Building a Shared Understanding of the Self-Study Process

It is critical to establish a shared understanding of the goals of self-study (SS), and these should be explicitly grounded in issues of faculty concern. Although self-study projects can be valuable for accountability reporting functions, such as those required by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) or Teacher Preparation Inspectorate (TPI) reviews, this work is NOT about compliance with external mandates. This work is about supporting "locally owned and operated" agendas for program improvement. The focus, goals, and findings of this kind of research are related to the specifics of local context - it is important that local teacher educators stay in the driver's seat for this work.

In building a shared agenda for local inquiry, differences of opinion about data and the proper role of data in decision-making should be expected. We have found it to be quite important to treat these differences with respect for dissenting views. This is not always easy, particularly in the context of contemporary policy pressures related to data use work. But dissenters almost always have a piece of the truth. Therefore, showing respect for those concerns is an important part of making the process inclusive and *real*, and important to developing self-study goals that are responsive to local values and concerns.   Finally, the self-study process is not intended to render value judgements about a program's data use practices, but to guide efforts to make those practices more useful for meaningful program improvement.

Using the Self-studies for Compliance Purposes: From Inquiry to Compliance

As we have said, our primary goals for the self-studies of data use in these programs were about inquiry and program improvement.   However, we found the process, and the reports it generated could also fulfill a variety of external reporting requirements. For example, the Jackson State University College of Education team analyzed data use practices related to several different types of data in the process of implementing the self-study (SS). Content data, which is related to Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standard #1, reflect scores from the PRAXIS I and II, Foundations for Reading, Teacher Assessment Instrument and portfolio. Changes in data *use* practices related to these measures allowed the College to make their uses of the data for program improvement more explicit and concrete for external reviewers.

Similarly, data use practices related to ACT scores for admission to the teacher education program, Praxis I and II scores, Foundation of Reading Scores, candidate portfolio during field experience, mentor teacher evaluation of teacher candidates, field supervisor evaluation of teacher candidates' performance, and site coordinator evaluation of candidate performance during the field experience were all relevant to CAEP accreditation reporting requirements. CAEP Standard 5 states: "The provider maintains a quality assurance system comprised of valid data from multiple measures." The standard specifically requires EPPs to present data-based evidence for continuous improvement. Further, Section 6 of the CAEP Annual Report focuses on "Continuous Improvement." The EPP must answer questions around data-driven EPP-wide programmatic improvements. That said, a Self-Study that targets data use practices can provide specific data-based evidence for CAEP Standard 5.