
Understanding Self-Study Research

What and Why

To my surprise, of all the projects I have worked on to date, my self-study research project has been the most practical . . . the insights I gained about myself, my colleagues, and the position have helped me enormously. Self-study forced me to think outside the box in new ways, and it changed my way of thinking, despite myself.

—Mary Adams-Legge (2006), *English Teacher and Department Chair, Frederick County Public Schools, Virginia*

CHAPTER DESCRIPTION

This first chapter introduces you to self-study teacher research and immediately prompts you to consider its usefulness to your practice. You will have an opportunity to play with your wonderments, to ponder and sketch out what may become your research question. You will also share your unrefined ideas with a peer. In that way, you will learn about self-study while gaining an overview of the research process. You will be introduced to what self-study is and what it is not. Then the discussion moves to the very important question of “Why conduct self-study research?” which includes personal professional accountability, applicability, and reforming in the first person with critical friends. Self-study teacher research puts you at the center of an inquiry you choose.

◆ Reading this chapter will provide an opportunity for you to gain a basic understanding of what self-study is, what it is not, what it entails, and how it broadly benefits students, teachers, and education more generally.