ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: TEACHING EXPERTISE AS A CULTURALLY-
EMBEDDED PHENOMENON: A CASE STUDY OF ONE
ESOL DEPARTMENT

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The United States has an unprecedented number of ELLs (English Language

Learners) attending public schools. Research on programs for ELLs has not kept pace

with the mushrooming growth of the programs themselves. The relative newness of

programs for ELLs, the rapid growth of the ELL population in public schools, and the

variety of programming available means that researchers know comparatively little

about the culture of available programs or the types of teaching expertise teachers

develop and use in them. In this dissertation I examine the phenomenon of culturally

embedded expertise in one type of program for ELLs, an ESOL program, in a large,

public comprehensive high school. The aim is twofold: 1) to identify and analyze

less-frequently understood aspects of teaching expertise with culturally and

linguistically diverse learners, and 2) to use this knowledge to improve the way

researchers approach understanding teaching expertise.

In this ethnographic case study I explore culture and expertise in one ESOL

department in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Unlike most studies of

teaching expertise, I broadened the scope of the study to include not only teacher interactions with students, but also teacher interactions with other teachers. In the dissertation I describe and analyze the teaching expertise of three ESOL teachers. I collected data primarily through interviews and observations. ESOL teacher expertise and culture were assessed through the lens of ritual (Bell 1992, 1997).

Teaching expertise was not limited to effectively helping ELLs learn to speak English. Rather, ESOL culture members "coconstructed" a cultural value that was more broadly focused on the overall flourishing of ELLs. ESOL teachers strengthened their commitment to ELLs through ritualized interactions that included keeping the value of students in the foreground of their interactions. Teachers also cultivated personal relationships with other ESOL teachers; this fostered stronger professional relationships that led to sharing expert practices and collaboration. Expertise in the ESOL culture revolved around two cultural goals. The first entailed helping ELLs make a cultural transition to the ESOL classroom. The second involved helping ELLs prepare for life beyond the ESOL classroom.

This study suggests that some aspects of teaching expertise are closely linked to the shared cultural values of ESOL teachers. Thus, it is important to consider the complexity of time, place, and culture when attempting to understand teaching expertise as it applies to ELLs.

TEACHING EXPERTISE AS A CULTURALLY-EMBEDDED PHENOMENON:

A CASE STUDY OF ONE ESOL DEPARTMENT

by

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PREFACE

The United States has an unprecedented number of English Language Learners (ELLs) attending public schools and a growing number of teachers to teach them. Research on programs for ELLs has not kept pace with the growth of the programs themselves. The relative newness of programs for ELLs, rapid growth of the ELL population, and variety of programming available for ELLs means that education researchers know comparatively little about the "culture" of available programs or the types of teaching expertise teachers develop and use in them.

In this dissertation I examine the phenomenon of culturally embedded expertise in one type of program for ELLs, an ESOL program in a large, public comprehensive high school. The aim is twofold: 1) to identify and analyze aspects of teaching expertise aimed at culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and 2) to use this knowledge to improve the way researchers approach understanding teaching expertise and its relationship to the culture in which teachers apply it.

The review of the literature showed that expertise and culture have normally been considered separately. Understanding the relationship between the two is critical to reforming and improving education (Fullan 2001, Gallimore & Stigler 2002, Sarason 1999). In this study I take a close look at the relationship between the two. Kathleen, Maria Elena, and Laura, participants in this study, coalesced around a particular cultural value—the flourishing of ELLs. Expertise emerged from that shared value and entailed helping teachers and ELLs successfully navigate transitions by making connections to each other and to the outside world. Teachers' understandings of how to fulfill their

commitments to helping ELLs flourish were enacted in various types of ritualized activities. These ritualized activities were similar across all three teachers' practices. In this dissertation I explore three key dimensions of teaching expertise in the ESOL culture.

I investigate the relationship between culture and expertise by studying three teachers' actions within a particular cultural context, an ESOL department in a large comprehensive high school. Using a combination of office and classroom observations, focus groups, and individual interviews, I define and examine cultural values and how teachers enact them in their interactions with each other and with students. I used ritual as an analytic lens to understand participants' actions and their language about those actions. First, I searched for patterns in teacher actions in observations and field notes. Then I matched those instances with the language from interviews where teachers described their actions. Doing so allowed me to examine the cultural meanings teachers assigned to various patterns of action. Once I established that a pattern of action had multiple layers of meaning in one teacher's practice, I searched for similar patterns among other participants.

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the problem under investigation, the purpose of the study, and some background information helpful to understanding the ESOL department at Grandview. This chapter also introduces Kathleen, Maria Elena, and Laura, the participants in the study. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical context for the study, focusing especially on the overlap among culture, ritual, and expertise. Chapter 2 also includes an explanation of how I use ideas of ritual to guide understanding of key concepts in the study.

In Chapters 3–5 I explore three distinctive dimensions of expertise that were a part of participants' practice. In Chapter 3 I examine how teachers collaborate with one another to build and support their expertise and that of their fellow teachers. They do this in a way that both constructs and strengthens cultural values. In Chapter 4 I show how teachers create a space in their classrooms that facilitates students' transition from their former culture to the new culture of the ESOL classroom. In Chapter 5 I explore how teachers create ritual activities designed to increase independence of ELLs and to "empower" them as they prepare to depart the ESOL department. I conclude each chapter by naming a cultural role that describes the nature of the work teachers were doing when they engaged in each dimension of expertise.

In Chapter 6 I conclude the dissertation by examining how each dimension of expertise serves a connective purpose. In the chapter I suggest thinking of expertise as a culturally embedded phenomenon and explores the implications for thinking of it in this way. I argue that while researchers have tried to define teaching expertise as a universal that applies to all contexts, subject areas, and populations of students, this may not be possible or even desirable.

The chapters that follow offer a picture of how expertise is embedded within a single cultural setting. I am to illuminate the understanding of one group of teachers as they attempt to meet the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse group of students. As more ELLs enter public schools and more teachers work to educate them, I suggest that teachers will need to collaborate more closely with one another to construct shared values that will build a healthy departmental culture and strengthen their expertise in serving a culturally diverse population.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

ESOL EXPERTISE: CONNECTIONS TO A DISTINCTIVE CULTURE

This is a dissertation about culturally embedded teaching expertise, or dimensions of teaching expertise that are culture-specific; however, it did not begin as such. This work began as an investigation into the dilemmas I had faced in my own classroom as an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher. When I started working teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) ten years ago, my efforts as the only ESOL teacher in a school with a new ESOL program revolved around how to prioritize my work and how to determine boundaries with students in terms of how much assistance to provide them. Hoping to inform other ESOL teachers who I assumed faced the same challenges I faced, I began the study with the following questions:

1. How do teachers' understandings of the student context influence their constructions of practice?

2. How do teachers understand the relationship between academic and non-academic types of work that they do with students?

3. Based on teachers' understanding of student context, how do they determine which aspects of academic and non-academic work with students fall within their responsibilities to the student? How do they decide which do not?

What became apparent to me as I spent time with participants in this study is that they were using an almost entirely different set of skills and knowledge than I had used when I was an ESOL teacher. I realized I had come into the field with a set of questions that were not only limiting, but also not entirely relevant to the setting I now find myself

immersed in as a researcher. I abandoned them early on and set out to find out how this department operated and what was of importance to my participants rather than what had initially been important to me.

I discovered quickly that the teachers in Grandview's[1] ESOL department did not have the same concerns or struggles I had. By and large, these teachers knew their responsibilities. Their programs were established. They had a teaching force of ten ESOL teachers along with a number of individuals who worked in administrative, supportive and guidance capacities. A much larger part of their work involved operating in concert with those other individuals to serve ELLs. They were much more involved in sharing expertise with others than I had been as a solitary ESOL teacher. And so, the following overarching question emerged: What is teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL culture?

Discovering what was important to participants in this study proved to be no small feat. Initially, my efforts to be included in the cultural activities of the ESOL department at Grandview were not welcomed. I experienced department as a "closed" culture from which I was initially largely excluded. Although the ESOL department culture readily welcomed ELLs as culture members, others, with no exception that I know of, were held at bay and denied access to most of the activities of the department.

This exclusion baffled me because I had what I considered a positive relationship with the department from previous work in the school. I worked in the school as an administrative intern for six months two years prior to conducting the study. I had also developed relationships with a few of the ESOL teachers from conducting previous studies in the school including a study with the former chair of the ESOL department.

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[1] Names of participants, students, school personnel, and the school itself are have been changed to ensure anonymity.

While I anticipated great advantages to having been part of the life of the school, the biggest advantage prior access to the site afforded me was that I also no longer lost my way in the sprawling schools' three stories and many wings of classrooms and corridors.

Grandview's ESOL department, I came to learn, was what philosopher Kenneth Strike (1994) would call a "thick" community, or one sufficiently coherent to sustain a shared vision and framework for what the education of ELLs should be according to culture members. In this case, that vision made the culture a difficult one to become a part of. In my time at Grandview I found that most teachers' exchanges involved very detailed information about students' lives and situations, and they protected this information from outsiders and cultural newcomers, like me. Idealistically, I had thought my background in ESOL would instantly afford me membership in what I came to understand as the ESOL culture at Grandview. That was, by no means, the case. As a result of my designation as an outsider, a good deal of my energy throughout the study went into establishing trust in the department. I went to great lengths to "fit in" to the departmental culture.

The reluctance on the part of the teachers to allow me "inside" their world caused me to begin to question the nature of their culture and why it might be closed to outsiders. I especially questioned the role teachers' protection and value of students held within the culture. I began to suspect that understanding the shared vision ESOL teachers held for students was the key to understanding their culture. Before I developed this hunch, my goal had been to "catch" teachers talking about ELLs, by using wireless microphones and other techniques so that I could understand how they made decisions about what responsibilities for students fell within their purview. After I began to suspect that

teachers had what could be described as a reverence for ELLs, I changed my approach. Rather than aiming to capture how teachers spoke about students to each other, I began to focus on their actions with students and their ways of describing those actions. What follows explores the dimensions of expertise I discovered stemming from my experience in the ESOL department at Grandview and how I studied those dimensions.

RITUALIZING EXPERTISE IN ESOL

Insights into what it means to be an expert ESOL teacher can be gained by analyzing teacher action (Alexander 2004, Sternberg 2004). In this study I explore expertise by analyzing teacher action as well as knowledge and intention. Ultimately, my goal is to shed light on what it means to be an expert teacher within the ESOL classroom and the culture of the ESOL department at a high school in the United States[2]. The relationships among knowledge, intention and action are particularly important to this study because they constitute expertise. Intentionality requires that the practitioner have command over his or her knowledge and actions—expertise is not accidental. I define teaching expertise as the elegant blend and deliberate deployment of knowledge, intention, and action aimed at meeting both cultural and pedagogical goals of the department (Cossentino in press, Fenstermacher 2002).

Here I also make a significant distinction between *experts* and *expertise*. I do not catalogue traits of people who are considered experts, nor do I examine how people become experts. Rather, I explore *how expertise is embedded in the common cultural practices of one community.* Expertise is rarely examined as a culture-bound

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phenomenon. Cossentino & Whitcomb's (2003) study of Montessori teacher education is a notable exception. In examining Montessori teaching practice from a cultural perspective they find that it is best characterized as craft, which they define as "culture-bound know-how." I examine the phenomenon of embedded expertise, or "culture-bound know-how," by looking at instances of "ritualized" teaching practice (Bell 1992, 1997). By linking the actions of teachers to the intentions and knowledge they assigned to them, the meaning of those patterned and symbolic actions and, more important, how those actions constitute expertise, begins to emerge.

In the three ESOL classrooms I studied, actions often had multiple purposes in addition to those related directly to learning to speak English. The ESOL culture at Grandview High School reached for much broader cultural goals, including connecting students to one another and to the life of the school. Throughout the study I examined teacher action in an effort to discover instances of ritualized[3] practice. Through both interview and observation, I searched for the meaning participants themselves made of those actions and, by extension, the link between symbolic action and expertise. Each chapter presents vignettes of teaching practice drawn from my classroom observations. Each vignette describes and analyzes the behavior observed, and analyzes data from interviews with teachers that include teachers' own descriptions of what occurred in the vignette. Finally, I begin to explain the expertise involved in teachers' actions along with their cultural significance.

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[2] I am not suggesting that ESOL classes, or that even the most expert ESOL teachers, can eliminate the many challenges ELLs face. However, I am hopeful that ESOL teacher practice can help banish the alienating effects of schooling, which often render ESOL students' lives invisible (Henry 1998).
[3] I explore ritualization, how it works, and how it is used in this study further in Chapter 2 and in Appendix A.

What follows in the next section serves as an example ritualized interactions that reveal forms of culturally embedded expertise.

A Brief Encounter Between Two Classes

One day Kathleen asked me if I would lead her ESOL I students downstairs to the computer lab in Lily's classroom so she could use the elevator to take her materials, which were too heavy to carry without a cart. Before Kathleen caught up with me, I led her students quietly down the stairwell, through the hallway, and in through the back door of Lily's classroom where the computer lab sat empty. In the front of the room Lily was leading a literature lesson. She held a large book in both arms in front of her. As I settled students into their seats at the computers, Lily briefly looked up, made eye contact with me, smiled, and returned to the discussion. When Kathleen entered the class, Lily stopped her lesson and began introducing her students to Kathleen's students.

Lily, from the front of the classroom loudly says, "Welcome Mrs. Ortega's class. Is this your first time here?"

Kathleen, now smiling at her friend, stands near her students in the back of the classroom and responds on their behalf, "It is. Thank you. We're happy to be here. Thank you for having us. Mrs. James' students, this is my ESOL I class. These are ESOL I students."

Lily responds in kind, "These are my transitional students."

Kathleen says as an aside to her students, but loudly enough for all students to hear: "Transitional students are no longer in ESOL, but we still love them."

Lily explains to the class how students progress through the ESOL department. She says, "It goes ESOL I, ESOL II, ESOL III, transitional. This is a wonderful group of students."

Kathleen ends the exchange by publicly complimenting Lily. She says, "That's because they have such a wonderful teacher."

Ritualized practice: Formalized, patterned, symbolic action

One of the features that distinguish this dissertation from other work that has been written about expertise is that expertise is examined using *ritual* as a framework for analysis. By ritual, I mean both the action of teaching practice and the messages symbolized in that action. At first glance, one may question what, if anything, this encounter has to do with ritual. After all, this event does not take place in a church or another place typically associated with ritual activity. And, the participants are not wearing special clothing or engaging in sacred rites. I would like to suggest, however, that the teachers during this encounter "ritualize" their interactions with each other and with students in these exchanges in a way that distinguishes them from non-ritual activity. The teachers do this by using "symbolic action" (Burke 1966). As McLaren (1999) points out, these activities, though they are "integrally related" to the everyday work of the teachers, are rituals. In fact, many researchers (Goffman 1967, McLaren 1993, Quantz 2001) claim it is within the everyday worlds of humans that ritual thrives. By exploring ESOL teacher work through the lens of ritual, the "cultural scripts" of ESOL teacher practice become visible. Attending to cultural scripts, in turn, makes it possible to define culture-bound dimensions of teaching expertise in ESOL.

I use ritual as both an "etic" and "emic" (Geertz 1973) construct. Typically, I began exploring observable patterns of behavior from an etic perspective by using ritual as a lens through which to view teachers' actions. The etic refers to the manner in which I use ritual as a window into the worlds of the participants, particularly their conceptions of expertise. In these instances, participants were not necessarily aware that they are formalizing or symbolizing. Ritualization was, in these instances, automatic. When I use ritual as an etic construct, I try to acknowledge the possibility of competing interpretations in the analysis. I also aim to capture how participants in the culture intentionally used ritual to make meaning of their work and their culture. By capturing the multiple layers of meaning participants assigned to their actions, I explore ritual from an emic perspective. The encounter above is one such instance where Kathleen herself assigned multiple layers of meaning to her ritualized actions. Typically, when participants were aware of how they were ritualizing their actions, rituals were more elaborated rites rather than those I capture from an etic perspective.

In this dissertation I explore rituals from the outside, describing and analyzing the observable behaviors, and also from the inside by describing and analyzing participants intentions and knowledge. In describing and analyzing rituals from an outsider perspective, I looked for patterns in the observable behavior of participants. In describing and analyzing rituals from participants' perspectives, I looked for patterns with respect to what participants were thinking and meaning about what they were doing. By exploring ritual from participants' perspectives rather than relying solely on what could be gathered from my outsider perspective, the multiple meanings that individuals assigned to actions and objects as they symbolized them became identifiable (Feleppa 1986). Participants

within the ESOL culture transformed and abstracted the meanings of ordinary classroom actions and objects in ways aimed at promoting the flourishing of ELLs at Grandview. How they did so, and what that means for expertise in ESOL is the topic of this dissertation.

One of the first clues that the exchanges between Kathleen and Lily are ritualized is the formal manner in which teachers and students interact. Rather than saying "hey there" or "come on in" as Lily normally might as students enter her classroom, she waits until Kathleen arrives and then brings her class to a standstill to formally "welcome" Kathleen's class. Rather than having students answer for themselves as they normally do, the teachers respond on students' behalf. The two teachers call each other by last names. Lily's doesn't say, "Welcome ESOL I," she says, "Welcome Mrs. Ortega's class." In doing so she establishes a formal tone. These actions contrast ordinary greetings and exchanges between ESOL teachers and classes, and these contrasts differentiate this greeting from other more ordinary greetings that occur on a more regular basis. These exchanges differ from the routine set of expectations that teachers and students have set which are generally more informal. Differentiating this encounter from others privileges it. Ritual is in part defined by difference. The formality and differentiation of this encounter are strategies Lily and Kathleen employ to ritualize it.

A second indication that the exchanges between Lily and Kathleen are ritualized is that they follow a predictable pattern of exchanges. The sequence they follow is the one that is typically associated with encounters where two groups who do not know each other are being introduced. Here after the formal greeting and welcome, the pattern follows the model of a fairly typical English greeting and introduction (Post 1992). For

instance, the group of lesser rank, Kathleen's class in this case, because they are younger and have less experience, is introduced to the group of higher rank, Lily's class. Students, following the patterns of introduction put aside their work and focus on the introduction. Kathleen and Lily exchange compliments, and those also follow predictable patterns. By referring to the patterns of the encounter, I do not mean to insinuate that they are habitual or routine in the ESOL department, but rather that the rules governing such interactions were established long before this encounter ever took place. Bell (1992) refers to the "fixity" and "repetition" associated with patterns inherent in greetings, compliments, and introductions as strategies for producing ritualized acts. Here Lily and Kathleen use the patterns of the encounter not so much for their obvious or intrinsic purposes, but rather to enact the values of their culture and to display those values for the students.

Determining that the actions of the encounter are formalized and patterned alone does not mean they are ritualized. They must also be symbolic. By saying the encounter is symbolic I mean that the actions have meanings that transcend surface level communication. Kathleen attributed multiple layers of meaning to the encounter she shared with the students and with Lily. Notably absent from the encounter as well as from Kathleen's subsequent description of the encounter was any explicit focus on language instruction. What she focused on in describing the encounter was how it served a relationship-building function. On the surface, the exchanges between Kathleen and Lily's classes may appear to simply serve as a model to Kathleen's students, most of whom have had few occasions to be introduced to anyone in English, of English greetings in general. Below the surface, however, much more was going on. The encounter, Kathleen suggested, stands for the relationship and respect she hopes the

students will show towards one another. It symbolizes commitment to the culture, and it symbolizes hope for both the younger ESOL students and the older ESOL students of the progress they have made and can make in transitioning to a new culture. Symbolically the encounter served as a model for the building of relationships among ESOL students. It was the formal "modeling" of valued relationships in the culture. The primary cultural purpose of the encounter was to promote the internalization of those relations and their values.

Culturally embedded expertise

Not only are the interactions in the encounter ritualized, they also serve as an example of an encounter in which certain types of culture-specific expertise are embedded. I call this phenomenon embedded expertise because the action is relevant and expert in this particular culture whereas perhaps it might not be expert (or not expert for the same reasons) if enacted in a different culture. To see what is culture-specific about the encounter it is important to understand the values of the culture, which here derive from the unique educational requirements necessary for English Language Learners to flourish at Grandview. The ESOL culture at Grandview values building relationships, especially friendships, among students. While the value of cultivating friendships may not be unique to the ESOL culture at Grandview, it is certainly not shared by all education cultures. In cultures where competition is highly valued, for instance, building friendships among learners might actually be discouraged.

Kathleen utilizes the introduction as a way to enact the cultural value of building friendships. She describes, "It's also good because many of them are newcomers to our school—9th graders. They have no friends. So it's another way of making friends."

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of helping ESOL students build relationships especially with students older or younger than themselves and among students who spoke the same native languages. During the course of fieldwork, they cited numerous reasons for encouraging friendships among students. Friendships, participants felt, made it easier for students to navigate the new culture. Also, without an understanding of English, life in a high school in the United States can be an extremely lonely experience. Friendships with other ELLs helps mediate that loneliness. In this particular encounter, Kathleen felt it was important for ELLs to befriend each other because in friendships students find hope that they can make it through the process of transitioning and learning language. She explains how it helps newer members of the culture: "It's a way to let them know that there are other kids that went through, and that they all started as an ESOL I student and then moved on." Her talk suggests that the ESOL I students find hope in knowing older students who have successfully navigated the distance they will soon travel themselves.

Kathleen draws on several different types of knowledge including some that are especially relevant in working with ESOL students. The most obvious form of knowledge she uses is knowledge of etiquette and how to properly and skillfully execute introductions for purposes not readily obvious to anyone who is not a member of the ESOL culture. In this case Kathleen employs the etiquette of making an introduction to work toward building affection and regard among the students for one another. Second, she utilizes knowledge of her own and Lily's classes to help her students build friendships with one another. She anticipates how both more senior and more novice groups of students will receive the encounter. Additionally, she draws on her knowledge

of the kinds of experiences and feelings ELLs are likely to have and about the types of assistance the ESOL department can provide to support ELLs. For instance, she knows that to newcomers, learning to speak English fluently may seem overwhelming, if not impossible. In recounting the encounter, she explained, "I really like the ESOL kids to feel that they're welcome and that they can achieve higher levels of English." She also knows that students who are further along tend to forget that they were once like ESOL I students with only a handful of English phrases and vocabulary. She draws on her knowledge of how both groups of students benefit from a sense of perspective.

Not only do Kathleen and Lily draw from cultural forms of knowledge when enacting the encounter, they also use actions in deliberate ways to work toward their aim of building friendships among students. One example of this is the way they carefully use each other's last names when referring to their classes. In ESOL culture, since students eventually all share the same teachers as they move through the program, knowing which teacher a group of students has holds a special purpose. It serves as an identifier. Teachers, in a sense, are a "medium" through which students can relate to one another outside of class. For instance, if two students meet in the hallway and have been introduced as members of a particular teacher's class, the students are likely to know quite a bit about the types of experiences each has had. The ESOL department is small enough that all the students quickly learn about each teacher's reputation, and many students may even have had a particular teacher, in which case the connection is likely to be even stronger. Even if they have not shared a particular teacher, they are still likely to know quite a bit about that teacher. Such knowledge is key for ESOL students because it

provides a conversational opening for those who might otherwise hesitate to speak to one another.

The introduction thus "ritualizes" familiarization among the students and sets the expectations the teachers have for interactions among them during and outside of shared class time. The formality of the introduction communicates the respect and appreciation the teachers have for one another and that they expect students to exercise with one another. What is "expert" about it is not so much that it maximizes how quickly ESOL students learn to speak English, but rather that it influences the culture in which they will learn and helps to construct a culture uniquely suited and designed for their educational requirements.

THE MEANING OF ESOL CULTURE

I use the term culture in two specific ways in this dissertation. First, I use it to refer to the ethnic, linguistic, and national backgrounds of students. I also use it to refer to the unique set of values, norms and qualities of the ESOL department in which students and teachers work. I assume teachers and students jointly construct departmental culture (Breen 1985). It is important to understand that I am not using the term culture to refer to the traditional paradigm used to describe ethnic, national, and international groups of people. Rather, I am applying it to a small group—the ESOL department in this case— where there is, I argue, cohesive social behavior (Holliday 1999).

ELLs and the ESOL teachers have organically co-constructed a departmental culture to meet the unique needs of ELLs. What it means to be an expert ESOL teacher at Grandview is embedded in this departmental culture. According to Weber (1965), culture

is made up of "webs of significance" that man builds and assigns meaning to. Taking this view, Geertz (1973) writes that we must look at what the members of the culture do if we are to understand the meaning of the culture. In this dissertation I examine what ESOL teachers do and how what they do might differ from what teachers do in other departments. I broaden the concept of teacher work to encompass work teachers do outside their own classrooms. I focus on how ESOL teachers interact with other ESOL teachers in ways that shape departmental culture and support culture-bound forms of expertise.

These teachers work to change the cultural climate of the school. They work with the principal and help with professional development of non-ESOL teachers to prepare them to work with ELLs. They provide support to classroom teachers during their planning periods to help them with challenges they faced in working with ELLs. Although I noted many of these types of instances throughout fieldwork, I do not explore these dimensions of ESOL teacher practice. Rather, I focus on ESOL teachers' work with fellow ESOL teachers and with students—the main thrust of their work.

One of the things I try to do in this dissertation is discern the culture of the department. I began this study under the premise that the ESOL department, like other academic departments, has a unique culture (Siskin 1994). However, I am studying it by studying the actions of participants. What follows in chapters 3, 4, and 5 are instances of action, which I analyze in part to discern the distinctive culture of the ESOL department.

English Language Learners (ELLs)[4]

Lily and Kathleen both teach English language learners (ELLs). ELLs arrive in the United States with varying levels of English language proficiency. While most ELLs at Grandview were from Spanish-speaking countries, more than 40 languages were spoken among students in the ESOL department.

Crandall (1994) notes that ELLs are expected to learn a new language and must learn a new educational system as well, one that may vary drastically from what they previously knew. These differences include aspects of learning that most researchers either ignore or take for granted, including the nature of relationships between teachers and students as well as differences in the type of support parents are capable of providing. To complicate their transition, Cabello and Burstein (1995) point out that many ESOL students "experience poverty, abuse, or other negative situations that can seriously affect their physical, cognitive and emotional development (p. 285, as cited in Freeman, Brookhart and Loadman 1999). Many newcomers grapple with recovering from trauma caused by moving from a wartorn nation. Many have received little or no schooling, or have lost family members to war, hunger, or disease. Often, posttraumatic stress disorder and other psychological problems are "undiagnosed and unrecognized" in ESOL learners (Crandall 2000). Finally, ELLs regularly feel unwelcome and isolated in schools as a result of discrimination and marginalization (Crandall, Olsen and Peyton 2000, Gregory 1996, McLaren 2002).

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[4] This dissertation uses the term *English language learner* (ELL) because it is how participants referred to their students. I also use it because it is more positive than the term *limited English proficient* (LEP) in that

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The ESOL classroom is a place where teachers aim to address the educational

requirements, interests, and concerns of ELLs. In this section I situate English for

speakers of other languages (ESOL) into the spectrum of programs offered to meet the

educational requirements of ELLs in public schools. In addition, I provide a description

of the ESOL department at Grandview.

Education researchers continue to debate which types of programs are preferable

for ELLs. Many researchers support bilingual programs (August and Hakuta 1997,

Collier 1995, Crawford 1999, Cummins 1996, Krashen 1996, Krashen et al. 1998).

Bilingual education focuses on additive bilingualism. Students learn two primary

languages. Emphasis is divided between maintaining the students' primary languages

while teaching English, the new language. Students receive instruction in both languages.

Many researchers and educators support immersion over bilingual education (Baker and

de Kanter 1981, Danoff et al. 1978; Porter 1990, Rossell 1996). In immersion programs,

students focus primarily on learning English. Instruction is given primarily in English.

Maintaining the students' primary languages is not an aim of immersion programs

(Freeman and Freeman 1998). I do not address or further that debate, but I do examine

teaching expertise in an immersion program. ESOL is a type of immersion—in the

vignette above, Kathleen is teaching an ESOL class.

Unlike bilingual education classes, Kathleen emphasizes teaching her students to

learn to speak English by relying primarily on the use of the English language[5].

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it focuses on students' potential rather than their deficiencies.

[5]This is not to say that participants never used students' first languages or that they did not permit students to speak with peers using languages other than English. It was not uncommon to hear three or four different languages spoken at one time in ESOL classrooms at Grandview.

Additionally, she uses strategies such as physical cues, pictures and gestures to communicate rather than depending on knowledge of her students' native languages. When students enter Rutherford County, central office ESOL personnel assess their English proficiency and recommend an appropriate placement. Placements occur along a continuum beginning with ESOL I, a class designed for beginning English speakers. Students progress through ESOL II and ESOL III classes as proficiency increases. Grandview, because of the size of its ESOL population, also offers support classes to its ESOL students. These include AIM literacy, a course for pre- and nonliterate ELLs that provides students with English fundamentals. A second course, CABLE, exposes students to academic language in mathematics, science, and social studies. A third course, language of math, teaches mathematical language and concepts using sheltered English. Finally, transitional English helps students to transition from ESOL classes into regular high school English classes. Grandview ESOL students participate daily in ESOL classes for 90 minutes.

Because ELLs were grouped by language proficiency into ESOL classes the length of time they spent in ESOL before exiting the program depended on how much English they knew when they entered the program and how quickly they mastered English along the way. Some students were in the program for only a year, and others remained in the program throughout their high school years. Some students were in an honors track within the ESOL program and transitioned into the honors program upon exiting the ESOL program, and other ELLs transitioned into the college preparatory or vocational tracks upon exiting.

The ESOL program in Rutherford County has four primary goals:

1. Teach ESOL students to understand, speak, read and write English to achieve academically, communicate in social settings, and use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

2. Help ESOL students to value their cultural and linguistic heritage and to understand and function in U. S. culture.

3. Encourage parents of ESOL students to understand the U. S. educational process and become active participants in their children's education.

4. Provide training to mainstream classroom teachers on methods for teaching ESOL students in their classrooms.

Of the roughly 2,300 students who were attending Grandview while I was undertaking fieldwork, more than 1,000 were foreign born (Grandview website). Grandview's ESOL student population grew from 260 students the previous year to 369 students by the end of the semester (Verbal communication, Kathleen Ortega). That number does not include students in transitional English classes or those who exited the ESOL program but are still at Grandview. The ESOL department is comprised of 10 ESOL teachers who taught various levels of ESOL classes. Due to the growth of the student body, the department anticipated receiving another ESOL teacher. The number of both teachers and students in the ESOL department has grown steadily since the early 1970s when the program first began.

ESOL departments are different from other high school departments in a number of key ways. Whereas most students in a high school take science, math, English and history, most do not take ESOL classes. ESOL departments are structured and designed to meet the educational requirements of a specific population of students, ELLs. Because

of this, they share a number of characteristics with special education and honors

programs, other programs, and departments designed to meet the needs of a group or

subgroup. Such departments have students who take classes in the mainstream but also in

a special program. They share a unique organization that differs from the way that

subject-specific departments are organized.

Several features distinguish the ESOL department from other departments at

Grandview. Few if any procedures were written down in policies either formally or

informally that solidly defined the work of individuals in the department. This meant that

the department enjoyed a great deal of flexibility and autonomy[6]. Teachers' work and

how they went about it was not highly prescribed by the school, the central office, or the

state. Teachers still had a great deal of freedom about what and when they taught. The

department still had a high degree of flexibility in terms of scheduling and course

offerings. This flexibility afforded teachers the opportunity to control the content and

design of courses. Participants attributed this flexibility to their ability to continually

reshape and develop new curricula. Many innovative ESOL classes have come out of this

school and have spread to other parts of the district and state. Two examples are the AIM

and CABLE classes described above. Kathleen says, "Many of the programs that they

[other ESOL departments] do throughout the country have started from here. It's like a

pilot." Several present and former members of Grandview's ESOL department have been

very active in shaping state and district-level policies. While most academic departments

in high schools are governed by curriculums designed to increase performance on

statewide standardized tests and accountability measures, this was not the primary focus

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[6] It also meant that they did not have the same type or degree of accountability most other departments did.

of the ESOL department. Because of this, there was during the time of this study, comparatively less control over what, how, and when ESOL teachers taught.

By comparing Grandview's ESOL department space allocation with that of another high school's in the same system, the way the department was relatively valued becomes apparent. The way Grandview values ESOL is not always the rule. Teachers from other schools who come to Grandview note that typically the ESOL department is not a valued member of the school community. Wade Alexander joined his wife Laura as an ESOL faculty member at Grandview. He notes the marked differences between Grandview's ESOL department and that at Maxwell High School: "At Maxwell, the ESOL department was in a part of the building where people could forget about it. No one swept the floor. There was no circulation, air conditioning, or windows. No one thought of ESOL as a real department."

By contrast, at Grandview the ESOL department resides in a newer wing of the building. The classrooms are large. There is a working, well-maintained computer lab. The rooms are clean and the floors sparkle. Unlike many other departments in the school, the ESOL department has a departmental office of its own complete with a receptionist and waiting area for parents who need to see the ESOL guidance counselor or ESOL coordinator. Providing an equally, if not superior, workspace for teachers and students demonstrates the high status of the ESOL department to the Grandview community. The school views and treats the ESOL department as a program that contributes to the overall wellbeing of the school, not as one that detracts from it.

Grandview: A school generally supportive of ELLs and ESOL

I initially chose to work at Grandview because of its demographics. GHS is a

large, public high school located in an urban school system outside of a major Mid-

Atlantic city. I intentionally chose to conduct this study in a system known for its

diversity. Of the approximately 2,300 students enrolled over 1,000 are foreign born. The

students at GHS speak more than forty different languages. GHS, the first high school to

have an ESOL center in the county, has had an active ESOL center for nearly thirty years.

95% of senior class graduated last year, and 77% of those graduates are attending college

or other post secondary institutes.

There were many ways in which Grandview demonstrated its appreciation of the

ESOL department. Although many of the teachers had been there for a long time and

were well versed in ESOL methods, Grandview had ongoing, yearly staff development

for the entire faculty on ESOL issues.

The executive principal, Tom, set the tone for the value of diversity and ESOL

students at Grandview. His actions and speech revealed his support for the ESOL

program. To increase parental involvement, for the last three years Tom planned a "Back

to School Night" at Grandview. This year at the beginning of the evening, as parents

settled into their child's first class, Tom gave opening remarks. Using the school's

television station to broadcast his remarks, he invited parents to learn more about the

school. After briefly introducing himself, he set a tone of welcome, respect, and pride in

all of Grandview's students: "Parents, you are welcome into the school building

anytime….We have the whole world represented here at Grandview. We want to make

everyone feel welcome. At Grandview, we aim to make everyone feel respected and

valued." To ensure that most parents and students understood his message, Tom asked Kathleen to translate his remarks in Spanish.

Tom's office reveals his appreciation for cultures from all over the world. Beautiful silks from the Middle East adorn his walls, and on his table rest artifacts representing a wide variety of cultures present at Grandview. When I first met him several years ago, I became quickly aware of not only his verbal commitment to the success of the ESOL program, but of his commitment to integrating ESOL into the life of the school. As we sat in his office, he said:

> I give the ESOL department my full support….I see to it that the group is involved in the leadership of the school in general. So, is ESOL represented on our planning and management team? Is ESOL represented in our instructional team? So it's looking at the organization and then ensuring that their voice is heard and is part of the leadership of the school.

Placing faculty on major teams works to integrate both the ESOL faculty and students into school life. First, ensuring representation on the major school teams puts the ESOL department on equal footing with other departments. Second, it ensures ESOL students rise through the academic programs and make it to the advanced placement classes. Third, it increases ESOL students' involvement in extracurricular activities. During my fieldwork, ESOL students served on all of the school's athletic teams. Finally, it makes certain that the school affords the ESOL department the flexibility between the department and the school it requires to maintain classes for fluctuating numbers of students.

UNDERSTANDING ESOL TEACHING EXPERTISE

In the United States there is a sizable number of ELLs in public schools as well as ESOL teachers who teach them, but little is known about ESOL departments or the expertise that teachers use in them. The United States, especially the public school system, is experiencing an ongoing, high volume of immigration (Crandall 1994, Fix 2003, Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix 2000). English Language Learners (ELLs) constitute an increasingly large percentage of the public school student population (Levin 1989, Suarez-Orozco, Roos and Suarez-Orozco 1999). This population comprises students with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The language minority population is not only constantly growing, but its composition is constantly changing as well (Crandall 1994, Garcia 1996, Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix 2000, Suarez-Orozco, Roos and Suarez-Orozco 1999). These conditions have led to an increase in the number of teachers who work with ELL students (Reeves 2002).

While most high schools have had English and mathematics departments since their inception, programs for nonnative speakers of English are a relatively new phenomenon. Until quite recently, many high schools did not have any kind of special programming to serve ELLs (some still do not). Research on programs for ELLs has not kept up with the mushrooming growth of the programs themselves. While education researchers have described differences among departmental cultures for quite some time now (Feiman-Nemser 1986, McLaughlin and Talbert 2000, Siskin 1994), in my review of the literature about programs for ELLs I did not find any that described the culture of ESOL departments or the expertise of the teachers within them.

As the number of ELLs steadily increases, and as its composition continually changes (Crandall 1994, Garcia 1996, Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix 2000, Suarez-Orozco, Roos and Suarez-Orozco 1999), what it means to be an expert teacher will change as well. Ongoing demographic shifts make it vitally important for teachers to continually revise their practice, take in and use knowledge about learners, and tailor teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Linguistic and ethnic population changes call for reexamining the skills and knowledge necessary to teach these students expertly. Consequently, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners need to better understand expertise in diverse settings. As Crandall (2000) boldly states, "These swift changes demand teachers who are knowledgeable, responsive and prepared to work with students of diverse language, educational and cultural backgrounds" (33). But what does this mean—what does this look like in practice? What kinds of places are ESOL departments, what kinds of teaching expertise do teachers utilize within them, and how is that expertise constructed?

In this investigation I address these questions. Many schools have ESOL programs that couple teaching of English and other survival skills for ELLs; however, research on teaching expertise in ESOL classrooms is scarce (Barcelos 2000). In an effort to improve the way secondary school teachers teach not only ELLs, but also all students from diverse backgrounds, I try to capture the nature of expertise by examining the action of teaching in the diverse setting of an ESOL department. The teachers of ELLs are especially interesting to study because their work takes place in the intersection of linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity. Using, an in-depth, ethnographic case

study of three ESOL teachers, the investigation sets out to illuminate frequently overlooked dimensions of teaching expertise within the context of an ESOL department.

ESOL Culture: Expertise in a Diverse Context

In this study I describe and analyze the teaching expertise of three ESOL teachers at Grandview High School. Its purpose is twofold: 1) to discover and analyze less-frequently understood aspects of teaching expertise by examining it as a culturally embedded phenomenon, and 2) to use this knowledge to improve the way researchers understand teaching expertise and its relationship to the culture in which teachers develop and exercise it.

I studied ESOL teacher expertise by examining the action of teaching through the lens of ritual. In this study I examine not only how teachers ritualize their practice with students, but also how they ritualize their actions with fellow teachers to build and share expertise. The qualitative study consisted of inquiry into the teaching expertise of three high school ESOL teachers through interview, observation, focus groups, and email. The methodology was designed to thoroughly explore teachers' expertise in the context of the ESOL department and offer a glimpse of less frequently studied aspects of teaching expertise. My aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of the unique expertise of a limited number of teachers who worked in the culture of one high school ESOL department.

The overarching question addressed in the study is this: How is expertise culturally embedded in the ESOL department at Grandview? To answer this question, I use frameworks derived from ritual studies. I use ritual as both an analytic and a

conceptual framework. As an analytic framework, I use ritual as a lens through which to view and understand symbolic, patterned activities as they are enacted in cultural context. I apply concepts derived from ritual studies to understand and interpret the meaning of those activities. In addition to the question above, I ask three more specific questions to help answer the more general question:

1. What is teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL culture?

2. What can be learned about expertise in Grandview's ESOL department by using ritual frameworks?

3. What roles do ESOL teachers assume when deploying different types of teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL department?

A new way of studying a seldom-studied phenomenon

This study of high school ESOL teacher expertise is significant for two reasons. First, I address an area where there is a paucity of research. In my review of the literature I found no studies that directly addressed expertise in high school ESOL classrooms. Moreover, ESOL departmental culture, to my knowledge, has also not been studied. My hope is that this study will provide new insight into this area. By drawing researchers' attention to it, the hope is that more research will be stimulated into a rich, previously untapped area. As the number of ELLs in U.S. high school classrooms continues to increase (Berube 2000), the gaps in our knowledge of expertise in diverse settings present greater barriers to preparing teachers to serve their students well (Delpit 1995, Ladson-Billings 1999, Valli 2000). In this study I provide insights into the ways ESOL teachers ritualize their practice. This work could better inform the way we prepare teachers to work with immigrant and linguistically diverse populations of students.

The study is also significant because it expands the examination of teaching expertise beyond the classroom setting. By broadening the scope of investigation to the ESOL department to look at how ESOL teachers ritualize their practice with fellow teachers, I extend the discussion of expertise to diverse contexts to include how teachers develop their teaching expertise and how they help their fellow teachers build expert practices.

OVERVIEW OF FIELDWORK AND PARTICIPANTS

I spent one semester during the fall of the 2002–03 academic year conducting an ethnographic case study of the ESOL department of Grandview High School. Data consisted of transcribed interviews, document analysis, email scenario responses, and observation field notes. I gathered data from focus groups, interview sessions, and observations of three faculty members throughout the fall semester. The documents I collected pertained to lesson planning, classroom activities, ESOL departmental and individual teacher's correspondence with parents, and official school correspondence with faculty and parents. In addition to observing each of the three participants' classes biweekly, I also observed departmental faculty meetings, parties, and schoolwide professional development activities and events.

While I had an opportunity to interact with other faculty members and with students at Grandview, I focused my study on three faculty members: Kathleen Ortega, Laura Alexander, and Maria Elena Duran. I interviewed these teachers individually, and I gathered data from two focus group sessions during which I asked participants to respond to my interpretation of their actions.

By way of introducing study participants, I provide some information about their age, ethnic background, and teaching experience along with a snapshot of a classroom instance that foreshadows one of the three roles explored further in later chapters.

Laura Alexander: Cultural Conductor

Laura Alexander is a white non-Hispanic in her late twenties. The majority of her formal education and career have revolved around working with ELLs. While attending an ESOL certification program at a nearby university, she met her husband, Wade, who joined the faculty of Grandview's ESOL department during my fieldwork. During the time of the study she studied in the evenings to complete a program to become an ESOL guidance counselor, because she has found that "a lot about what I enjoy about this job are the pseudo-counseling situations that I get into."

I asked her during our first interview what her goals were for her students, and she responded: "To learn English and to become acclimated to American schools and expectations of American schools. One of my personal goals for them is that they feel accepted, and they feel that they have a comfortable secure place to be in the midst of their day."

I noticed early on that teachers in the ESOL department spent much of their available time with their colleagues discussing, borrowing, and adapting activities. One of the activities that cut across teacher practices was the "school tour." An annual tradition, the school tour takes place at the beginning of the year and serves not only to orient students to the building, but also to introduce them to faculty, staff, and to each other.

When I enter Laura's classroom on a day late in August she is preparing to take a class on their "school tour". Before classes started, Laura toured the school herself preparing the nurse, office workers, and school faculty for the visit from her students. As students enter the classroom around 9:45, Laura prepares them for the tour by reviewing each destination on the school tour worksheet and by helping students practice asking each question on the guide. She stands statuesquely at the front of the room. Her six-foot height and natural elegance work to create a classroom presence that rarely requires her to call for the respect and attention of her students. As students complete the preparation for the tour she sends them out armed only with the company of their peers and a map of the school, which covers three levels.

The first question on their guide requires them to ask the office administrative assistant how many children she has. They begin whispering among themselves as they enter the ESOL office when they discover that Mrs. Prieto is not behind her desk to receive them. Roused from her desk by the rustle of students, Kathleen Ortega, the ESOL chair comes around the office partition smiling to greet students.

The students mistake Kathleen for Ms. Prieto. Manuel steps forward. Reading from his guide sheet he asks, "How many children do you have, Mrs. Prieto."

Again, Kathleen smiles. "I'm Mrs. Ortega. Mrs. Prieto is not here right now, but I think she has four children."

As they turn to leave, Kathleen suggests, "Why don't you all come back to check to see if I'm right in a few minutes."

Students nod and leave for the next stop on their sheet.

A few minutes later, with a little more confidence, students return. This time Mrs. Prieto is sitting behind her desk in the receiving area. Again Manuel steps forward. This time he asks, "Mrs. Prieto, you have four children?"

Mrs. Prieto asks, genuinely surprised, "How did you know I had four kids?"

Students begin laughing, and then again, Kathleen comes out from behind the partition. Looking at Kathleen's smile, Mrs. Prieto realizes where the students got the information.

Here Laura works as what I call a "cultural conductor" by tapping into the expertise of her fellow ESOL teachers to accomplish the goals she (and the culture within which she is working) have for ESOL students. As Laura stated, part of her aim involves helping students "acclimate to American schools" and to "feel accepted." Laura did not work toward these aims in isolation. She borrowed materials and ideas from coworkers and prepared others to receive her students. The expertise involved in this form of collaboration and how ESOL teachers work as cultural conductors are the primary focus of Chapter 3.

Maria Elena Duran: Cultural Liaison

Maria Elena is a 30-year-old white Puerto Rican woman, who moved to the United States with her brother when she was in high school, and attended Grandview as a student in the ESOL program. She wears small wire-rim glasses and almost always dresses in casual, loose-fitting clothes that hide her slight frame. Her curly brown hair neatly frames her face. Her wedding ring, the only jewelry she wears except for a gold crucifix, is the only clue an outsider would have that she might not be a student. She

began her teaching career at a Catholic school. Like Laura, she completed her student teaching with Lily here at Grandview. After that, with prompting from the supervisor, she applied for and received a teaching position at Grandview.

On one of the first days I observed Maria Elena's AIM class, she was working with students on using language to describe themselves. She hands students two worksheets, each with a blank Venn diagram. In her khaki pants and beige turtleneck with an untucked denim top over it she moves across the front of the room handing the front person in each row papers to pass back.

She leads the class through one exercise together to illustrate the basics of using a Venn Diagram. When they have finished, she says, "Easy, right? It's not difficult." Students agree. Challenging them she prepares them for the next exercise, "You're going to do this on your own. We're going to think about things that are the same about Grandview and your school in your country." She helps students remember the names of their schools, and she prompts them to write it in the appropriate box at the top of the page. Before she releases them to work independently, she focuses their attention on her to give the directions: "OK, ready? Are we ready now? OK, Beautiful eyes, everyone. Manuel? Your eyes? Adaliz? I want your best English. Write things that are unique about Grandview and your school. I want you to think about it, and tell me how many minutes you want. Five?"

Students respond, "No, ten!"

She grants their request and sets the time to mark off ten minutes, "All right, ten minutes."

She starts them with two examples, and now they set out on their own working against the running timer. Some students almost immediately appear to be stalled. Some consult with each other and some use their translators to get them started in English.

Maria Elena watches them from behind her desk and says, "There are many things. What about uniforms? Did you wear uniforms in your old school? What about lunch? In your country could you eat lunch in your home and then come back to school?" From the sound and motion of hands now writing, it is clear that the prompts stimulated most students to come up with other examples of differences and similarities.

One by one students approach Maria Elena's desk for help. She patiently assists them with thinking through how to phrase their ideas.

Almost half of the students in the class have been to her desk now for help with this assignment.

Once she observes students slowing down, she signals for them to wrap things up, "Okay, let's talk about this together. Let me hear your ideas."

Through the process of describing their previous educational experiences and cultures, Maria Elena drew students' attention not only to the common experiences they had with each other before coming to the United States, but also to the common experience they have now as ESOL students at Grandview. Maria Elena is working as what I call a "cultural liaison," bridging students' former educational experience with their current educational experience. In doing so, she unites students and initiates them into the ESOL culture at Grandview. I explore the work of the cultural liaison further in Chapter 4.

Kathleen Ortega: Cultural Transitor

She stands only 5' 2", although many days, high heels and a strong personality increase her height by several inches. Kathleen is a white Puerto Rican in her late thirties. She almost always wears her long, layered hair down around her round face. Her attire alters between the professional and the hip. Kathleen has been a student in a foreign language program herself, and her experiences as a second language learner gave her insights into what students experience learning English as a foreign language. She is in her tenth year of teaching and has taught in both Puerto Rico and the United States at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Near the beginning of every ESOL I class, Kathleen has the class participate in a brief warmup activity that is usually easy enough for students to complete without her assistance. Today she asks the class, "Who is the teacher this week?" Several students look in the direction of a male student sitting quietly in his assigned seat, and a few dare to call out his name. Kathleen begins the warmup by focusing the class's attention on the student she has designated as this week's "teacher." In a singsong voice, she calls, "Beautiful eyes on Mr. Bubacan. Mr. Bubacan, are you ready to be the teacher? Please read the directions."

The tall lanky student from Cameroon leaves his seat moves purposefully into place at the overhead at the front of the classroom. To signify her status as a nonteacher, Kathleen imitates a student by asking the "teacher" a question: "Do I have to write my name?" and then "Do I have to write the date?"

Today's warm up happens to be on using forms of the verb "be". The class checks their answers against Mr. Bubacan's, and several students raise their hands to volunteer

to take the next question. Mr. Bubacan pauses, carefully considering who to call on next and points authoritatively toward another student to indicate that she is to take number 2. The student answers correctly. Mr. Bubacan continues to call on new students, and the exercise proceeds in this manner until each of the seven answers have been successfully given. At this point students clap and Kathleen thanks the student for his leadership.

In this snapshot Kathleen resists her own use of power by placing a student in the front of the classroom and by taking a seat in a student's chair. When teachers act in this capacity I describe their work as that of a "cultural transistor," that is, she is preparing her students to transition to the culture beyond the ESOL department. One way she does this is by cultivating leadership. She prepares students to become leaders by "resisting" her own use of power and by "transferring" the focus of the class and the responsibility for activities to students. I explore this theme further in Chapter 5.

CONCLUSION: CONDUCTING, CONNECTING, TRANSFORMING

All of these roles have in common the connective and transformative nature of teacher work. As a cultural conductor Laura tapped into the expertise of her fellow teachers to further the goals she has for her students. By bringing students into others' space, she used the power invested in others to cultivate an appreciation for her students. By inviting her colleagues to participate in the education of her students, Laura strengthened community collaboration and reinforced the ESOL culture's value of English Language Learners. As a cultural liaison Maria Elena provided a space for her students to make the transition between cultures. She worked to alleviate the inevitable tensions ESOL students experience being "betwixt and between" cultures by making

their transition and the differences and similarities between their former culture and the new culture the focus of instructional activities. By doing so she honored their previous culture and made a space for it in the classroom. As a cultural transistor, Kathleen placed her students in positions of power in the classroom. She empowered them by resisting or impeding the flow of her own power and by making space for students to taste and experience leadership roles.

Looking at expertise from the perspective of these three roles expands the meaning of teaching to encompass broader purposes of education valued by the ESOL culture. Connecting teachers to each other, students to each other, and students to the rest of the school was the focus of much of ESOL teachers' work. When ESOL teachers worked as cultural liaisons, conductors and transistors they were working together in a shared cultural and educational purpose: the flourishing of ELLs. What is expert about the ways teachers work in those roles and how expertise is embedded in ESOL culture and interweaving of action, intention, and knowledge is the my focus in this dissertation.

In the next chapter I set a more in-depth theoretical context for the study, focusing especially on the overlap among culture, ritual, and expertise. In it I also explain how I use ideas of ritual to guide understanding of key concepts in the study.

CHAPTER II

CULTURE, RITUAL, AND EXPERTISE

In this chapter I provide the theoretical context for this study. I reviews three interrelated strands of literature: 1) *culture* and its relevance to understanding teachers' actions and expertise in both ESOL classrooms and departments, 2) how *ritual* functions in educational settings and its viability as an analytic tool to capture teaching expertise in ESOL classrooms and departments, 3) and the definition of *expertise* and its meaning in relation to English language learners (ELLs).

CULTURE

Culture serves as a central construct in this dissertation. Here the term refers to culture on two distinctive, but interrelated, levels: the ESOL classroom and the ESOL department. I assert that both teachers and students work within distinctive cultures and that learning and teaching are culturally embedded. Classroom and departmental cultures are central to all teaching and learning, but they are especially relevant to language learning because language permeates all social and cultural relationships.

I apply Holliday's (1999) concept of small culture to the ESOL classroom and the department. Holliday contrasts large cultures—the traditional paradigm used to describe ethnic, national, or international groups of people—to his concept of small cultures, which he applies to "small social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behavior" (237). In small cultures, recurring social practices and use of artifacts give order, purpose, and continuity to social life (Smagorinsky 2001).

In education researchers often use the terms "culture" and "social" interchangeably. This is not surprising since both sociological and anthropological traditions address the importance of considering teaching and learning as processes that occur in the presence of others. Much of the literature that uses the term "social" is relevant when thinking about education in cultural terms as well. In this dissertation I use the term "culture," because my primary focus is on the meaning participants assign to their actions rather than on their structure or function.

Cultural Change: Transformation and Context

Culture is interactive, human-made and ever changing. We normally think of the ways culture shapes human action. For instance, children speak the language spoken by the members of their family culture. Language is, therefore, part of one's cultural inheritance. It is also important, however, to consider how human action shapes culture. For example, human action frequently shapes language development within a culture: the computer has changed not only the vocabulary of the English language, but also the metaphors that guide thinking, writing, and the ways we organize physical structures within the space of our cultures. Lantolf (2000), building on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of "mediated mind," describes how cultures change and evolve. He explains, "Artifacts are generally modified as they are passed on from one generation to the next. Each generation reworks its cultural inheritance to meet the needs of its communities and individuals" (2). Murphy (1986) similarly observes that "Cultures are not rooted in absolutes. They are the products of human activity and thinking and, as such, are people-made. The elements of culture are artificial, contrived and changeable" (25).

Zinchenko (1996) portrays how cultures change in a slightly different way. He describes the organic nature of culture:

> Culture is not merely the situation in which human development takes place. It is a functional organ, or as some characterize it, an activity system, composed of historically organized social relations created by humanity with the power to penetrate into itself. (313)

According to Zinchenko, cultures change in much the same way that systems and people do. By "penetrating" into itself, culture reflects on itself, assesses the current environment, and reinterprets the culture based on new needs brought about by environmental changes.

Noting how culture evolves in schools and classrooms has two implications for how I frame this study. The first is my assumption that teachers' interactions with other teachers in their department influence the department's culture and, by extension, the evolution of their teaching expertise. Second is that teachers *and* students shape the culture of the classroom. Culture communicates the sorts of behaviors that are acceptable through the passing along of traditions embedded folkways, mores, laws, habits, customs, rituals, etiquette, and fashion (Holliday 1994, Schultz 1964). These traditions share what Bourdieu (1971) calls a "common set of previously assimilated master patterns from which an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated" (192). Using culture as a construct makes it possible to analyze these patterns along with their meanings to culture members. And this questioning is a central concern of this dissertation.

The Size of Culture

Cultures can be any size. Every sphere of human behavior can be looked at in cultural terms. The term culture is problematic because it is so commonly used in our language that people have their own connotations for it. For this reason, Holliday (1994) admonishes that "Culture is a concept which needs to be handled carefully" (21). He criticizes use of the term to apply to nations (as is commonly done), because doing so invokes imprecise generalizations about people and their ways of being that become too easily mixed up with stereotypes and prejudices. Applying the term *culture* to smaller groups (such as classrooms) acknowledges the histories, traditions, and sense of permanence (Holliday 1994) that these groups have—in the same way we think of large cultures having the same qualities. Both classrooms and departments share similarities with these more permanent cultures. Because cultures share similar features "knowledge of how culture works generally can reveal much about the workings of classroom interaction." (Holliday 1994, 23). Classroom cultures and teaching cultures form "when the groups in question meet to carry out specific activities (Holliday 1994, 23)."

Classroom Culture: The ESOL Connection

This investigation operates under the assumption that "English language teaching produces a culture within the classroom which is different from that of teaching other subjects" (Holliday 1994, 23). With this in mind, I examine the implications of viewing the classroom, especially the ESOL classroom, as a distinct culture. Rather than focusing on cultural dimensions of classrooms, Second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have bickered for decades about which method of instruction is best (Allwright 1998,

Prabhu 1990). SLA researchers have frequently overlooked the fact that language learning takes place in the presence of others and that others influence the development of language for individuals and the class as a whole. Because of this, SLA lags behind other fields in which cultural implications of learning have been on the radar screen for several decades.

Most work that has been done on cultural aspects of the classroom focuses on learning rather than teaching. When researchers have applied cultural learning theories to classrooms, the focus has been on what learners do rather on how teachers can create environments and interactions with learners that make use of these theories. Allwright's (1998) study of the ESOL classroom as a cultural sphere is one such example. Allwright focuses on inhibitions ELLs face when deciding whether to ask a question. He examines how the culture of the classroom influences students' willingness to participate in the processes therein. Although this study is unique and noteworthy, because Allwright considers the effect speaking has on the student who speaks rather than only on others who overhear what is said as SLA research traditionally does, it still focuses on learning rather than on teaching. Teaching, like learning, is culturally situated. The cultural context influences how teaching actions are deployed and how members of a particular culture interpret the meaning of the actions that take place in it. Freeman (1996b) argues that studying teacher decisionmaking without regard to the culture within which it takes place may "obscure the mutual influence" (363) they have on one another.

Holliday (1994) argues that English language education should be appropriate to the culture in which it takes place for it to be accepted by members of the culture. Holliday refers to cultures as marketplaces where negotiation takes place and "us" and

"them" tendencies subside. In viewing culture as a marketplace, he acknowledges the agency and power all members have to shape the happenings in the classroom. Holliday investigates the value of looking at educational contexts as cultures. Viewing classrooms and departments as cultures makes "often opaque features of the classroom" (21) visible. Using culture as a way to think of classrooms and teaching "draws attention to aspects of classroom and teaching interactions which might otherwise escape analysis" (22). By thinking of classrooms as places with a distinctive culture can we begin to understand the opaque features of teaching expertise.

Dewey (1938) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) describe some of the more opaque aspects of education. Both highlight the interrelationship between academic growth and other aspects of development. Verity (2000), building on Vygotsky (1978), points out that development is neither uniform nor unidirectional. Language acquisition, the main thrust of the ESOL teacher's work, is especially tied to other aspects of development (Collier and Thomas 1997, Vygotsky 1978). Teachers shape not only the intellect of the student, but the spiritual and emotional aspects of the student as well. Moll's (1992) study comparing learning in home to learning in school suggests it is important to be aware of how teachers understand the student as a "whole" person "taking into account…the multiple spheres of activity within which the child is enmeshed" (133). Lampert (1985) shows how teachers' understanding of student needs within a particular classroom culture shapes actions as teachers struggle to "manage" both academic goals and other goals they have for students.

This study extends the work of these scholars, focusing on ESOL teachers' work, especially how they understand their work with students and their fellow ESOL teachers.

The interrelationship between academic growth and other aspects of development only becomes apparent when studying teaching and classrooms from a cultural perspective. By viewing these theories with the teacher in the center of the research rather than the student, we can begin to think about how teachers can use these theories to create cultures in the classroom that facilitate learning along with other aspects of development.

Breen (1985) provides a framework for viewing and understanding classrooms as cultures. He points to the importance of examining the language classroom as a culture worthy of study. He develops the metaphor of coral gardens originally used by Malinowski (1935) to capture the complexity and dynamic forces of the language classroom. He describes a language class as

> an arena of subjective and intersubjective realities which are worked out, changed, and maintained. And these realities are not trivial background to the tasks of teaching and learning a language. They locate and define the new language itself as if it never existed before, and they continually specify and mould the activities of teaching and learning. (142)

Breen describes "eight essential features" of language classroom cultures:

1. *The culture of the classroom is interactive*. Classroom interactions exist on a continuum from ritualized interactions to completely unpredictable interactions.

2. *The culture of the classroom is differentiated*. As Breen describes, "the culture of the classroom is an amalgam and permutation of different social realities" (144). The classroom culture contains these differences. Teachers and learners must balance tensions between their own internal reality and the shared external reality.

3. *The culture of the classroom is collective*. The culture of the class has a life of its own, which emerges from the continually negotiated meaning of classroom activities. Ritualized actions and overtly dynamic actions exert influence over actions that take place subsequently.

4. *The culture of the classroom is highly normative*. The teacher and students judge one another on how each meets certain highly defined, if tacit, expectations for behavioral or classroom criteria for performance.

5. *The culture of the classroom is asymmetrical*. "Learners give teachers the right to adopt a role and identity of teacher" (146). The differences in roles between teacher and students create asymmetry. Similarly, "through the unfolding culture of the particular classroom group" (146) teachers allot rights and responsibilities to students. Different views of what these roles should be among classroom culture members creates tension that calls for continual renegotiation of these roles.

6. *The culture of the classroom is inherently conservative*. A classroom group will initially resist anything that poses a threat to the established order of the culture. Because the group wants to preserve order, even small changes take time. Both students and the teacher risk upheaval by deviating from classroom norms.

7. *The culture of the classroom is jointly constructed*. Even though teachers prepare lessons in advance, the playing out of the lesson is jointly constructed. The social process of the group influences classroom activities in ways that teachers and students cannot anticipate.

8. *The culture of the classroom is immediately significant.* To an outside observer, very little is readily accessible—only what Breen calls the rim of the coral reef of the interplay among the individual, the individual as a group member, and the group culture is immediately observable.

Breen's description of language classroom cultures explains why expertise must be viewed within its cultural context. Examining teacher action within its cultural context helps portray a more comprehensive picture of teaching expertise, and it enables the researcher to link cognitive and social aspects of learning.

Teaching Cultures: Communities of Practice

Scholars who research the cultures of teaching (Feiman-Nemser and Floden 1986, Gallimore and Goldenberg 2001, Lawrence-Lightfoot 1983, McLaughlin and Talbert 2001, Siskin 1994) discuss the ways that cultures in high school departments vary based on differences in subject matter. We can assume, based on these scholars' research, that ESOL departments, like other subject area departments, have a distinctive culture. While we do have a sense of what ESOL culture is like based on theory, we do not have any clear sense of ESOL culture from the empirical literature. In the literature review for this dissertation, not a single empirical study on ESOL departmental culture could be found. However, based on two preliminary studies of my own, high school ESOL departments starkly contrast to typical high school departments in which teachers typically place teaching the subject as their top priority. ESOL teachers, on the other hand, organize their work around students. Therefore, students, rather than content, are the nexus of classroom life.

Lave and Wenger (1991) use the term "communities of practice" to describe what I call the culture of individuals who come together to engage in a commonly valued enterprise. Within communities of practice, interactions develop commonly shared understandings about the valued enterprise. These types of collaborative interactions develop norms for associations among individuals (Wenger 1998). Lave and Wenger encapsulate the cultural nature of learning in their term "communities of practice," suggesting that all learning occurs within such social and situated contexts.

Wenger (1998) outlines three characteristic dimensions of communities of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. Mutual engagement describes the sense-making process that takes place as a result of participating in jointly valued activities. Joint enterprise describes the commonly shared understanding of the shared activity and what participating entails. Shared repertoire refers to the products constructed by the community that serve as resources to the community for engaging in their work. Examples of resources include routines, policies, and processes.

Rituals are both a part of culture and a lens through which to view culture. In the next section I primarily discuss what rituals are and how I draw from ritual studies as a conceptual frame for the study.

RITUAL

Ritual delineates the "contours of culture" (Cossentino under review) and illuminates the connections between the values of culture members and their behaviors. Succinctly defining the term "ritual" is complicated, because it has been used in numerous ways in countless contexts. Studies of ritual are the subject of research in

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anthropology, sociology, religion, political science, and, to a lesser extent, education. Within the field, sometimes known as "ritology," there is no consensus on what ritual is or why it exists. Rather, scholarship aimed at defining, classifying, and analyzing form and function proliferates across the disciplines, and out of that proliferation, individual scholars craft working definitions to help explain an array of cultural phenomena. From table manners to burial practices, from a presidential inaugural to the exchange of gifts, the study of ritual aims to illuminate the patterns of human activity and the cultural messages embedded in them.

Traditional sources limit the use of the term to the study of religious contexts (Durkheim 1915, Frazier 1935, Weber 1965). However, recently, scholars have used the term to describe secular events (Moore and Myerhoff 1977) as well as aspects and patterns of human interaction, such as greetings, table manners, and daily "habits" (Goffman 1967). Some ritoligists even suggest that individuals can invent their own rituals, such as rites of passage to suit their particular needs (Grimes 2000, Parker 1996, 1999).

In addition to widening the scope of settings to which ritual has been applied, researchers have broadened their analysis of the functions ritual serves. Sociologists, for instance, have traditionally viewed ritual as a mechanism of social structure. Durkheim (1915) highlighted the power of ritual to maintain the status quo. Turner (1967), by contrast, insists that ritual is a more dynamic phenomenon, capable of both affirmation and transformation. Ritual can be seen as an attempt to structure experience by adding meaning and organization to processes that have a tendency to move toward disorder. One view of culture is that it continually swings on an imaginary pendulum between

"absolute chaotic conflict and anarchic improvisation" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977).

Turner (1969) describes this swing as a natural movement between "structure and anti-structure."

Ritualization: Uniting Action and Intention

Whether ritual exists is rarely the subject of scholarly activity. Bell (1992, 1997) and Quantz (1999) have argued that the debate over whether ritual has an ontological existence outside of our intellectual use of it is fruitless. Rather, the focus of ritual studies has shifted to treatments that employ ritual as an analytic tool to make sense of cultural aspects of experience and human interaction. For this reason, the term "ritualization," a term coined by Catherine Bell (1992), proves more useful in many instances than the term "ritual." The importance of ritual is that "systems of meaning" or "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973, Weber 1965) inherent in cultures become evident when action is viewed as symbolic and ritualized. Distinguishing "ritualized" behavior from discrete rituals or rites emphasizes the ongoing, dynamic nature of human activity, offering an analytic framework for making sense of a wide range of behavior and the meanings that are embedded in it. When humans ritualize their behavior, they are uniting action and intention.

In an effort to describe classroom and teaching as cultural activity, Holliday (1994) distinguishes between deep and surface actions. He describes surface actions as "plain to see" behavior that is readily apparent, even to outsiders of a particular culture. For example, if a teacher rewards a class because every student turns in an assignment on time, and such a reward policy is written or posted in the classroom, that is a surface

action. By contrast, deep actions are those that are opaque to outsiders and perhaps only tacitly understood by insiders. As he describes, "Deep action phenomena are within the realm of tacit recipes for action deep within the fabric of the culture" (40). Although both deep and surface actions may be ritualized activities, deep actions are usually more difficult, but no less important for researchers to understand. An example of a deep action is reflected in the way a teacher calls on students to respond to a question about a piece of literature. Although a policy for governing such actions might not be stated, a teacher might predictably call on students she assumes are likely to know the answer. Holliday argues that understanding both surface and deep actions is essential if what he calls "appropriate change" is to take place (131).

In my review of the literature Erikson (1977) was the first to begin using the term ritualization. He describes it as highlighting the role of the "numinous," a sense of hallowed presence, assuring ritual actors of transcending separateness from others. Bell (1992, 1997) uses the term ritualization in a different way to describe how individuals differentiate and privilege activities. My use of the term follows from this work. In describing the methods individuals use to ritualize action, Bell highlights an array behaviors that fall into the category of symbolic action (Burke 1966). These include (1) the use of set-apart, structured space within which access is limited, (2) the use of formal movement and speech with distinctive language, (3) the grouping together of people who do not come together for other reasons, (4) the reserved use of clothing, objects, or texts for a particular activity alone, and (5) use of verbal and gestural combinations that suggest how "things have always been done." These are but a few of the ways individuals ritualize action.

To get a better sense of what it means to ritualize activity, Bell provides three central features of ritualization, which also serve as strategies for producing ritualized acts. These are formality, fixity, and repetition. Formality is adherence to established procedures. For example, when individuals adhere to formal rules of etiquette while dating, they ritualize their courtship. Fixity means that a particular way of acting endures predictably over time. And third, Bell sets forth repetition as both a characteristic of and strategy for producing ritualized action. When individuals ritualize activity, they repeat the same or nearly the same actions on multiple occasions or on a regular basis. It is through repetition that actions take on symbolic meaning. In sum, Bell says that at best, "ritualization can only be defined as a "way of acting that makes distinctions…by means of culturally and situationally relevant categories and nuances" (205).

Ritual in Education

Ritual is ubiquitous in culture. Consequently, substantial attention has been given to ritual's symbolic significance as it relates to the historical and political experience of particular social groups (Bernstein 1975, Douglas 1966, Turner 1969). While researchers increasingly classify teaching as cultural activity (Freire 1998b, Gallimore and Stigler 2002), ritual remains an underutilized tool for analyzing the actions and intentions classroom practice (Lankshear 1999, Quantz 1999). McLaren (1999) claims that "rituals are constitutive of everyday human life, including secular activities" (36). He adds, "rituals thrive in the world of life experience" and are "integrally related to everyday action" (38). Most research on educational ritual focuses on the constitutive dimensions of ritual activity.

Researchers have applied ritual to understand numerous aspects of education. An array of studies use ritual to illuminate the structure of time and space in school life. Graduation ceremonies, testing rituals, and bell schedules mark off predictable sequences of "normal time" that order school life (Lesko 1983). "Lining up" to walk through hallways and predictable seating arrangements in classrooms control and structure movement through school space (Jackson 1968, Ratcliff 2001). Gracey (1993) notes that the school day is punctuated by ritual oaths such as the pledge of allegiance. Sitton (1980) describes teachers' administration of forms of "ritual humiliation" to enforce classroom norms.

Ritual has also been used to analyze aspects of student behavior. Quantz (1999, 2001) uses ritual as an analytic lens to view the nonrational aspects of college seminar classes, showing how complex and often contradictory undergraduate and master's level classes can be. He also shows how ritual resolves tensions inherent in seminar style classes where all students are expected to participate and construct group meaning in an American culture with firm commitments to individualism. McLaren (1999) uses the concept of ritual in an educational setting to show how Latino students resist the hierarchical structure of school through "clowning" and other forms of inverting meaning.

Some educational researchers have used ritual to draw comparisons between schools and religion (Jackson 1968, Lesko 1983). As in churches and places of worship, time, space, and human interactions are highly ordered and structured in schools (Foucault 1979, Grumet 1997). Erickson (1982) compares aspects of school lessons to a

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Roman Catholic mass. Merritt (1982) describes the ritual closure of class discussions and deference to a powerful Other—teachers and administrators—within the school context.

Jackson (1968) compares the ritual nature of classrooms to churches. Schools, like churches, he notes, are readily identifiable by their structure, scent, and stability over long periods of time. He explains, "The fact of prolonged exposure in either setting increases in its meaning as we begin to consider the elements of repetition, redundancy, and ritualistic action that are experienced there" (6). Although no two are identical, he describes the differences that do exist as insignificant. When people enter any school, they know, as Jackson describes, "What is *supposed* to go on there" [emphasis in original]. These commonalities distinguish classrooms and make them "special" places reserved for an intimate form of social interaction unparalleled elsewhere in society.

Not only has ritual been used to understand religious structures in school, but it has also been used to understand spiritual dimensions of education. Both Cossentino (under review) and Lesko (1988) use ritual to analyze specific types of educational cultures. In an ethnographic study of the practice of Montessori education, Cossentino (under review), a non-Montessorian, examines how Montessori practitioners use ritual to articulate the union of technical, social, and moral "goods" unique to Montessori culture. Lesko (1988) applied ritual to the context of a Catholic high school to show how ritual worked to alleviate tensions between conflicting goals in the educational process. She showed how both masses and pep rallies, while they emphasize different goods, both serve to alleviate social structural tensions by establishing what she calls "harmonious unity."

Ratcliff (2001), by contrast, selects a generic school location—the corridor—to document the expression of spiritual impulses among third, fourth and fifth graders in an American elementary school. He views hallway space as domain in the school that belongs both to teachers and students. Classrooms, on the other hand, have traditionally been considered the teachers' domain, while the playground has traditionally been considered the students' domain. Ratcliff examined children's rituals in these domains and considered them as expressions of children's' spirituality. He cautions against ignoring the role children's spirituality as expressed through their rituals plays in the way children experience their education and childhood in general.

Some educational researchers have used ritual to describe rites of passage that mark important transitions in life that take place in schools. In her study of the languages of reform, Cossentino (2004) illustrates how teachers interpreted exhibition most frequently as a rite of passage. She describes how this interpretation dominated the language of participants and helped them contain the tensions inherent in the multiple interpretations they held for exhibition. She argues that teachers were moved to interpret exhibition as rite of passage, because it not only reconciled tensions brought on by multiple interpretations, but it also allowed them to enact roles and fulfill deeper meanings and purposes they held for education.

Grumet (1997) addresses what she calls the "erosion" of the rituals and ceremonies of schooling. She calls for the preservation of highly ritualized ceremonies such as school plays that seem to be decreasing in frequency in schools. She regrets their loss because of their ability to help individuals transcend themselves through shared moments that unify individuals. She calls educators to be reminded that schools are

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liminal spaces that mark transformative passageways from one way of being to another. Bushnell (1997) shows how one rural school ritualized an annual school potluck as an occasion to increase parental involvement by "initiating" parents into the school community.

Ritual in Second and Foreign Language Research

A ritual perspective offers a richer picture of the experience of teaching than the relatively technical views that one often finds in discourses of second and foreign-language teaching. A ritual perspective makes it possible to see beyond the methods teachers employ to view the multiples types of investments teachers make in their teaching.

In research on second and foreign-language learning, "ritual" has generally been used as a term of deprecation, most often used to describe old-fashioned, "traditional" methods of instruction in contrast to the more progressive, constructivist pedagogies advocated over the past 30 years or so. Edwards and Mercer (1987), for example, call learner activities "ritual" when they seem to be copied, habitual, rigid, and oriented toward pleasing the teacher. They contrast these unfavorably with "principled" learning, which is described as creative, thoughtful, flexible, theoretically-based, metacognitive, and oriented toward achieving individual aims.

Within research on foreign and second language acquisition, there has been substantial interest in learners' use of scripted, formulaic patterns. This research usually speaks of "repetition," "routines," "chunks," or "prefabricated patterns" (DiCamilla and Anton 1997, Weinert 1995) while at the same time viewing language form as separable

from meaning (Ellis 1994, Widdowson 1978). The social symbolic aspects of formulaic language have been largely ignored. One exception to this tendency is a study by Nunn (2001), who explores ritualistic teacher-fronted classroom discourse and how it has been negatively compared to more progressive communicative language teaching methods. He suggests that the intrinsic ritual in teacher-fronted classrooms does not shut down conversation or prevent the process of negotiation between teachers and students in language learning classrooms. He further states that ritual verbatim repetition of phrases in language classrooms does not prohibit improvisation on basic patterns. In short, Nunn suggests that repetitive, form-focused activities can be replete with meaning for both students and teachers.

Recently several studies have called into question traditional views in foreign and second language research, paying heed to social-symbolic affective processes in second language acquisition (Ehrman and Dornyei 1998, Kramsch 2000, van Lier 2000). Currently, however, the dominant view of second-language pedagogy is that students learn better when rituals are replaced by communicative tasks because the latter are thought to be more interesting and "meaningful." Two examples of exceptions come from the work of Rampton (2002) and Rappaport (1979). Rampton (2002) shows how a language teacher's pedagogic methods turned language instruction into a series of rituals. He shows how German language learners transposed these rituals to improvise and make the German language their own. Rappaport's theory of ritual communication (1979) claims that ritual makes up for languages shortcomings. Language, unlike ritual, is easy to misinterpret. Rappaport claims that ritual serves as a uniquely trustworthy channel of communication. Because the ELLs all speak different languages, ritual becomes a

valuable resource to ESOL teachers. ESOL teachers do not have a method of communicating with all students while they are learning English. Consequently, reliance on ritual to communicate important values becomes prevalent. I will pay particular attention to how teachers ritualize actions within their particular cultural context as a strategy to communicate the norms and values of their culture (Bell 1992).

By exploring ESOL teacher work through the lens of ritual, the "cultural scripts" of ESOL teacher practice become visible. Attending to cultural scripts, in turn, makes it possible to define culture-bound dimensions of teaching expertise in ESOL. In addition to using ritual as an analytic lens, which helps me look for types of interactions, I also use ideas from ritual studies to guide interpretation of teacher actions. In this thesis, I use several concepts from ritual studies to guide my analysis and understanding of teacher actions.

While there are many varieties of rituals, here I draw primarily from ritual concepts associated with transition because that was the main focus of my participants' work. Other ritual varieties include interaction rituals (Goffman 1967), communion rites (Bell 1997), rituals of exchange (Grimes 2000), and political rites (Edelman 1971). In contrast to some other forms of ritual that are primarily expressive in nature, such as ceremonies, rites of transition serve instrumental purposes in that they attempt to accomplish something. In most cases, that something involves successfully coping with change and navigating potentially difficult transitions between states (Bell 1997). Three key ideas from ritual studies guide my understanding of the ritual activity I observed in the ESOL department at Grandview. I use the concepts rite of passage, rite of

intensification, and liminality to gain insight into the meaning and expertise of participants' actions in the ESOL culture at Grandview.

Rite of passage

The first major concept I employ is rite of passage. Rites of passage are found in all cultures, but smaller cultures tend to place more emphasis on their importance (Turner 1987). Rites of passage mark and affect the end of one phase or state and start of another. In this way they both signify and facilitate transition between states (Turner 1987, van Gennep 1960). All rites of passage follow similar structural patterns and have most often been associated with the ways cultures socially mark the transition from childhood to adulthood (Benedict 1934). However, they also mark and facilitate other transitions, such as initiation into "an occupational guild, a religious institution, a political office, or an association" (Chapple and Coon 1978, 501). The major emphasis of much ESOL teachers' work involved helping either themselves or students transition from one stage of life to another. Teachers themselves transitioned when they became closer members of their culture, the ESOL department. They also helped students make the transition from their native countries to the ESOL department, and ultimately, to the broader culture of Grandview and society at large. I regard these types of transitions as rites of passage even though they differ in some key ways from the traditional use of the concept.

Rite of intensification

The second term I use to understand teacher action is rite of intensification. Traditionally, rites of intensification are ritual activities performed in response to changes that affect all the members of a culture in concert. Aptly named, they work to "intensify" a culture member's sense of belonging. Although rites of intensification are particularly

common among horticultural and agricultural people (Haviland 1978), they occur in all cultures (Goldschmidt 1959). Enacting rites of intensification strengthens the bonds among the members of a particular culture through construction and affirmation of shared values. Rites of intensification unite members of a culture by emphasizing their common purpose (Chapple and Coon 1978). These rites restore culture members' sense of belonging and strengthen group ties (Goldschmidt 1959). I use the term rite of intensification especially in Chapter 3 to describe activities teachers used to become closer members of the departmental culture.

Liminality

The third term I use to understand teacher action is liminality. Limina are "between spaces." Turner (1987) defines liminality as "interstructural" meaning those in liminal states are between one culturally defined structure and another. Limina are spaces of transformation and possibility, and although these spaces can occur without ritual activity to support them, the aim of ritual activity is often to create a space for transformation of one kind or another. I use this term particularly to describe the transition students make from their native countries to the United States. Such a transition brings on a state of liminality during which time students are neither "fully here nor fully there" (Turner 1969). By that I mean that while they have left their former country, they have not yet ceased to view the world through their culture's lens. And although they are physically present in the United States, in many ways they are not yet fully engaged in the culture that is around them. I argue that teachers deliberately engaged in ritual activity with the intent of creating limina to ease the difficulty of this transition. Chapter 3 uses the concept of liminality to understand how elders created and used space and activities to

facilitate cultural transitions with ELLs. Using these concepts helped me explore the expertise inherent in teachers' actions. Expertise is the subject of the remaining sections of this chapter.

EXPERTISE

ESOL teachers have been largely left on their own to practice " as they see fit" (McLaughlin and Talbert 2001). The degree of autonomy ESOL teachers have is rare, especially in high school departments and classrooms, and has implications for expertise. These unique conditions make it especially important to gain an understanding of ESOL teacher work by observing teacher practice and coupling that data with the teachers' perspective of what matters most to them about their work. Studies of culture in SLA have been limited in scope and contribute little to understanding what it means to be an expert teacher in ESOL (Crookes 1997). This study will contribute to what we know about ESOL teaching expertise by focusing on how teachers understand their practice in diverse contexts.

Most studies of teaching expertise within the ESOL classroom do not focus on its relationship to a cultural context. Educational researchers need a more holistic understanding of the work that ESOL teachers do to gain more insight into teaching expertise in diverse contexts. This need calls for observing the ways that teachers work within their departmental culture and the classroom culture. Traditionally, expertise has been thought of as something that could be boiled down to a quantifiable set of behaviors. According to this technocratic view, being an expert teacher means executing a collection of discrete behaviors, routines, or scripts. Expertise becomes a set of quintessential

teaching behaviors that lead to the same learning outcomes in all education cultures. This line of thinking reflects the process-product research paradigm that has pervaded our understandings of education (Freeman 1996a, Richardson 2002, Shulman 1986). This paradigm provides little insight into teachers' inner thought processes or the interaction between classroom and departmental culture and teachers' actions. In other words, it affords few insights into discovering how teachers know what they know (Elbaz 1991, Freeman 1996b).

The process-product paradigm typically led to studies of expertise that focused on isolated aspects of teachers' practices rather than on teachers' practice as a whole. Berliner (1986) sought to isolate differences in practice between novices and experts. Borko and Livingston (1989) have focused on teacher planning. Lee Shulman (1986, 1987) has focused his work on developing the concept of pedagogical content knowledge, or how teachers alter their delivery of content based on the nature of the material being taught. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge has had on numerous fields in teaching and learning. His concept now pervades current frameworks that undergird our understanding of what teachers need to know and be able to do to teach effectively. Researchers have taken the concept of pedagogical content knowledge and constructed new models for thinking about preservice teacher development (Grossman 1990, Marks 1990, Cochran, et al.1993). These models are based on a constructivist view of teaching and learning in which preservice teachers continually integrate new experiences into their previous understandings. Researchers and educators have also applied Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge to every content area imaginable, including English

(Grossman 1990), mathematics (Ball 2000), science (Loughran 2002), and physical education (Jenkins 2002). The term "pedagogical content knowledge" is even used in the standards for National Board Certification. It is considered one of the "biggest ideas" in teacher education (Smith and Girod 2003). Rather than taking one of these approaches, in this study I explore expertise within a small culture, that of one school's ESOL departmental culture.

Exploring Teacher Expertise through Action, Intention, and Knowledge

In this study, I analyze teacher action, and the knowledge and intentions that guide such action, to shed light on what it means to be an expert teacher within ESOL culture. For the purposes of this study, I define teaching expertise as the "elegant" blend (Fenstermacher 2002) and deployment of knowledge, intentions, and actions (Cossentino in press) aimed at meeting cultural goals of the department and the educational requirements of students. The coherence of action, knowledge, and intention is particularly important to understand for the purposes of this study. In this study I attempt to identify aspects of ESOL teaching expertise by looking at teacher action, intention, and knowledge within the context of one school's ESOL culture. Actions, or physical behaviors, are guided by intentions (or aims) and knowledge. Previously researchers of teaching have viewed knowledge, intentions, and actions as interactive (Freeman 1996a, Richardson 1996) if not inseparable (Elbaz 1991). Building on this assumption, I take the stance that actions, intentions, and knowledge are not only inextricably intertwined, but are determined by the culture in which a teacher works.

Conceptions of what is desirable and expert in teaching are embedded in both culture and method (Jackson 1986, Richards 1998, Woods 1996), or the strategies and techniques teachers employ to bring about learning (Fenstermacher 1999). To better understand teaching expertise researchers must examine teacher action, intention, and knowledge within its proper cultural context (Rios 1996). I devote the remainder of this section to exploring theories that pertain to action, intention, and knowledge in turn.

Activity

Activity involves a subject moving towards a certain goal or purpose (Ryder 1998). Activity theory provides ways of investigating activities within their cultural context (Leont'ev 1974, Vygotsky 1925). Vygotsky, Leont'ev and others formulated a completely new theoretical concept to transcend the prevailing understanding of psychology, which was then dominated by psychoanalysis and behaviorism. In providing a wide scope of analysis, activity theory offers a basis for determining the meaning of actions within a particular culture. It provides a foundation for interpreting the relationship between actions, artifacts and values within a particular culture (Nardi 1996). Activity theory, a more potent descriptive rather than a predictive tool, utilizes five basic principles: the hierarchical structure of activity, object-orientedness, internalization/externalization, tool mediation, and development (Bannon 1997). I will not define these basic principles here because I do not use them as conceptual frames. Rather, activity theory influences my decision to view expertise through the lens of ritual as dynamic, hierarchical, culturally situated and communal (Adams, Edmond and ter Hofstede 2003).

To understand teaching expertise in this study, I began by observing teacher action. Actions are the observable features of teaching. They encompass all of a teacher's physical behaviors including postures, gestures, and interactions with teachers and students (Grimes 1990). Actions encompass teachers' "instructional moves" (Yinger 1979). Although insights into what it means to be an expert ESOL teacher can be gained by analyzing teacher action (Alexander 2004, Sternberg 2004) "educational ethnographers appear to prefer to listen to what their informants say rather than to observe what they perform" (Quantz 1999, 1). Because teaching is a routinized (Laursen 1996) activity, it is important to look at what teachers do in the classroom. Yinger (1979) called for looking at teacher "routines." He defined routines as "established procedures whose main function is to control and coordinate specific sequences of behaviors" (169). These types of observable patterns in teacher action help to identify rituals. Formalized observable patterns of behavior with symbolic meaning, also known as rituals, permit teachers to complete highly complex tasks more reliably and efficiently. I specifically looked for such patterns in teacher action in this study and used them as points for further exploration. After identifying patterns of action, I probed teachers during interviews to find out why they were doing what they were doing and what knowledge they used to do so. Actions, or physical behaviors, are driven by intentions and knowledge (Cossentino personal communication, Richardson 2002). Next I explore each of those concepts.

Intentiality

Expertise involves intentionality—that is, expertise requires that the practitioner have command over his or her knowledge and actions. The relevance of looking at intentionality is that it allows the researcher to determine whether an action was

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thoughtfully selected as a course of action to accomplish a specific purpose—as opposed to being selected through impulse or preference (Rieck 2000). To understand a teacher's intentions, the researcher must look for evidence that a teacher's actions were deliberate and aimed at meeting a previously defined goal. Dewey (1933) explains the special relevance of examining intentionality when looking at routinized behavior:

> Thinking emancipates us from merely impulsive and merely routine activity. Put in positive terms, thinking enables us to direct our activities with foresight and to plan according to ends-in-view, or to come into command of what is now distant and lacking. By putting the consequences of different ways and lines of action before the mind, it enables us to know what we are about when we act. It converts action that is merely appetitive, blind and impulsive into intelligent action. (212)

Ritual has often been viewed as habitual behavior performed without thought of meaning and intention (Bell 1992). However, I view ritualized actions as potentially purposeful. To ensure a deeper understanding of why teachers engage in particular forms of ritualized actions, I couple looking at the action of teaching with the intentions or purposes teachers assign to those actions.

Knowledge

Teachers draw upon particular types of knowledge (Shulman 1986,1987) or special "know how" to carry out actions and fulfill intentions. For this reason knowledge is the aspect of expertise that has been frequently studied by expertise and educational researchers (Alexander 2004, Sternberg 2004).

Documenting the "cognitive processes and mental structures at the heart of expertise" (Alexander 2004, 3) was the aim of the cognitive revolution, which took off

during the 1970s and 1980s. During this period studies in teacher thinking also took off. Researchers have frequently used teacher thinking as a way to understand the relationship between knowledge and expertise (Clark and Peterson 1986, Richardson 1996). Stemming from this research, researchers have also used beliefs to study expertise (Richardson 1996). Beliefs are "psychologically held understandings, premises or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson 1996, 103). Research on teacher beliefs and theories has emphasized the personal knowledge teachers have and has explored teachers' practical knowledge (Artiles 1996, Connelly and Clandinin 2000). Connelly and Clandinin (2000) have argued that practical teacher knowledge is the knowledge developed from experience through interaction in and outside the classroom.

Teachers' narrative accounts, including stories (Elbaz 1991), teacher metaphors (Munby 1990), and teacher images (Connelly and Clandinin 2000) are all means by which researchers try to understand the complexity of culture and its relationship to teacher knowledge and action. Understanding teacher practical knowledge is especially important when attempting to understand teaching expertise, because teachers often draw on their own sources of knowledge to determine how to interact with students (Lortie 1975).

Researchers have studied teacher thinking and teacher beliefs to understand how what kinds of knowledge teachers use, how they use it, and how they develop special forms of knowledge (Alexander 2004). However, current theories of teaching expertise in ESOL inadequately explain how teachers act based on their understanding of the cultures in which they work.

The application of this field of study to second language acquisition (SLA) is relatively new (Johnson 1992). There are few studies of teacher knowledge and ESOL culture (Barcelos 2000). Johnson's (1992) shows a strong connection between teachers' theoretical beliefs and their methodological approach in the classroom. Graden (1996) found that ELL teachers' actions are not determined by their instructional theories alone, but are also influenced by their knowledge of students. Though Graden found that teachers often experience tensions between two competing belief systems, she did not show how teachers manage these tensions or how knowledge of students influences teachers' work. Barkhuizen (1998) conducted one of the few studies of SLA in a high school setting that attempts to draw on the knowledge of both teachers and students. He argues that students should be involved in classroom decisionmaking processes in order to align teaching and learning processes. By doing so, he argues, teachers will have more knowledge about learners with which to facilitate both teaching and learning in the classroom.

This study does not explore expertise and teacher knowledge by delving into teacher thinking or beliefs as previous studies have done. Rather, it examines particular teacher actions and attempts to discover from subsequent teacher interviews what types of special knowledge teachers drew on to carry out those actions. While most studies of ESOL expertise have narrowly focused on instruction, this study widens the scope to examine both classroom interactions with students as well as interactions outside the classroom with students and teachers. I do this to get a better sense of the relationship between ESOL culture and expertise.

The Significance of Considerations of Culture in Expertise

Teachers need knowledge about the cultures in which they work to build and support expert practices (Holliday 1994, Verity 2000). Cultural knowledge has been frequently overlooked in the research on teaching. Dewey's concept of experience emphasizes the cultural embeddedness of teaching and learning by stressing the interrelationship between people to other people, people to the environment, and ideas to other ideas. He posits that

> A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of the actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile. (40)

In the above statement, Dewey calls for teachers to be intentional about utilizing the culture of the classroom to promote the overall development of students. What we lack here, as educational researchers, is not awareness of the importance of intentionally building culture, but rather knowledge about how teachers accomplish this goal. We do not have any real views of how teachers do this in ESOL classrooms or departments.

Johnson (1996) provides us with one picture of what it looks like when teachers' previous experiences have not adequately prepared them to culturally shape the classroom. Johnson (1996) describes the experience of Maja, a preservice TESOL teacher, as she completes her final practicum in a high school ESL classroom. Johnson portrays the tensions Maja experiences between her vision of teaching and the realities

she faces. Many of the tensions she describes stem from her discomfort with the culture of the classroom. She does not feel she understands the students well enough. She does not understand her cooperating teacher's rationale for using the materials and techniques that she does. Maja's experiences illustrate the difficulties of translating theory, as learned in teacher training programs, into practice within a particular classroom culture. Working in the culture of another teacher's classroom presents a unique set of difficulties. Many of these difficulties arise because of mismatches between what the teacher expects and the classroom reality. These pose serious challenges for the practicum student to overcome. Looking closely at how teachers overcome mismatches between teacher and student expectation also provides insights into how the culture of the classroom influences teaching expertise.

In this study I argue that part of what it means to be an expert ESOL teacher means viewing students as "co-constructors" of culture (Breen 1975). Rarely as researchers have we explored, let alone honored, students' importance as "co-constructors" of culture. We know that irrespective of departmental culture, students play prominent roles in the work lives of teachers. For decades researchers have claimed that students serve as the most important context to teachers (Huberman 1993, Jackson 1968, Lortie 1975, McLaughlin and Talbert 2001).

Based on his study of preservice teachers, Freeman (1998) asserts that culture influences expertise and that there is much room for improvement in the way we prepare teachers to work in ethnically and linguistically diverse environments. Collinson (1994, 1996, 1999) elaborates the difficulty of this task by illuminating the complexities of integrating knowledge of students with professional knowledge. Her studies of expert

teachers highlight the links between "knowing students" and expertise in teaching. Berliner (1986), based on his studies of experienced teachers, distinguishes knowledge of students from other aspects of a teacher's practice and sets it aside as a "separate kind of knowledge" (10) that has the potential to influence all other aspects of a teacher's practice. Fenstermacher (1990) goes so far as to say that it is impossible for teachers to teach well while ignoring "the many dimensions of the lives of their students" (167). This study will make the overlap between expertise and culture clearer by carefully examining how teachers understand their work and how their understandings influence their actions.

What happens to teaching expertise when the cultural context changes? Deryn P. Verity (2000) relates temporarily losing expertise when working in a different culture. He recounts his experience as an American-trained ESL teacher who struggled to adapt to Japanese culture, describing his experience as being "thrust unexpectedly back into the chaos of novicehood" (182). He describes the process he engaged in to recalibrate and reattain his previous feeling and practice of being an "expert." Teachers shifting from one departmental culture to another may experience this to some degree. Teachers who begin teaching demographically diverse populations of students may experience the loss of expertise Verity describes as well. Verity's piece suggests a relationship between culture and expertise—that expertise is culturally embedded. Teachers learn particular strategies for working within cultures that allow them to deploy their expert skills and knowledge. Changing cultures necessitates reformulating one's expertise and perhaps even learning new aspects of expertise. Teachers work within continually changing cultures. Verity explains, "As a creative activity, teaching balances the intellectual and the affective, the self and the other. New cultural contexts call for recalibrating teaching expertise.

Freeman and Johnson (1998) describe the importance of cultural context:

   What teachers know about teaching is largely socially constructed out of the

   experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come. Furthermore, how

   teachers actually use their knowledge in classrooms is highly interpretive, socially

   negotiated, and continually restructured within the classrooms and schools where

   teachers work. (400)

With this in mind, as educational researchers we need to recognize that teaching is

culturally constructed and consequently teacher's knowledge develops and changes

depending on their experiences and interactions with students and colleagues. Therefore,

expertise is culturally constructed as well. In other words, what it means to be an expert

in one ESOL classroom may not be the same as what it means to be an expert in another.

   Freeman and Johnson (1998) call for reconceptualizing the knowledge base for

language teacher education so that it documents teacher learning within the cultural

contexts in which it takes place. Freeman points out that language teacher education has

focused "more on what teachers need to know and how they could be trained than on

what they actually knew, and how this knowledge shaped what they did…" (398).

Teacher preparation programs generally operate under the assumption that "teachers

needed discrete amounts of knowledge, usually in the form of general theories and

methods that were assumed to be applicable to any teaching context" (399).

   Richards (1998) states that there is no consensus on the knowledge base for

language teaching. He proposes that we add contextual or cultural knowledge to the

knowledge base for language teaching. To prepare teachers to work with linguistically

diverse populations, he suggests that programs need to equip student teachers "with the

ability to identify and understand relevant contextual factors in their own teaching situations. Among the contextual factors he names are community factors, sociocultural factors, school culture, and teaching resources. He advocates what Posner (1985) calls situation analysis. Situation analysis includes observation and conversations that focus on

1. The community or neighborhood of the school setting

2. The school including the physical, social, and personal setting

3. The room or space in which the teacher works

4. Colleagues

Bailey (1996) stresses the active and immediate nature of language teachers' decisionmaking by exploring their decisions to depart from preplanned lessons during instruction. Complex cultural issues necessitate increased flexibility on the part of the teacher based on her understanding of how the lesson reshapes itself from moment to moment.

Katz (1996) uses the term "style" to include teachers' interpretations of their role within the culture of the university ELL classroom. She uses the term style to encompass teachers' beliefs, goals, interpretations, and content knowledge. She studies teachers in four different classroom cultures and shows how the differences in teacher style influence the way teachers use technique and build classroom culture. She notes the central part that teachers play in creating the culture of the classroom. Katz uses the term style to illustrate the complexity involved in how teachers create classroom culture. The four teachers she studies built very different classroom cultures, partially attributable to the individual differences in their compositions of style.

The Research Base and Its Applicability

Teaching expertise has been largely ignored in SLA research because the body of research has focused predominantly on students and how they learn rather than on teaching and how teachers teach. Crookes (1997) criticizes the weak relationship between research on SLA and teaching. He discusses the desirability of a closer relationship and critiques the predominant psycholinguistic and individualistic approaches currently employed in this vein of research. He suggests that the importance of researching teachers of ELLs has been marginalized because ELL teachers work primarily with marginalized populations of students. He points out the limits of individualist psychology and positivistic traditions in SLA research because of their lack of observance of the cultural nature of learning and teaching. He suggests that another reason for the breach in the relationship between researchers and teachers is because of the differences in status associated with the two positions. He suggests some possibilities for mediating a relationship between the two such as university-school partnerships and collaborative research projects including action research.

In addition to a paucity of research on teaching expertise in SLA, the research that exists is underutilized by teachers. Freeman (1996a) explains why teachers do not make use of much research on classrooms. He calls for researchers to ask a simple question about teacher knowledge: what do teachers know in order to do what they do?" (90). This question places the teacher at the center of the research on teaching expertise, rather than the researcher—who often misses the central stories that are there. He describes the knowledge teachers possess as "immediate, daily, intimate knowledge" (110). In order to base research on a solid foundation, Freeman calls for addressing these aspects of teacher

knowledge by giving teachers voice and a central location in research on teaching. "In this process of teachers' articulating, in their own voices, their understandings of what they know lies the start of a redefinition of the relationship of teaching and research" (109). Nunan's study of language teachers emphasizes constructive and interpretative views of the learning process. He (1996) echoes Freeman's call for understanding the voices of teachers to gain insight into classroom processes, especially the language learning process.

In this dissertation I place teachers at the center of investigation and focuses on teaching expertise within the context of an ESOL culture. In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 I examine three different dimensions of expertise in an ESOL culture using ritual as a lens to understand teaching expertise from participants' perspectives. In these chapters I examine teachers' actions and their own interpretations of those actions. In doing so I explore intersections among culture, ritual, and expertise and their meanings for teaching expertise.

CHAPTER III

INTENSIFYING COMMITMENT AND CONSTRUCTING CULTURE

In this chapter, I examine how participants take part in action that both

constructed and strengthened a culture dedicated to supporting the enterprise of educating

English language learners (ELLs). I call these actions rites of intensification. It also

explores the implications that such rites had for expertise and the roles teachers played

when participating in the rites. Rites of intensification, like all rituals, accommodate

contradiction, and I explore those contradictions and their implications in each section.

Rites of intensification occur in all cultures (Goldschmidt 1959). Families engage

in rites of intensification when they pray before a meal; corporations do so when they

bring their shareholders together for an annual dinner; nations do so when a political

leader dies or leaves office. Other rites of intensification (not a focus of this dissertation)

are a means of restoring equilibrium after certain changes take place in a culture. The

focus here, however, is to understand how these rites helped construct and strengthen the

culture of the ESOL department at Grandview.

By making certain types of exchanges and patterns of interaction customary

between participants, rites of intensification reinforce cultural meaning. They focus

interactions on particular unifying symbols. In ESOL, by focusing on ELLs during rites

of intensification, teachers strengthened relationships among teachers in the culture and

potentially strengthened the culture of the department as a whole. Any topics that were

not student-centered were excluded from rites of intensification. The omission of

extraneous topics highlighted the connection that united the work of participants; thus,

these rites "intensified" the relationship between teachers and the ESOL departmental culture. During the semester, teachers worked to achieve the shared goal of educating ELLs, working in definite and prescribed ways depending on their position in the department (e.g., leading the group or working with students at various levels of the program). Rites of intensification stressed the interconnectedness of teachers' work and emphasized the goal of educating ELLs—not the individual goals of each teacher. In this way, rites of intensification thickened what was already what Strike calls a "thick community." The intense bonds that developed among teachers made it hard for newcomers and cultural outsiders, including new teachers, to break into the culture.

ESOL teachers frequently engaged in large-scale rites of intensification such as special lunches, faculty birthdays, ESOL events, faculty meetings, and professional development days. They also frequently engaged in small-scale rites with one another: interactions between pairs of teachers in classrooms, hallways, and in ESOL offices. Unlike other departments at Grandview, the ESOL department, classrooms, and guidance office were primarily located on one wing of the building, an arrangement that facilitated such one-on-one rites of intensification.

Viewing the education of ELLs as a "shared enterprise," participants in this study frequently engaged in rites of intensification that focused on ELLs and sharing knowledge about them. These rites strengthened teachers' ties to the department culture by renewing and intensifying their commitment to ELLs. Rites of intensification strengthened the foundation of the culture and anchored the teachers' work with ELLs. They served as a support for the main thrust of ESOL teacher work: leading students through cultural transitions or rites of passage. Value for ELLs provided the impetus that

drew teachers together, and they built on that foundational commonality and created a medium for building expertise.

I begin the chapter by exploring the role teachers' reasons for becoming ESOL teachers had in shaping a departmental culture of commitment to ELLs. It then examines the cultural meanings of collaboration, and it shows how participants collaborated in ways that strengthened their commitment to ELLs and supported the development of expertise in the ESOL culture. The chapter presents a vignette of an intensification ritual and then analyzes the ritual to identify clusters of skills and knowledge participants deployed. The first cluster pertains to keeping the value of students in the foreground of teacher action; the second relates to how teachers used their personal relationships with other teachers to build professional relationships that helped them become more expert teachers. Finally, the chapter concludes by proposing a role for the teacher called the "cultural conductor." This term suggests the creative and intimate relationship between ESOL teachers' professional relationships with other ESOL teachers and their interactions with their students. Whereas when teachers worked as liaisons, their actions influenced how students transitioned from one culture to another, when they worked as cultural conductors, everything they did influenced teachers' connections to each other and to students.

Examining teachers' reasons for becoming ESOL teachers helps reveal why rites of intensification—even though they always focused on students—intensify teachers' commitment to the culture. Although I observed hundreds of exchanges among ESOL teachers and staff during my fieldwork, I can recall only a few instances where teachers'

conversations did not turn to the topic of ELLs. This shared value is the foundation upon which I believe teachers build the expertise to lead students through cultural transitions.

Teachers' accounts of why and how they became ESOL teachers reflected their shared value for ELLs. While each gave a different account of how they became an ESOL teacher, all of their accounts revealed that their interest in teaching ELLs drove their decision, not a desire to teach a particular subject. Rather than identifying themselves as teachers of the English language, participants identified themselves as teachers of a particular population of students.

Maria Elena's account of why she became an ESOL teacher is typical:

Well, first of all I was an ESOL student myself. I came here to Grandview, and I had great teachers who helped me and motivated me to do different things and to get very active in school—SGA…. That was pretty new for ESOL students to get into, and so they really pushed me and wanted me to serve as an example to the other ones. So that really motivated me…. Since I was a student in high school I decided I wanted to teach as well, and eventually ESOL.

Maria Elena's experience as an ESOL student influenced her understanding of teaching: it changed her understanding of teaching expertise, expertise she saw reflected in those she calls "great teachers." What made those teachers great for Maria Elena was more than their ability to teach English; rather, it was the effort they exerted to "motivate" her to "get active in school." She defines her great teachers as those who helped guide her transition from ESOL into the life of the school. As her story continues, other aspects of her decision become apparent:

I really enjoyed meeting people from other nationalities, and that was a big impact

for me when I came as an ESOL student here. "Oh, wow! People from China,

Cambodia," I remember, and that was great. I didn't know about that side of the

world when I was in San Juan…but here it was all of a sudden right there next to

me, a little part of the world, and so I think that's why I got so interested in

teaching international students too. So I always want to promote that and make

them feel comfortable, and they're valuable….

Her positive experiences meeting students from all over the world and her desire to create

positive experiences for students who, like herself, were once newcomers, inspired her.

Notably absent from her story was the desire to teach a particular subject. Her story, on

the contrary, focused entirely on the experience she had as an ESOL student and her

desire to create a similar experience for other ESOL students. She revealed that wanting

to create that experience comes from her value of students, and creating that experience

for them involves helping them understand their own value. Maria Elena's account is

typical of all participants not because she was once an ESOL student, but because her

desire to teach ELLs took precedence over any other reason she had for becoming a

teacher.

COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION

This section explains what collaboration meant to participants and why it was

important to them. Participants detailed numerous forms of collaboration: sharing ideas,

borrowing and offering materials, and raising awareness of problems. Rather than

describing collaboration as a formal, departmental process, however, participants described it in terms of ongoing, one-on-one encounters.

Participants gave numerous reasons why collaboration was important in their culture, including sharing new ideas, supporting one another, building trust, and sharing responsibility for educating ELLs. Being aware of what other teachers were going through allowed teachers to be supportive of one another. Kathleen said that:

Having a department so diverse is also a blessing because people bring in so many new ideas that we get and that enriches our department. We try to talk to each other as much as we can and just being aware of what's happening -- this person is going through this, make sure you're supporting them. I feel so relieved knowing that when I was at the hospital with my husband, I knew I had my lesson plans and everything, but I knew that I could count on them. That whatever they had to do with my kids, I knew they could take care of them, and in saying that it's like saying you can take care of my kids. I don't have any kids, but it's like saying, I know they're going to be fine. I know they're going to be fine if they're with Maria Elena, with Laura or with whomever. They're going to be fine. Knowing that I feel better, so we're very supportive as a department.

Kathleen's remarks suggested that by collaborating with other teachers with diverse backgrounds and experiences, teachers gained access to "new ideas." "Talking to each other as much as possible" was not only a way to gain a new perspective, it also supported teachers by acknowledging what they were "going through." Knowing each other well was also important, as Kathleen remarks, because ESOL teachers had to trust each other with their students when they were absent. Collaboration spread the

responsibility for educating ELLs among the faculty. Kathleen likened trusting another

ESOL teacher with her students to trusting them with her own children. She notes that the

advantage of closeness and trust were especially important when family emergencies

arose because it relieved an additional worry during periods of stress. In stressful times

Kathleen did not carry the weight of educating ELLs alone; rather, she entrusted her

students to fellow teachers in the ESOL department. Being "supportive" according to

Kathleen meant sharing ideas with other teachers, keeping up with what was happening

personally with other teachers, and entrusting her students to other teachers.

Although most participants talked of collaboration in terms of one-on-one

encounters with other ESOL teachers, faculty meetings and other group-wide events,

such as professional development days, were occasions for collaboration. Kathleen

described an advantage of collaboration as raising awareness of departmental issues and

providing space for a group approach to problem-solving. She explains:

Every time we have a meeting, a department meeting, I always try to make my

comments brief of the information that I need to give them and provide them, but

also provide them with a time where they can voice their opinion. It's a way for

me also to know when issues are going on that we haven't had time to talk about.

And maybe I don't have all of the solutions. I don't….And I need their help

too….I let others answer. I let others tell….This is all a learning process. You

know? And we all have different issues in our classrooms that need to be

addressed…. I would be concerned if solutions were not provided. Because

what's the sense in presenting a problem? You need the solutions too. Let's come

up with the solutions….Do something about it….I'm opening the forum. And

that's also something that I need to always be careful about. It's an open forum. When it's a closed forum, you're the one controlling everything, but when you open the forum you're allowing others to speak, voice their opinion, so I don't want our meetings to just be complaints, you know? …I also like when other teachers, experienced and non-experienced, give advice. And that helps us grow. It's up to the teacher to do it or not to do it. But it's up to the teacher whether to use that information or not….

Kathleen is describing how the faculty meeting served as an opportunity to "intensify" commitment to the department. She stepped back and let teachers "voice" their concerns, and she let other teachers provide "advice" and "options" for dealing with specific matters. Teachers thus intensified their involvement in the departmental culture by engaging with one another about student-related issues. They made others "aware" of what was happening in other areas of the department, and by doing so they built a cultural type of knowledge. Kathleen associated this increased awareness with "growth," especially because teachers with different levels of experience participated. As she explained, sharing was voluntary, as was the decision to implement ideas and solutions developed during meetings.

Participants described collaboration as a way to tap into the rich and diverse backgrounds of teachers. When Kathleen described the diversity of the department, she did not limit it to ethnic diversity: "There are different personalities, different years of experience…different backgrounds, different ethnic groups" and "age is a factor." She described collaboration as a way of taking advantage of and bringing out the collective

wisdom of the department. She describes an instance where she "gathered" a material to disseminate to someone else:

> I came into Marlene's room, and she was doing a great prompt on Halloween....It was something that she came up with. She wrote this poem. And I asked her, I acknowledged what she was doing, and I said to her, 'This is just great. Could I have a copy?' She said, 'Oh, sure!' And she gave me a copy, and then I asked her, 'Is it ok if I share this with another teacher who's also doing writing?' She said, fine. And that's the way you know that, I'm like a sponge, I'm trying to get from everyone because everyone has something positive and constructive related to instruction that can be useful to another colleague.

Here Kathleen described absorbing the "positive and constructive" ideas and materials "related to instruction" that each teacher had. Interestingly, she related gathering Marlene's writing prompt not for later use by herself, but for another colleague who she recalled was also "doing writing." In this sense, collaboration was a gathering process that entailed collecting the best ideas and materials of each teacher and sharing them with other teachers. She noted that no teacher was excluded from sharing, because "everyone" had something to offer.

When teachers collaborated with one another, however, more often they were collaborating to improve circumstances in their own classrooms:

> [Maria Elena's] been very proactive in coming to me about what we're doing in CABLE. I haven't been as, I haven't taken as much initiative in sharing, but not for any reason, I just haven't, but I've gone to her about particular students and asked her impressions of those students and how they're doing and sort of

comparing notes to see what else that kid might need….So, I've approached her

about things like that….I think that part of it is that she's taught CABLE before

for a long time, and I'm just, this is my first experience….I am going to be going

to her soon actually about the next unit for some guidance….

Laura's narrative revealed another function of collaboration, which is sharing information about students. Most often teachers connected through "particular students" that they shared in common. ESOL teachers wanted to have as much information about students as possible, because they believed it helped them educate them more effectively. Collaboration often took the form of "comparing notes" and "asking impressions" to "see what else" a "kid might need."

Participants described numerous variations of collaboration and most frequently described collaboration as "sharing." When participants spoke of sharing they used terms such as "new ideas," knowledge about "what's happening," "advice," and "options." Participants viewed collaboration as important because it was a means of "enriching the department," "being aware," "providing stability" and "support," and "growing" as a department. Participants viewed all teachers as having "something positive to offer" about instruction and knowledgeable about what students "might need." For these reasons, collaboration was a central feature of ESOL teacher practice, and it became ritualized (followed predictable patterns) and had multiple layers of meaning. The remainder of the chapter describes those layers of meaning and how they supported individual teachers' expertise and "intensified" teachers' commitment to the ESOL department.

"Checking In": A Quick Rendezvous Between Classes

One common rite of intensification is the "checking in" ritual. Checking in occurred when teachers met before or after school or between classes. Checking in usually followed this form: teachers met, exchanged pleasantries, and then moved toward exchanges about students.

The following checking in vignette demonstrates how a common value for ELLs allowed ESOL teachers to exchange cultural knowledge that facilitated their shared mission. When teachers met face-to-face they gravitated toward shared cultural values. Each exchange of information about students brought teachers closer in their shared enterprise. While checking in brought teaches closer together in their work, it also spread information about students that may have altered teachers' perception of them.

For example, second period on A days, Laura and Kathleen teach across the hall from one another. Many days they check in with each other before second period while classes are changing. The exchange below took place on a Friday, the last day of the work week and also a day on which teachers dress casually. Kathleen crossed the hallway diagonally from the doorway of Lily's room where she would be teaching and approached Laura, greeting her with a hearty "Good morning." Laura responded in kind. Kathleen handed Laura a stack of forms to distribute to her ESOL students, "Would you do me a favor and hand these to the people who come in please? I think Jonfel is the only one who has this."

Laura readily agreed.

Kathleen remains to visit, commenting, "I'm so happy to be wearing a t-shirt today."

Laura: "My thing is I'm just happy to wear my sneakers."

Kathleen: "I wear them every day. I don't care."

They laugh. As the laughter subsides, Kathleen continues their exchange with another substantive remark: "I have about 22 or 23 students in ESOL I now."

Laura: "Well, all my CABLEs are growing, so I'm not surprised. So do you think she might do another one?" By this question, Laura is asking Kathleen whether or not she thought Claudia, the guidance counselor, will open another section of ESOL I to accommodate the teachers with large classes.

Before Kathleen can answer, Jaime, one of Laura's former students, approached. Laura welcomed Jaime: "So how are you? How are your classes going?" During this exchange, Kathleen waited and watched students pass by. Laura learns that this student is on his way to June's class. He complains about her class, and Laura encouraged him to give the class a chance before judging the teacher too harshly. After the student continues down the hallway, Laura said: "I can't believe how many difficult boys June got from me, like the ones I had last year." She abruptly changed the subject: "So you know who hasn't shown up? Asad. Remember him?"

Kathleen indicated that she did. Laura continued, "Well at least he wasn't here Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. I don't know about this week." At this point the bell rang and Kathleen returned to her classroom to begin her class.

Keeping students first

 From start to finish of this conversation, both teachers' focus was on ELLs. Kathleen began the interaction by giving Laura the student forms. Delivering the forms

served as the impetus for their meeting. Then, Kathleen moved to a personal exchange about attire but quickly returned to the topic of students by mentioning the number she had. Laura stayed on this topic, reporting the growth of her CABLE class and wondering whether Kathleen thought another section of ESOL I or CABLE would be opened. This exchange invited Kathleen to share her own knowledge of how the guidance office planned to accommodate the rapid growth of the ESOL population. Jaime, one of Laura's former students, briefly waylaid the interactions between ESOL teachers; however, this did not turn the focus from student issues.

Laura expressed concern for students through her interactions with Jaime in three ways. First, she asked generally after Jaime's wellbeing. Then she asked how his classes were going. Finally, she expressed concern for his attitude about his ESOL class. Rather than turning the focus away from ELL-related issues, Jaime's discussion probably prompted Laura to discuss other student-related issues with Kathleen that she might not otherwise have shared. Once Jaime left, Laura kept the focus on students by commenting on June's class of students, many of whom Laura had taught the previous year. During her observation, she recalled one student, Asad, who hasn't shown up. Kathleen remembered him as well.

This exchange took place in less than five minutes between classes. What is striking is how much knowledge about students these teachers shared during this brief time. Kathleen and Laura's interactions revolved around issues relating to both the students as a group and as individuals. The group concerns included distribution of forms and growth of the population. Although neither teacher seemed rushed or hurried, they used the time to brief each other on a number of student-related issues. While keeping

each other abreast of current student-related issues certainly served as one purpose of this exchange, interviewing teachers about the role students played in their practice revealed that such exchanges also served other purposes, especially related to the cultural value of sharing responsibility for ELLs.

The desire to work with ELLs not only served as the common basis for teachers' decisions to become ESOL teachers, but participants also understood enacting this value as a way to become more "professional" or expert and more involved in the culture of the department. Keeping students first was a skill teachers practiced that increased the knowledge they had of students; it also strengthened their connections to other teachers and their commitment to the culture. Teachers connected to each other through students they shared in common. Students drew them into closer relationships with one another.

Participants associated keeping students first with being "professional." Laura's language reflects the close relationship between serving students, strengthening culture and improving practice:

> I just think that for the most part people are so professional in our department. We
> have a very professional leader. And I would say that if Kathleen was here or if
> she weren't here. And she sets the tone for how we all need to be and beyond her.
> I just think that there's a really high level of professionalism among our staff, and
> I haven't experienced that before. And I just mean we're all very concerned with
> the welfare of our students in all our various ways, not all of the same ways, but
> we're all very concerned about the students, and we're all concerned with being
> good teachers and a good department, where I think we're aware of how the
> school looks at our students and at us, and we have a responsibility to be really

good, and I think we do. I think we live up to that. I think that we're a really good

department.

In the above statement Laura equated being "really good" and being "professional" with being "very concerned with the welfare of our students." In Laura's view, there was not one right way to educate ELLs, but there was one criterion that must be at the forefront if a practice was to be considered expert: regard for students. Laura associated being "really good" or expert with finding one of a number of ways to be "concerned" with students' welfare. She connected being "really good" and "professional" by caring about students with managing how others outside the department in the school "look at our students and at us." Being "very concerned about the students" was a way to model that concern for others outside the department. When Laura said, "I think we're aware of how the school looks at our students and at us," she hinted that outsiders in general view the department with a critical eye, and being "very professional" served as a way to avert such criticism. While criticizing a particular method or style of a teacher would be easy, genuine regard and concern for ELLs was a value that outsiders could not criticize. As long as that value drove teachers' actions, their "professionalism" effectively staved off outsider criticism.

ESOL teachers intensified their commitment to the department by enacting the cultural value of "concern for students." Putting students first and demonstrating concern for their wellbeing were skills teachers employed that were aimed at maintaining and increasing engagement in the department's culture. Kathleen provides an example of how regard for students serves as the basis of interaction among ESOL teachers:

I know many of my kids Laura [the CABLE teacher] has, which is good because I

can share with them, "Oh this is how Christina is doing." Yesterday we met,

Laura, Abby, who is the math teacher, and myself as the English teacher, and we

met in the hall, and I said, 'Oh, I'm so glad we have the same kids, and it's good.'

Kathleen's comments revealed that one way to enact the cultural value of keeping ELLs

first was by pointing out the students teachers had in common. Noting students teachers

shared in common provided a basis for future interactions. Kathleen's remarks showed

that she was already thinking of future interactions with Laura that would revolve around

how Christina was doing. She also showed how when she bumped into Laura and Abby

in the hall that the basis of their exchange revolved around highlighting the connections

among them based on the students each serves.

In the checking in vignette, Kathleen's remark that she had 22 or 23 students

demonstrated her value of ELLs and their education and the ways the growth of the

population influenced teachers' ability to serve them well. In turn, Laura echoed

Kathleen's commitment to ELLs by reporting the growth of her own population. By

responding in kind, Laura affirmed her own commitment to ELLs and to supporting the

culture of the ESOL department. By saying that she was not surprised, she acknowledged

the connection between her practice and Kathleen's. She highlighted the commonality

between the way the growth influenced both teachers' abilities to educate ELLs. She

offered a solution to the problem by asking whether or not Claudia would be able to open

another section of ESOL I. Offering this solution also showed her hope that this dilemma

would be temporary. By focusing on the wellbeing of ELLs, both teachers intensified

their commitment to the population, and, by extension, their participation in the culture of

the department. Both teachers demonstrated that what was best for the population was in

the forefront of their thinking. When Laura and Kathleen share the size and the growth of

their ESOL classes, they are putting their students first and making each other aware of difficulties they are struggling with. Bringing awareness to such difficult issues enlists the help of multiple people to solve them and makes ESOL teaching a collaborative enterprise.

Laura's exchanges with Jaime intensified both teachers' commitment to the culture of the department. Laura took time from her conversation with Kathleen to interact with Jaime, a former student and thus publicly exhibited her commitment to ELLs. She put the needs of the student first, before her interactions with Kathleen. Laura's two questions to the student reflected her value first of the student, "How are you?" and secondly of the student's education: "How are your classes going?" Asking these questions confirmed her value of and participation in the education of ELLs. By encouraging Jaime not to judge June's class too quickly or too harshly, she asked the student to take responsibility for his own education. This exchange took place early in the semester before teachers had had many opportunities to give many lessons without interruption. Laura questioned whether the student had really given June's class a chance. She also questioned the wisdom of writing off a class off so early in the semester. By posing these questions, Laura intensified her commitment to the student and to the culture by inviting him to persist. She affirmed the power of the culture to transform students like Jaime by encouraging him to persist and to give his ESOL teacher the benefit of the doubt.

Practicing the skill of keeping the cultural value of the wellbeing of ELLs in the foreground facilitated connecting teachers to each other through students. When Laura commented, "I can't believe how many difficult boys June got from me, like the ones I

had last year" she connected to June through her own experience. She compared the difficulties June was having to those she had had with the same students. By admitting her own struggles, she did not fault June's practice in any way or call her expertise into question. Her actions revealed her belief that helping students change their attitudes about the class by working together with other teachers could alleviate the problem. She brought Kathleen into the collaborative process by greeting the student as he passed by on his way to June's. By including her in the audience of her interactions and by making the comment about the students in June's class, Laura took the liberty of inviting Kathleen to help solve June's dilemma. By encouraging Kathleen's awareness and participation, Laura intensified her own and Kathleen's participation in the culture. At the same time, she may have broadened the resources available to the student and built closeness with Kathleen through the collaborative process. Had Laura and Kathleen not collaborated, Kathleen would have remained unaware of what June was going through. Knowing that June was struggling enabled Kathleen to potentially provide support.

It is also important to acknowledge how Laura's actions may have limited the resources available to Jaime. Laura did not address Jaime's concerns about June with the other teachers, and she communicated to Kathleen that Jaime was "difficult." In essence while Laura was strengthening her ties to other teachers, she dismissed the seriousness of Jaime's exchanges with her, and she places the burden of the problem on Jaime rather than on June. In previous interviews Laura suggested that June had one major obstacle to overcome in her teaching practice and that was being taken seriously as a teacher of English when she was a non-native speaker of English. Laura believed students discriminated against June simply because she spoke English with an accent. Laura is

assuming that Jaime's problems with June's class stem from his discrimination against her because she was not a native speaker. When she says to Kathleen, "I can't believe how many difficult boys she got from me" Laura perpetuates an assessment that she has made about Jaime and other students that may cause teachers to write the students off rather than giving them the same consideration they would give other students who were having difficulties in their classes.

While rites of intensification brought teachers closer together they also involved forms of communicating about students that may have had the effect of locking students in to certain expectations teachers had of them. In education this is known as the Pygmalion effect. When a teacher has a negative expectation for a student like the one Laura expressed about Jaime being "difficult," this expectation may then cause Jaime to act in ways that are consistent with that expectation even if it is not accurate. Students could become pigeonholed into some categories that might hinder their ability to develop in positive healthy ways. While discussing students may perpetuate a healthy cultural value of ELLs that helps teachers connect to each other, it can also alienate students and it could prevent teachers from forming their own opinions about students thereby preventing students from starting each year with a clean slate.

Everything teachers did when they were working in rites of intensification influenced their commitment to the culture. Ironically, at the same time they were increasing their commitment to the culture they could also damage students in the process. Rites of intensification enabled teachers to become closer to each other while potentially alienating students from other teachers. The power of these rituals included

their ability to intensify teachers' relationships with one another whether they were communicating positive or negative things about students.

This section showed how the concepts of expertise and the departmental culture are intertwined. Putting students first and demonstrating concern for the wellbeing of ELLs helped teachers stay engaged in the culture of the department. As Laura's comments revealed, showing regard for ELLs made ESOL teachers "professional" or expert. Furthermore, as Laura suggested, commitment to ELLs and "professionalism" served an important function, because it helped to improve the perception of the department in the rest of the school. For that reason, staying engaged in the culture of the department was all the more important for ESOL teachers. Also important to note is how rites of intensification such as this one have the potential to lock students into a particular expectation that a teacher has of them.

The next section explores how ESOL teachers developed professional relationships that supported expertise in the ESOL culture by drawing from their personal relationships with other ESOL teachers.

Bridging the personal and the professional

During rites of intensification teachers interacted in ways that built professional relationships. One way they did so was by personalizing their interactions, meeting face-to-face, making small talk, and sharing inside jokes. Building personal relationships during rites of intensification facilitated teachers' sharing of expertise. Teachers shared their insights about individual students, their knowledge of the population as a whole, classroom practices, and, on some occasions, even teaching materials they used or developed. Teachers' commitment to one another, manifested in their personal

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interactions during rites of intensification strengthened their commitment to ELLs, which in turn facilitated teachers' sharing their expertise. All culture members did not participate in rites of intensification equally, and I explore some factors that influenced their participation at the end of this section.

The checking in vignette provided an example of how participants used their personal relationships as a bridge to develop more professional relationships. Kathleen and Laura communicated about a variety of issues in a brief period of time. Kathleen initially made the meeting personal, meeting with Laura face-to-face and delivering papers to her. On several occasions, I noticed Kathleen using a student worker to deliver papers. The action of taking them to Laura personally worked as a gesture that indicated Kathleen's wish to interact on a more personal basis with Laura. As the chair of a department with numerous teachers, her personal delivery showed that she was making an effort to spend time with the teachers. She confirmed this message when she lingered in the hallway after she had given Laura the papers and explained what to do with them. First, Kathleen assured her that the forms would be distributed. The teachers joked together about their casual attire and how much they enjoy wearing it. Kathleen, who is normally noticeably dressed up joked that she really does not care about her appearance, and the preposterousness of this premise evoked laughter from both. After the joke, the real substance of their communication with one another began. Her efforts to make small talk about their casual Friday attire illustrated her interest in communicating with Laura further. Laura, in turn, showed her interest and receptivity to Kathleen's interactions by making her own comment about the benefits of casual Friday. Taking her cue, Kathleen used the small talk to create a more informal atmosphere and lessen the "strictly

business" tone the conversation could have taken on from the delivery and explanation of the papers.

While the beginning of Kathleen and Laura's interactions may seem inconsequential, in fact Kathleen's use of the personal is a warm up. She tapped into her rapport with Laura. This informal banter led into the subsequent professional conversation that follows. As Maria Elena described, at this point in their interactions both were "comfortable" and this enabled them to engage in a more substantive discussion about class sizes and student distribution. Strategically, she used the personal relationship to facilitate a professional interaction.

Participants revealed numerous reasons why personal relationships with other faculty members were important. One was that many ESOL teachers did not have family or an extensive network of friends outside the department. Secondly, personal relationships facilitated professional collaboration and made it more likely that they would "share" with the teachers to whom they felt closest. Rights of intensification brought teachers together and made it easier for them to bridge the gap between the personal and professional. One of the skills teachers used during rites of intensification was to draw on their personal relationships in ways that furthered professional relationships.

In the ESOL department, more so than in most other departments, many teachers were foreign born or from out of state. For that reason, teachers in the department looked to the department to have more of their personal needs met than perhaps teachers from other departments did. Kathleen explains:

Oh, you know, some of them don't have other family. I don't have anyone else

here except my husband. So church members and some of my coworkers become

my family, as you would say. And I guess it's the same for some of the other

teachers, who come new to this country, or new to our school, they might not

have family in the area, so I want them to—we celebrate the birthdays. We're

already thinking about Sandra's birthday on Monday. What are we planning, you

see?

Here Kathleen describes meeting one's personal needs within the culture of the

department. In fact, she goes so far as to call coworkers "her family." One example she

gives of meeting personal needs within the culture of the community is celebrating

birthdays. The department organized a birthday celebration for every faculty member and

ESOL staff person. These celebrations included gifts and a homemade birthday cake.

Meeting personal needs went far beyond birthdays. ESOL teachers shared clothes with

one another, exchanged gifts at Christmas, and visited each other's homes. Having

personal needs met within the culture of the department would not be significant except

for that teachers strategically used these relationships to further their professional aims.

One way ESOL teachers explained how personal relationships facilitated

collaboration was by eliminating competition, which they felt could prevent or impede

sharing with others. As Kathleen put it, "We're a team." She also said:

It's collaboration, and even though I've been teaching for 10 years, I find myself

that I need help from others, and I know that others will benefit from what I do, so

it's kind of a collaboration, cooperation, and since we get along well, there's no

issue of competition. Which at some other level or department there might be. I don't feel like I'm competing with them.

Kathleen attributed being able to "collaborate" or "receive help from others" to "getting along well" with other ESOL teachers. In other words, she believed collaboration was possible because of personal relationships. Kathleen says, "Since we get along so well, there's no issue of competition." As Kathleen put it, having personal relationships helped alleviate competition and made it possible for her to "collaborate," receive "help," "cooperate," and let others "benefit" from what she does.

Personal relationships were important because they made it easier and more likely that they would share with teachers to whom they felt close. Teachers drew on these personal relationships with their fellow faculty members to further their professional goals. Maria Elena explains the relationship between the personal and the professional. "I think it helps because you feel really comfortable later on to approach someone, and to talk about, 'How would you handle this?' Maybe not everybody would feel comfortable." Having a friendship or personal connection to a teacher made it more likely that teachers would collaborate. Laura explains how it is easier to collaborate by sharing materials and ideas with Lily, a teacher to whom she feels particularly close, than it is to share with Maria Elena, with whom she does not have the same "connection":

I'm closest to Lily on a personal level, and I have gone to her and shared, I mean, granted in a limited way. I have shared things with her unasked. You know, I've just taken her some things and said, well especially last year because last year we were both teaching ESOL II, and neither of us had AC II. It was just both ESOL II, and so if I made something, I would go to her and say, "Look, I made this,"

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you know, "Do you want a copy?" or, "Here's a copy." And, I guess because I knew it was relevant. You know we were both teaching the same thing and because we're friends, and she would do that with me too. And Maria Elena I feel like I'm—I don't feel close to her the way I feel close to Lily, but I want to be close to her. Like I feel I have a great liking for her, and I want us to be closer, and so I want to be braver, not that I'm scared of her, but it is just a different connection. We don't have the same connection. I student taught with Lily, and we went to the same college.

Laura's commentary showed the relationship between sharing or "collaborating" and the closeness of the personal relationship. She shared most frequently with Lily, with whom she was "closest." She described how casually and effortlessly they shared materials on a regular basis. The common background they shared from attending the same college and the relationship they have built by working with one another in teacher training encouraged the high degree of sharing. And although she would like to be closer to Maria Elena, she did not have the personal relationship in place yet that would enable her to feel comfortable about sharing and borrowing materials regularly. When she considered what it would take to share with Maria Elena the way she shared with Lily, she said she would have to be "braver" indicating that sharing materials required a degree of trust that she had not yet established with Maria Elena. That it was easier for teachers to share with those with whom they were close shows the importance of developing friendships among teachers.

When teachers had a close relationship with another teacher, they used it strategically to collaborate in ways that supported expertise. Kathleen, who is admittedly

close to Maria Elena, explains how she taps into her personal relationship with Maria Elena to encourage her to share her ideas and materials:

> I always share with Maria Elena what I do, and she shares also some information, but lately we haven't talked a lot. We've been very busy. So I made a comment to her, and I said, and she likes the ideas sometimes that I do, and she tells me 'Oh, I like that. I'm going to use that. Make me a copy.' So I said to her, 'But when are you going to provide me with your ideas? You haven't shared, you don't like to share,' I said to her, but kidding because she's my friend. But in a way I'm letting her know that I, I need her ideas also. She's a great ESOL teacher, and whatever she is lacking I'm able to complement her with that—supplement her with that, and whatever I am lacking, she can help me. And I told her, so the other day she said, 'Well, you could do the caterpillar story.' So, I used the book, and we shared, and I had them write about it.

Kathleen's portrayal of this instance showed how she tapped into her friendship with Maria Elena by joking with her to prompt her to share materials with her. Although it sounded as if Maria Elena was initially reserved about sharing, after Kathleen joked with her she provided her friend with a lesson plan using Eric Carle's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and Kathleen used the lesson plan and then reflected on it, comparing notes with Maria Elena.

Strategic use of personal relationships, as occurred in rites of intensification, strengthened teachers' ties to the departmental culture. Sharing ideas, information, or materials with other teachers intensified teachers' commitment to the culture of the department because they became involved in education of ELLs beyond their own class

of students. When Laura provided materials to Lily, she became involved in Lily's practice. It expanded her involvement with another teachers' practice. When Laura and Kathleen shared ideas and information each became more aware issues facing the department and its teachers.

All culture members did not participate in rites of intensification to the same degree or with the same frequency. Status within the department culture and preceding relationships with other culture members partially determined whether and how culture members participated in intensification. In the vignette a more senior teacher, the department chair, initiates intensification with a more novice teacher. I did not gather many examples of more novice teachers initiating collaborating with more senior teachers. One of the few examples I do have evidence for is Laura initiating collaboration with Lily. She describes, "I'm closest to Lily on a personal level, and I have gone to her and shared, I mean, granted in a limited way. I have shared things with her unasked." Laura describes her sharing with a more novice teacher, a teacher who happened to serve as her supervising teacher during her student teaching, as "limited." More senior members of the culture normally initiated rites of intensification, and they usually "intensified" relationships between teachers who were already close in terms of friendship. Just as it was easier for teachers to collaborate with those they called friends, the converse is also true. Teachers were less likely to collaborate with teachers with whom they did not share friendships. Laura describes her difficulty initiating intensification with teachers she is not yet close to:

> And Maria Elena I feel like I'm—I don't feel close to her the way I feel close to
> Lily, but I want to be close to her. Like I feel I have a great liking for her, and I

want us to be closer, and so I want to be braver, not that I'm scared of her, but it is just a different connection. We don't have the same connection. I student taught with Lily, and we went to the same college.

Developing that "connection" Laura describes takes time and effort on the part of teachers. As she describes, it also takes bravery to reach out and share. While strategic use of personal relationships led to the sharing of expertise among teachers, rites of intensification have the potential for the excluding teachers who do not have a history of friendship with other teachers in the department.

The degree of connections and the history that members of the ESOL department shared at Grandview was, in my experience, unusual. Most of these teachers had relationships with one another that preceded their tenure as teachers in the department. For a small department made up of ten teachers many of the teachers had a strong history of relationships with one another. One teacher had been a student in the department and had relationships with many of the teachers who had been in the department since her days as a student. Laura's husband taught in the department, and she had also served as a student teacher in the department under Lily's supervision. The other male teacher in the department had been there for nearly 30 years, as had another teacher in the department. Lily and Kathleen had also been in the department for more than a decade. For these teachers, rites of intensification were common and strengthened their ties with the department. Other teachers were newer and did not have the connections to other culture members that more senior member had. Their incorporation into the life of the department depended in part on more senior members' willingness to reach out to them. I question whether it is excessively difficult for a new teacher to "break in" to the culture.

While there was a new teacher in the department during the time of data collection, I do not know how she faired in the culture because she was not someone I had very much contact with during data collection. Just as it was very difficult for me to move towards an insider status in the culture, I imagine that the time it would take for a new teacher to feel accepted in the department would also be quite lengthy.

Here I have attempted to show how teachers sought to bridge personal and professional aspects of their lives by personalizing their interactions, meeting face-to-face, making small talk, and sharing inside jokes. Doing so led to sharing of expertise. Not being included in rites of intensification potentially led to alienation of teachers who were likely to be those most in need of being drawn into the department culture. The next section concludes the chapter by proposing a role for the teacher called the "cultural conductor." This term suggests a close relationship between how teachers work together with one another and how effectively they serve ELLs.

THE TEACHER AS CULTURAL CONDUCTOR

Geertz (1973) (paraphrasing Weber) defines culture as webs of significance that people build and to which they assign meaning. Further, he suggests that we must look at what the members of the culture do if we are to understand the meaning of the culture. In this chapter I show how ESOL teachers interacted with their colleagues in ways that shaped departmental culture and supported culture-bound forms of expertise. Members of Grandview's ESOL department shared a common purpose that served as the basis of their culture. Not all shared purposes lead to strengthening culture, however (e.g., grading). The desire to see ELLs flourish was a vision communicated when ESOL teachers

engaged in rites of intensification, and that communication led to strengthening the culture as it united participants. This vision required cooperation, and when teachers engaged in rites of intensification, they not only recommitted to serving students, but also to collaborating with fellow teachers to achieve their common goals.

I chose the metaphor of conducting to describe the work of the ESOL teacher in this chapter because of the way the conductor works to bring out the talent of the symphony to meet the needs of an audience. Like symphony conductors, ESOL teachers strive to learn skills and refine techniques, which they can use to develop a broad teaching repertoire of "performances" for ELLs. Whereas a symphony conductor's repertoire develops based on the musical pieces he conducts, an ESOL teacher's repertoire consists of strategies and knowledge that serve a diverse population. This chapter has shown how teachers developed expertise by engaging in rites of intensification with other members of the ESOL department.

The cultural conductor is a member of a larger cultural enterprise and serves as a channel through which expertise flows to others. She works with fellow teachers within a particular shared culture to preserve and advance cultural values. The ESOL teacher, like the conductor of an orchestra, who is the intermediary between the audience and the symphony, mediates between the student and the other teachers. Although the main interchange is clearly between students and teachers, teacher-to-teacher interaction is key in terms of improving student-teacher interchanges. Because the teachers I studied shared a group of students, they had a basis for contributing to the expertise of other members of their department. Working with each group informed the interactions with the other group. Teachers used particular knowledge of their students and their teaching strategies

to improve their own expertise and that of others. To make collaboration possible,

teachers appealed to each other's cultural knowledge or personal friendship to engage in

ritualized collaboration, and thus they harnessed ideas to practice. As cultural conductors,

ESOL teachers filtered ideas from fellow teachers and artistically transformed them into

something tangible for their students to benefit from.

Conducting and Culture

ESOL teachers identified more closely with the students they taught rather than

with the subject matter. Both students and subject matter defined the type of knowledge

held in esteem. This orientation had implications for the culture they shared, surfacing in

the ritual activities of participants, e.g., intensification rituals where students rather than

teaching English dominated teachers' interactions. The usual assumption of education

resesarchers is that teachers' subject affiliations influence the instructional and

organizational practices of departments (Stodsky & Grossman 1995). Scholars who

research the cultures of teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Floden 1986, Gallimore and

Goldenberg 2001, McLaughlin & Talbert 2001, Siskin 1994) discuss ways that cultures

in high school departments vary based on differences in subject matter; however, they do

not discuss differences in culture based on the population of students teachers serve. One

of the defining traits of ESOL teachers is their motivation for becoming a teacher. In high

schools, many, if not the majority, of teachers chose to teach because of their passion for

a particular subject (Huberman 1993, Prick 1986). By contrast, none of the participants in

this study mentioned becoming an ESOL teacher because of their passion for teaching

English. Rather, each mentioned that they became ESOL teachers because they wanted to

teach ELLs. They became teachers because they wanted to teach a particular type of student, not a particular subject. This reason for becoming a teacher contributed to the creation of a culture and a unique form of teaching expertise. It built a culture that required members to rely heavily on ritual forms of collaboration with fellow members of the culture to support the changing skills and knowledge necessary for expertise in ESOL teaching.

Rites of intensification were collaborative, i.e., when teachers engaged in this rite, they were sharing and sometimes exchanging valued forms of knowledge. Through these collaborative and affirming rites teachers established, shared, and defined both expertise and culture in ESOL. By examining collaboration, the link between culture and expertise began to emerge. This link was critically important to ESOL teachers because of their heightened need for attention to individual learners, and consequently for individualized pedagogical strategies. Collaboration among the ESOL teachers at Grandview served two interrelated purposes: it led to increased learning about strategies for working with ESOL students; and it defined the boundaries of the ESOL culture by strengthening the norm of collaboration. Through this second function, ESOL teachers constructed and established their identity within the context of the culture.

Although research is beginning to document the dilemmas associated with collaboration (Cossentino Bramblett & Grove 2003, Honig 2003, Magolda 2001, Soliman 2001, White & Wehlage 1995), collaboration does have the potential to build culture (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin 1995, Printy 2002) and expertise (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1992, 1999, Harradine 1995, Nieto 2000). What made collaboration among teachers during rites of intensification successful was that they arose out of a shared value

for ELLs. Renewing that commitment first made it possible for teachers to collaborate in a way that furthered the goals and values of the culture. When teachers collaborated through rites of intensification they made explicit the values, goals, and norms of their culture. As teachers interacted with others in their culture, they shaped their practice: they determined what the purpose of their joint work was, came to understand what activities were valued, and established social norms for relationships between members (Wenger 1998). When teachers collaborated by engaging in rites of intensification, they established a cultural norm that they are collectively responsible for ELLs. When teachers collaborated by engaging in rites of intensification, the knowledge of individual teachers became shared, or a type of "cultural knowledge." In this way, individual expertise became cultural or shared expertise available to other members of the culture.

Studies in Chicago schools indicate the positive relationship between teachers' participation in collegial activity and self-reports of improvement in their instruction (Bryk et. al. 1997). Collaborative interactions among teachers provide opportunities for teachers to reflect deeply and critically on their own teaching practice, on the content they teach and on the experiences and backgrounds of the learners in their classrooms (Putnam and Borko 1997). Engaging in the culture of the department requires interacting with other members of the culture. Interacting with others exposes teachers to differing ideas and opinions. This leads to learning, which may have consequences for teacher practice. In this ESOL department, the potential to increase mastery of knowledge and skills became greater involvement in the culture of the department increased. Teachers refined their practice as they become fully engaged in the culture of the department. Part of expertise in ESOL became knowing how to construct interactions in which important

decisions about students and pedagogy were made through collaboration. Becoming an expert ESOL teacher meant weaving a complex fabric of connections between oneself, other teachers, and students. Parker Palmer (1998, 11) describes this form of teaching expertise as a "capacity for connectedness."

Conducting as Expertise

Expertise in the ESOL department revolved around ESOL teachers' concern for ELLs. Shulman (1987) defines one dimension of expertise as knowledge of learners and their characteristics. Although learner characteristics is not the focus of Shulman's work, this dimension of expertise serves an especially relevant purpose to ESOL teachers whose students continually change. It is also relevant to the participants in this study, because they stated that ELL students were the primary reason they became ESOL teachers. Rosenholtz (1991) found that instructors revealed two strongly held reasons for their continuous learning: 1) to deal sensitively with different learners, situations, and settings, instructors need a variety of skills and strategies; and 2) to modify their methodology to match changing needs of their learners. Freire (1998a) elaborated on the importance of teachers' knowledge of learner characteristics. Without such knowledge, he argues, we have "no access to the way they [learners] think…and how they know (58)."

The implication here for ESOL teachers, for all teachers really, is that there is no end point: there is no "getting there" after which one has "arrived" as an expert teacher. For example, Kathleen, the more seasoned teacher, probably learned more from Laura in their exchange than the other way around. While their exchanges began with Laura inquiring about the growth of the population, their interactions quickly turned to other issues where Laura was more expert. Because ESOL teaching, and to some degree

teaching in all subject areas, is dynamic and the population continually changes, expertise must be continually reconstructed. While all teachers must accommodate changes in populations, ESOL teachers must accommodate almost ceaseless changes in population composition and size. Most ESOL teachers accommodate more rapid and dramatic changes in population size and composition than teachers who work with mainstream populations (Crandall 1994). These changes require continual modification and adjustment of departmental organization and classroom technique. Changes in the size and composition of the student population call for reconstructions of expertise. In other words, working with 20 students makes different demands on a teacher than working with 35 students. And working with a homogeneous population of, for example, Hispanic students, makes different demands than working with a more heterogeneous population. Teachers' main method and resource for reconstructing their practice is by interacting with other ESOL teachers who have different experiences with ELLs.

Participating in rites of intensification transformed relationships among teachers, making it possible for them to work more closely together to achieve their common goals. The intimacy formed by participating in rites of intensification made it possible for teachers to scale barriers that often impede collaboration among faculty members. Engaging in these rites enabled teachers to share the building blocks of expertise with one another.

In summary, this chapter explored how teachers strengthened the culture of the ESOL department and their commitment to it by engaging in ritual activity that had the effect of intensifying their commitment to their students and to the culture of their department. Strengthening the culture provided a strong basis for a particular kind of

expertise that focused not only on helping ELLs learn to speak English, but also on helping them flourish in an American high school.

The next two chapters focus on how ESOL teachers deployed particular types of culturally bound expertise to lead their students through rites of passage that ushered them into life in the ESOL department and life as a U.S. high school student.

CHAPTER IV

CREATING TRANSITION SPACE

In this chapter I describe how ESOL teachers "design" ESOL space and lead

ELLs in rituals with the intent of easing their transition to the ESOL classroom at

Grandview. The chapter begins with a description of how teachers prepared ESOL space

for the purpose of "honoring" students' native cultures. Then, I show how participants

engaged students in a ritual that was aimed at helping them "belong" to the ESOL class.

While symbols in the ESOL culture helped students transition to the culture of the

classroom, I also explore how these same symbols perpetuated cultural stereotypes and

marginalization among ELLs and among members of the broader school culture.

Underlying the discussion is the concept of *liminality*, a lens through which some of the

teachers' actions are analyzed.

Liminality, as first defined by Arnold Van Gennep (1960) and later by Victor

Turner (1967), explains the symbolic action entailed in transformational rituals. The word

derives from the Latin root, *limen,* which means *threshold* (Grimes 2000). Liminality

refers to the abstract state of being neither here nor there, but rather in between defined

states. It is a state in and of itself that is an outcome brought on by the ritual process.

Liminality is another way of describing the transcendence that sometimes results in and

from ritual. Ritual is not, of course, the only way to attain the state of liminality. Big

transitions such as childbirth and death may also be accompanied by liminal states, and

these events are often marked by rituals that heighten the significance of the transition.

ESOL students go through a liminal state as they transition from their previous culture to the new one. This transition is often not an easy one. The psychological and emotional difficulties newcomers to a culture experience have been well documented by language acquisition researchers (Adler 1972, Foster 1962, Hall 1959, Larson and Smalley 1972, Madrid 1991). Durkheim's (1897) concept of *anomie*, or feelings of social uncertainty or dissatisfaction, serves as a useful umbrella term to describe the experience of ELLs in a new culture. The experience results from the loss of ties to the native culture, and the fearful anticipation of entering the new culture. While adapting to the cultural shift, ESOL students are both literally and figuratively "betwixt and between." This is an example of liminality not produced by ritual.

The ESOL classroom is inevitably a place where cultures quite literally converge. Typically, the ESOL classroom serves as one of the first educational exposures ELLs have to U.S. culture. Inevitably then, ESOL teachers often work as "cultural liaisons," facilitating the change in status from membership in the former culture to membership in the new culture, which in this case is the culture of a U.S. high school[1]. ELLs first experience the classroom through the lens of their previous culture. In working as cultural liaisons the ESOL classroom, teachers ease the transition from culture to culture and help alleviate the tension and distress ESOL students experience as a result of being "betwixt and between."

How ESOL teachers use symbols from students' previous culture influences how and to what degree students maintain their connection with their previous cultural identity, and it also communicates how their previous culture is valued in the new culture. By creating symbols that represent students' native cultures and by having students

connect with those symbols in the ESOL classroom, ESOL teachers may help alleviate the "fearful anticipation" of ESOL students as they make the transition to the new culture. Teachers' actions, therefore, heighten the significance of limina—"between" spaces—and these may alleviate the tensions inherent in such transitions[2]. These limina contain contradictions students encounter in transitioning from one culture to another and represent both their status as newcomers and their marginalized identity within the broader culture.

ESOL teachers use symbols to indicate the value of students' cultures and create a space for students to experiment with their identities in the new culture. Before their classes began, all of the participants in this study gave carefully consideration to the spatial arrangement of their rooms, molding the spaces in ways that symbolically honored differences and built unity among students. This preparation was one of the bases upon which they later led their students to shape the environment as well.

The following description and vignette describe some of the ways teachers shape their spaces to guide students in rituals that ease transition. Through the lens of ritual, I show the expert skills teachers employed and how these skills supported the education of ELLs. This intentional shaping and management of the symbolic meanings of the classroom is, in my view, a central component of ESOL teaching expertise. Teaching expertise in ESOL included teachers' consideration of the meanings they built and communicated by their construction of the spatial arrangement in the ESOL classroom. They also considered how to help ELLs negotiate cultural transitions through the

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[1] I explore the role of teacher as cultural liaison more fully in the conclusion of this chapter.
[2] Some between spaces or limina may be disorienting while others may alleviate tensions. I argue here that ESOL teachers created limina aimed at alleviating tensions brought on by the cultural transitions students were making.

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symbolic meanings of their space. By helping ELLs negotiate cultural transitions, the ESOL teacher works as a "cultural liaison."

The rituals explored here are related to the delineation of a sacred place (Eliade 1961). For this reason, it is important to study the symbols operating in that environment. Preparation of space created an atmosphere for particular types of transitional activities. One way ESOL teachers prepared their space was by using symbols with the intent of honoring differences among students.

Most considerations of classroom space end after a look at how seats are arranged or noting whether tables or desks are used. Researchers usually analyze these arrangements in terms of how they promote the values of control and efficiency (Foucault 1979; Montessori 1973). Montessori also noticed how the learning environment has both symbolic and practical implications. The "prepared environment" was, in fact, a term coined by Montessori, who aimed to describe a place for learning that is both practically and symbolically set-apart from ordinary space, a place specially designed to meet the needs of children at varying stages of development. Arrangements, however, are symbolic acts that are often far more complex in that they can also reveal other cultural goals (Quantz 2001). Seldom do educational researchers consider the "tone" the teacher sets through other aspects of the spatial arrangement. In this view, the management of the classroom space "sets the stage" for a particular type of performance in the ESOL classroom. The shaping of the physical environment of the classroom communicates to students (and teachers) the desired types of interactions; this then influences how students and teachers work in the space. The following vignette describes how Kathleen ritualized

the space of the ESOL office with the purpose of demonstrating respect for students' native cultures.

A Unifying Place: The Guidance Office

The ESOL guidance office houses Kathleen, the program coordinator, Claudia, the guidance counselor, and Maria, the parent liaison and office receptionist. The arrangement of the office reflects the division of work. Tall partitions on each sidewall evenly divide the space of the main room between the receiving area in the front of the office, where Maria works, and Kathleen's space in the back of the main room. Tucked behind the main room of the office is Claudia's space, separated from Kathleen's by a door, a door. Claudia usually keeps shut for privacy.

On Maria's side of the office the U.S. flag hangs just below the intercom in the corner of the room. Her desk sits parallel to the sidewall facing the door. Behind her desk attached to the wall hangs the office's main bulletin board. On a background of yellow butcher paper big red lettering reads, "ESOL PROGRAMS: ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES." Beneath the lettering are cartoon scenes from different countries. In the center is a picnic scene from the United States with students whose clothing and skin colors suggest their different cultures. The Statue of Liberty and the New York City skyline behind it serve as the backdrop. The young people in the cartoon are enjoying a variety of activities: several are sharing a hug, others are smiling, riding horses, or carrying food to the picnic blanket. Around this photo are scenes from France, China, Japan, Korea, Germany, South America, Africa, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, India, and Southeast Asia.

On the opposite wall is another bulletin board on which Maria and Kathleen have posted fliers about where to get flu shots, brochures about evening high school, and a newspaper article with names of ESOL students from Grandview who received scholarships highlighted in yellow. There is also information about where to go for walk-in immunizations. This bulletin board serves mainly informational purposes; however, the upper-right corner displays a glossy poster of a globe surrounded and supported by young children of various ethnic backgrounds standing shoulder to shoulder looking up with smiling faces. Above it, it says in large red letters, "Respect Our Differences," and below it in letters about half the size: "It's a Smart Choice."

A sturdy rectangular oak table stands against the partition beside several chairs for parents in front of the information board, and on it rests a stack of hard clear plastic trays with forms for parents to take tidily placed inside. The forms cover a wide range of topics: support services, free counseling, directions to the International Student Guidance Office, how to prove residency, information about a local family support center among others. Beside the trays is a plant, and on the other side of the plant is a menagerie of artifacts from all over the world. Included in the collection is an eight-inch tall African wood carving of a lean, angular woman carrying water on her head, an Oriental fan, and two matching Asian silk dolls. Sitting at the feet of the Asian dolls are two Guatemalan dolls made from what look like cornhusks. Beside them are two Chinese wooden statues.

Above the table on the gray surface of the partition is a poster of a beach with the words by Oliver Wendell Holmes "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." Beside the poster is a circle with "I Love You" woven into it in tan and brown. Centered above the divider, near the ceiling of the office

there is a long banner with blue and yellow lettering that reads, "You never know what you can do until you try."

On Kathleen's half of the room in the back of the office she has arranged her desk on one side of the room and a large round table that serves as both a place to meet with students and to eat lunch with colleagues. Behind her desk, there is a bulletin board and each side displays multicultural cartoon figures. On one half there is a Mexican boy in a sombrero, an Irish man in a kilt and a Hawaiian girl with flowers behind her ear. On the other half she has a Japanese girl in a Kimono, an African girl in traditional attire and a Native American wearing a headdress. Three large windows run down the length of the back wall. On the sill nearest Kathleen's desk is an assortment of artifacts similar to the ones on Maria's table. In the corner of the windowsill, she has arranged five tiny multicultural figurines: Chinese, Middle Eastern, Eskimo, Dutch, Native American, and African, and they are arranged around a wooden globe small enough to fit into the palm of the hand. Beside the figurines is an ashtray from the Dominican Republic with carved dolphins smiling and swimming. Beside the ashtray is a Puerto Rican plate with a beach scene. A tiny pair of *moroccos* from Mexico and a miniature set of wooden glasses sitting on a matching serving tray from El Salvador complete the collection.

There are no loose papers on Kathleen's desk, and a coffee mug given to her by a student's father sits on the corner. On the opposite corner sits a glass American eagle.

Above the table across the room, there is a poster from Puerto Rico called "Caleta de San Juan." It has a picture of a bright street with yellow and pink storefronts. As usual, Claudia's door is closed, and I can see that on the door is a poster with an African-

American male lifting a big dumbbell. Above him are the words, "Effort adds up to accomplishment."

Environments honoring differences

In this section I explore how ESOL teachers used symbols in ways that communicated a variety of messages, some positive, and others not so positive. Symbols in the ESOL culture and in all cultures serve as the "building blocks" for rituals (Turner 1968). In part because they are abstract, symbols hold multiple meanings, have the power to bring visual and verbal images into play, and evoke "feelings, values, emotions and sentiments" (Airasian 1988, 302). Cobb and Elder (1983) point out that "within a particular context, certain symbols will be salient to most people and will provoke either positive or negative reactions" (131). The outcome of symbols working in the above ways results in a frequently complex and continuously changing construction of meaning. The deliberate use of symbols entails an ongoing meaning-making process stemming from the management of their meaning. In ESOL space, some of the very same objects that communicated an honor for difference also perpetuated stereotypes. Both messages have an impact on how ESOL students will transition to the new culture.

Although the ESOL office had the highest density of artifacts and images, every ESOL teacher's classroom was filled with multicultural posters and artifacts from different parts of the world. In fact, ESOL classrooms were readily identifiable because of this distinctive use of such images. It would be impossible to walk into an ESOL classroom at Grandview and not know that it was such. Kathleen, Laura, and Maria Elena related a variety of purposes for their distinctive arrangements of space. The purposes they expressed ranged from helping students feel secure in a large urban school to

communicating to students that their cultures were all equally valued. One way teachers accomplished these purposes was by honoring differences through their careful and distinctive arrangement of space.

Honoring differences in the ESOL department was important because it helped students "adjust" to a new environment and new cultural experiences. Being in a "multicultural" environment may be a new experience for ELLs. Laura explains:

> Everyone has problems. Another difficulty would be making new friends, understanding that our classrooms are very diverse, and that it's different from probably their countries where it's a homogeneous class[3]. But here being so multicultural, it could be a difficulty for that student adjusting. Also the way the clothing is different—even the manners. Even the discipline is different. In some cultures, it's okay for the teacher to spank. Here in the States it's not. So, I would not say it's a difficulty, but it would be something different for them to learn, but it's a totally different culture, and it would take them time to adjust. Another difficulty would be being with non-ESOL kids, like in their electives. They might feel lonely. They might feel that other students would make fun of the way they dress and speak, or the way they, you know, perform…and you know, just adjusting…

In these remarks, Laura mentions "adjusting" three times. Most of these references pertain to new cultural expectations related to "manners" and "discipline." Laura acknowledges numerous "difficulties" ELLs encounter with a new culture. Some of the

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[3] Many other countries are multicultural—especially in the Americas, but in Asia and Europe as well. This comment reveals some typical assumptions we in the United States make about our own and other countries. However, it is probably safe to assume that the ESOL classroom is more heterogeneous than most of the previous environments students have encountered.

difficulties stem from being in a culturally heterogeneous ESOL classroom environment. Others derive from how student "differences" may be interpreted by "non-ESOL kids." Honoring differences in the classroom was important, not only because it shows that their particular culture is valued in the classroom, but also because it helps students "adjust" to being in a culturally heterogeneous environment.

ESOL teachers could not shield ELLs throughout the day from other unwelcoming teachers or students, or from the frustrations of being in an environment for most of the day where everyone spoke what was to them still mainly a foreign language; however, they could control the tone they set in their own classrooms. Laura explains why she chooses items for her classroom that reflect the cultures of the students:

> I think it's conscious to have things up that you know I try to represent, like the poster in the front, I chose it even though the children are too young for this school, but they really—they represent a lot of different places where our students come from and the same with the map.

By "representing" students' cultures through displaying their flags, Laura articulates an aim to help students feel "accepted" and "comfortable." Laura says, "One of my personal goals for them is that they feel accepted and they feel that they have a comfortable secure place to be in the midst of their day. Whether they feel that anywhere else, I want them to feel that way in my class at least." Laura said that she tries, through her arrangement of space, to create "secure place," a safe haven of sorts, for students in the unpredictable environment of a large urban high school. By tailoring space to reflect the diversity of the student's backgrounds, she "represents" students' cultures, and helps alleviate the tensions of transitioning from one culture to another.

ESOL teachers conveyed the importance of maintaining equality and not privileging any particular ethnic group. Kathleen explains her intentions to communicate this to students: "I see them the same, if they're African Americans, whatever they are, if they're from Ivory Coast, if they're from Jamaica, wherever they are, they're my students. They're mine. I try to teach them that too." Kathleen's language demonstrated her intention to claim students. By representing their cultures in the room she demonstrates her intention to "see them the same" irrespective of their ethnic background. This nonverbal communication is one of the first ways she "tries to teach" them that they *belong* to her.

"Seeing students the same" is not the same as being "color blind." In fact, for Kathleen "seeing students the same" means recognizing and acknowledging students' cultures, and valuing them equally. Kathleen says:

> ESOL, it's international. Our population is international. So, I want them when they come here to feel welcome, but I don't want them to stereotype [me] because my parents are from Puerto Rico. I was born here, then I will tend to favor, Hispanic families, and that's not it. I favor everyone who comes in. So, it's important to me to display that we are international, diverse, multicultural.

Kathleen reveals that her intention to make students feel welcome by "displaying" internationality. Her use of multiple words to describe the population, "international," "diverse," "multicultural" shows the multiple types of not only ethnic differences but of ways of life as well. As Kathleen explained, "displaying" the diversity serves to make students feel welcome. In an environment where the use of language with students was unreliable at first, such physical displays of culturally diverse ornamentation dependably

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communicate an appreciation for the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Kathleen also pushes toward limina; she is playing a bit with the paradox of unity and diversity. She promotes a "whole group" identity (ESOL), which is, in part, defined by all the difference represented within the group.

The language both Kathleen and Laura use expresses their intentions to help students mediate cultural "differences" as they transition to a new culture. The way Kathleen arranges the ESOL office space reflects some of the skills ESOL teachers used to mediate tensions brought on by being in a new environment with a multiplicity of cultures and being in a place where the culture of the high school differs from the former culture of the students.

As Laura mentioned, "representing" student cultures is one skill ESOL teachers use to help students identify with ESOL space. As the description of the ESOL office portrays, Kathleen's arrangement of the office reflects her honoring of other cultures. The broad range of cultures represented was a way Kathleen worked to "display" that the ESOL department is international, diverse, and multicultural.

Kathleen chose objects for the office that reflected diverse groups of students working together or enjoying one another's company, and she arranged artifacts from diverse cultures very near one another in a way that communicated that they belonged together. As Laura remarked, students most likely came from cultures where they learned with other students who shared their ways of life. The adjustment to working within a diverse group can be difficult for numerous reasons. The arrangement of the ESOL office communicated the possibility of getting along with diverse peers. Not only did the office contain a wide variety of cultural artifacts and images, but their arrangement was notable

as well. At least five locations in the ESOL office had groups of multicultural children together engaging in a common activity, signifying that the ESOL culture honored differences and that a goal for students was getting along with a diverse group of peers. The picnic scene, for instance, showed a diverse group of young people enjoying an activity together. The spatial proximity of objects from various cultures in several locations in the office signified that they belonged together as well. At least two locations in the office displayed a dense collection of artifacts from Africa, the Orient, and Central and South America. Any one of these objects would not have been very "attention getting" had it stood alone, but the juxtaposition of artifacts from all over the world made the collection unusually beautiful. Not only did these objects belong together, but they were beautiful as a group in a way that they were not separately. The togetherness of these images in the ESOL office communicated the diverse group of ESOL students all belonged there together as a part of one ESOL group. By including images of numerous cultures and people in the ESOL office, Kathleen purposefully deployed a type of expertise that communicated this message.

Strategically located near the entrance of the office so that it was the first thing one saw upon entering and inevitably one of the last images one saw before exiting, the "Respect Our Differences" poster captures one of the message ESOL teachers strove to convey. By coupling these words with the image of a diverse group of children standing in a circle smiling and working together to support a globe, the poster communicates the message that when people honor one another's differences it becomes possible to accomplish "earth-moving" tasks.

The images and artifacts teachers used functioned as symbols that represented students' cultures. By using the symbols to beautify the ESOL office Kathleen communicates an appreciation for the beauty of those cultures. By using objects that represent different cultures to decorate her office, Kathleen honors those cultures and, by extension, students from those cultures.

Through the use of symbols in a very important ESOL space, Kathleen partially manages and controls what it means to be an ESOL student at Grandview. This is not to say that she can completely control how students interpret those symbols or their meaning. By symbolically honoring students' cultures in a powerful ESOL space, Kathleen, and other ESOL teachers help legitimize the participation of all ELLs. By symbolically communicating the value of working in diverse groups and honoring differences, ESOL teachers worked to motivate students to become a part of a classroom "group" or "community."

Having multiple cultures represented in the ESOL office space both conveys and constructs a value for the differences in culture among ELLs. Kathleen's communication of honor for difference in the ESOL office sent an especially powerful message because it serves as a hub for both teachers and students. This message reverberates not only throughout the department, but throughout the school as well. When visitors come from other parts of the building or outside the school, they too receive the message that this department honors difference. By decorating and making the central office space "multicultural," teachers express regard for each of the represented cultures. Any student who entered the office could easily find an object or an image that communicated value for her culture and country. Her ritualized honoring of difference in the most powerful

ESOL space in the school indicated that others should follow suit. The variety of objects from all over the world communicates to students that they should celebrate their "difference."

Another way to explain why the management of images and artifacts in ESOL space served an especially relevant purpose in ESOL is by thinking of the ritual effect teachers' actions had on ELLs. In many ways ESOL teachers were creating *limina,* or moments of possibility, where ELLs could comfortably exist "betwixt and between" two cultural realities without feeling the tensions of being "neither fully here nor fully there." By symbolically honoring students' former cultures in the new culture, ESOL teachers created a kind of bubble where students could wear all their identities at the same time. Unlike many rites of passage where initiates are stripped of all former associations with the culture, during the transition process at Grandview, ESOL teachers strategically use representations of the former culture to integrate the old identity with the new. *Limina* create a space for ELLs to incorporate their cultural backgrounds into their new cultural identity without abandoning them.

The way ESOL teachers symbolized their classrooms also communicated some messages about students' previous cultures that may not have been well received. Clearly participants expressed the intent of valuing students' cultures through their use of symbols. While teachers stressed the importance of honoring students' cultures in the ESOL classroom, it is important to ask how they might also have been perpetuating what were denigrating stereotypes of cultures. In going back and looking at the ESOL office it is possible to see how a number of artifacts that were used perpetuated stereotypes that could cause ELLs to feel socially uncertain. For instance, the artifact of the African

woman working sits beside a doll depicting women of the Orient lounging with a fan or playing with dolls. These symbols convey messages that suggest limited expectations for members of different cultural heritages, especially for women.

Other images of cultural stereotypes filled the room as well. On the bulletin board the a Mexican boy in a sombrero, the Irish man in a kilt and the Hawaiian girl with flowers behind her ear, the Japanese girl in the Kimono, the African girl in traditional attire and the Native American wearing a headdress all represent cultural stereotypes. Although teachers expressed their reasons for displaying these gifts were to show that they valued the gifts from students and that they wanted make the space multicultural, in doing so they were also communicating how the new culture, which they represent, perceives students. In many instances the process of symbolization also communicated a dated, narrow understanding of the meaning of the students' previous culture. These communications may have caused students to feel pigeonholed or misunderstood within the context of the new culture. By displaying these objects, unfortunately, ESOL teachers may have unwittingly been perpetuating cultural and gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, the ESOL classroom was a site where students with multiple ways of life came together from all over the world. Part of expertise as an ESOL teacher entails using knowledge of students' backgrounds to help them construct meaning and adjust to a multicultural environment. One way participants attempted to do this was by trying to construct an environment that reflected an honor for students' differences. ESOL teachers drew from knowledge of students' difficulties in transitioning to the ESOL classroom, to Grandview and the United States, and they deployed the skills of "displaying" and "representing" students' cultures through their intentional arrangement of space in ways

intended to mediate the tensions inherent in cultural transition. While participants did express awareness of some of the implicit messages of the symbols they used in the ESOL space, they were more focused on the overall explicit message they were trying to convey. While many of the explicit messages were positive, such as honoring difference and valuing a multicultural group of students, many of the implicit cultural messages were not. Ritual symbolization accommodates both messages even though they are contradictory.

The next section describes how ESOL teachers tried to ease transition and build unity in the ESOL classroom by leading ELLs in a symbolization process marking their journey from their former countries to the United States.

LEADING STUDENTS INTO *LIMINA*

Having students place self-representations in a special space in the classroom is a part of each participant's practice. Participants engaged students in this activity at the beginning of each year and maintained the activity throughout the year. The map activity portrayed in the following vignette shows how ESOL teachers guided students on their journey from one place to another within the classroom. By identifying their former culture on a map with a representation of themselves, ELLs created a symbol of their transition. I argue that this ritual activity created space that facilitated the transition from the former culture to the new culture of the classroom. After the presentation of the vignette, first I show how the symbol they used helped them "belong" to the ESOL culture. Then I show how at the same time the same symbol communicated their status as marginalized members or outsiders of the broader school culture.

The Map Activity

In Maria Elena's classroom a large glossy map of the world fills nearly the entire back bulletin board. In varying shades of brown, figurines, "little people", as she calls them, hang down from countries all over the world. Inscribed on the little people are the names of Maria Elena's students. Thirteen little people about two and a half inches in length hang down from El Salvador. Little people with the names Elena, Francisco, Guadalupe, Jose, and Rosa hang down head to foot, head to foot, forming an unbroken chain that reaches nearly the bottom of the map. A few little people hang down from Mexico, and several rest near other Central American countries. Two are suspended from Middle Eastern countries, and a lone little person lies inside of China. Flags from all of the nations' countries border the map.

The map activity established ELLs' membership in ESOL. Throughout the year ESOL students came and went. The map activity continues all year long as new members join the already established class. Maria Elena says, "We're still getting kids, and they're still coming, and we make them feel comfortable and do that [map ritual] as well."

One day upon entering the ESOL office while observing Kathleen, I noticed her talking to a new student named Anita who had been making numerous schedule changes. The tears on Anita's face suggested that the schedule changes were her parents' idea rather than her own. Kathleen asks Anita, "Did you tell your family I called?" Anita nodded that she had. "Well, we can't keep making changes, Anita. I need your signature on the new schedule." When Anita signs, Kathleen motions for her to follow, and they leave the office for the main guidance office to turn in the schedule change.

When they return a few moments later, the ESOL guidance counselor, Claudia, emerges from her office and says to Kathleen, "Does she understand now?" Before she receives an answer, she turns to Anita and says in simplified English while shaking her head and waving her finger in "no, no" fashion, "No more changing now." Anita looks at the floor. Claudia waits for a moment for her words to sink in and then, satisfied and without saying anything more, disappears back into her office.

As if by cue, Maria Elena, Anita's new ESOL teacher enters the ESOL office. Anita is still standing by Kathleen when Maria Elena approaches. Kathleen hugs Anita and says, "Anita, this is your new ESOL I teacher." Maria Elena, after a moment of studying Anita's tear-streaked, face hugs Anita as well. The three of them stand together in a circle in the corner of the ESOL office, and I watch as Maria Elena and Kathleen wipe away the tears streaming down Anita's face as they counter her numerous protests about changing classes.

Once Anita's protests subside, they begin joking together in Spanish. Then in English, Maria Elena says, "I'm happy Anita. Are you happy too? See my roll book? I need one more student in my class." She points to the names of students Anita knows in the class, and then she says, "I wanted another student." A smile lights on Anita's face. After a bit more joking, Maria Elena says, "Come on, Anita. Let's go." The two of them side by side leave the ESOL office and head toward Maria Elena's ESOL class, which is being led by Maria Elena's student teacher, Ed.

By the time they enter the class the period only has 20 minutes remaining. Maria Elena and Anita wait at the front of the room and listen as Ed wraps up a vocabulary

review. When he finishes he turns to Maria Elena, and she announces to the class, "We have a new student. Her name is Anita."

Ed leads the class in unison, "Hello, Anita. How are you?"

Anita does not reply. Ed suggests, "Why don't you each introduce yourselves to Anita, and tell her where you're from." One by one, the students take turns saying their names and telling Anita their country of origin. Manuel begins, "My name is Manuel, and I am from Argentina." He smiles at Anita and the rest of the class remains silent waiting for her reaction. Next Esmerelda follows, "My name is Esmerelda, and I am from Bosnia." Like Manuel, she too smiles at Anita while her peers watch and wait. While this is taking place Maria Elena quickly moves to Ed and asks him for one of the little people. Only one is left and Ed traces its outline with a pencil onto a light brown sheet of construction paper. He then carefully cuts it out. Well before the students finish their introductions, Ed has a little brown person complete with a piece of rolled up tape on the back for Anita. As the last student finishes her introduction, Ed stands beside Anita. He hands her the little person he has made for her and explains, "Now it's your turn Anita. Let's go to the map, and you can place your little person on your country." He leads her between two rows of diagonally arranged desks to the map in the back of the room. All of the students turn in their seats to watch Anita at the map. Ed continues, and as he speaks he models placing the little person on the map, "Now, find your country and "boomp" put your little person there." Anita takes the little person from Ed, and she carefully searches the map. Her eyes move down the chain of little people already hanging down from Mexico, and when she reaches the end of the chain she adds her little person to the others from Mexico.

When the students see this several exclaim, "You're from Mexico! I'm from Mexico!" Anita smiles and begins speaking with several students. Ed shows her to a seat and introduces her to Francisco who sits behind her. Students begin their homework, which consists of a memory exercise where students write family words on one half of a paper and then turn the paper over and try to write the words from memory. Francisco, without being asked, explains the homework to Anita. In a similar fashion to how a teacher would explain the exercise, Francisco explains in a little more English than Spanish and then proceeds to help Anita fold her paper and complete the first part of the exercise. Maria Elena who has noticed the way Francisco is helping Anita, points out how the two are working together to Ed. Shortly thereafter the bell rings and several students make their way to Anita to help her find her next class.

Building Unity: The Many Become One

The map activity is a way of "unifying" or bringing together ELLs from diverse backgrounds into one group. Maria Elena, Laura, and Kathleen described this activity as one that "made students feel comfortable," "showed them they were important," and "helped them feel a part of the class." All of the purposes teachers expressed for this activity were related to building unity.

Maria Elena, Laura, and Kathleen each reserve a special spot in the classroom for students to place representations of their identities on the walls. They engaged students in placing a self-representation, such as a "little person" in the reserved space at the beginning of each year. As new students join the class, they add their self-representations to the space. This similarity among participants' practices prompted me to investigate further, and I found that participants used the map activity, or other similar activities, to

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help students make the transition to the ESOL classroom by building unity. Building unity helped teachers and students bring together multiple cultures, and it helped students "belong" to the class. Maria Elena's intent to use the map activity to unify students arose when I asked her why she used the activity. She explained, "It helps with the whole atmosphere and the unity that I want in the class, so I like doing that at the beginning." When I asked her to delve a bit more deeply she elaborated: "It's a good exercise. It's a good activity to do, I think, because you can show them that they're important—that they do bring beautiful and good interesting things to the classroom and to the country…." Finding a way to "show them they're important" is an aspect of the expertise Maria Elena employs through the map activity. Through ritualizing this activity, Maria Elena unites her intention to create a place where students' identities are valued with particular actions that work to achieve that aim. Having students mark their countries of origin in the classroom and keeping them there throughout the year conveys the importance and value of their cultures both to teachers and to students. By having students place their names on a map in her space and by displaying that map in her room, Maria Elena communicates her regard for ELLs and for the "beautiful and interesting things" they bring to the "classroom and to the country."

Not only does Maria Elena value students' cultural identities through the map activity, she also builds unity by creating a symbol of the cultural transition each student was making. By having students place the "little person" on the map, Maria Elena creates a powerful symbol that changes the "atmosphere," as she describes it, of the classroom. The map is a symbol of liminality in the ESOL classroom that symbolizes the change of state that was taking place with students and the transition each ELL was making.

Though they are associating their representations with their former home, they no longer live in that home: their representations rest in a new, temporary "between" home. The map thus symbolizes the transition from the home to the new home. The representation of the student marked not only the physical journey, but more importantly, the cultural journey the student is making. The liminal symbol unites the physical and the cultural journeys of students.

In addition to "showing students they're important," the map activity also helps students "feel a part" of the ESOL classroom. Maria Elena explained how the map activity established ELLs' membership in the ESOL classroom. After the class just described, I asked Maria Elena to describe the activity to me, and this is how she portrayed it:

The first thing I did was introduce [Anita] to the class, and everybody said, "Hello. How are you? Where are you from?" and all of that. So that was good. And then…I immediately went to Ed [the student teacher] and asked for one of the little people, and he had one for another child in the other class, so he made one for her. He cut out one, so that was nice. So, she had her little person to go and 'boomp,' put it in place. And then it was very nice that he [Ed] went on to explain the activity so that she could feel a part of the class, and the kid right behind her said, 'I'll help you,' and he folded this paper and did half of the word and then handed it to her…. So, once again we see that by making them feel comfortable and all of that…then they reach to each other, and that's what I want. And I could see it right there.

As the vignette described, Anita had been very upset about changing classes only moments before entering her new ESOL class. Maria Elena's commentary above reveals an awareness and knowledge of how Anita felt being a newcomer. Maria Elena stressed that she "immediately" went to Ed just after Anita had been introduced to the class. Her urgency in engaging Anita in the ritual activity as soon as possible revealed the significance of this activity in making Anita feel she belonged to the ESOL class. Maria Elena described the relationship between participating in the map activity and alleviating Anita's anxiety by making Anita a "part of the class." She explains that participating in the map activity "makes them feel comfortable" and helps them "reach to each other."

Maria Elena's language reveals that she looks for "indicators" to determine whether the activity worked. In this instance, when Francisco said, "I'll help you," Maria Elena took this as a sign that Anita had been incorporated into the culture of the classroom. Her statement indicated that when the veteran student behind her "reached" out to her, she knew other students perceived Anita as a member of the class.

Helping students quickly assimilate into the class is a skill of an expert ESOL teacher. One way ESOL teachers build unity, or help students "feel a part of the class" during the map activity, is by creating uniformity of action among students. Uniformity of action transformed the individuals in each class from many different cultures into a single group of students united in purpose. In the vignette, each student placed a brown figurine, identical to every other figurine with the exception of the name of the student, on a large map of the world in the back of the classroom. Students placed their figurine on their country of origin. Before Anita became a member of the ESOL class she approached the map and placed her little person on the map, as had every other member

of the ESOL class before her. When Maria Elena invited Anita to engage in the map activity, she was helping Anita "feel" and become a part of the class. Engaging in these actions associated with the map activity helped Anita identify herself as a student in the class and helped other students recognize her as a part of the class. This uniformity of action helped to create equal status among ELLs and thus built unity.

On a basic level, the map activity served as an orienting activity. When I asked Maria Elena to describe how the map activity works in her classroom, she explained:

I've found little people…and so I like giving the kids one so they can find their countries, or, if someone's from El Salvador for example, 'I have no idea where Ethiopia is.' Then they have to find that particular country. And so I like doing that, and you can see the long chain of kids from El Salvador, and they all like to go and look at that and count or see, "Wow! So many!" And also they like to look at the map and things like that, so I like doing that.

When Maria Elena pointed out that someone from El Salvador might not have any idea where Ethiopia is, she alluded to the way the map activity familiarized students with their peers' countries of origin. She suggested that the act of "finding" a student's country on the map oriented students to the diverse composition of the classroom and that this is something students like. She explained that the map serves two distinct purposes. First, students "find their countries," and then they spend time "looking," "counting," and "seeing" where other students are from. She indicates that sometimes students are surprised when they see how many students are from one country or another. And she implies that finding out the composition of the class was something they liked to do. When she said, "they like to look at the map and things like that, so I like doing that" she

specified that her use of the activity arose from her understanding of how it serves a useful purpose to the students.

As Laura pointed out, students may be unfamiliar with the culture of the high school, but also of their new ESOL peers. By "looking," "counting," and "seeing" the little people on the map, students saw their peers' representations all over the world. In this way the map serves as a reminder of the multitude of cultures represented in the classroom. The map thus helps make sense of diversity—for students and teachers.

How does the ritual activity make students more comfortable? I asked Maria Elena what happens when students go to the map and place their name on their country. She told me that they take time while they are up there to notice where other students come from:

> I hope they take time, and, if not, then the next time they come into the class and there are a few minutes to walk around, or say hello, or meet other people, you'll see that some of them do go [to the map] and look and count or just laugh at the idea that [the chain of "little people" runs from] El Salvador all the way down by Antarctica…So, they do make little comments about that.

Maria Elena's comments illustrate one way that this activity built unity was by simply increasing the knowledge that students have about one another. Through the map activity students constructed a type of cultural knowledge.

In addition to serving as an orienting device, the "little people" also function on a symbolic level in a way that promotes unity. All of the "little people" look the same. The only distinguishing feature on the "little people" is that each student writes his name across the center. Having students all use the same figures was another way Maria Elena

equalized status among her students. The uniformity of the little people, and their sameness in size and shape, reflects an absence of ELLs' self-expression or individuality. By having all students use the same figurines, no country or place of origin was privileged above another. Because the "little people" looked the same, and because they represented the students, Maria Elena communicates that the students are all of equal value in her eyes. No matter where they place their brown figure on the map, no matter where they called home, they were the same to Maria Elena. She communicated that it was not any better to be from one place than from another. All places were worthy of record.

While the symbol of the little brown men represented unity among ESOL students, at the same time, it also represented their marginalized status within the broader school community. On the surface, the little people students placed on the map represented the students' identities, and having one's representation on the map signifies membership in a particular teacher's ESOL class. The symbolism of the figurines however, extends far beyond that. In many ways, the "little people" reflected an "identitylessness" commonly found in rituals that promote transition (Turner 1987). While the little people all look the same, they mark students' differences in origin. The map activity illustrates the complexity and contradiction of liminal symbolism because it engages students in marking differences in points of origin while at the same time marking the larger *inconsequence* of coming from different places. All ELLs at Grandview come from another country. Noting one's country of origin distinguished ELLs from other Grandview students but not from other ELLs. While the action of placing the figurine on the map symbolizes a reverence for differences among ELLs, it

also demonstrates the inconsequence of that difference since all students had in common. In this way the little people reflect the "complex and bizarre" (Turner 1987, 6) symbolism of the liminal persona.

The identitylessness of the little people is also similar to that which initiates take on during the liminal stage of rites of passage, because they symbolized the in-betweenness of ELLs' status. The featurelessness of the brown figurines marked the structural indefinition of ELLs. When ELLs entered the ESOL program at Grandview, in many ways they were initially invisible and segregated from the life and culture of the high school; the figurines symbolize this anonymity. In other words, ELLs had a physical, but not yet a social, reality in the life of the school outside of the ESOL classroom.

While participants did not intend to marginalize ELLs by establishing their identity as members of the ESOL class, the use of little brown men to represent students did mark their identity as marginalized members of the larger school culture. Using the brown men conveyed to students that they had a somewhat ambiguous value in the new culture. Having students locate and mark their country of origin on the map with a little brown man drew attention to the fact that they are all segregated or grouped together because of their status as newcomers. Such attention to their status as newcomers heightened the focus on ELLs partial exclusion from the broader school community.

Part of the irony of the little brown men is that while the use of the symbol helped them "belong" to the ESOL class, at the same time it inhibited their belonging in the broader culture of the school. The little brown men established a status for the ELL as an outsider or a person of indifference in the life of the school. By default, being in the

ESOL program segregated students from the rest of the school. By being in ESOL, ELLs were set apart. In many ways, they were invisible to non-ESOL members.

The color of the little brown men represents their status as marginalized members of the large school culture. Brown is a warm neutral color. It is nondescript. In comparison to other colors, brown is uninteresting. Brown's cousins, taupe, tan and beige are often used as background colors because they are not demanding. In many ways, ELLs, while they were ESOL students were also part of the background. Just as in the world of design, brown is a color that serves to unify diverse color palettes in the ESOL class, brown was the color used to unify a group of diverse students. By default, establishing students' membership in the ESOL department marginalized them by removing them from the center or mainstream of the school culture. Being in ESOL separated them from dominant social groups at Grandview.

In this chapter I have shown how particular types of expertise help students make the transition to the ESOL classroom by building "unity" among them. Teachers use the skills of "showing" students they were important and helping students "feel" or become part of the classroom by constructing activities in which students display a representation of themselves in a special place in the classroom. The map activity operates on a number of levels in ways that "orient" ELLs to the classroom and symbolically mark the cultural and physical transitions they are making. Orienting and marking transitions helps students feel "comfortable" by building their knowledge of other students and making them a part of a unified whole. I have also shown how symbols can accommodate contradictions and multiple meanings that reflect the complexity of teachers' work in helping students make cultural transitions.

TEACHER AS CULTURAL LIAISON

The symbolization work teachers perform is like that of a cultural liaison, a facilitator between two entities. The Oxford English Dictionary (2003) explains the etymological roots of *liaison* as deriving from the Latin noun *ligtinem*, meaning "of action" and the French verb *ligre* meaning "to bind." A cultural liaison brings together or bridges the two cultures by locating commonalities and differences between the two. By helping bridge cultures, the teacher is the link creating continuity between two cultures. This work necessitates a close connection and cooperation between the two cultures. To establish this connection, teachers construct space and enact rituals that honor differences among students and unify the members of the group by creating and communicating "belonging." ESOL teachers, in their role as cultural liaisons help students navigate "betweenness" by building figurative bridges between cultures.

In ESOL, teachers are cultural liaisons between students' former and present cultures. As cultural liaisons, teachers guide students in the transition from culture to culture; at the same time, they express regard for the students' former culture and good will on behalf of the new culture. In other words, part of ESOL teaching expertise entailed helping students join the new culture by expressing value for their former.

By working as cultural liaisons, ESOL teachers did more than simply acquire knowledge about cultural diversity. They also participated in processes that required both themselves and students to exhibit understanding and appreciation of other cultures, and to participate in ritualized activities that facilitated social relations and interactions. In doing so, they helped unify diverse learners in a common purpose.

Working as a cultural liaison involves distinguishing ESOL space from other space in the school. By setting the space apart, teachers demarcate the ESOL boundaries and clearly define the parameters of the ESOL department culture. One component of expertise in Grandview's ESOL department involved defining the ESOL department culture apart from that of other high school department cultures and thus providing a separate space for ELLs to develop an identity that incorporates who they are and who they are becoming. Creating limina in this fashion thus helps limit the marginalization of the ELL.

Connecting as Culture

In the ESOL culture, connection was seen as a way to ease transition. "Connecting" served at least two important functions that influenced the culture of the department. First, it served to help students transition from one culture to another. The ESOL culture was one devoted to helping ELLs successfully transition from their former culture to the new culture of the high school. ESOL teachers, understanding that ELLs first experience the new culture through the lens of their former culture, capitalized on the opportunity to use the students' knowledge of their previous cultures as a way to connecting them to each other and to the new culture. The centrality of connecting and the ways ESOL teachers communicated about the students' former cultures shaped the ESOL culture because it influenced how students formed their new cultural identities. This chapter has demonstrated that communicating value and respect for students' former cultures creates a liminal space that facilitates the process of cultural transition by indicating to ELLs that it is appropriate to incorporate their former cultural identities into

their new cultural ones. The senior culture members' awareness of the significance of the transition ELLs make and the difficulties associated with it meant that the culture was focused on helping students transition by helping them connect.

Second, connection served to help students belong to a group and to be a part of a community. Encouraging students to connect with their new environment. The culture was built around encouraging students to participate in, identify with and move into the new culture. The theory of action underlying connecting students to the new environment and culture was that it would improve the education process.

The significance of connecting surfaced in the ritual activity of the department, i.e., every class I observed engaged students in rituals to help them identify themselves as part of the group. Liminal ESOL space both symbolizes and alleviates the inevitable tensions ESOL students experienced being "betwixt and between" cultures. Using the space to support the transitioning work ESOL teachers do with ESOL students helps them achieve the multiple goals: they negotiate and co-construct with students what it means to be an ESOL student at Grandview and they facilitate students' co-construction of what it means to be an ESOL student.

Connecting as Expertise

In this chapter, culturally embedded expertise involves teachers' strategic use of cultural images and activities to create a distinctive and inclusive ESOL space. The strategies teachers employ honor differences among cultures and help unify groups of students. ESOL teachers helped alleviate tensions inherent in transitioning from one culture to another. The three participants' ritualization through the strategic use of

symbols and symbolic actions works similarly in that they all stress value for the group and all individuals in their classrooms. Teachers communicated to themselves and their students that they would endeavor to understand students on their own terms.

Recognizing the important role that students' former cultures play in their transition to the new culture is part of ESOL teacher expertise. Without an understanding of the culture of the ESOL department, the use of artifacts in the ESOL office and in ESOL classrooms might be understood simply as a way to decorate the space. The implications that they arrangement had for symbolically managing the meaning of symbols and communicating that diverse groups of students belongs together might easily be overlooked. Likewise, without an understanding of the importance of helping students make cultural transitions, much of the complexity of teacher action in this ESOL culture would have been lost. Just as an example, take the map activity. Allowing Anita to participate in the map activity might have been understood solely in terms of how it served to help Anita learn to speak English. As the vignette showed, the significance of the activity transcends language acquisition. Maria Elena's inclusion of Anita in the activity helped Anita become a member of the ESOL class.

While this chapter focused on aspects of culturally bound expertise related to helping student transition to the ESOL department, Chapter 5 focuses on aspects of culturally bound expertise that pertain to helping ESOL students transition from the ESOL department into the broader school culture.

CHAPTER V

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE BEYOND ESOL

In Chapter 4 I explored how ESOL teachers help students feel that they belong to a group within the ESOL classroom. In Chapter 5 I explore how ESOL teachers prepare students for life beyond the ESOL classroom by teaching skills for survival in mainstream U.S. culture, a culture that elevates individual achievement above all others. In this chapter I examine classroom activities that teachers design to equip their students with strategies to survive in the world outside of ESOL. Whereas teachers initiated ELLs to ESOL culture by stressing interdependence, the activities studied in this chapter promote "empowerment," leadership, and independence.

While many cultures value collectivism, mainstream U.S. culture generally places a higher value on individualism (Bellah 1985, Hoffman, 2000, Putnam 2000, Strike 2003). The intent here is not to present U.S. culture as monolithic. The fact remains, however, that many U.S. citizens will not willingly share power and resources with English language learners Surviving in a culture that values individualism may require adjustment and adaptation on the part of some ELLs. ESOL teachers understood it as a part of their responsibility to help ELLs make those adjustments. This is not to say that ESOL teachers were attempting to inculcate this "privileging" of individualism; rather, they felt it necessary to help ELLs prepare to survive in a culture that, on the whole, does so.

When participants spoke of life for ESOL students beyond the classroom, they spoke of it as a place where the treatment of ELLs was uncertain. I also make this

distinction, between ESOL classroom and other school cultures, in terms of how "ELL friendly" they were. ESOL teachers were wary about how ESOL students would be treated in other classrooms and strove to equip them to learn in less ESOL-friendly cultures by teaching them a number of strategies. ESOL teachers ritualized their practice to prepare ESOL students to survive in the "outside" culture by helping them recognize their own agency and by cultivating the their leadership skills.

The language of ESOL teachers reveals that their use of the term *empower* differs markedly from how it is most often defined in education literature. ESOL teachers used the term to describe helping students become independent leaders. When ESOL teachers described the classroom activities they intended to use to empower students, they explained them as opportunities for students to feel power or to be empowered. Thus, these teachers see preparing ELLs for life beyond the classroom as empowering them to lead and to be independent.

The concepts of empowerment, leadership, and independence were intricately intertwined in participants' language. Participants focused not only on ELLs' English-speaking skills, but on their ability to "teach themselves" and lead others as well. This chapter illustrates how Laura, Maria Elena, and Kathleen used ritual activity to support their goal of preparing ELLs for life beyond the ESOL department. Participants used two main strategies to prepare ELLs: cultivating leadership and promoting independence. The analysis proceeds with a vignette of a classroom activity (the literature circle), an examination of how the activity was ritualized to cultivate leadership and independence, a discussion of how this activity promotes independence and leadership, and a typology of the of teaching expertise that was involved in this work. Finally I posit a roll for the

teacher as "cultural transistor." When teachers successfully "empower" ELLs, they worked as cultural transistors by enhancing students' ability to exercise power, while at the same time limiting their own.

INDEPENDENCE

The following vignette presents Laura's ESOL II class, where students are engaging in an activity called a literature circle. The degree of leadership students took over literature circles increased over the course of the semester. The view I present here took place after students had just begun to work in literature circles, and they and Laura were still in the process of negotiating their roles. On one of the first occasions I observed Laura's class, I witnessed her students engaging in literature circles. When I walked into the room, I noticed that, as usual, the agenda for the class was posted on a dry-erase board in the front of the room:

ESOL II

9-20-02

–warm-up (summary)

–discuss any contacts

–literature circles 9:50–10:30

–notebook maintenance/grades

–time to work on projects or play a word game

As students filter into the room, one student comments, "That homework was hard, Mrs. Alexander." Several other students concur. While students were completing the warm-up, Laura instructed them, "Place your homework on the top of your desk for me. I'm going to come by to check it." The homework involved a series of questions about the reading selection for the day's literature circle. Laura instructed students to read an excerpt from a novel by Anne Dillard, *An American Childhood*. As she moves from desk to desk, I suspect that several students have not completed the assignment, because her brow furrows. When she finishes checking homework, she moves students into sharing their summaries from the warm-up and discussing problems they are having with a current project. As she had planned, at 9:50 she begins moving students into literature circles. She declares, "Next we have literature circle on your agenda, but only two-thirds of you did the assignment." Several students squirm uncomfortably in their seats.

Rather than carrying on as she had planned with all students participating in literature circles, she modifies the activity. She explains to the class that while most of them will be working in literature circles, "some students have to complete the assignment even though they have a zero." She makes clear to them that she will not permit them to participate in their respective circles because they have not prepared. She explains that this is not only a loss for each individual not participating in literature circles, but it is an even greater loss for the group that will suffer as a result of their absence. To lighten up the somber tone that has taken hold of the class, however, she adds, "It was difficult. I know. If you understood even part of it, that makes me happy." She signals to them that it is time to begin the activity by saying, "Get in your groups and see how much more of it you can put together." By this comment she conveys the

message to students that they are capable of doing and understanding more by working together than by working individually. By emphasizing that they are "putting it together," she indicates that their work is independent of her, and she expresses her confidence in their ability to come to an understanding of the selection without her assistance.

Students take her cue and begin moving their desks into circles of four and five students. I take the movement into circles to indicate the beginning of a more ritualized phase of the activity, because rearranging seats into a circle changes the physical structure of the room and signifies that students have taken on their new identities as artful artists, literary luminaries, capable connectors, discussion directors, and word wizards.[1]

One group forms fairly close to my desk, and I can see that students are relieved to have others working with them on this assignment. I overhear small talk as the group moves together in front of me. Students are still discussing the assignment and its difficulty. After the members of the group have again confirmed the difficulty of the assignment, students begin exploring aspects of the excerpt through their respective roles. I overhear snippets of their conversation: "I think the seeds represent the people…and the dirt represents the mess they're in." and "I think the ANC grew weak because they didn't have access to the media." Their work resembles putting together a jigsaw puzzle. They examine individual pieces, and when they begin putting their comments together, the picture that is the story in this case, begins to emerge.

In a section of the room near the front and by the door six desks have not been moved into a circle, and the six students who have not completed their assignments sit

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[1] These roles were both highly defined and assigned by Laura. The responsibilities involved in each role are described later in the chapter.

there silently working through questions. Occasionally I see them pause in their work and look up when they overhear comments that interest them from a group working near by.

I notice that Laura made sure XiuMei, a shy Chinese student, and Trina, a slightly less reserved student from Sierra Leone, were assigned to separate circles. Now XiuMei is actively listening in her group. She leans her head on the shoulder of an Hispanic girl sitting next to her and her eyes move from person to person as they speak. After a few minutes the other members of the group notice her silence. One African boy reprimands her for not contributing more: "Why don't you say something, man?" And although I cannot hear what XiuMei says, I notice that she responds to her peer's criticism by speaking and participating a bit more.

While students discuss the story, Laura silently moves from group to group. I observe that she smiles as she walks, as if she enjoys seeing the students work through this process. When she nears the fringe of a circle she squats down, looks in on the activity and mostly listens. After a few exchanges have passed among the students, she stands up and without comment moves away.

In one instance, when Laura nears the group working in front of me, she squats down to look in on the circle at the students' shoulder level. She rests her arms across the backs of the student desks on either side of her, and at first she listens. In this group, Oswaldo is working as the word wizard. His job was to read the story and strategically select the words he thinks the group will have difficulty with. He then defines the words in a way that will help the group understand their significance within the context of the story. When Laura arrives, Oswaldo is exploring the definition of a word, and Laura sees that he has selected an inappropriate definition, given the context of the story. In an

attempt to lead Oswaldo to the appropriate definition, she asks him, "Oswaldo what did you find when you looked up that word?"

He answers, "To look beyond."

Signaling that this definition does not work here, she asks, "Did you find any other meanings? That word has a lot of meanings." And then realizing that she is beginning to direct the activity of the circle, she says to them, "I'm leaving. I'm talking too much." A few moments later she passes by Oswaldo's group again. This time rather than squatting, she quickly takes note that their discussion is progressing, and she lingers only for a second, saying nothing and moving on more quickly.

At 10:30, the time the activity is scheduled to end, all of the students are still discussing the story. Making a choice to adhere to the schedule, Laura says loudly, "We were three groups; now we're one group to wrap up the discussion." Students are reluctant to end the activity. One student protests: "Why do you make us stop just when the discussion is getting sweet?" Laura waits and gradually the groups' talking tapers off and the activity ends. To help students understand the significance of the activity in which they just engaged, she says, "We need to talk about the process." And then she asks the class, "How did your group work together?" At this point students transition from engaging in their small groups to a large group discussion of the activity itself.

Strategies for Developing Independence

The vignette reveals several ways the ritual activity promotes independence of ELLs. First Laura expressed confidence in students' ability to work without her. She separated XiuMei and Trina, assigning them to separate circles. I took this as an

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indication that Laura did not regard XiuMei as independent. Moving XiuMei to a separate circle made it impossible for her to depend on Trina and helped move her toward independence.[2] Then she required students to take responsibility for promoting the participation of other members of their circles. In addition she expected students to lead discussions and to develop their own understanding of pieces of literature. Laura described her intent to help students become more independent as follows: "I need to expect that they can do more independently…. I'd like to see them more independent. I have a greater positive vision of them doing more independent work." Expecting students to do more independently, and seeing them more independent required creating opportunities for students to do more independent work. Kathleen expressed similar goals. She says:

> I believe that they should become independent by all means. I find it rewarding when I see students' progress, when they're able to teach themselves even if I'm not there. I'm only the facilitator…. They're no less….That is rewarding to be helping them become more independent.

Kathleen's comments revealed that she associated students increasing independence with progress. When she named herself the facilitator and placed students on equal footing by saying "they're no less," she presented a view of education in which she and the students were basically doing the same thing. She revealed that one of her goals was to diminish her facilitative role, because it will be important for students to learn to teach themselves without her. I took this as an indication of her concern that students will not always have a teacher as willing as she is to teach them. While students' and Kathleen's roles were far

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[2] Interview data showed that Laura worried about how XiuMei's shyness and reliance on others would influence her academic growth and overall development, especially in non-ESOL classrooms.

from the same, there were daily occasions during the warm-up when Kathleen asked

students to imitate her by leading the activity. When Kathleen talks about making her role

inessential and that students are equal, she is really modeling the role she wants them to

assume. She has given them roles in which they each share the responsibilities for

teaching and leadership. This form of expertise involved "mimesis" (Jackson 1986),

whereby students became leaders by acting out leadership roles they saw performed by

their leader. Another aspect of expertise was her giving students credit for their

accomplishments while downplaying her own role.

ESOL teachers described "having a vision" of ESOL students doing independent

work, preparing them to make academic progress even when the ESOL elder was not

there. ESOL teachers ritualized specific classroom actions during particular activities to

achieve this aim. These strategies included prescribing specific roles for themselves and

their students during some activities and changing the physical structure of the room to

prevent interfering with students' independence. Before I explore how ESOL teachers

employed these strategies in their teaching, I want to briefly examine the complexity of

helping students become independent.

Balancing challenge and support

Many considerations were involved in helping students become independent. It

required a careful balance between helping students feel comfortable while encouraging

them to do as much as possible for themselves. During an interview after an observation,

Maria Elena illustrated the complexity of this process. Near the midpoint of the semester

Maria Elena received a new student from El Salvador. This student, a 14-year-old girl

named Flor, had almost no command of English. Her family had very few material

possessions and Flor had attended school intermittently in El Salvador and only at an elementary level.[3] When she came to Grandview, ESOL staff rushed in to help accommodate her needs, but Flor was somewhat unresponsive to their efforts. One day in ESOL I class, Maria Elena grew frustrated with Flor's near complete lack of effort. She pushed Flor to respond during a class activity and waited quite some time for her to participate.

On many occasions during the first few days when Flor joined the class, Maria Elena simply skipped over Flor when she did not attempt to respond to questions, but finally it came to something that resembled a showdown.[4] Maria Elena grew frustrated because Flor was not even making a pretense of attempting to keep up with the exercise students were reviewing. In fact, she did not even have her book open to the correct page. Flor attempted to wait out Maria Elena to get her to pass over her and move on to the next student. She was engaging in what McLaren (1993) calls "ritualized resistance." Maria Elena pushed Flor to respond, asking her multiple times to answer a question. The tension that filled the classroom was almost unbearable. I had to fight the urge to get up and help Flor turn to the appropriate page in her book and answer the question myself. Maria Elena was calm but persistent in pressing Flor to respond to a question when it was her turn to respond. The danger of not providing challenge is that students may shut down, because nothing is expected or required of them or that they will not progress as quickly as they could. Maria Elena communicated that shutting down and not trying was not an option. Maria Elena attributed the over-support Flor received during the first

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[3] Maria Elena was aware of some additional difficulties surrounding Flor's personal life and of some of the ways these issues influenced her willingness and ability to participate in class.

several days of class to the ritualized resistance she encountered when attempting to prompt Flor to participate.

Maria Elena describes the event in retrospect:

Sometimes you're just Mrs. Nice, and there's a limit. Sometimes you also have to show your students that it's in their hands. That we're here to help you, but a lot of it you have the power, and you have to do something to acquire this knowledge or whatever it is. And that's why I also pushed her a little bit because now it's time for her to take some action, and "If I have a problem, if I need help, then I have to say something." You have to raise up your hand, or you have to reach to someone. And that's why I made her practice, because she needs to realize it. Maybe she's getting too used to people coming to her and offering too much. Now she has to realize that that's good, and that's great, and that's why we have the aids, and that's why, thank God, we have bilingual people -- teachers that will do that, not that everyone would, but so now she has to also do something if she needs a tutor, if she needs to talk to someone, there are a lot of people in the ESOL office that can help….I'm trying to help her. Now she has to also see how she can help herself.

Maria Elena explained the careful balance teachers must maintain between providing appropriate support and overcompensating or coddling. Determining this balance is complicated by issues of race, class, language, and culture. Maria Elena's comments illustrated the complexity of providing support while encouraging students to do what they can for themselves. Maria Elena described the key to helping Flor succeed at

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[4] This is not advocacy for showdowns or to argue that they exhibit expertise. On the contrary, this example stresses the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between support and challenge to prevent

Grandview as "showing" her she has the "power" to "help herself." Succeeding at

Grandview required action on Flor's part, such as "doing something to acquire

knowledge," "raising up your hand" and "reaching to someone." She said that "offering

too much" help to ELLs can lead to inactivity on the student's part. The balance Maria

Elena suggested was more of a partnership: teachers make students aware of resources

and support that are available, and students take initiative in reaching out for support

when they need it. For the most part, however, students were "seeing how they can help

themselves" and, by action, realizing that they "have the power" to help themselves.

Role-playing

One characteristic of almost all ritual activities is that participants take on

distinctive roles that vary from their normal ones (Grimes 1982). Each role carried with it

unique responsibilities that differed from the responsibilities students and ESOL teachers

normally assumed. The skill of assigning highly defined roles for students and teachers

was a part of the expertise ESOL teachers employed to promote student independence.

Prescribing roles promoted independence by giving ELLs specific responsibilities for

participating in classroom activities. Laura described the discussion roles as devices that

helped her promote independence of her students. She explains:

> Though not all teachers advocate the use of prescribed discussion roles in
>
> literature circles, I see them as scaffolding devices that not only have helped my
>
> students learn how to talk about books, but also have allowed me to move from
>
> teacher-centered to student-centered discussions with less fear.

 In the statement above, Laura attributed her ability to move toward "student-centered

discussions with less fear" to the prescribed discussion roles in literature circles. She

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resistance on the part of student.

claimed that the prescription of roles not only served students, but also helped keep her out of the spotlight. Prescribed discussion roles offered a "scaffold" that supported a type of activity contrary to the more familiar "teacher-centered" activities.

During the first several times the class participated in the literature circle ritual, Laura prepared students to engage in a more complex form of the circles, providing an opportunity for each student to practice, and thus gain a comprehensive understanding of, all five roles. On many of these occasions all of the students in one literature circle would share the same role rather than take sole responsibility for only one of the roles. Only when all of the students understood all of the roles did she begin having students enact literature circles in groups where roles were divided among the students.

During literature circles, students broke up into groups of five. Each group worked together to discuss a piece of literature. According to Laura, the division of labor was aimed at "deepening each member's understanding and enjoyment of the selection." Roles included the "artful artist," the "literary luminary," the "discussion director," the "capable connector," and the "word wizard." Each role was highly defined:

- the artful artist brought in a piece of artwork to help the other members deepen their understanding of a particular scene or idea from the reading
- the discussion director developed questions to guide the discussion
- the literary luminary selected passages for reading aloud to help group members remember important parts of the selection
- the capable connector made connections between the text and the lives of the group members
- the word wizard searched for important vocabulary words

In other empowerment rituals, students assumed the identity of the class leader or teacher. Highly defined roles made it easier for Laura to empower students to make their own meaning of literature. Highly defined roles helped Laura and others ESOL teachers resist the temptation to assume the familiar traditional role of the "expert" conveying information; it also helped remove them from students' sense-making processes.

Rearranging space

Using highly defined roles was not the only skill that limited the involvement of ESOL teachers during empowerment rituals. ESOL teachers also used physical rearrangements to support empowerment of ELLs. The skill of arranging space in a way that symbolically honored the independence of ELLs was part of the expertise ESOL teachers employed to promote their vision of helping ELLs "become independent by all means."

I asked Laura what she thought it meant for students to engage in literature circles. She responded, "Well, it means that they…are totally responsible for the discussions." Her view of independence is that students, not the teacher, control the discussion of a piece of literature. In the vignette, students moved their desks into a circle, and Laura's position on the outside of the circle served as a reminder that students were "totally responsible for discussions" while she was a nonparticipant observer. The circle of desks, a physical barrier between her and the students, reinforced this separation.

When Laura approached Oswaldo's circle, the structure of the ritual helped limit her involvement with the group. After asking questions about the word Oswaldo's group was discussing, she said, "I'm leaving. I'm talking too much." This statement reminded

Laura and the students that putting the pieces together without her help and without all of the "right" answers took precedence over understanding every single aspect of the story. Laura's message was that the students were capable of engaging in meaningful activity even if they were missing some pieces of the story.

In the vignette, when students sat in their literature circle, they acted in their roles as they saw fit. Structural changes were part of what distinguished these activities as rituals, and they changed the power structure of the classroom by putting students in positions of power. When Laura altered the physical makeup of the classroom, she also relinquished a great deal of her power over students. Often times the power shift occurred by physically placing students in positions in the classroom traditionally invested with authority. For example, in some cases ESOL teachers ritualized activities by giving students the front of the classroom, and moving themselves into student seats. This swap symbolically represented a role reversal, an inversion of the traditional power hierarchy, communicating to the student that the elder had made space for the student's leadership in place of her own.

During ritualized activities that aimed at empowerment, teaching expertise involved a change from its traditional form. Rather than transmitting knowledge to students, teachers encouraged students to produce their own knowledge (Jackson 1986). ESOL teachers used two primary skills to support this changed form of expertise. First, they assigned highly defined roles and responsibilities to students. Secondly, ESOL teachers physically altered the structure of the room in a way to remind them to limit their involvement in student performances. These physical rearrangements created a barrier between the student and the teachers and created a visual reminder to teachers to honor

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the empowered positions in which their students worked. In addition to helping students develop and maintain independence, expertise also involved showing students the significance of their work.

Showing the Importance of the Activity

In this section I explore the expertise ESOL teachers employed during these rituals to show students the significance of the activity and their work. Teachers employed skills such as preparing the environment, celebrating at the end of the ritual activity, and using formality during the ritual activity. Much of being an ESOL student at Grandview involved learning skills and language in ways that often seemed babyish for high school students. In many ways ESOL teacher practices infantilized the learning process. For instance, teaching materials and classroom decorations often depicted children younger than the ESOL students. Activities frequently involved the use of simplified speech and "pretending" or "imagining" one was participating in events like a picnic, a trip to the grocery store, or a conversation. Such activities may have had the effect of making ESOL students feel like their work was unimportant. ESOL teachers sought to counter this effect by empowering students by making them "feel important."

Preparing the environment

Careful preparation of the environment for empowerment rituals distinguished them from other classroom activities by showing students that they were "important." They all involved a particular type of transformation of the space in the classroom that elevated the significance of rituals such as the literature circle. ESOL teachers modified the space of the classroom to support the empowering purpose of the ritual.

Laura supported the empowerment of her students by devoting a bulletin board to the activity. On the bulletin board she placed representations of the identities students took on in literature circles. She took great care to create an attractive board. She says, "I want to show them that it is important to me, and so I did take my time with it and made it nice." She used the walls of the classroom to send the message that participating in the circles was an important part of the class. The board had each student's name listed beside the identity they were responsible for in the upcoming literature circle. On the board she created laminated name cards for each student. On white paper with a pink background she typed cards for each of the five student roles. On the backs of the name cards she fastened velcro strips that adhered to the bulletin board under each of the five roles. On any given day students could see which students were responsible for which roles. They could also see that the activity was important, because Laura took the time to maintain the bulletin board and to change it to reflect any changes in the roles students assumed.

The literature circle bulletin board communicated to students not only practical information, it also served to elevate the importance of the literature circles. The bulletin board added permanence to the literature circles, communicating that they did not go away when the activity ended. The board also served as a management strategy. Laura says, "I am interested in keeping more official track of who's doing what because they're supposed to rotate and get practice with all of the jobs." By carefully constructing the bulletin board, Laura communicated to herself and to her students that students were doing important work. Would a teacher spend so much time on an insignificant activity?

Devoting space to student work

Showing the importance of student work by creating a special place for it in the classroom was a strategy ESOL teachers used that was a part of expertise in ESOL. This strategy showed students that the ESOL teachers took their students' work seriously. It showed students that the work they were doing had value, enough so to devote time to making a special place for it in the classroom. Showing students that their work was important and that teachers took it seriously was a way ESOL teachers helped ready students for life beyond the ESOL culture.

Displaying student work and showcasing their activities serves as an especially useful strategy in ESOL because they do not require using English to communicate the message of importance. Maria Elena explains, "I think it's important also to put something that they have done in class, a project or something so that they feel proud…." The very act of displaying something shows that it is important. As Kathleen elaborates further, "What do you do when they speak no English? Do you talk to them in Spanish? No. A lot of hand movement, a lot of jumping up and down. A lot of visuals." A carefully put together display of a classroom ritual communicates its importance nonverbally.

Celebrating success

Teachers also ended the empowerment rituals in ways that communicated their importance. Teachers often ended these rituals with some form of celebration. Laura explains:

And it was just fantastic. I was really, really proud of them, and I want to celebrate that. They deserve to have this celebrated in more than just a grade

from, I feel, because it's not an easy thing. No one has ever asked them to do this

before.

Laura's language revealed the celebratory mood that took hold of both ESOL teachers

and students after empowerment activities. A glow filled not only her language, but it

often took hold of teachers' actions as well. One day I asked Maria Elena to explain the

applause in her classroom. She told me: "We did it with Flor once, and now it was his

turn [referring to giving Jamie applause]. I'm not sure if you notice, when she actually

participated, I'm like Whoa! Yes! You want to encourage that and celebrate that they do

some of that." Celebrating student achievement was a way to encourage students and

show them that their accomplishments were important. It was not uncommon to see

teachers hugging students or even declaring that they loved them after empowerment

activities. On many occasions Kathleen made exclamations at the end of a class such as:

"This class is great! I love this class!" and even told individual students directly that she

loved them on some occasions after they completed an empowerment activity.

The celebrations that took place after empowerment activities varied in their

scale. A small-scale way ESOL teachers celebrated was by leading the class in applause

following a student's performance. Kathleen always affirmed students' leadership roles

by leading the class in applauding after completion of the warmup. Applause

communicated to the student and to the class that the performance was successful.

Larger-scale celebrations involved food, music, and longer periods of celebration.

One way Laura regularly concluded literature circles was by having a debriefing session

during which students openly complimented each other on their progress. Celebration

signified that the students' willingness to lead the class marked a change in their journey to becoming members of U.S. high school culture.

Formality

Aside from using nonverbal methods, teachers also used formality as a way to communicate the importance of these activities. Whereas often times ESOL classes were informal as a way of encouraging students to speak English as freely and as often as they liked, empowerment activities were very different occasions. Not only was only one person permitted to speak at a time, but the ESOL teachers also frequently called students by their last names. Formality signified the importance of the rituals. Strategically using formality during empowerment rituals was a type of expertise Kathleen and other ESOL teachers used to acknowledge and support the leadership of students and to encourage them to continue in their leadership capacity. In all empowerment activities ESOL teachers created a distinctive tone by using formality in both manner and speech. Kathleen explained how and why this works:

> "I really believe that if you respect students, you will also get respect from them, and I try to address them, and use their last names to empower them when they are teachers. …It's the same way I want them to address me."

As Kathleen's remarks illustrated, using students' last names was a way to respect students while they were working in their leadership roles during empowerment activities. The formality of using students' last names was a way to "respect" them as well as a way to get respect from them. Using formality was a way to not only to respect the work of students, but a way to respect them as individuals. Kathleen's statement

revealed that not only was she modeling the type of respect she would like students to show her, she was also creating respect for the work students were doing.

By using students' last names, Kathleen distinguished the empowerment activity where students led the class from other classroom activities where students' first names were invariably used. By reserving the use of students' last names for this activity, Kathleen strategically set it apart from other activities. In this way, she worked to highlight the changed role of students from that of student to that of teacher. By changing the roles of teachers and students, Kathleen "ritualized" this activity.

A final way Laura formalized literature circles was by reserving participation for those who had prepared. Before the activity began, Laura lamented the fact that some students would not be participating. When she explained that this was a loss for every member of the class, she called attention to the worthy contributions each student had to make. At the same time, by excluding students who had not prepared, she preserved the integrity of the activity. Laura elevated the importance of the activity by limiting it to those who had prepared.

Empowering students by showing them that their work and their activities were important involved forms of expertise quite different from those involved in empowering students by encouraging their independence. Whereas encouraging their independence limited the involvement of the teacher, showing students their work was important did not. Rather, showing students their work was important required involvement of the teacher before, during, and after the empowerment activity. Teachers prepared the environment by carefully showcasing the activity or student work. During the ritual,

teachers used formality to respect student work, and afterwards, they celebrated student work. Both forms of empowering students involved a changed role for the teacher.

EMPOWERMENT

In this section I examine the way teachers used the term "empowerment" in reference to their work with ELLs and how they understood themselves as promoters of student empowerment. Participants' understandings of empowerment were often contradictory, and their understandings of how to promote empowerment were often muddled. Moreover, their understanding of how to empower students did not reach beyond the classroom. While participants' hoped their version of empowering students by encouraging them to lead and be independent would prepare them for life beyond the ESOL culture, how this would actually occur was unclear.

Kathleen, Maria Elena, and Laura each expressed a concern for helping ESOL students become more "independent" by "empowering" them. Participants felt that part of their responsibility was to help ESOL students become more self-reliant and independent to prepare for other teachers who might be "different" from the way they were. Kathleen viewed a connection between "empowering" students through leading and helping them to become independent, a characteristic she believed they needed to make progress. To her, independence meant "becoming leaders" and making decisions and choices. Kathleen describes:

> I give them that power—empower them. They have to be independent. ESOL II
>
> teachers might be different from how I am. …And they have to be able to make

decisions and become leaders and continue that. I also try to give them

responsibility of deciding. Whatever you decide. So I'm giving them choices.

Kathleen noted not only her awareness of the power she has in the classroom, but also her

role in and her desire to share it with her students. When she said, "I also try to give them

the responsibility of deciding," she hinted at a method she employed to limit her own use

of authority in a way that created space for students to take leadership by making

decisions in the classroom. Her comments indicated that empowering her students helped

ready them for environments outside of her classroom. Kathleen's statement explained

why empowerment and leadership were the means by which teachers readied ELLs for

life beyond the ESOL culture. Becoming independent meant that ELLs did not have to

depend on another teacher's ability to understand their struggles as an English language

learner.

Kathleen's statement is problematic in a number of ways, however. First, she

describes power as a force that comes from her and that she in turn "gives" to students.

She suggests that she has power to bestow on students. Her language suggests that she

gives them power, which in turn helps them become independent. Her language denies

the agency of students and suggests that students do not have power unless she gives it to

them. In other words, without her they are disempowered. She distinguishes herself from

other teachers who might be "different" and perhaps not as willing to forego their power.

It is as if she believes this is students' one chance to become "power-filled."

Kathleen's belief that ELLs should be empowered and that her intention is to

"empower" is clear. However, her understanding of how and why these methods

empower them remains elusive. What is absent from Kathleen's explanation is the link

between how making choices empowers students. One theory that underlies Kathleen's language is "teachers always making choices is bad" and "students making choices is good." Her language camouflages her confusion about how letting students make decisions leads to empowering them. She implies that anything students decide is preferable to a decision she imposes.

Letting students make decisions was not integrated into Kathleen's practice; rather it was relegated to certain activities during which decisionmaking held symbolic significance. Her language suggests that empowering ELLs was as simple as letting students make a few symbolic decisions. Kathleen did not discuss the complex ways students' language, culture, and race influenced their ability to experience power in U.S. culture.

Most of the ESOL teachers described at least one activity they conducted on a regular basis as "empowering." As illustrated above, ESOL teachers believed that empowerment meant cultivating student leadership and building student independence. In describing literature circles, as portrayed in the vignette, Laura says, "I think it's really empowering for the students to be in charge of that discussion, and it's going really well as far as I'm concerned." Her comment reveals that she bases her judgment about how well the activity went on the degree to which students were "in charge." In other words, she viewed the activity as a way to help prepare students for life beyond the classroom by decreasing their dependence on her. Laura correlated being in charge with being empowered, and as she indicated, helping students be in charge served as her intention for literature circles.

ESOL teachers engaged ELLs in what they called "empowering" activities long

before they had a command of the English language. Their intention was to encourage

ELLs to participate and not fear making minor errors in their use of language. Maria

Elena's explanation below describes this purpose:

> I want them to feel that they have some control over the situation…. They're
>
> providing something back…and then again it makes them feel important, it makes
>
> them feel power that 'Ok, so I'm the teacher so you go,' and sometimes they
>
> begin saying their names like "Afrah" or "Jose" or whomever…. So, if they make
>
> a mistake, like I said, it's okay. What letter does she need, or what did he or she
>
> forget? I'm not making it like an awful like 'How could you do that now?'

Maria Elena shows her understanding of the relationship between language and power.

Her language reflects an awareness of the power of language to both exclude and include.

Putting students in positions traditionally associated with power is a strategy she uses to

offset the negative consequences of language. Maria Elena clearly expresses that

participation is more important than grammatically correct language. Maria Elena's

comment illustrates the emphasis ESOL teachers placed leadership and willingness to

take charge rather than speaking without errors. The role she presents for herself involves

helping students move past their errors and get back into the activity when they get hung

up. Maria Elena described how she wanted students to "feel power" as a result of making

decisions when they were the "teacher." Whereas U.S. mainstream culture privileges

English in ways that exclude and disempower non-English speakers, ESOL teachers

stressed importance in the culture of being confident, independent, and willing to take

charge. Maria Elena's focus seems limited to the classroom in that she attempts to keep

students focused on leading and using language for a powerful purpose so that they will forget themselves and lose themselves in the activity. While Maria Elena intends to help students feel they are making a contribution in her class, her understanding of how and whether this activity leads to any kind of lasting change remains unknown. She does not indicate any intention of helping students translate this notion of contribution to other situations beyond her classroom. Her focus on this type of "empowerment activity" seems more focused on helping students become comfortable with language rather than about promoting any kind of lasting change in the way they view themselves as a part of the dominant culture.

Like Maria Elena, when Laura described her goals for the literature circles she spoke of them as a way to help students change the way they viewed themselves. She expounds:

> I see it as being kind of a threshold…it's a big step towards seeing themselves as academically capable…not just ESOL students, but students who are of a higher caliber…. I mean, this has built their confidence.

The intention Laura expresses includes helping to change the way students think of themselves. She says she wants the activities to help them with "seeing themselves as academically capable." When Laura refers to literature circles as a "threshold," she hints at their ability to bring about change. She specifies that the purpose of empowerment activities is to help change the way students "see themselves." By this she means that not only do literature circles teach students academic skills, such as how to discuss a piece of literature, they also serve the purpose of changing and developing a new way for students to think of themselves. She alludes to a tendency students may have of seeing themselves

as "just ESOL students," as if being an ESOL student in and of itself does not make one important. Engaging students in empowerment rituals served as a way of "building their confidence" so that they "see themselves as academically capable" and "as students who are of a higher caliber"—having more control over the classroom activities. Empowerment activities worked to achieve this aim by increasing the decisionmaking and participation of the students while decreasing the decisionmaking and participation by the elder.

Each participant expressed concerns about students who did not take the initiative they felt was needed. When ESOL teachers felt students were not being independent they associated this with an inability to succeed. In ESOL "being a leader" was synonymous with being "empowered" and "independent." The overlap of these ideas and their connection to the ESOL teachers' belief that being independent meant being successful suggested that being a leader was the ideal for all students. Kathleen illustrates the way these ideas were closely related in the thinking of ESOL teachers. She explains:

> Sometimes it's hard because sometimes there are people within a group that might like you to do everything for them, and they're okay with that. They don't want to be empowered. They're followers…. Not everyone has to be a leader. That would be the ideal….

Kathleen refers above to "being a leader" as ideal. Students who were not leaders, as she describes were those who were okay with letting others do for them what they could do for themselves. Being a follower, which was the same as not being a leader, meant not being empowered in her view. Her language above illustrates the overlap in her thinking

of independence, or not letting someone else do everything for one, leadership and empowerment.

TEACHER AS CULTURAL TRANSISTOR

In this chapter, expertise involved teachers' "empowerment" of students by strategically structuring activities that strengthened students' abilities while limiting teachers' exercise of power. The role ESOL teachers took on when they engaged students in empowerment rituals can be characterized as that of a cultural "transistor." In this section I explain the idea of a cultural transistor and how that role empowers and initiates students to the culture of being a U.S. high school student. I chose the image of a "transistor" to describe ESOL teacher expertise in this chapter because the word transistor is actually composed to two separate words: transfer and resist. Transferring and resisting capture the two actions that helped ESOL teachers promote a culture of transformation in the ESOL department.

Expertise entailed initiating students to the culture of the school by helping them become independent of ESOL teachers. Helping students become independent required ESOL teachers to use their knowledge of students and their abilities as well as knowledge of the culture of the school to prepare ELLs for life outside the protective ESOL department. To do this, ESOL teachers used ritual activity to set boundaries that maximized ELLs' participation and involvement in educational activities. To a varying degree this necessitated that ESOL teachers limit or *resist* their own use of power and decisionmaking ability to make space for ELLs to take responsibility for their own

education. At times this meant allowing ELLs to struggle with difficult activities, such as discussing a piece of literature or standing in front of a class to lead a classroom activity.

In preparing ELLs, ESOL teachers gradually *transferred* increasing amounts of authority and responsibility to ELLs. In essence, the teacher moved the spotlight from herself to her students. ESOL teachers carefully built capacity among their students for them to assume particular positions of power by careful preparation, and they provided supports to ensure students' success. When ESOL teachers were showing students that the work they were doing was important they *transferred* attention to their students by employing skills such as preparing the environment, celebrating at the end of the ritual activity, and using formality to show students the importance of their work

The role of the teacher in encouraging students to do as much as possible for themselves entailed limiting their involvement and aid to students. In other words, teachers *resisted* the urge to provide too much support. To do this, teachers resisted their own use of power. In the literature circle vignette we saw Laura limit her interactions with students by using highly defined roles and by implementing a physical arrangement of space that kept her outside student discussions. In the view of these participants, a teacher who empowers resists or impedes the flow of her own power and makes space instead for the power of her students. In the vignette in this section, Laura limited her own use of power by physically removing herself from student discussions. Other ESOL teachers did this by placing students in the power-filled positions in the classroom, taking a seat in a student's desk, changing or limiting their use of language, and turning over to students activities that they ordinarily direct. Each of these actions limited the flow of power from the teacher. At the same time teachers also redirected the activity in the

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classroom to provide an opportunity for their students to exercise their own power. In essence, limiting their own use of power opened up or made space for the exercise of power by the students. When ESOL teachers worked as cultural transistors, they slowed the flow of their power. Working as a cultural transistor required self-monitoring: not only must the cultural transmitter be aware of her power, she must also *resist* the urge to exercise her power. Cultural transistors located opportunities for students to assume power carefully.

Transformation and Culture

Empowerment and leadership were values that shaped the ESOL culture at Grandview. Those goals made the culture unique in that they stressed that the ability to speak English fluently was not tied to the ability to participate in U. S. culture. I am not suggesting that the ESOL culture did not value speaking English – quite the contrary – learning to speak English was a part of most, if not all, instruction. Rather, the culture sought to transform students perception of themselves. The culture wanted students to see themselves as leaders. Leaders, independent and empowered, are not likely to question whether or not they have something meaningful to contribute to the broader culture.

The culture encouraged students not to hinge their value or worth on their ability to speak English. One could imagine quite a different culture, and sadly, some may exist, where students are taught that only fluent speakers can contribute to the culture. A culture with this value would not likely offer students responsibilities for teaching lessons or for leading classrooms as this one did.

Transformation as Expertise

In this chapter teaching expertise was culturally embedded in that it involved using strategies of "empowerment" and independence to initiate students into the culture of being in a U.S. high school student. ESOL teachers used the term empower to refer to helping students establish "independence" and take "leadership" in classroom activities. In other words, teachers created opportunities for students to exercise their power with the intention of helping students recognize their power. When Kathleen, Maria Elena, and Laura discussed empowering ELLs, they described "empowering" as "building their confidence" by helping them "see themselves as academically capable," and "as students who are of a higher caliber" by working to help them "feel that they have some control," "feel important," and "feel power." To accomplish "empowering" students, ESOL teachers worked to help them become "independent." They let them "make decisions and become leaders," "gave them choices" and the "responsibility of deciding" and sometimes let them "teach themselves." Most frequently when discussing these activities teachers spoke of "empowering" students by helping them to become "independent." Teachers did not define empowerment as transferring their power to their students. Rather, teachers discussed empowerment in terms of limiting their power to make space for students to exercise power that was already vested in them. They helped students "realize" and "recognize" their own power.

Some researchers have begun to explore complexities surrounding empowerment in diverse contexts (Delpit 1995, Friend 1993, Nieto 1992). LeCompte and deMarrais (1992) note that when "uncritically embraced, empowering practices can lead to the very

abuses they seek to redress." Freire (1998) calls the desire to empower "romantic,"

suggesting that the idea of empowerment is enticing but not often realized. Drawing from

Freire's conception of "denunciation" (1972), Cossentino (2004) describes some

approaches to practice that aim directly toward empowerment as "negation." In other

words, in an effort to resist the urge to oppress students, teachers sometimes find

themselves focusing on what they will not do rather than on how they can assist students

to develop skills and knowledge that lead to power.

The way ESOL teachers strove to empower students, however, suggests that there

are practical ways of empowering students through ritual activity. I argue that situating

practice within the frame of ritual can provide a practical support for teachers aiming to

achieve specific goals. Careful examination of how teachers use ritual activity for

empowerment reveals how ESOL teachers created ritual structures that helped them turn

a "romantic" notion into a practical reality. The ways ESOL teachers sought to

"empower" students by using ritual activity stands in contrast to the way empowerment is

normally discussed in education literature. ESOL teachers did not seek to "empower"

ELLs in the sense of teaching students to be critical (Shor 1992). Nor were ESOL

teachers bestowing power on or seeking to transfer power to ELLs. Rather, during

classroom activities designed to empower, ESOL teachers limited their own use of

authority and power to make space for ELLs to exercise "leadership," taste "power" and

experience "independence." During some classroom activities ELLs were leaders. They

were powerful, and they were independent. How well these strategies equipped them for

life beyond the ESOL culture is an uncomfortable unknown.

Traditionally, being an expert meant knowing more than students. In contrast, preparing students for non-ESOL environments involved different forms of expertise that were often contrary to the traditional notion of teacher as "expert." Participants seemed to deemphasize the importance of the teacher. This may have been due in part to preparing ELLs for survival in classrooms where teachers did not give them much attention. Participants emphasized showing students their own power and agency, perhaps to prepare them for working with others who were not so willing as they to share their power with ELLs. Participants were practicing different kinds of expertise with the explicit intention of "empowering" students. Rather than "empowering" students in the traditional sense, ESOL teachers were aiming to prepare students to survive and succeed in the world outside ESOL classes. Participants' ideas and strategies of empowerment fail to address and engage with the structural problems that create inequality and exclusion inside and outside the ESOL classroom. Rather, participants focused their energies on equipping ELLs to survive in a culture where they will inevitably encounter inequality and exclusion.

I do not wish to suggest in any way that ELLs needed transformation because they were inadequate in any way. The opposite is actually my aim. I do wish to imply that U. S. cultures and values quite possibly greatly differ from the students' former cultures, and that cultivating leadership in the ways these ESOL teachers did helped to equip ELLs for flourishing within the context of the broader culture. The focus on transformation was actually to help students see the value in their own abilities and strengths and to encourage them to use those within the new culture. ESOL teachers developed forms of expertise that communicate to ELLs that the new culture benefits from their participation.

CHAPTER VI

PASSAGE, CONNECTION, AND AGAPE

This dissertation began with three interrelated research questions:

1. What is teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL culture?

2. What can be learned about expertise in Grandview's ESOL department by using ritual as an analytic lens?

3. What roles do ESOL teachers assume when deploying different types of teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL department?

This dissertation concludes with an exploration of how educational researchers should think about teaching expertise in light of the findings of this study, which has shown connections between departmental culture and teaching expertise. This implies that improving expertise requires understanding the culture from which it arises. The tendency when thinking about teaching expertise is to reduce it to a set of techniques (Palmer 1997). This overlooks the complexity of time, place, and culture. By examining ESOL teacher culture, the connections between culture and expertise emerge.

The ESOL culture at Grandview evolved out of rites of passage engaged in by both teachers and students. Teachers built personal and professional relationships with their colleagues. ESOL teachers also helped initiate their students into the culture of the ESOL classroom and of the U.S. high school. Expertise involved developing knowledge and skills that included bridging personal and professional relationships with fellow teachers, keeping students first, honoring students' home

cultures, and building unity in the classroom. This helped students make the transition

to high school as well as develop leadership and independence. These aspects of

teachers' work involved taking on transitional roles. The roles defined in this chapter

are the teacher as the cultural conductor, the cultural liaison, and the cultural

transistor. All these roles hold in common the connective and transformative nature of

teachers' work. The types of passages ESOL teachers and students were making

entailed becoming closer members of cultures. Expertise involved connecting

teachers to each other, students to each other, and students to the rest of the school.

LIAISON, CONDUCTOR, TRANSISTOR:

TRANSFORMING AND CONNECTING SELF AND OTHERS

When individuals participate in ritual activity, they take on ritual identities,

such as that of "master, elder, priest, shaman, diviner, healer, or musician" (Grimes

1982, 28). When ESOL teachers ritualize their interactions with other ESOL teachers

or with ESOL students, they take on the ritual identity of "elder". The term "elder"

connotes the prestige, authority and power teachers need to create space for, construct

and supervise the development of ELLs. Elders, because they are the more senior

members of the culture, share the responsibility for instilling the values and norms of

the culture in younger, more novice culture members, students. Specifically, the term

elder refers to the type of relationship ESOL teachers have with ELLs. The

ritualization process transforms the ordinary appearance of their identity as "teacher"

(Goffman 1971) and extends it to encompass the work that elders do in setting the

stage for and leading ELLs through cultural transitions. As Turner (1987) describes

it, elders "steer" the ritual process by creating appropriate tests and challenges for younger members of the culture. ESOL teachers, or elders, collectively share the responsibility for transitioning and transforming ELLs. In this chapter I explore how elders collaborate with other elders to build a culture-specific form of expertise that focuses on ELLs. The cultural conductor, cultural liaison and cultural transistor are dimensions of teachers' work as "elders" within the ESOL community. These roles are teacher as cultural conductor, cultural liaison and cultural transistor.

The three roles defined in this thesis have two overt commonalities: all three serve a connecting function, and all three point toward transformative potential. One reason this ESOL department was remarkable was that these teachers came together around a shared educational purpose: the flourishing of ELLs. While the ESOL department did not have a clearly articulated philosophy that governed culture members' actions, they did have a strong value for ELLs that guided the development of their culture. Small cultures like the one portrayed in this dissertation could make more intentional use of the common values they share.

Just as Cossentino (forthcoming) portrays how Kristen, guided by ritual, acts like an expert teacher despite her novice status, the teachers at Grandview relied on ritual to frame their practice. Unlike Montessori schools, however, public school culture is rarely guided by coherent ideology or practice. Public school systems and the schools within those systems generally lack an agreed-upon set of values. Indeed, frequently contradictory values often pull practice in many directions. For instance, a value for producing students who are good test takers conflicts with a value for producing students who work together in community: one produces students who

compete with one another while the other calls for working for the overall betterment of the group. Not only do our values in public schools frequently clash, but the purposes of education are not always clear. Are we preparing students for an internationally competitive labor force or to participate in a democratic society (Gutmann 1987)? Contradictory, competing, or unclear values in education do not bode well for expertise or for culture. Why not? Because as this thesis shows, teachers coalesce around certain values, and expertise emerges from shared values. What teachers do and how they do it depends on what they value.

Foundational Values of the Cultural

Cultural elements "tend to be very intimately associated and influence one another" (Kluckhohn 1942, 65). For instance, helping students transition and helping them prepare for life outside the ESOL classroom were related to the foundational cultural value and the culture members' conception of the flourishing of ELLs. In other words, elements of the culture were interdependent and they converged around teachers' commitment to ELLs. Teachers' understandings of how to fulfill that commitment were enacted in ritualized activities.

In this dissertation I show how ESOL teachers used ritual activity in ways that support expertise. That is not to say that all ritual supports expertise. In fact, depending on the construction of the ritual, some rituals may actually undermine expertise. The values promulgated or perpetuated in ritual activity must be considered, and all shared values may not be the types of values around which groups of people can or should cohere. It is possible to have high levels of ritual activity that

do not necessarily lead to the flourishing of ELLs. For instance, teachers could come together around a dislike for their profession. One could certainly imagine that some departments may have a "culture of isolation" or a "culture of competition."

I interpreted Grandview's culture as an example of a culture that was based on an unselfish love of ELLs, which is an example of a value that is actually good for groups to "cohere" around (Strike 2003). While care for students is frequently written about as an important value in teacher education (Goldstein & Lake 2000, Kohl 1984, Noddings 1984, 1992, Rogers & Webb 1991) love is less frequently mentioned. This may be because in our society we primarily associate love with strong feelings, such as romance, which is taboo and usually not an appropriate model for the types of relationships teachers should have with students (Higgins 1998). Or it may be because we attach such a wide and complex range of meanings to the word love that it becomes difficult to specify what one means when using the term. However, because love was a term teachers repeatedly used themselves, both in communicating with students and about students, I think it best captures the value that anchored their regard for and work with ELLs. The Greek triadic, philos, eros, and agape, is useful in understanding the types of love in teaching. Philos is usually defined as brotherly love; eros describes what we often think of as romantic love, and agape refers to a hierarchical love that is frequently used to describe God's love for man or a mother's love for a child. Education researchers who have written about the concept and value of love in education have explored how teachers' love for students is connected to suffering on their behalf (Palmer 1998, Liston 2000, Garrison 1997). The idea of connecting love with selfless suffering on another's behalf is most frequently

associated with agape because it is the type of love that is based upon the commitment to seek someone else's wellbeing. Agape is unconditional, not earned, and it is selfless, placing others before the self and asking nothing in return. When ESOL teachers ushered each other and ELLs into the ESOL culture and the culture of Grandview, they were acting out of a selflessness not unlike that associated with agape. Agape is a more "cosmological" (Cossentino 2004) and encompassing love than either philos or eros. It describes loving for love's sake. Homer (Lattimore 1999) uses the term to describe the joy and hospitality with which Odysseus' family greeted him on his return to Ithaca. In this way agape is about bringing others into the fold or welcoming them into a preexisting group. In my view, ESOL teachers were ushering and welcoming ELLs into Grandview in much the same way. Like the epic odyssey, cultural transitions can be long, painful, challenging processes. A group of teachers who share a selfless regard ELLs would likely be the type of group willing to help students navigate such cultural passages.

As Gibran (1923) writes, "when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself and to one another…" (26). As I discuss in the next section, ESOL teachers were engaged in a process of connecting themselves and students to others.

Connection as the Measure of Success

Teachers were engaged in a pedagogy of connection underpinning the roles of the conductor, liaison, and transistor, because their actions were aimed at evolving and enlarging ELLs' and their own relationships with others. The work of connecting is hardly insignificant, especially since Bloom (1993) calls isolation "the disease of

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our time" (14). ESOL teachers themselves were the grand connectors. Although they took pride in the academic successes of their students, their work with ELLs was largely based on an unselfish regard and care for ELLs. Expertise entailed helping teachers and ELLs make connections to each other and preparing ELLs to connect to the outside world. While Kathleen, Maria Elena, and Laura often talked about how well their students were fairing on the standardized tests they needed to pass classes and graduate from high school, this was not the only way they measured the success of their students. They would gauge their students' success by their degree of connection: by how integrated their students became in the life of the high school, how connected were they to other ESOL students, how much the more advanced ELLs helped new students along, and how connected ELLs were to non-ESOL members of the school.

The Usefulness of Ritual as an Analytic Lens

Using ritual as an analytic lens makes it possible to see cultural connections. While most theorists have used ritual as a lens to view the meaninglessness of actions or "empty conformity" (Douglas 1973), others (Cossentino 2004, Grumet 1997, McLaren, 1999, Quantz 2001) call for a deeper consideration of the role of ritual in constructing educational meaning. This dissertation answers that call by showing how ritual as an analytic lens serves as a powerful mechanism to unearth the rich variety of meanings inherent in teacher action.

Ritual offers a special vantage point from which to see how thought and action unite. Using ritual as an analytic lens enabled me to capture unique aspects of

ESOL culture and made it possible to examine both the commonalities that cut across ESOL teachers' practices and the nuanced differences that distinguish them from each other. Not only did it make seeing the differences possible, but the meanings implied by those differences also surfaced. As Geertz puts it, the analysis of culture is "not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretative one in search of meaning" (1973, 5). The primary benefit of using ritual as an analytic lens rests in its ability to make cultural meanings visible. In cultures such as Grandview's ESOL culture, multiple cultural forms link together meaningfully, and studying ritualized patterns of behavior makes these linkages visible. By tracing the linkages, researchers can learn a great deal about the web of meanings that underlie a culture.

Without this cultural approach, the full range of meaning embodied in ritualized practices would have remained hidden. Viewing departmental activities as ritualized activities suggests possible new meanings and yielded new insights into ESOL teaching culture. Using ritual also provided a way to link cultural phenomena with expertise. It did so by making it possible to identify clusters of skill and knowledge teachers used to achieve cultural aims. These clusters were not only models of what culture members believe, but they are also scaffolds for the believing of it.

Without some knowledge of ritualized teacher action and its consequence and some understanding of why it exists, our knowledge of expertise cannot be complete. Without using ritual as a lens, many of the behaviors studied in this thesis may have appeared irrational or unproductive (Trice and Beyer 1984). Using ritual showed how ritualized actions were functional, meaningful, purposeful, and revealed the expertise

embedded in them. It also made it possible to see how these ritualized elements are related to each other by the cultural values they enact.

Discussing the potential of ritual would be incomplete without considering the problems associated with it. Ritual can serve both conservative and transformative purposes. This thesis demonstrates how teachers use ritual for transformational purposes, but it does not to explore any of the inherently conservative features of teacher practice such as grading.

EXPERTISE AS A CULTURALLY-EMBEDDED PHENOMENON

Why is it essential to define expertise in a way that applies to all cultures? Some aspects of expertise may be culturally bound. While researchers have tended to try to define characteristics of good teaching that apply to all contexts, subject areas, and student populations, this may not be possible or even desirable. Clearly, as I demonstrate in this dissertation, to fully understand expertise, the culture of the department must be considered. If we consider expertise in a monolithic fashion, we miss those dimensions of expertise that are culturally embedded. In the case of Grandview's ESOL department, studying teaching expertise without taking culture into account would cause one to miss what was arguably the main thrust of these teachers' work: helping students connect, make cultural transitions, and enter the culture of the school. In this section I examine the implications of this study for teachers as well as for policy, theory and future research.

Only by looking at what ESOL teachers did and what they said about what they did through the analytic lens of ritual did the cultural elements of teachers' work

come to light. Otherwise, the cultural meanings of ESOL teacher work remain obscure. Without this understanding, what it means to be an expert ESOL teacher remains elusive and incomplete. That is not to say that there are not skills and knowledge that all teachers need in order to be more expert. Frameworks like Shulman (1987) and Fenstermacher's (1999) are helpful for this. For example, while knowledge of what Shulman (1987) calls learner characteristics might be important to a mathematics teacher (so she can assess the math ability of the learner, make sure that instruction is appropriate, or ensure the student has the necessary background to understand a particular concept), learner characteristics would be important to an ESOL teacher principally for different reasons. The ESOL teacher must understand the cultural frame of reference from which the student is working so that she can anticipate cultural differences that might be difficult for students to understand. The concept of culturally embedded expertise suggests that skills and knowledge should be tailored to fit the cultural context. In this way ESOL teaching and practice is culturally embedded—different aspects of practice are determined by the goals of the department. To return to the example above, the goals, values, norms, and culture of high school mathematics departments vary greatly from those of ESOL departments.

Thus, formal instruction provides partial insights into ESOL teaching expertise. To look at formal instruction and ignore the culture of practice is futile. The interactions included in the vignettes in each chapter involved little if any formal instruction[1] by the teachers. For example, understanding teaching expertise by examining the map activity would be all but impossible without looking at the action

within cultural context. After all, spending precious class time with "little people" -- essentially paper dolls -- in a high school classroom seems inappropriate if the cultural aims are not considered. The vignette from Chapter 4 is another example. Discussing students in the way Kathleen and Laura did might actually appear antithetical to building expertise if it were not for an understanding of the way the ritualized interactions they shared recommitted teachers to the ESOL culture. In fact, this interaction might be viewed as disrespectful of students or as idle gossip. Similarly, the literature circles described in chapter 5 might seem like an inefficient class activity instead of a deliberate pedagogical use of ritual to affirm local cultural values of building leadership, independence, and empowerment.

One reason education researchers have not been able to agree on matters of teaching expertise is because of differences in culture (Schmidt et. al. 1997). To provide an example of how this works in a large culture, consider the following example. In the United States it is considered commonplace and even desirable for student to ask questions in class, discuss matters with the teacher, and build arguments to support one's stance if it differs from the teacher's. This is not necessarily so in other cultures. For instance, in some Hispanic cultures, the wellbeing of the group is generally placed before that of the individual (Rothstein-Fisch Greenfield & Trumbull 1999, Zuniga 1998). This is also true in some Eastern cultures as well (Cocroft & Ting-Toomey 1994, Tjosvold & Fang 2004). Small cultures such as high school academic departments have different values just as large cultures do. Different departments may have different values based on the content

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[1] I do not mean to imply that instruction was not occurring during these activities; rather, the instruction was not what researchers would normally think of as instruction such as when teachers

areas that are taught, the kinds of people attracted to those content areas, the students they serve, and the goals and needs of the members of the department. This is not to say that all academic departments do not share some values. Rather, it is to say that it is more likely that members of small cultures may have a better chance of sharing more of the same values.

Preservice Teachers: Co-constructors of Expertise

This study has implications for teacher training programs. Specifically in the ESOL culture, this study showed that it might be helpful for teachers to learn about ways their interactions with students influence the transition into the ESOL culture and the culture of the school. It showed how teachers helped students to make the transition by validating their cultural identities. Along these lines, teachers may want to think about using particular activities to create a sense of community through affirming the individual identities of students.

Not only do ESOL teachers need to be prepared to help students make cultural transitions and to collaborate with fellow teachers to achieve those goals, it would be helpful for teachers to be able to diagnose the culture of the department in which they work. This is important for two primary reasons. First, if a teacher is to effectively work within a particular culture, it is important to have an understanding of and engagement with that culture. Once teachers understand the culture, they can begin to think of their fellow teachers as vessels of expertise who can help them build their own.

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stand up in front of the class and *give* a lesson.

Second, teachers need to be able to think about the consequences their actions have on the culture of the department in which they work. They can ask themselves how they can meaningfully contribute to the life of the culture to improve it. What strengths do they bring to the culture? What practices could they share to improve the expertise of their fellow teachers? To effectively contribute to the life of the culture teachers need to think of themselves as vessels of expertise who can help other teachers build their own. To share expertise, teachers must develop communication strategies to make their practice accessible to other teachers, and they should develop strategies to access the practices of their fellow teachers.

How often do we ask classroom and preservice teachers to describe school cultures and subcultures, let alone give thought to why they might be the way they are? Asking teachers to do so throughout teacher preparation could prepare them to work more intentionally within the cultures they will become members of in the future. This type of reflexivity (Schon 1983, Zeichner 1996) could help teachers make more deliberate decisions about how they spend their time with students and fellow teachers. This type of activity could bring awareness to how even simple decisions influence culture. For instance, if a teacher uses time between classes to plan the next week's activities, that influences the departmental culture in a completely different way than if she chooses to spend the time in hallways communicating with fellow teachers or students. This is not to say that one activity is more important than another, but that what and when teachers choose to do things has cultural implications, especially since their actions tend to become patterned and ritualized.

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[2] I am using female pronouns in this chapter because my participants were female and because most of the members of the ESOL department at Grandview were women.

In-service Teachers: Deliberately Constructing Culture

Teachers could be more deliberate about the ways they construct culture by thinking about the way they ritualize their work. Professional development needs to be relevant to the culture of the department. Teachers can think about the implications that professional development will have on department culture. Teachers' collaborative interactions with one another could be thought of as ongoing professional development. Teachers can look for ways to guide students through cultural transitions, and they can be mindful of how cultural differences influence power relationships in the classroom.

The concept of culturally embedded expertise suggests that anyone conducting professional development activities would need to have knowledge of the departmental culture to make the professional development most relevant and meaningful. Some types of professional development would be more appropriate in some cultures than others. This suggests that "canned" or prepackaged professional development programs that do not take in any information from teachers beforehand would fail to meet specific small culture needs. Professional developers should take in requests from teachers in order to meet the specific needs of the department. The concept of culturally embedded expertise suggests that departmental cultures can vary a great deal, and it would be important for professional developers to know about these variations in order to effectively conduct professional development activities.

Policy: Changing Values, Redirecting Expertise

The current education policy environment is dominated by the influence of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. NCLB requires states to base sanctions and rewards on schools and local education agencies' performance on state assessments. This act has changed expectations for all learners, including ELLs. The act has moved ELLs and teachers, especially ESOL teachers, from the curtains to the center stage of the accountability movement by requiring states to include ELLs in high stakes testing and also to include them as a disaggregated subgroup that partially determines whether or not schools make annual yearly progress (AYP). Whereas previously states and LEAs had discretion over when ELLs were tested or ready for testing, NCLB allows exemption only during ELLs' first year of school in the U.S. Furthermore, states are required to show that the number of ELLs who are passing state assessments is increasing each year. While some advocates for ELLs argue that the policy is having a positive effect on ELLs by making it impossible for states and localities to ignore their academic achievement (Wrigley 2000), others argue that high stakes testing narrow curricula and limit teacher autonomy and creativity (McNeil 2000).

How this reauthorization will influence the development of teaching expertise in linguistically diverse classrooms remains to be seen. One unavoidable outcome of such an emphasis on high stakes tests is increased pressure on ESOL teachers to raise scores. These pressures can lead to a distorting effect on teaching and learning. When high-stakes are attached to test results, there is a tendency for educators to emphasize the objectives from the content domain that are sampled on the test. Instruction

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becomes limited to the content areas that teachers know will be tested and other areas are neglected (Gulek 2003).

In ESOL in such a policy environment it is possible to imagine that expertise may be focused on content covered on an assessment to the detriment of the overall well being of the learner. Learning a language is a process that influences the emotional and social dimensions as well as the cognitive dimensions of a student. While participants in this study certainly valued and focused upon academic achievement, they also focused on social and emotional goals for their students such as helping them make transitions. These teachers shared a value that encompassed a broad concern for the overall flourishing of the learner. In the high stakes environment that currently dominates teachers' work, could the new value of high performance on the state assessment eclipse the traditional value? It becomes difficult to see how teachers' focus could remain such a broad one when this reform means that the majority of class time may be spent preparing ELLs for standardized testing. While participants in this study developed expertise focused on helping students make transitions to a new classroom and a new school, it is difficult to see where space for the development of such expertise exists in the current policy landscape.

The findings of this study suggest that expertise cannot be reduced or universalized. Rather, a culturally-embedded view of expertise suggests that it develops based on teachers' interpretations of the needs of students. More important, a culturally-embedded view of teaching expertise suggest that those needs will differ from culture to culture. Given the current policy environment, it appears likely that expertise would develop based on helping students perform on the test to the

detriment of the development of expertise in other areas such as the ones that were explored in this study.

Building Theory: Keeping Cultural Specifics in Mind

Culture is easily influenced by many factors. In Grandview's ESOL department, some of the major factors included teachers' reasons for becoming teachers, the population of students teachers shared, the way the rest of the school viewed the department, and the proximity of teachers in the department to one another. Changing any one of those factors would result in changing the culture of the department. All of these factors had implications for the types of rituals teachers shared and, consequently, for expertise.

For theorists this is important to note because when building theories that explain why things are as they are, it is important to look at the specifics of small cultures. My work in this dissertation suggests that the shape and life of small cultures can vary or fluctuate a great deal with even small changes. For instance, if teachers are not positioned near each other, the types of ritual collaboration described in Chapter 3 would not have been likely. Teachers would have had to go to much greater lengths to meet face-to-face, and they probably would not have been able to "check in" between classes.

When we are "building" cultures we can consider how to make them healthy by intentionally building on values that would be likely to lead to the flourishing of students and the development of expertise. We can also strategically place them in environments that work to strengthen them. The concept of culturally embedded

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expertise suggests that the way we group teachers has implications for the way the culture will develop. For instance, in Grandview's ESOL department, where teachers taught the same students, there was a built in impetus for sharing materials and knowledge of learners.

Regarding teaching expertise as a culturally-embedded phenomenon suggests that it defies reductionism. Our desire to boil expertise down to its essential components and then apply those to all cultures is potentially counterproductive to cultivating teaching expertise. Cultural meanings determine what it means to be an expert. Oversimplifying the meaning of expertise is dangerous because it could cause faulty assumptions about what "should" work. Just as Geertz (1973) cautions against oversimplification when studying cultures, it should also be avoided when studying expertise.

Future Research: Views from Inside Out

Teachers make great researchers of their own culture because they have sustained access over time. They can be opportunistic, and they can are likely to observe those less predictable, yet highly ritualized events that do not have clear beginnings and ends. Limited access to a field setting is not sufficient to capture some of the more highly ritualized aspects of ESOL culture including meetings with parents and many meetings between teachers.

Action research is needed to obtain a real insider perspective into culture. What cultures provide the most support in helping teachers build expertise? Action research could tell how teachers really experience the culture of the department.

Firsthand accounts of how teachers describe what they do and why they do what they do could lend even more insight into the ways teachers ritualize their practice.

Educational researchers often advocate action research because of its potential to help students become "reflective practitioners" (Zeichner 1996) or "critical." Though worthy reasons for engaging in action research, my call for such stems from the action researcher's status as an insider in a particular culture. Throughout this study, as noted in Chapter 3, my status as an outsider prevented me from gaining full access to the cultural life of the department. Action research conducted by a teacher in the department might yield even greater insight into the cultural dimensions of ESOL teacher work. Had a participant been conducting this research, she likely would have faced much less initial resistance and uncertainty from participants. The time to forge trusting relationships would in be much less time consuming and access to the intimate events of the department would not have been prevented. Her potential, therefore, for gaining insights into the ritualized dimensions of ESOL teacher practice would be much greater.

This could yield more knowledge about personal cultural meanings. As a researcher, I had to try to surmise in some instances, personal meanings for teachers because I did not have unfettered access to their thought processes. A teacher researching from the inside, by contrast, would have complete access to the thought processes and personal meanings inherent in ritualized interactions from both her perspective and that of others.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

Research Traditions

The proposed study primarily utilized case study research methods, but was also informed by ethnographic traditions (Agar 1996, Geertz 1973, Hammersley & Atkinson 1993). I used case study methodology because my aim was to contextualize teacher practice in settings where linguistic and cultural diversity were of special interest. Because I focused on the complexity of teachers' work in a culturally diverse setting, I needed the intensive spotlight and depth of focus provided by case study to understand the teaching expertise of these three teachers. The case study tradition enabled me to capture the complexity of multiple dimensions and perspectives of teacher practice. Using case study enabled me to emphasize the particularities and uniqueness of the setting. Case study added multidimensionality to this study and provided an entree into the phenomenon of how teachers understood their work with ESOL students. Because the study focused on questions of "how" rather than on questions of "what," the cases were explanatory rather than exploratory in nature (Yin, 1994).

To facilitate cultural explanations, I drew from the research traditions of ethnography. Ethnography enabled me to focus on the issues of culture in the classrooms and in the ESOL department at Grandview. By focusing on culture I aimed to discern how teachers understood the culture of the students and the role those understandings played in determining what counts as teaching expertise and the culture of the ESOL department at Grandview. Focusing on culture helped me

understand how the teachers worked within and shaped the cultural norms of the classroom and department and the influence this had on their expertise. The cases are not ethnographies. Rather, I used investigative tools from ethnographic traditions to construct the content of the cases.

Although the study is not primarily ethnographic, ethnographic traditions in research influenced this work in several significant ways. Ethnographic principles facilitated my attempt to uncover teaching expertise within these ESOL cultures by examining teacher's practice from an emic perspective (Geertz 1973). Furthermore, ethnography enabled me to focus on how teachers work with students and fellow teachers who in most instances did not share the same culture. Ethnography assisted me in analyzing instances where I "zoomed in" (Lampert 2001) on social interactions between teachers and other teachers and between teachers and students. Furthermore, ethnographic traditions helped me contextualize the attributes and patterns of behavior unique to ESOL teachers as a group in my cross-case analyses. Finally, analytic traditions in ethnography helped me analyze artifacts teachers used as well as what teachers said and did (Spradley 1980).

Research Questions

The overarching and most general question addressed in this study is as follows: How is expertise culturally embedded in the ESOL department at Grandview? In order to answer this question, I use frameworks derived from ritual studies. Because this dissertation examines the culture of a culturally diverse context, I use ritual as an analytic and conceptual framework. As an analytic framework, I use

ritual as a lens through which to view and understand deeply symbolic, patterned activities within their cultural context. I apply concepts derived from ritual studies to understand and interpret the meaning of those activities. In addition to the question above, I ask three more specific questions to help answer the more general one:

1. What is teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL culture?

2. What can be learned about expertise in Grandview's ESOL department by using ritual frameworks?

3. What roles do ESOL teachers assume when deploying different types of teaching expertise in Grandview's ESOL department?

In the conclusion I examine the implications of the study by asking how we should begin to think about expertise based on the findings.

The research questions changed during the course of this study. During fieldwork, I frequently returned to my research questions to remind myself of what I was studying and to focus my data collection. Increasingly, I found that the questions I began with were overly confining and did not fit with the predominant concerns of the participants in this study. Below I have listed the research questions with which I began this study:

1. How do teachers' understandings of the student context influence their constructions of practice?

2. How do teachers understand the relationship between academic and non-academic types of work that they do with students (I assume that all teachers do some types of non-academic work)?

3. Based on teachers' understanding of student context, how do they determine which aspects of academic and non-academic work with students fall within their responsibilities to the student? How do they decide which do not?

4. Based on findings, how should we begin to think about the relationship between expertise and student context?

Trying to separate how teachers distinguished between academic and non-academic work proved to be an unhelpful question because, as I discovered early on, teachers rarely concerned themselves with defining the boundaries of their practice. Although that had been a constant dilemma for me as a novice teacher, it was not a concern that occupied the participants in this study. I suspect that the differences in the size of the ESOL population and the number of teachers at Grandview may account for this difference. Whereas I had personally struggled as the only ESOL teacher in a high school with which responsibilities to students fell within my domain, these teachers did not grapple with this distinction very often. Although this question was initially helpful because it led to my careful attention to how teachers worked with other ESOL faculty, refocusing the question to examine how ESOL teachers ritualize their practice with other teachers, proved more helpful. In the same vein, trying to tease apart how student context influenced teacher practice also proved futile. Teachers so completely integrated considerations of "who" they were teaching with "how" and "what" they were teaching that the question about the relationship between the two was not helpful.

Site

I had a relationship with this school prior to this study as a result of having worked in it as an administrative intern in it for six months. I had also developed relationships with teachers in this department from conducting previous fieldwork in this ESOL department. Although these experiences, as I found out during data collection, by no means made me an insider, my previous work experiences did facilitate gaining access to this site. It also saved precious data collection time because I was already familiar with many of the school and department's rhythms, policies and procedures. My familiarity with Grandview and the ESOL department permitted me to focus more quickly on the teachers themselves, their work and the research questions.

My sample was located in Grandview High School (GHS) (a pseudonym), a site I initially chose to work in because of its demographics. GHS is a large, public high school located in an urban school system outside of a major Mid-Atlantic city. I intentionally chose to conduct this study in a system known for its diversity. Of the approximately 2,300 students enrolled over 1,000 are foreign born. The students at GHS speak more than forty different languages. GHS, the first high school to have an ESOL center in this county, has had an active ESOL center for nearly thirty years. 95% of senior class graduated last year, and 77% of those graduates are attending college or other post secondary institutes.

Sample

I initially planned to work with four teachers at Grandview; however, my committee urged me to rethink the number of participants in the study. Upon rethinking, I decided to work collecting data with three teachers rather than four. Reducing the number of teacher participants permitted me to add flexibility (and pauses) to the data collection process. It also permitted me to focus more deeply on the practices of the three teachers than I would have been able to had I been dividing my time in the field among four teachers.

My first criterion for participating in the study was working as a full-time teacher in the ESOL department at Grandview. All of the teachers I selected for participation in this study worked in Grandview's ESOL department. I selected teachers primarily based on their willingness to participate. I also chose teachers who represent a diverse range of experience levels, ESOL levels, cultural backgrounds, and ages. I limited the number of teachers I considered by only inviting teachers who were certified in ESOL to participate. I chose two teachers who had been through teacher preparation more recently and one who went through teacher preparation more than ten years ago.

Researcher Identity

During the course of fieldwork I gradually shifted more towards the participant end of the participant-observer continuum. I did this deliberately for three reasons. First, being in the classroom and strictly observing made me feel uncomfortable and conspicuous. Participating in small ways provided a more natural

way to blend into the classroom setting. Second, moving towards the participant end of the continuum provided me with relationship building opportunities with teachers and students alike. It facilitated conversations with teachers and students upon which I could draw to gain insights into teaching expertise. Third, moving towards the participant end of the continuum worked to partially flatten the researcher/participant hierarchy. The way I chose to participate was never in a "leadership" fashion. Rather, I chose to participate in ways that were subservient to the authority of the teachers. For instance, when I felt I had saturated my ability to gain data from a particular class through observation, I often worked one-on-one with a student who was struggling with the consent of and occasionally by the direction of the teacher.

I went to great lengths to "fit in" to the departmental culture. On a regular basis I brought donuts and left them in the office for the ESOL faculty to show my regard for and my gratitude to the department as a whole. I changed my manner of dress after the first week of fieldwork because I sensed mistrust of who I was among the faculty. My professional attire made my presence too conspicuous, and it distinguished my identity from the identities of the ESOL faculty. I began to dress more casually in what I considered to be "ESOL appropriate" attire, meaning that I sometimes wore African batik blouses and South American skirts. In addition to trying to "blend in" with my appearance, I tried to emphasize my identity as an ESOL teacher. To do this, I occasionally told stories about experiences I had as an ESOL teacher in an inhospitable part of the South. In other words, I began to try to make myself an "insider" in a culture that draws a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders. I moved towards the participant end of the participant-observer continuum.

Although I expressed interest in attending all faculty meetings, professional development days and department celebrations, throughout the semester I discovered that many occurred without my having been made aware. At the very end of my fieldwork I was invited to attend a faculty luncheon that included a birthday celebration, which may indicate that faculty began to trust me more.

The barriers I faced in obtaining consent from teachers to agree to participate in the study were plentiful, and they began early in my dissertation work. After I had completed what I thought would be the most difficult parts of permission for the study, gaining access from the county level and the school level, and the departmental level, I faced an even greater challenge: obtaining consent from ESOL teachers. All ten teachers in the ESOL department at Grandview were invited to participate; however, only one teacher initially expressed interest. Others either expressed no interest or were reluctant to commit. I had to personally meet with several teachers face-to-face to convince three to agree to participate. This surprised me because I anticipated having the opposite problem. I had worked in the school in various capacities for three years at the time I entered the field for this study. I had some familiarity with the ESOL faculty from two preliminary studies I conducted there, and I had established what I considered trust between the faculty and myself. These previous studies with ESOL faculty, however, relied primarily on interview data. I had never asked for access to ESOL departmental meetings or classes. Having observed classrooms in other departments and school meetings with no problem, I did not anticipate barriers to access in the ESOL classroom and departmental meetings. I was mistaken. ESOL teachers were reluctant to let me in their classrooms and in their

activities with other faculty. As discussed in Chapter 3, the reluctance on the part of the teachers to allow me "inside" caused me to begin to question the nature of their culture and why it might be closed to outsiders.

Data Collection

My field study was bounded by the fall semester of 2002. Data collection began in August 2002, and was concluded at the end of the first semester in December of 2002. Data collection began in August because I felt it was critical to capture the beginning of the semester when teachers were becoming acquainted with one another and with students. Data collection continued throughout the semester and was interrupted only by pauses when I felt I needed to review the data I had collected to refocus the study. I took approximately three brief (three to four day) pauses. Field study relied on five strategies for gathering data: observations, interviews, email scenarios, focus groups, and collection of artifacts.

Observation Types

Using several types of observations gave me an opportunity to join what teachers did with what they said about what they did (Cazden 1988). Observations gave me a basis to probe teachers' understandings of their actions during interviews. I sampled from the physical behaviors I recorded in my field notes during observations of teachers and asked them to describe why they were doing what they were doing during interviews. Using samples from observations, I targeted my interviews to probe more deeply into the complexities of teachers' own understandings of their

work and how these shaped their practice. Insights gained from observations also helped me generate "thick descriptions" (Geertz 1973) of teacher practice.

Class observations

The study included approximately seven one-hour long observations of a selected class of each of the three teachers. Class observations took place periodically throughout the semester of fieldwork and were scheduled based on each teacher's preference as to when they wanted to be observed. At the beginning of the semester I invested a great deal of time into scheduling teacher observations because I sensed that teachers were uncomfortable with being observed. As the semester progressed and as teachers began to trust that observations were not evaluative in nature each teacher indicated that scheduling observations in advance was not necessary. About half way through the semester it became possible for me to move freely into and out of teachers' classrooms without extensive communication with teachers beforehand.

During observations I kept extensive field notes (Agar 1996) to record classroom activity. From this record I selected a sample of interactions to promote discussion during follow up interview sessions with teachers. I sampled from a variety of formal and more informal instructional interactions teachers shared with students. I looked for the ways teachers drew from their knowledge of students to promote academic goals for students. For instance, if a teacher made reference to an event that took place outside of school to use as an illustration to explain an academic concept, I explored the teacher's decision-making process that led up to deciding to use that event. Then, I asked them what considerations they were making as they were using the example. I also sampled participants' actions that were more

formalized and less formalized. For instance, most participants predictably began

each class with a warm up and then the class moved to activities that were not the

same each day. I made sure that I asked participants about both types of actions in

follow up interviews.

Day-long teacher shadowing

The study included two full days of shadowing each teacher. During these

days I observed not only classroom interactions but also teacher interactions with

other teachers, staff and administration in the building. I attended to what teachers

said as well as to what they did, or their physical behaviors (Cazden 1988). I recorded

how teachers communicated about students with others and how they shared

responsibilities for students with others. Recording instances of teachers

communicating about students proved to be very difficult at first because teachers

were protective of students and consequently very guarded about what they said about

students.

Interviews

I conducted two different types of interviews during data collection. I

designed the first type of interview to "get to know" participants and their practice. I

conducted a total of four interviews of this type with each participant. These

interviews were spaced throughout the semester. I structured the first four interviews

around four broad topics: teacher background, work orientation, relationships with

students and context.

The second type of interview was based on samples from field notes taken

during teacher observations. From these samples, I constructed interview protocols to

try to make visible the "tacit and implicit knowledge" (Dewalt 2000) of students teachers used in their practice. As soon as possible after observations, usually after school on the day the observation took place, I related to the teacher samples selected from what I saw in the classroom, and I recorded the teacher's account of the event and how the teacher understood her actions in the given sample.

Every time I asked teachers to recall a specific instance directly after I observed it I aimed to get as close to their particular experience of the encounter as possible. Interviewing teachers as soon after an encounter as possible provided a way for me to focus teachers on the specific details of their everyday work by enabling me to center teachers on their experiences with students before they had days or even hours to reflect on them.

Focus groups

I conducted two focus groups during data collection. The first took place at the beginning of the study in late August and served to orient participants to the study. I covered what I hoped to learn and how the study was organized. It also oriented me to the teachers and the culture of the department. The second focus group took place in mid-December towards the end of data collection. It served as an occasion for me to share with the group what I had been learning from them and preliminary findings from the study. I also used this final focus group to assess how teachers had been influenced by their participation in the study.

E-mail scenarios

For the study I developed five scenarios. Their purpose was two-fold. First, the e-mail environment provided participants the opportunity to respond to scenarios

with minimal probing from me. Second, the fixed nature of these scenarios offered a valuable opportunity to compare how teachers respond differently to the same situation. Using scenarios made it possible to compare similar situations that might not naturally occur in each teacher's classroom within the given time frame of the study. I e-mailed scenarios to each of the four teachers, and I planned to follow up with probing questions. This was not possible however because even though e-mailing took place during the first two months of the study teachers did not respond to the e-mail scenarios until the end of the semester. Like the semi-scripted interviews, I had planned for scenarios to serve as a way to get to know teacher practice and to become familiar with each teacher's style early on. However, they served more of a confirmatory role because I was not able to analyze them until after data collection was over.

Artifacts

Throughout the study I collected artifacts. These served as permanent records of teachers' practice. Artifacts included lesson plans, worksheets, assignments and correspondence to parents. I summarized and reviewed artifacts throughout the data collection process to determine their significance (Miles & Huberman 1994). I organized and filed them separately by participant. Artifacts served as a useful way to discuss how participants collaborated with one another because I noticed early on that participants often used the same or similar hand-made worksheets and activities. Artifacts provided concrete evidence of sharing and collaboration. Using artifacts during interviews allowed me to record how teachers shared and used one another's materials in their practice.

Data Analysis

My goal was to understand teaching expertise within the culture of the ESOL department at Grandview. To reach this understanding I analyzed data both during and after the data collection phase of my work. During data collection I analyzed data by revising and coding field notes (Miles & Huberman 1994) and by writing analytic memos (Maxwell 1996) and reflecting on my work regularly with my dissertation advisor and my dissertation support groups. After data collection, I engaged in even more systematic analysis through single case-study construction and analysis and cross-case construction and analysis. During both phases of data analysis, ritual was my primary analytic lens.

Ritual as an analytic lens

As previously defined, rituals are the patterned, symbolic actions in all cultures through which participants construct and enact the values and norms of the culture (Bell 1997). I use ritual as an analytic tool to understand teacher action within its cultural context. By using ritual as an analytic "window" (Geertz 1973) through which to view teacher action, it becomes possible to define patterns of action and the multiple layers of meaning associated with those actions within a particular culture. It also becomes possible to unveil the cultural meanings teacher actions have. Using ritual as an analytic lens made it possible to see the connections between expertise and culture in the ritualized activities I explore in this dissertation. Regarding those sequences of interactions as cultural phenomena with predictable patterns of action

made it possible to see how the cultural values surfaced and formed culture-specific varieties of teaching expertise.

In this dissertation I investigate the relationship between culture and expertise by studying three teachers' actions within one particular cultural context, an ESOL department in a large comprehensive high school. Using a combination of observations, focus groups and individual interviews, I define and examine cultural values and how teachers enact their cultural values in their interactions with fellow teachers and with students. I used ritual as an analytic lens to understand participants' actions and their language about those actions. First, I searched for patterns in teacher actions in observations and field notes, and then I matched those instances with the language from interviews where teachers described those sets of actions. Doing so allowed me to examine the cultural meanings teachers assigned to various patterns of action. Once I established a pattern of action with multiple layers of meaning in one teacher's practice, I began to search for similar or related patterns of action in the other participants' practices to see if they assigned similar or different meanings to those actions.

Data Analysis During Data Collection

Interview transcripts

Interview transcripts served as a primary source of data. All interviews were both recorded and transcribed during the data collection process as soon as possible after the interview took place, usually during the same week. I analyzed each interview for two separate purposes. The first type of analysis was to look for patterns

that informed future interviews and observations with teachers. This type of analysis included comparing observations recorded in field notes with data collected during interviews. I looked for instances that revealed the relationship between the culture of the department and teaching expertise. I was especially mindful of instances where the teacher's actions did not fit with my expectations for that teacher based on previous interactions and interviews. These instances served as rich points for me that I used to probe teachers' thinking in subsequent interviews. The second type of analysis was an ongoing attempt to code and make sense of the data in conjunction with interviews and observations from other respondents.

Memo writing

I wrote weekly analytic memos throughout the research process and these memos included analysis and reflection on a wide range of topics. Memo topics included ideas about the relationships among preliminary codes (Miles & Huberman 1994) as well as thoughts and impressions from the field and from interviews, ethical concerns, reflections about purpose and method, and general reflections about how the study was progressing. Memos served to "facilitate" and "capture" critical insights and served as a first step in analysis of data (Maxwell 1996). I chose to include memo writing in the analysis section for its use as an analytical tool, but I used them as a reflective tool as well. In this way memos helped me reflect on issues that threatened validity during the study by making my thought processes explicit.

Field notes

This study included extensive observations of each participant. Field notes were the method of recording these observations. Field notes served as the core of my

data along with data from interviews. I wrote field notes based on notes taken during observation and reflections of the day spent in the field. They included, as Agar (1996) describes "observations, conversations, interpretations, and suggestions for future information to be gathered" (161). I also used field notes as a method of adding context to interviews (Bogdan & Biklen 1998). Field notes included my recollection and interpretation of participant behaviors, student behaviors and observations of others including non-participant teachers and staff as well as the environment in which those behaviors occurred. I was often able to capture verbatim dialogue that took place between participants and others in the environment. I used this dialogue along with the description of behavior to construct vignettes. I took extensive notes during observations, revised them and, with few exceptions, wrote them up on the evening of the observation to prevent problems with recall (Agar 1996).

Data Analysis After Data Collection

Single case-study analysis

Data analysis of each case took place through coding (Glaser & Strauss 1967) individual interviews following transcription and through analytic memo writing (Maxwell 1996). I described each case in detail and analyzed themes within each case (Creswell 1998). Coding included matching field notes with interview data where teachers elaborated on samples from field notes. I worked to validate data through triangulation (Denzin 1970) of data from observations, interviews and artifacts. Finally, I used data to construct a qualitative case study for each participant in the study (Stake 1995, Yin 1994).

Cross-case analysis

I comparatively coded and analyzed cases built from individual participants. In doing so I found patterns and themes across cases. N-vivo facilitated this process by making it possible for me to search all field note and interview transcript data simultaneously. Using searches from N-vivo I was able to build files that included data from all three participants that dealt with a recurrent theme or pattern. Those files formed the basis of the three data chapters that now appear in the body of this dissertation. The final focus group, which included all three participants, served as a means of validating data, building explanations and discussing rival explanations when data collection neared completion.

Validity

I addressed many validity threats during the design of my study, as qualitative researchers recommend (Glesne 1999). One such threat I addressed was the threat posed by my researcher identity. As Agar (1996) illustrates, there are inherent problems in studying one's own "society". Because of my previous work as an English as a second language teacher and because of my previous interactions with this distinct group of teachers at Grandview, I was not conducting the study as a complete "outsider" to the field. My researcher identity had the potential to bias my work. My identity as a former English as a second language teacher influenced my interpretation of what I saw in the classroom and of what I heard during interviews. That identity shaped the questions I asked and the interactions I had in the field. By developing and organizing interview protocols, observation guides and e-mail

scenarios for specific purposes before data collection began, I aimed to curb the bias of my researcher identity.

I looked for multiple explanations of emerging theories in the data. To add to the validity of my study I used multiple sources of evidence and analyzed them together so that findings resulted from a convergence of a variety of sources rather than upon one source alone (Denzin 1970). I structured cross checks of observations with follow up interviews as noted earlier in this chapter.

I continued to control for validity threats once the research began (Maxwell 1996) by addressing validity threats as accounts were being developed and as explanations and interpretations were forming. For example, when I was interviewing teachers about their practice, I observed the event in progress, and then rather than recalling the event myself, I asked the teacher to recall the event from her perspective. This helped me prevent imposing my own interpretation of the event on the teacher and encouraged teachers to develop their own interpretations of what was happening and why. Furthermore, I recorded information about the sampled event from my field notes and tried to ask teachers as soon after the class as possible to recall the event so that I could avoid faulty recall.

How do I know that what teachers say is true and not just what I want to hear? By assuring all participants anonymity I aimed to limit the reservation teachers had about giving open and unguarded responses. I interviewed them privately without the presence of students and other teachers. I found that teachers did not refrain from sharing with me their negative feelings and criticisms of their practice, the system, the school, their department or members therein. However, teachers were much more

reluctant to share their knowledge of individual students with me. On several occasions I erased information from an interview transcript in front of a participant to protect students' rights to confidentiality. Repeated interviews with participants over the course of a semester aided in establishing a rapport with them so that they felt more comfortable sharing information that might have made them feel vulnerable had they did not trusted me.

Ethical Concerns

I was forthright about my identity, my role in the study, what the study entailed and what I planned to do with the findings from the study. I provided this information during a focus group before selecting the sample for the study, and I systematically reviewed this information when I provided teachers with the informed consent forms. I ensured all participants in the study confidentiality and anonymity. Although interviews were audio taped and transcribed, only I have access to them. Teachers selected a pseudonym, and I used pseudonyms in all forms of formal and informal writing about the proposed study. Teachers signed informed consent forms that reflect Institutional Review Board, departmental and personal standards.

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