teacher candidates adopted for their inquiries—process completion, learning, instrumental/efficiency, social change, and responsiveness.

The final chapter in this dissertation continues with a discussion of the significance of some of these findings in relation to previous literature on inquiry stance. Next, potential implications for local practice, teacher education, and PDSs are proposed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study’s limitations and some of the opportunities it presents for future research.

**Discussion**

The complexity of inquiry as stance among this study’s participants testifies to the rich diversity that exists within the theoretical boundaries of the inquiry stance construct. There was no universal perspective, no absolutely essential characteristic, and no definitive type of inquiry stance that was held in common by all the teacher candidates who participated in this study. Perhaps most notably, there was no singular purpose that united the teacher candidates’ inquiries. Instead, teacher candidates expressed different purposes for inquiring at different times. They inquired alone, and they inquired together in community. They inquired with the support of highly structured protocols. They inquired in the shower, on the couch at home, and during shared car rides. They went along with others’ ideas for their inquiries, and they also struggled as they developed and asserted the significance of their own ideas.
Despite their complexity and wide variation, this study’s findings nevertheless reflect and affirm some of the core aspects of Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) conceptualization of the inquiry stance construct. As theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle, inquiry as stance is wide-ranging and inclusive, allowing room for significant variation of local perspectives even as it offers a means of connecting these perspectives to broader, global perspectives. As they inquired, teacher candidates took on a wide range of relationships to knowledge and knowledge generation, particularly as they worked within communities to develop their inquiries. They readily conceptualized practitioner inquiry as an activity that could happen within and across the many contexts that shape their teaching.

In other respects, the study’s findings diverge significantly from what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) theorized. In particular, the teacher candidates adopted widely varying purposes for engaging in inquiry, some of which may be better aligned with the democratic purposes and social justice ends envisioned by Cochran-Smith and Lytle than other purposes. For example, while the responsive purpose for inquiring may well be a worthwhile purpose, no teacher candidate explicitly connected inquiry as stance to a vision of a diverse, democratic society. The instrumental/efficiency purpose, at least as it played out in this study, may be rather far removed from the democratic ideals embedded in Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s theorizing. Still, the diversity of perspectives within the inquiry stance construct affirms the assertion of Parker et al. (2016) that teacher candidates’ responses to the process of practitioner inquiry are immensely varied. It was for this reason that Parker et al. emphasized the need for teacher educators and supervisors to adopt differentiated, flexible approaches to working with teacher
candidates engaged in practitioner inquiry, and this study’s findings support Parker et al.’s conclusion. The study therefore also presents a substantive challenge to standardized or high-stakes approaches to practitioner inquiry, such as those described in Barnatt’s (2009) dissertation, in which teacher candidates’ inquiries or inquiry stances are graded on a standardized set of rubrics.

The study’s findings lend support to the systematic research approaches of scholars such as Barnatt (2009), Braaten (2011), Smith (2012), and Bennett (2013), as well as the descriptive approach undertaken in the scholarship of Dana (2015). While each of these scholars adopted a different approach to understanding how an inquiry stance plays out, each one also recognized the complexity of the construct and, in particular, its highly contextualized nature. For example, Dana adopted a descriptive approach to understanding how inquiry stance played out for one teacher. By combining written description with videos of a teacher’s practice, Dana drew out key themes to illustrate how the teacher exemplified several dimensions of inquiry as stance and had truly made inquiry “a part of” rather than “apart from” her practice. Barnatt, Braaten, Smith, and Bennett each took a systematic approach to describing inquiry stance in a particular, local context, and in doing so, they, too, were able to capture some of the richness and complexity of the inquiry stance construct in the locations where they conducted their research. Through the frameworks and themes described in the previous chapter, this study, too, illustrates how complex an inquiry stance really is.

This complexity within the inquiry stance construct, however, also complicates some aspects of the writings of scholars such as Nolan and Hoover (2004) and Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2014), whose language has occasionally implied that an inquiry stance
is a binary construct. It is important to note that these scholars were not advancing empirical claims about the nature of inquiry as stance. However, their descriptions of inquiry stance as something you “either have or you don’t” and that cannot be assessed are challenged by the findings of this study, which indicate that an inquiry stance is not something a person either has or lacks, but that it is, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) theorized it, a multi-dimensional and highly complex set of perspectives. Framing inquiry stance as an either-or suggests that it is possible for some teacher candidates to be deficient in regard to their inquiry stances. Instead, this study indicates that each teacher candidate likely enters preservice teacher education with many of the dimensions of an inquiry stance already well in-place, offering a rich basis upon which their inquiry stances can be further developed.

This study therefore indicates a need for caution against any future research that would seek to classify people on the basis of whether they “have” or “lack” an inquiry stance. In light of the complexity described in this study, the validity of the studies reported by Lamb (2009) and Lamb et al. (2009) is called into question because these scholars’ claims about inquiry stance were advanced along a single dimension. By offering a more robust analysis of how inquiry stance plays out, this dissertation indicates that systematic and rich description is needed to understand the full complexity of how inquiry stance plays out in any given context and with any particular teacher candidate.

Implications

This study’s findings carry implications across multiple contexts. The study’s implications are directly relevant to the local context in which this study was conducted. Beyond the local level, they also carry significance for the role of practitioner inquiry
within teacher education programs more broadly, and for PDSs in particular, as well as for policy advocacy by teacher educators within PDSs.

**For Local Practice**

The findings of this study carry potentially significant implications for practice within the local context where this study was conducted. Within the RVSU-RVSD PDS, this study bears directly upon the work of the teacher educators who facilitated the clinical practice seminar. The study also implicates the design of the curriculum of the existing clinical practice seminar.

Teacher educators throughout the RVSU-RVSD PDS widely espoused inquiry stance as a goal for all learners in the PDS, and especially for teacher candidates. In fact, promoting an inquiry stance was one of the chief goals of the PDS’s clinical practice seminar. However, the lack of previous research or program evaluations about how the inquiry stance construct has played out within this PDS signals that there is scant empirical basis for understanding the nature of the inquiry stance that teacher educators and supervisors have actually succeeding in promoting among teacher candidates. It is precisely within such contexts as this PDS—where inquiry and inquiry stance can be interpreted to mean anything and everything that people want it to mean—that Snow-Gerono’s (2003) warnings are prescient. The inquiry stance construct may be rendered meaningless through its vagueness and overuse.

The teacher educators from the RVSU-RVSD PDS could potentially benefit from using the frameworks generated in this dissertation in order to reflect systematically upon the characteristics and the meanings of their own inquiry stances. For example, teacher educators may wish to identify and critique their own understandings and practices in
relation to inquiry stance. They could use the collaboration-structure compass to assess their own habits and patterns of inquiry (or lack thereof) within communities throughout the PDS. They could use the project-stance continuum to reflect upon their own prior experiences with inquiry and their current orientations toward the relationships between knowledge and inquiry, as well as the orientations they promote among teacher candidates. Perhaps most importantly, teacher educators need to consider their own purposes for inquiry and ask how these purposes shape the ways in which they facilitate practitioner inquiry for teacher candidates. For instance, do teacher educators feel that there is, or that there ought to be, a hierarchy of purposes for inquiring within the PDS? Is the purpose of inquiring for learning’s own sake valued more than inquiry that is aimed, at least initially, at learning to complete a cycle of inquiry successfully? How is the social change purpose for inquiry prioritized or deprioritized in relation to the other purposes, and what other purposes that were not represented in this study would teacher educators like to see? How should teacher educators respond when teacher candidates decide to pursue purposes that do not align with the teacher educators’ own preferred purposes for practitioner inquiry?

The teacher educators may, in particular, wish to deliberate the significance of social change being one among several purposes teacher candidates espoused for engaging in practitioner inquiry and to what extent they believe it is appropriate to shape the purposes for which teacher candidates inquire. As this study revealed, the purpose of connecting an inquiry to some kind of desired social change was one of the five purposes that teacher candidates espoused for their inquiries, yet social change was far from the only purpose, and when it was espoused, it was often vaguely defined. Ought social
change to be the primary purpose of teacher candidates’ inquiries? What about those teacher candidates who, though not rejecting social change as an important purpose, tended to emphasize other purposes for their earlier cycles of inquiry, such as process completion or learning for its own sake? Further, what purposes were notably absent from teacher candidates’ inquiries that teacher educators might wish to see? How might teacher educators more effectively widen teacher candidates’ sense of the potential purposes of practitioner inquiry and connect these to a broader vision for their inquiry that reaches, at least eventually, beyond their immediate concerns about practice? Are teacher educators preparing teacher candidates with inquiry stances that, though focused on local questions, will transcend these local issues? Are teacher educators successfully preparing teacher candidates who can adapt their inquiry stances for new contexts? How does an inquiry stance develop “here” transfer to a first year of teaching over “there”?

These kinds of questions cannot be answered definitively and then set aside, nor do they have just one possible set of answers. For teacher educators within this PDS to become more purposeful and consistent about how they approach such questions, however, they could benefit from ongoing professional learning in which they systematically explore their own inquiry stances and their values surrounding practitioner inquiry on a regular basis. As teacher educators’ perspectives change over time, the curriculum for the clinical practice seminar could also be changed. While scholars such as Barnatt (2009) have recommended the creation of standards to guide and evaluate practitioner inquiry, the complexity and local characteristics of inquiry as illustrated by this study suggest that standardization would be the wrong direction to pursue. Instead, teacher educators could, themselves, strive to work from the kind of evolving and
adaptive inquiry stance they are seeking to promote in their teacher candidates. They could lead prominently by example—by becoming co-inquirers with one another, with teacher candidates, and with their elementary students.

In addition to individual reflection upon the local meanings of inquiry as stance, the teacher educators who facilitated the clinical practice seminar may wish to engage in ongoing shared reflections about the nature of the inquiry stance the seminar is seeking to promote in teacher candidates and how these relate to the larger, global purposes envisioned by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). If teacher educators themselves have not reached some level of clarity on this point, it is doubtful that the purportedly important goal of promoting an inquiry stance can be achieved for teacher candidates. To that end, teacher educators in this PDS could benefit from ongoing professional learning around practitioner inquiry and, in particular, from deliberating the significance of this study’s findings. Since the purpose of this study was to characterize, rather than to evaluate, the question remains for the teacher educators to judge for themselves whether this study’s findings represent success or failure.

Once they have reached greater clarity about the characteristics of the inquiry stance they seek to promote, teacher educators could benefit from clarifying the relationship of inquiry stance to the other goals that were espoused for the teacher candidates’ clinical practice seminar. In particular, the practitioner inquiry strand’s relationship to the seminar’s other strands—developing teacher candidates’ identities, planning instruction, growing in teacher leadership, and becoming a socially just educator—was never clarified during the time of this case study. Other studies that were running concurrently with this dissertation placed more explicit emphasis upon the other
strands of the clinical practice seminar. These strands are, arguably, already subsumed within the dimensions of the inquiry stance construct as it was theorized by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), but this relationship was not explicit either within this study’s findings or in the PDS itself. On the other hand, perhaps the teacher educators’ local meanings of the inquiry stance construct differ so significantly from what Cochran-Smith and Lytle described that inquiry stance itself could more fruitfully be incorporated within and throughout those other strands. The teacher educators have not yet reached a shared understanding of how practitioner inquiry and the inquiry stance construct encompass—or fail to encompass—these other goals, and this lack of shared understanding has led to confusion over how inquiry stance aligns with other goals.

As they reach greater clarity about the meaning and values that surround inquiry stance within the PDS, teacher educators may benefit from engaging in a process of mapping the PDS’s planned curriculum as it relates to the teacher candidates’ foundational knowledge for practitioner inquiry. Yet there was little evidence that the teacher educators had a clear plan for what they hoped teacher candidates would know about practitioner inquiry by the end of their time in the PDS, let alone what specific inquiry skills or dispositions they hoped teacher candidates would acquire as a result of these activities, or how this learning could be meaningfully assessed.

Finally, teacher educators from the RVSU-RVSD PDS may wish to deliberate how inquiry and inquiry stance should be assessed. Barnatt (2009) studied practitioner inquiry within a high-stakes context where teacher candidates were required to complete a highly formalized and extensive written inquiry project, which could then be evaluated on a rubric related to the inquiry stance construct. For example, in Barnatt’s context,
teacher candidates’ stances toward social justice were evaluated on a rating scale from “poor” to “exemplary.” Barnatt commented upon the difficulty and the inherently problematic nature of rating inquiry stances in this manner, even as she recognized the affordances of assessing inquiry stance through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Teacher educators in the PDS have yet to reach consensus about the role and relationship of inquiry projects and other forms of explicit participation in the inquiry cycle to more implicit forms of inquiry, such as written and oral reflection, analysis of student work within inquiry communities, and more.

**For Teacher Education Programs**

This study also carries implications that may apply in broader teacher education contexts as well as locally. In particular, the diversity within the study’s findings carries particularly significant implications for teacher education at RVSU and in teacher education programs more generally. The study suggests that developing an inquiry stance and learning to teach through practitioner inquiry may require more frequent but less-formalized opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in practitioner inquiry. By the time of this study, teacher candidates were engaged in their third complete cycle of practitioner inquiry. However, it was the first cycle that they had completed in which the direction of their inquiry questions was not preestablished for them by their teacher educators. In that sense, it could be understood as the first cycle of inquiry that truly met the definition of a systematic study rooted in practitioners’ own intentions. This first cycle of “true” inquiry was, prior to COVID-19, scheduled to culminate in a relatively high-stakes public presentation, possibly leading teacher candidates to “play it safe” and
not take risks through their inquiries so as to have a “successful” set of findings to report by the time of the planned inquiry conference.

Incorporating a wider range of opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in practitioner inquiry could take a variety of forms. One possibility would involve creating an extended sequence of courses to assist teacher candidates in acquiring the foundational knowledge for practitioner inquiry that could support them in moving away from viewing inquiry as a project to a more robust inquiry stance. More cycles of inquiry, however, will not necessarily promote the development of an inquiry stance that is robust in all its dimensions. Instead, providing explicit instruction and tightly structured practice with the processes involved in practitioner inquiry could be a strong place to start, and this took place already within the first semester of the teacher candidates’ yearlong clinical internships in the PDS. Multiple opportunities to conduct inquiry during the Fall 2019 semester had prepared teacher candidates to launch their Spring 2020 inquiries—those that were in progress during the time of this case study—already having acquired some of the necessary knowledge to inquire systematically.

More inquiry is not necessarily better inquiry; however, teacher candidates may benefit from the preparation program being restructured to include an extended course sequence with practitioner inquiry at the core. For example, using a two-year sequence required for all teacher candidates during their junior and senior years at RVSD and taught by the same instructors, rather than a one-year sequence available only to seniors who choose to complete their clinical internships in the PDS, could provide the basis for developing a much more robust inquiry stance. Informed by the supervisory behavior continuum of Glickman et al. (2018), this course sequence could move through a process
of gradual release of responsibility for facilitating inquiry from teacher educators to teacher candidates. For example, in a first semester inquiry seminar, teacher educators could rely upon directive control and directive informational behaviors in order to introduce practitioner inquiry to teacher candidates and offer initial opportunities to practice the process during their early clinical experiences. Teacher educators could also take primary responsibility for leading a second semester inquiry seminar that provides opportunities for teacher candidates to explore the values, ideologies, and political tensions within the inquiry stance construct. Teacher candidates could explore and deliberate their own curriculum-making philosophies as these relate to their emergent inquiry stances. They could explore varying conceptions of equity and social justice and make more explicit linkages between these conceptions and their inquiries.

In their third and fourth semesters, the locus of responsibility could gradually be shifted toward teacher candidates themselves in the context of an inquiry community. Within these inquiry communities, teacher educators would move from directive to non-directive and collaborative supervisory behaviors. Teacher candidates could continue developing their knowledge of practitioner inquiry but would be able to engage in their own cycles of self-selected inquiry over longer periods of time. This extended sequence could also create opportunities for teacher candidates to participate in longer-term inquiry communities of teacher candidates, inservice teachers, and others, rather than maintaining an individual focus on their own inquiries.

A different possibility could involve rejecting the clinical practice seminar approach altogether. Rather than isolating practitioner inquiry to a seminar taught by a teacher educator with expertise in practitioner inquiry, several teacher educators with
expertise in practitioner inquiry could be hired and assigned to co-teach expanded versions of other courses throughout the curriculum, incorporating a consistent focus on developing teacher candidates’ inquiry stances throughout each foundational and methods course. This more seamless integration through co-teaching could potentially address the problem of practitioner inquiry being confined to an isolated course or capstone requirement associated with a singular professor. Instead, faculty with expertise in practitioner inquiry should be present throughout the entire curriculum for preservice teacher education.

For PDSs

Although no two PDSs are identical, the implications of a study from this PDS may also carry implications for PDS work and policy advocacy more broadly. Within PDSs and other forms of school-university partnerships in which clinical preparation of teachers is a core part of the work, this study’s findings may complicate or challenge the roles of mentor teachers, teacher educators, supervisors, and other people who assume responsibility for supporting the development of teacher candidates’ inquiry stances within. This study focused, in particular, upon the inquiry stance construct as its primary unit of analysis and bounded the case to teacher candidates. However, the roles of mentor teachers and teacher educators were clearly implicated within the findings.

PDSs might wish to consider defining the role of mentor teacher to include ongoing professional learning specifically about practitioner inquiry and how to facilitate it or, better yet, sustained, job-embedded participation in practitioner inquiry throughout the PDS. Whereas some PDSs have made offering a minimum level of support for teacher candidates’ practitioner inquiries a requirement of becoming a mentor teacher,
simply offering space and time for teacher candidates to conduct inquiry is likely insufficient to support teacher candidates’ emergent inquiry stances. As this study indicated, mentor teachers who understand practitioner inquiry primarily as a one-time project can have a significant influence upon their teacher candidates’ capacity develop more robust inquiry stances. However, if mentor teachers were more consistently active as co-inquirers with their teacher candidates—as illustrated by Aurelia’s collaborative inquiry with her mentor—they may contribute to the development of a more robust inquiry stance not only for their teacher candidates but for themselves as well.

The complexity of the emergence of inquiry as stance, along with the knowledge that supports teacher educators in promoting it, indicates that an expanded role for supervisors is warranted within PDS contexts. While scholars such as Burns (2012) have offered rich portraits and conceptual frameworks for understanding the knowledge bases and tasks of supervision in PDSs, these frameworks have tended to focus upon supervisors’ performance of tasks in service to others: providing direct assistance to others, developing community, facilitating action research conducted by other educators, and so on. In so doing, these frameworks have tended not to emphasize one particularly important role for supervisors—that of co-learners within the PDS.

Burns’s (2012) conceptual framework for understanding supervision in PDS contexts contributed to reconceptualizing the function of supervision as a form of inquiry. Burns’s framework included an expanded knowledge base as well as an expanded and deepened understanding of the tasks of supervisors in PDSs. The framework, however, did not explicitly designate supervisors’ engagement in their own professional learning as a task. A survey of teacher education programs conducted by Jacobs et al. (2017)
similarly did not include supervisors’ own professional learning as a task for supervisors and, in fact, indicated that supervisors’ knowledge of facilitating inquiry tends to be low. Thus, it is surprising that the role of supervisor in a PDS is not necessarily defined to include professional learning related to supervision, and, specifically, supervision of practitioner inquiry. As this study indicates the complexity of inquiry stance, it further indicates that supervisors must know the content they are attempting to teach, and allocating specific time for them to engage in professional learning about their own supervision of practitioner inquiry and the development of inquiry as stance would be a strong step in that direction.

These implications—that teacher educators must themselves know the content they are teaching and that they must have some specialized knowledge of how to teach it—may appear obvious at first glance. However, they carry special significance for teacher educators in PDS contexts. While university-based teacher educators who specialize in practitioner inquiry may have acquired the necessary knowledge to support the development of an inquiry stance, the same cannot be assumed to be true for all teacher educators. As recent research has indicated (Wolkenhauer & Rutten, 2020), teacher educators in PDSs do not necessarily “learn on the job.” Both school- and university-based teacher educators who facilitate practitioner inquiry may erroneously assume that the process is self-evident and straightforward, when instead, it is complex, nuanced, intentional, and political. Mentor teachers likewise may interpret teacher candidates’ efforts to cultivate an inquiry stance as a straightforward project required for a course and feel that providing space for teacher candidates to complete their projects is
all they need to do, when instead, their own inquiry stances profoundly shape the emergent dimensions of their teacher candidates’ inquiry stances.

Teacher educators and supervisors who facilitate practitioner inquiry, particularly within PDS contexts, could consider designating time for their own professional learning specifically about practitioner inquiry and how to facilitate it within their local contexts. This designated professional learning time should include explicit attention to the conceptual underpinnings of practitioner inquiry, the specific skills that are involved in engaging in inquiry, and explicit consideration of how the inquiry stance construct is playing out in their contexts. Further, this time should include time for reflection and deliberation about the moral and political nature of practitioner inquiry, including explicit consideration of the varying purposes teacher candidates may pursue through their inquiries and the teacher educators’ or supervisors’ purposes. This learning time could include activities such as Q-sort or other card-sorting activities that ask teacher educators to rank various purposes for practitioner inquiry or the inquiry passions described by Dana et al. (2006) and Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2020). Literally “laying the cards on the table” and discussing the significance of teacher educators’ differences could be a generative and instructive activity for teacher educators working across school and university boundaries.

PDSs may wish to develop, partner with, or even embed the structures of existing induction programs for novice inservice teachers. Evidence from the literature suggests strongly that teacher candidates’ inquiry stances are unlikely to be sustained if not supported by an ongoing culture of inquiry in the schools where teacher candidates find jobs (van Katwijk et al., 2019). As the mission statement of the RVSU-RVSD PDS
testifies, PDSs can develop a mission that includes ongoing learning for all participants, which should include teachers throughout the career span. Induction programs have been identified as potentially powerful mechanisms for improving instruction during teachers’ first years in the classroom as well as retaining teachers in the field for longer periods of time (Ingersoll, 2015). The role of PDSs in supporting novice teachers during their induction years, however, has been underexplored, and working more closely with induction programs may offer an opportunity to support the ongoing development of inquiry as stance. PDSs could even form networks with other PDSs through a state or region, such that teacher candidates who have begun developing their inquiry stances in a PDS in one part of a state could then continue developing their inquiry stances if hired to teach in a school associated with a PDS in another part of the state where an induction program is ready to support their ongoing work with inquiry.

Finally, the possibilities this study has generated to inform the work of PDSs also carry implications for policy advocacy among teacher educators and those working within PDSs in particular. The study’s suggestion that teacher education programs may need to expand or revise their sequences for clinical practice to place practitioner inquiry and the development of inquiry stance at the core of their work signals that teacher education programs that emphasize short-term preparation or preparation in the absence of robust programs of inquiry-based clinical practice are insufficient to address the complexity of what it means to learn to develop an inquiry stance while learning to teach. Teacher educators, especially those who work within PDSs, could consider that their roles may need to include advocacy for policies that support clinically rich teacher education, not alternative pathways in which clinical practice is not valued. Organizations
such as the Association of Teacher Educators and the National Association for Professional Development Schools already play a key role in building coalitions of advocates for clinically rich, inquiry-based teacher education. They can continue to expand their advocacy by issuing policy briefings, building social media campaigns, and engaging directly with policymakers to advocate for their work in clinically based teacher education.

The study’s recommendation that PDSs increase their emphasis upon induction programs implicates not only those who work directly in PDSs but also state and local policies that shape induction programs for novice teachers. While PDSs themselves can provide exemplary contexts for induction, the suggestion that PDSs arrange to support teacher candidates’ transitions from clinical practice through their first years in the classroom would require funding at the policy level for centers, organizations, or initiatives that could coordinate transitions between “sending” PDSs and “receiving” PDSs. The complexity of the coordination and the increased funding that would be required for such an approach suggest that PDSs could benefit from developing structures that are explicitly designated for supporting advocacy with state and local policymakers for all aspects of their work, but preservice teacher education and inservice teacher induction in particular.

Limitations, Opportunities for Future Research, and Conclusions

This study contributes to the practitioner inquiry literature by offering an analysis of one case of the inquiry stance construct as it played out within one PDS context. Since the study has generated a systematic interpretation of the characteristics of an emergent inquiry stance, it offers an instructive and potentially transferrable example of how an
inquiry stance might play out among teacher candidates. The study responds directly to other scholars’ calls for more thorough and robust descriptions of how the inquiry stance construct is actually taken up. However, an inherent limitation of this kind of qualitative and case-oriented research is the impossibility of generalizing on the basis of a single case.

The themes and frameworks developed from this single-case study are necessarily tentative and emergent in nature. Though constructed from empirical evidence, they ultimately represent a single case of the phenomenon of interest during a particular span of time, in a particular place, and with particular people. Further research is needed in order to examine the merits of the frameworks and in what ways they may or may not be useful in other contexts, as well as the ways in which they may obscure, such as by omission, other key aspects or factors that matter in how an inquiry stance develops. For instance, since the study’s frameworks are offered as a way to understand and describe the characteristics of inquiry as stance, rather than as a way to explain the processes or mechanisms that cause an inquiry stance to emerge, the framework omits many contextual factors (e.g., role of supervisor, role of mentor teacher, preconceptions of inquiry, political beliefs and ideologies, prior experiences with research, etc.) that may have shaped the data that were generated for this study.

Despite their limitations, the frameworks generated in this study nevertheless offer mechanisms for mapping out how the dimensions of an inquiry stance change over time and through extended engagement with practitioner inquiry. For example, while this study considered the characteristics of teacher candidates’ emerging inquiry stances during their first fully self-selected cycles of practitioner inquiry, the study’s frameworks
could also be used to assess the characteristics of teacher candidates’ inquiry stances before they have even been introduced to practitioner inquiry, at various points during their experiences with practitioner inquiry, and after the conclusion of their clinical internships. The frameworks further offer possibilities for much more specific, narrow investigations, such as investigating the types of informal inquiry talk and collaboration that teacher candidates reported as key aspects of their inquiry stances for this study. If used to assess or conduct future research about teacher candidates’ inquiry stances in this manner, the study’s frameworks should be used as tools for inquiry and supporting further development of teacher candidates’ inquiry stances, not as a means of evaluating or grading their perspectives.

Using some of the interpretive tools developed through this dissertation, (e.g., interview protocol, code book, analytic framework), replications of this study could be conducted to further existing understandings of how an inquiry stance emerges. Yin (2018) recommended that qualitative researchers overcome some of the key limitations of qualitative research by pursuing replication logics rather than sampling logics. Replications of this study could be conducted with different teacher candidates but in the same context where this study was conducted; with similar teacher candidates but in a different context; and in different contexts with different teacher candidates. Replications of this study could be well-positioned to affirm, extend, complicate, or refute the study’s interpretations of how the inquiry stance construct plays out among teacher candidates.

In addition to replication studies of emergent inquiry stance, replication studies could be conducted with inservice teachers as a way to learn more about the characteristics of a more mature inquiry stance. While scholars have conducted limited
follow-up studies with inservice teachers who were prepared in inquiry-oriented preservice teacher education programs (e.g., Amond, 2008; Butville, 2020; Wolkenhauer & Hooser, 2017), very few studies have systematically explored the characteristics of a more seasoned inquiry stance. Fewer still, with the partial exception of Barnatt (2009), have systematically traced the evolution of an inquiry stance from teacher candidates’ earliest introductions to practitioner inquiry, throughout their entire programs of preservice teacher education, through their induction years as inservice teachers, and into later stages of their careers. A follow-up study or series of studies should be considered for this case as well, since all six teacher candidates who participated in the study granted consent for the researcher to continue communication after the study’s conclusion, simply to keep in touch and also to discuss potential future research.

Future research could also consider the affordances of multiple-case, cross-contextual, or international research designs. Without future research that compares inquiry stance across contexts, it will not be fully possible to understand how local characteristics of inquiry stance connect to the global aspects. Using the frameworks generated in this study as a starting point, a multiple-case study could be conducted of similarly situated teacher candidates in different PDSs or teacher education programs. Following the limited examples of international multiple-case study designs in the practitioner inquiry literature (e.g., Capobianco and Ní Riordáin, 2015), multiple-case studies of how inquiry stance emerges among teacher candidates in different countries could prove illustrative.

Within the same teacher education program, a longitudinal matched-pairs research design could offer fruitful comparisons. Long and Morgart (2020) recently illustrated
how multiple different teacher education program options can coexist within the same university-based college or school of education, offering vastly different experiences for teacher candidates who are preparing for recommendation for the same state teaching licensure. Such programs offer unique contexts for comparative research. Teacher candidates who are similarly situated but who self-selected into different program choices could be paired, tracked, compared, and contrasted to further explore factors that shape the emergence of an inquiry stance and the characteristics of the stance that emerges within their different contexts. Similarly, future research could combine interviews with classroom observations, including the possibility of building a video case library of inquiry stance in action. Dana’s (2015) scholarship could serve as the first entry, and a comparative, international database of cases could be compiled.

Beyond case studies, methodological options abound for future research on inquiry as stance. Some scholars may wish to adopt hermeneutic or hermeneutic-phenomenological lenses to designing studies of inquiry or inquiry as stance (e.g., Wolkenhauer, 2013; Wolkenhauer & Hooser, 2020). As the characteristics of inquiry stance become increasingly well-understood, others may wish to consider design-based research (Brown, 1992; Collins, 1992; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003) as an option, potentially paired with a conjecture mapping approach (Sandoval, 2014). Such approaches could simultaneously explore the merits of the frameworks generated in this case study while testing, extending, and refining them, ultimately with the goal of understanding how an inquiry stance can best be promoted and creating scalable approaches to doing so. Still others may wish to explore the affordances of Q-methodology as a possibility for exploring how teacher candidates, teacher educators, and
supervisors make sense of the various points along the continua and the various purposes for engaging in inquiry. Supervision scholars such as Badiali (2005) and Cormier (2019, 2020) have illustrated the potentially transformative power of Q-sorts as professional development for teacher candidates and inservice teachers alike.

In the end, determining whether a teacher candidate has successfully begun the process of developing an inquiry stance constitutes an act of valuing particular kinds of characteristics as evidence of an inquiry stance. Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) framework continues to offer strong guidance in this regard. It provides a powerful lens through which to pose questions about inquiry stance and how its four dimensions play out in different contexts. Yet even the most sophisticated analyses of inquiry as stance remain the product of researchers’ choices to value some characteristics they feel best represent the inquiry stance construct, as opposed to other characteristics they value less, or that they reject. Barnatt’s (2009) dissertation, directed by Marilyn Cochran-Smith herself, remains to this day among the most systematic and exhaustive analyses to date of how the inquiry stance construct plays out. Despite developing extensive, longitudinal case analyses of the complex perspectives of two teachers, Barnatt ultimately resorted to a yes/no summative evaluation of her study participants, in which she determined that neither one had really developed an inquiry stance. This study’s findings, through what they include and what they omit, therefore stand as a challenge to other scholars to consider what they value and devalue in the name of promoting an inquiry stance.

Regardless of the specific directions that scholars pursue through future research on inquiry as stance, they should keep in mind and return regularly to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) assertion that “the purpose of inquiry stance…is enhancing students’
learning and life chances for participation in and contribution to a diverse and democratic society” (p. 146). While inquiry stance may take many forms across different contexts, the goal of inquiring in order to enhance each learner’s chances for participation in a diverse and democratic society should remain perennial. This study has arrived at some tentative understandings of what it means for an inquiry stance to play out among teacher candidates, even as it has raised more questions for future investigation. Still, the study makes one thing plain: the characteristics of teacher candidates’ inquiry stances are highly nuanced. Each teacher candidate’s inquiry stance is unique and complex, bursting with potential and pitfalls, but also easily stifled. Those teacher educators and supervisors who take the time to appreciate the inherent worth of each teacher candidate’s inquiry stance may be in the best position to kindle a passion for inquiry that will truly endure.
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## APPENDIX A

### CODE BOOK WITH A PRIORI CODES AND DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Code Definition: Teachers with an inquiry stance…</th>
<th>Possible Locations and When to Flag</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K_WORTHY TO RESEARCH</td>
<td>Feel worthy to conduct research</td>
<td>Questions about who is involved; reaction questions</td>
<td>I’m worthy to do it because now I’ve had experience doing it (Aurelia, Interview 5/5, 6.10.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K_RESPONSIBILITY TO RESEARCH</td>
<td>Feel a responsibility to conduct research</td>
<td>Questions about responsibilities; reaction questions</td>
<td>I am responsible for figuring out how to help these kids (May, Interview, 5/5, 5.18.20).…and there’s research. But you’re still testing it out on your own (May, Interview 1/5, 1.16.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K_OTHER KNOW PROB</td>
<td>Recognize others’ knowledge as important but subject to local interrogation</td>
<td>Discussion of literature as data; univ. faculty, supervisors, etc.</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K_OWN KNOW PROB</td>
<td>Recognize their own ways of generating knowledge of teaching as inherently problematic</td>
<td>Questions about wondering phase</td>
<td>I don’t have data or evidence (Charity, Interview, 4.14.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K_LOCAL AND GLOBAL</td>
<td>Feel that their knowledge of teaching matters outside their classrooms</td>
<td>Any description of impact beyond classroom</td>
<td>Sharing with others, I feel like, could go further than just your school community (Rachel, Interview 5/5, 5.27.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C_INQUIRY COMMUNITY</td>
<td>Inquire both alone and with others</td>
<td>Mentions an inquiry group, PLC, CoP, other community that supports inquiry</td>
<td>I’m thinking about the whole PDS community…I would consider every time I’ve talked to other interns in seminar (Cordelia, Interview 3/5, 3.24.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C_CURRICULUM</td>
<td>Collectively study school curriculum, standards, and assessments</td>
<td>Questions about or challenging or questioning curriculum</td>
<td>So, yeah, we’ve talked about what the new unit is and what we’re going to do for that (Charity, Interview 2/5, 2.18.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C_ASSUMPTIONS</td>
<td>Collectively challenge shared assumptions about how teaching/learning happen</td>
<td>Asking about or challenging own beliefs/biases; must be with others</td>
<td>I think that it’s also nice to have maybe another outside, third-party person that has nothing to do with the inquiry take observations with you, or…Just so you get that non-biased view, and maybe they see things that you don’t (Aurelia, Interview 5/5, 6.10.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C_STUDENT DATA</td>
<td>Collectively analyze data beyond test scores, including student work</td>
<td>Data analysis; must be done with others</td>
<td>[My mentor teacher] and I have an Excel spreadsheet, and we go and look at the students’ work every week (Aurelia, Interview 4/5, 5.11.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C_COLLAB WITH ANYONE</td>
<td>Reject expert/novice divides and inquire collaboratively with anyone</td>
<td>Mentions a collaboration with a student, supervisor, principal, professor, etc.</td>
<td>Who can be involved in this? Well, the person who inquired in the first place and then anyone they choose to share it with. So, I kind of answered that before: students, parents, principals, teachers, etc. (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR_INQUIRY PLACE TIME</td>
<td>View everywhere and anytime as a potential inquiry context</td>
<td></td>
<td>It can stem from anywhere at any time (Rachel, Interview 3/5, 3.31.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Name</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR_STUDENT FOCUS</td>
<td>Inquire into their practices in relation to student needs and learning</td>
<td>Mentions focusing inquiry on students and their learning</td>
<td>You have to think really deeply about your students (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR_TEACHER LEADER</td>
<td>Assume responsibility for leadership</td>
<td>Describes teacher leadership, reaction questions</td>
<td>I definitely think that I have shown some traits of being a teacher leader... (May, Interview 4/5, 4.20.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR_OWN PRACTICES PROB</td>
<td>View their own current practices and ways of using knowledge as inherently problematic</td>
<td>Reaction questions</td>
<td>I noticed that aspect as well. I’ve been keeping an eye on that. I haven’t really put a wondering together for it. I don’t know if I would, but it’s just something I’ve been noticing (Rachel, Interview 4/5, 4.30.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR_EXTENDED PROFESSIONALISM</td>
<td>Assume extended professional responsibilities to families and communities</td>
<td>Connected to impacts of inquiry questions</td>
<td>The school community is a community in and of itself, and then the broader community is where several students, or several cultures, or several families come, and are under one room, and it’s your responsibility to kind of represent everybody, include, teach them about each other (Hope, Interview 3/5, 3.16.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU_BASICS</td>
<td>Inquire to improve student learning of “the basics”</td>
<td>Mentions an inquiry to help with a core content area: math, reading, etc.</td>
<td>I had to really think about what I could do to get my kids to understand what mood is and almost the difference between mood and what a theme is, and how to decipher between the two and look into themselves (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU DEMOCRACY</td>
<td>Inquire to improve students’ chances for participation in a diverse, democratic society</td>
<td>Mentions an inquiry and connects it to citizenship and democratic society</td>
<td>…making sure that those kiddos grow up to be good citizens (Cordelia, Interview 1/5, 1.31.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU_STUDENT INQUIRY</td>
<td>Teach their students to become inquirers</td>
<td>Mentions “student inquiry”</td>
<td>I don’t know if you saw [points to schedule on the whiteboard], but we have inquiry today on Thursdays...It’s every day, too, but, yes, we’re teaching them how to inquire on things (Aurelia, Interview 1/5, 1.23.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU_STUDENT CHALLENGE</td>
<td>Teach their students to challenge knowledge</td>
<td>Mentions having supported students in questioning or challenging knowledge</td>
<td>I taught them, like, “Oh yeah, this is a great story, but how is this information accurate? Let’s challenge the accuracy and credibility of this source” (Rachel, Interview 2/5, 2.28.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU JUSTICE</td>
<td>Inquire to remedy injustice affecting students and families</td>
<td>Mentions an inquiry and connects it to questions of equity and justice</td>
<td>And I feel like that’s important with inquiry stance is making sure that, when you’re doing an inquiry, that it’s all equitable for the students or at least that your analysis of it is equitable for students (Aurelia, Interview 3/5, 4.2.20).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

INQUIRY STANCE REFLECTION CHECKLIST

Name_________________________

Please take a moment to reflect about your inquiry stance. Check each item that you feel applies to you.

_____ I feel worthy to conduct research.

_____ I feel a responsibility to conduct research.

_____ I view other people’s research as important, but I investigate whether it works for me.

_____ I think that my ways of knowing and learning about teaching are problematic.

_____ I think my knowledge of teaching matters outside the walls of my classroom.

_____ I feel like I can do inquiry anywhere.

_____ I do inquiry to improve student learning in my classroom.

_____ I am a teacher leader.

_____ I think my teaching practices are problematic.

_____ I feel responsibilities to my students’ families and their communities.

_____ I do inquiry both alone and with others.

_____ I collaborate with others to study school curriculum, standards, and assessments.

_____ I collaborate with others to challenge assumptions about teaching and learning.

_____ I collaborate with others to analyze student work beyond standardized test scores.

_____ I feel like I can collaborate on inquiry with anyone.

_____ I inquire to help my students learn “the basics” and curriculum content.

_____ I inquire to improve my students’ chances for participation in a diverse democracy.

_____ I am teaching my students to be inquirers.

_____ I am teaching my students to question/challenge knowledge.

_____ I inquire to remedy injustices that I see affecting my students and their families.
APPENDIX C

MONTHLY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Opening Script:
Thank you for speaking with me today and helping with my inquiry. I’m interested in learning about your inquiry stance and your experiences with inquiry in the PDS.

[Months 2-4: You’ll recognize most of the same questions from our previous interview, but I’d like to understand your current thinking. Even if the question is familiar, I’ll ask you to reflect and share specific examples that illustrate how you think about the question today, along with any changes in your thinking since our last interview.]

[Month 5: You’ll recognize most of the same questions from our previous interviews, but I’d like to understand your thinking as you reflect back across your entire internship year.]

There are no right or wrong answers, and there is no judgment on anything you decide to share. I will not be sharing your answers with others in the PDS, which includes but is not limited to people like mentors or supervisors. I want to remind you that what you share in this interview will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from this study at any time, without repercussion.

I also want to mention that this may feel like an unusual conversation in that I’ll mainly be asking questions and you will be doing most of the talking. You may find that my questions lead you to repeat answers or elaborate on what you’ve already said. That is totally okay!

This interview is broadly structured in three parts, each of which has a different type of question. In the first part, I’ll ask you to reconstruct some of your experiences with inquiry and your inquiry stance. In the second part, I’ll ask you to react to some statements and explain whether you feel they apply to you. In the third part, I’ll ask you to describe your thinking about the phases of the inquiry cycle and ask some follow-up questions.

May I have your permission to record our conversation? [pause for affirmative consent]

Do you have any questions before we get started? [start recording]
Interviews 2-5 Only
Did you get a chance to look over the transcript from our last interview? Is there anything you would like to change or elaborate on?

All Interviews
1. How are things going with inquiry? Anything you’d like to talk about together?
2. Whom do you know who has an inquiry stance toward teaching? [How do you know?]
   a. Do you have one?
   b. If I were your shadow, how would I be able to tell you had an inquiry stance?
3. In the next two questions, I’m going to ask what you have learned about doing inquiry and what you have learned from doing inquiry.
   a. What have you learned about inquiry by engaging in inquiry?
   b. What have you learned from inquiry by engaging in inquiry?
4. In the next three questions, I’m going to ask about impacts of your inquiry on your students and on your teaching and on you.
   a. What impacts, if any, have you noticed on your students as a result of your inquiry? [What led to those impacts?]
   b. What impacts, if any, have you noticed on your teaching as a result of your inquiry? [What led to those impacts?]
   c. What impacts, if any, have you noticed on you as a result of your inquiry? (How has your inquiry affected you?) [What led to those impacts?]
5. What other impacts, if any, does your inquiry have?
6. For the next five questions, I’m going to make a statement and ask you to respond. For each one, could you tell me whether you feel the statement applies to you today and why/why not?
   a. Name, you are worthy to conduct research.
   b. Name, you have a responsibility to conduct research.
   c. Name, you are a teacher leader.
   d. Name, you have a responsibility to your students’ families.
   e. Name, you have a responsibility to the broader community.
7. Do you teach your students to inquire? How?
8. Do you teach your students to challenge official knowledge? How?
9. I’m interested to learn about your thinking about the relationship between inquiry and your inquiry stance. Let’s start by looking at this diagram [share appropriate version of last page of interview protocol]. The phases of the inquiry cycle are numbered. Could you please state the number of the phase, then answer these same questions for each phase? Please share as much as you can for each item. You can start with Phase 1, Question A.
10. Given our conversation so far, how would you define inquiry today? If you had to say, “Inquiry is…”
   a. How did you come to this understanding?
   b. What experiences [in the past month] have shaped that thinking?
11. How do you understand the purposes of doing inquiry?
12. How does doing inquiry relate to what you think it means to have an inquiry stance?
13. Given what you just shared, how would you define an inquiry stance today? If you had to say, “An inquiry stance is…”?
14. To what extent would you say you have an inquiry stance at this point?
15. I’m interviewing multiple people about inquiry stance. Is there something I should be asking people that I haven’t asked yet?
16. Is there anything else I should have asked that you would like to add about inquiry or your inquiry stance as you think about it today?

Interview 1 Only
I’d like to understand more about you. If you don’t have an answer or prefer not to answer, you can say “pass,” and I’ll move on. How do you identify your…?

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Class
- Preferred pseudonym
- Any other key markers of identity you’d like to share?

In what grade level are you currently interning?

How would you describe the demographics of your elementary class this year?

Interview 5 Only
Can you take me through the story of your journey with inquiry in PDS, starting from when you first learned about inquiry and highlighting the key moments or “stops” along the way? [probe for details, people, activities, practices, etc.]

What has been most helpful in supporting your learning with inquiry?

What has been least helpful in supporting your learning with inquiry?

How would you describe the effort needed for inquiry?

What will your inquiry stance mean after you graduate?

What advice would you give for next year’s teacher candidates on how to grow an inquiry stance?

Could you share with me any other documents/folders related to your inquiry that you haven’t already shared?

Is there an email address where I can follow up with you next year?
Month 1:
Question A: What does this phase mean to you today?
Question B: In what ways have you done this?
Question C: Who can be involved in this?
Question D: Where can you do this?
Question E: When can you do this?
Question F: Why should someone do this phase?

Months 2-4:
Question A: What does this phase mean to you today?
Question B: Since our last interview, in what ways have you done this?
Question C: Since our last interview, who has been involved in this?
Question D: Since our last interview, where have you done this?
Question E: Since our last interview, when have you done this?
Question F: Why should someone do this phase?

Month 5:
Question A: What does this phase mean to you today?
Question B: During your internship year, in what ways have you done this?
Question C: During your internship year, who has been involved in this?
Question D: During your internship year, where have you done this?
Question E: During your internship year, when have you done this?
Question F: Why should someone do this phase?

Inquiry Cycle

Phase 1: Develop a Wondering
Phase 2: Collect Data
Phase 3: Analyze Data
Phase 4: Take Action
Phase 5: Share with Others
VITA
Logan Rutten

EDUCATION
The Pennsylvania State University
PhD Curriculum & Instruction, Emphasis in Curriculum & Supervision; Doctoral Minor in Educational Theory & Policy (Aug. 2021)
MEd Curriculum & Instruction, Emphasis in Curriculum & Supervision (Aug. 2016)
Concordia College
BA Majors in K-12 Music Education & K-12 Latin Education (May 2012)

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES (Selected)

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (Selected)

ACADEMIC AWARDS AND HONORS (Selected)
Stevenson Memorial Scholarship, Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), 2021.
Blumberg/Pajak Memorial Scholarship, Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS), 2019.
Award for Outstanding Achievement in Classical Studies, Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS), 2012.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Selected)
Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), 2018-Present.
National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS), 2018-Present.