

## ABSTRACT

TITLE OF DISSERTATION: THE TEACHER'S HOMECOMING:  
UNDERSTANDING VOCATIONAL  
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF  
MILITARY CAREER CHANGERS

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As increasing numbers of teacher candidates enter the field of education from other careers, teacher educators must consider the complexities of career transition. Insiders' accounts of vocational change can help teacher educators act with tact and authenticity in a way that is sensitive to the experiences of career changers.

This study uses philosophical hermeneutics to develop understanding related to the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for two military career changers as they become teachers. The concept of identity is explored, and it is developed both as lived experience in community as well as a sense of self, fashioned through rememberings and imaginings. Two case studies center on Caucasian males with military experience who are transitioning into secondary English teaching positions. Thomas, a 50-year-old Air Force retiree with 24 years of service, is enrolled in a local school system-sponsored alternative preparation program. Rob, a 38-year-old past Verizon employee and current lieutenant in the Army Reserves, is

enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching program. This study employs a participatory paradigm in which participants serve as co-researchers.

The study follows each co-researcher into three communities of practice related to their teacher preparation and/or induction to teaching. Their experiences as persons-in-community are analyzed using a sociocultural perspective. The following constructs are explicated for each community of practice under study: place, social structures, practical tools, conceptual tools, metaphors, narratives, and imagined futures. Each community is shown to promote certain teaching identities while constraining others, although the process of vocational identity development emerges as a negotiation among person and community. In the spirit of Wenger (1998), each individual's nexus of being is then discussed, and vocational identity is explored in relation to coordination and contradiction of multiple communities as well as in mutual constitution with an individual's rememberings and imaginings.

A vocational meta-story is told in archetypal language to represent the reverse coming of age which military career changers undergo on their journeys to become and belong as teachers. Finally, a synthesis of understandings related to identity, ways to make meaning, and the needs of military career changers is offered.

THE TEACHER'S HOMECOMING: UNDERSTANDING VOCATIONAL  
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY CAREER CHANGERS

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*Ah, not to be cut off*

Ah, not to be cut off,  
not through the slightest partition  
shut out from the law of the stars.  
The inner – what is it?  
if not the intensified sky  
hurled through with birds and deep  
with the winds of homecoming.

(Rilke, 1995)

*Dedicated to my children,  
James, Andrew, and Ryan*

*You have taught me more about being  
than you will ever know.*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Framing the Phenomenon

I still have post-it-notes everywhere. Everything's a mess. I don't have time. I don't even know what I am yet. I want it to be a day when I can say, "What are you?" "I'm a ninth grade English teacher." – Rob, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts intern, full-time MAT student, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, Army Reserves

I have to feel comfortable enough with myself, with my knowledge of content, with my students and with the situation before I feel comfortable enough to experiment. – Thomas, 11<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher, Resident Teacher Program participant, and retired Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force

The words above come from two military personnel who are making the transition to teaching. Their experiences provide a glimpse into a complex process that all career changers face: that of developing a vocational identity as teacher. Facilitating this development is perhaps the greatest challenge of teacher education as more and more teacher candidates enter the field of education from other careers.

### *Career Transition*

The word *career* originally signified "a running course, especially of the sun across the sky." Likewise, *transition* is from the Latin *transitionem* which means a going across or over (2001). When one puts the two words together as a phrase, *career transition* carries the distinct etymological implications of a crossing.

For much of American history, *career* was signified by institutional affiliation and gradual climbing of a metaphorical ladder of hierarchy through which a person gained earning power and prestige. Company loyalty was valued and expected. Careers today, however, are considered to be "much more fluid, nonlinear, and unstable" (Imel, 2003, p. 2).

Many Americans will experience multiple careers. In the late seventies, between 10 and 30 percent of the American workforce had experienced at least one career change in a five-year period (Teixeira & Gomes, 2000). More recently, Townsend (2003) found that 62% of students with Bachelor's degrees enrolled in community colleges were seeking education in order to make a career change. Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) report a national shift in career trends that now includes multiple careers within the work life of an individual. Career changes are so extensive, in fact, that in 1996, Arthur and Rousseau proposed a new definition of career transition. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), career transitions are “the *now prevailing* cycles of change and adaptation, including stages of preparation, encounter, adjustment, stabilization, and renewed preparation” (p. 34, emphasis added).

Sociocultural theory posits that with each change in one's work context, a person must develop a meaningful way of acting and interacting in the new situation. This dialectic understanding of the individual within an evolving career setting raises the question of the implications for a person's development of identity. How is identity constructed, reconstructed and co-constructed, especially within the context of career change? What contexts provide constraints and/or affordances to identity development? How does an individual experience identity transformation? What happens if a person makes a drastic change, for example, from active duty military to a teacher of 11-year olds?

Within teacher preparation programs, the typical teacher candidate reflects this changing career demographic. Recent years have seen the doubling of the

percentage of people licensed to become teachers at age 31 or older (Murnane, Singer, Willet, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991). A survey of Massachusetts teachers reveals that 46 percent entered teaching as a second career (Johnson, 2004).

Feistritzer finds that 47 percent of those entering the classroom from alternate routes were working in a non-education job before beginning their teacher preparation program, and nine percent more were completing military service commitments (2005a). These figures are significant when one calculates in the fact that the number of individuals entering teaching through alternate routes is growing exponentially, with 35,000 individuals in 2004 and 59,000 in 2006 (Feistritzer, 2007).

How do teacher preparation programs accommodate the growing number of career changers? How do these programs facilitate professional identity development? What efforts, if any, are made to provide continuity across careers?

### *Importance of Understanding Career Transition*

With the increasing number of individuals entering teaching from other careers, it becomes necessary for teacher educators to understand career change and reflect on the implications of the transition process for teacher preparation. As Dewey instructs, “Wholly independent of desire or intent, every experience lives on in further experiences” (1938, p. 27). Career changers do not come to teaching with a clean break from their past experiences. Instead, their experiences and personal memories play a critical role in their development of a revised sense of professional identity. In Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) study of Norman, the researchers determine that Norman’s professional practice is intimately connected with the way that he was educated and his past experiences. How can a lifetime of service in the United States

Air Force not have an impact on who one becomes as a teacher? How does the experience of war mediate professional practice for the soldier turned teacher?

Bateson, in her discussion of the composite life, proposes that change suggests constancy (1989). With each transition, we are able to ask about the ongoing entity that changes form, about what the *before* and *after* have in common. Likewise, teacher educators should guide teacher candidates in exploring this constancy. “In the undivided self, every major thread of one's life experience is honored, creating a weave of such coherence and strength that it can hold students and subject as well as self. Such a self, inwardly integrated, is able to make the outward connections on which good teaching depends” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 15).

Philosophers insist on the importance of constructing an identity that integrates the varied events of one's past. Parker Palmer states, “*Re-membering* involves putting ourselves back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of our lives. When we forget who we are we do not merely drop some data. We *dis-member* ourselves, with unhappy consequences for our politics, our work, our hearts” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 20). Scott-Maxwell makes the point powerfully: “You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours. When you truly possess all you have been and done . . . you are fierce with reality” (1983, p. 42). Those who decide to “live divided no more” (P. J. Palmer, 2000, p. 32), who insist on acting in ways that are consistent with deeply held personal goals and meanings, are able to act from a center of truth in powerful ways.

Career transition involves risk for even the most centered person. Heidegger (1993c) and Levin (1985) speak of *the leap* as a taking off point where an individual

makes an act of faith in a moment of great risk. The leap is an act of faith in that the individual must trust that he will not fall into an abyss. Safranski explains, “The bridge grows under our feet only as we step on it” (1998, p. 431). In this leap, an infinite passion for questioning arises.

Is career transition a leap? It certainly is a moment of great risk to many people. Individuals, who in some cases have well-established careers and families, step into the abyss, trusting that a bridge will appear to support their journey. Career change requires an act of faith.

Many career changers exhibit an infinite passion for teaching. They may not know exactly who they will be as teachers, but they have passionate ideas about education and pedagogy. Kierkegaard posits that the passion of the leap must become a person’s walk of life (in Levin, 1985). Teacher educators must help career changers live in the leap, continually choosing to *be* teachers, day by day, moment by moment.

It is somewhat striking that the philosophers who give so much prominence to the leap pay little attention to the ledge from which the leaping occurs. This ledge is made of past memories, collected together (recollected) by the leaping figure to form a view of self and identity that is consistent with the leap he is taking.

Nor do these philosophers speak of the other ledge, the one on the other side of the chasm. When one leaps, one must leap toward something, even if there is no expectation of ever actually reaching that destination. This far ledge is formed by the imagination, by a collection of imagined futures. These imaginings give purpose to the leap and represent an imagined fulfillment of the call as invitation to action.

A chasm is defined by its edges. There would be no chasm if it were not for the sudden drop-off of the ledge. In the same way, the leap depends on its horizons of memorial past and imagined future. Career changers stand at the ledge made of past experiences, hearing the call to teach. How do they develop an imagined future toward which they can turn and gain the trust that will enable them to make a leap of faith, confident that they can *be as teachers* in their leaping?

What is it to live in the leap? How do career changers discover who they are as teachers, while at the same time learning to act in ways that are meaningful within a new professional community? How do they integrate diverse past experiences in a meaningful way as they develop a new vocational identity? The process is complex; it forms the central investigation of this study.

### *Importance of Developing a Strong Vocational Identity*

Identity is a difficult concept that will be discussed at length under the heading *Theoretical Underpinnings and Definitions of Terms*. Within this study, a modified sociocultural perspective will be used to understand an individual's identity development during career transition. This sociocultural lens views the person-in-context, with identity negotiated and evolved by the members of the professional community and expressed through practice. Identity development from a sociocultural perspective consists of two parts that exist in mutual constitution: belonging, or a recognition of one's interdependence with others, and becoming, or self-actualization. The latter is intertwined with one's memories and imagined futures.

Identity is not simply a collection of personality traits, a person's character, or a set of habits. Gladwell speaks of a common tendency in humans to believe that identity is something unified and all-encompassing. "Psychologists call this tendency the Fundamental Attribution Error, which is a fancy way of saying that when it comes to interpreting other people's behavior, human beings invariably make the mistake of overestimating the importance of fundamental character traits and underestimating the importance of the situation and context" (Gladwell, 2000, p. 160).

Recent scholarship explores the concept of teacher dispositions as a necessary focus of teacher preparation (Diez & Raths, 2007). The term *dispositions* is widely used in teacher education, and its definition ranges from a set of attitudes that an individual possesses to the habits that one exhibits that appear to stem from core beliefs. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008) requires dispositions of fairness and a belief that all students can learn. These dispositions are measured through observable teacher behaviors. Very few scholars link dispositions to the situational and social contexts in which these attitudes or habits are enacted, however, and attention to an individual's being in relation to his dispositions is rare. Dispositions can be examined and "improved" in a way that identity cannot. The term implies a behavioral and cognitive approach that only hints at the conception of identity being taken up here.

The word *identity* is derived from the Latin *idem* meaning sameness. It is abstracted from *identidem*, which means over and over again, repeatedly (Oxford University Press, 2006). This etymology points to the fact that one's identity is developed through one's recurring actions, those things that one does over and over

again. *Identity*, in an historical sense, has much more to do with consistency or sameness than with psychological conceptions of internal traits or personality. Sociocultural theory rejects a dichotomy between being and doing, merging the two in this sense of recurring contextualized action and interaction. Sociocultural theory, however, rarely acknowledges the varying depths to which one may be aware of one's own oneness and one's deep interdependence with history, other beings, and situations. The view of identity employed in this study will combine a sociocultural perspective with an attentiveness to conscious awareness of one's own becoming. For this reason, phenomenology will play a significant role in the understanding of lived experience. Phenomenology and sociocultural theory are complimentary fields due to the fact that they are both based on nondualist ontology that rejects the separateness of the knower and the known, or of the self and the other (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

This study of identity will necessarily focus on work-related aspects of identity while attempting to honor the complexity of being. This does not suggest that professional identity is separate from other aspects of identity; rather, it denotes a desire to foreground those experiences and actions that directly relate to an individual's work in the world. The term *professional* is rooted in the verb, *to profess*. Its original meaning was related to the vows one took upon entering a religious order (Harper, 2001). This public declaration or profession of faith identified a person's commitment to a certain set of ideals that would serve to guide his work in the world. The term is closely linked in meaning with the modern term, *vocation*.

*Vocational* identity development most accurately describes the construct under study in this research. A *vocation* is literally a *calling*. It is related to the term *voice* (Harper, 2001). To call means to set in motion or to desire that something might happen. The old word ‘to call’ is not a command but a facilitated action, a drawing toward. The word in Sanskrit means ‘to invite’ (Heidegger, 1993d). Whose voice calls to the career changer who becomes teacher? Who issues the invitation to teaching? Palmer suggests that the voice comes from within. “Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I *must* live – but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life” (P. J. Palmer, 2000, pp. 4-5, emphasis in original).

In contrast, Huebner views the calling of the teacher as coming from external sources that result in complexity in a teacher’s way of life:

Three voices call, or three demands are made on the teacher. Hence the life that is teaching is inherently a conflicted way of living. The teacher is called by the students, by the content and its communities, and by the institution within which the teacher lives. . . . That part of the teaching life that is a response to the call of the student results in the work of love; to the call of content, the work of truth; to the call of the institution, the work of justice. (Huebner, 1999a, p. 411)

The voices of the two former military personnel that are featured at the beginning of this chapter resonate with conflict surrounding vocation. How does one teach without feeling comfortable with oneself or knowing who one is? How do the responses of others influence the identity that one negotiates in the world of work? How does the experience of war mediate the sense of urgency with which one takes up vocational pursuits?

The sociocultural perspective suggests that a vocational call comes from within and without, from one's personal meanings that are forged through remembering and imaginings, and from the meanings negotiated within a community of practice. Living a vocation requires continual rethinking of who and what we are and an ongoing appraisal of the worth of our actions. Huebner argues that this type of life cannot be lived in isolation (1999b). Hearing a call implies responding with care, not only being, but being with others (Lashley, Neal, Slunt, Berman, & Hultgren, 1994).

When career changers become aware of their vocational homelessness and hear a call to the classroom, how can teacher educators help them hear the call clearly enough that they will be able to make the leap of faith and then live in the leap, making a response to the call through their daily participation in schools? How can teachers remain open to questions, ever becoming more fully themselves?

One's vocational identity is expressed through action in practice. O'Donohue explains, "When we perform an action, the invisible within us finds a form and comes to expression. . . . Our nature longs deeply for the possibility of expression in what we call work" (1997, p. 134). Parker Palmer urges educators to let their lives speak. He encourages teachers to pay close attention to their actions, reactions, intuitions, instincts, feelings and bodily states of being (P. J. Palmer, 2000). Through this close attention to practice, one can discern if one's actions are in line with what Thomas Merton calls *true self* (in Bochen, 2000). Levin (1985) similarly urges attention to the *true*. He uses the term *authenticity* to describe the process of becoming while remaining true to oneself. O'Donohue promises that when one's world of work is

aligned with one's inner life, imagination will be activated and transformative changes will occur (1997).

Acting in accordance with one's nature implies a strong vocational identity and integrity. Actions that are honest in this sense do not consume the self; instead, they energize and renew. "When the gift I give to the other is integral to my own nature, when it comes from a place of organic reality within me, it will renew itself – and me – even as I give it away" (P. J. Palmer, 2000, p. 49). Huebner agrees that teaching, when taken up as a vocation, can be transforming, renewing and life forming.

In order for the profession to reverse the trend of burnout, Huebner suggests that schools must be socially organized in such a way that teaching is recognized as meaning making for teachers as well as students (1999b). Honoring the meaning making of teachers requires a form of community that gives special attention to vocational identity development. "If teaching is to be improved we must attend to the teacher – not to the teacher's income and benefits or the other resources available for teaching. Rather, we must attend to how the teacher's work influences the teacher's life" (Huebner, 1999b, p. 379). Huebner warns, "Few people are fortunate enough to be part of a teaching community where vocation is the norm and the guiding metaphor: a listening/speaking community where personal story is talked and 'listened into being,' and values and meanings are assessed and reconstituted. Too often teachers have been isolated, vocationally, from community" (1999b, p. 386). For an excellent example of this type of community among educators, see *Toward*

*Curriculum for Being: Voices of Educators* (Berman, Hultgren, Lee, Rivkin, & Roderick, 1991).

Teachers instinctively know that issues of identity are important. Connelly and Clandinin, in their (1999) study of personal practical knowledge and professional knowledge landscape discovered that the teachers with whom they were working were trying to answer different questions as they contemplated their own teaching stories; these questions centered on the issue of identity. They write, “In graduate student writing, in teacher inquiry groups, and in research meetings, teachers were more inclined to ask questions along the lines of ‘Who am I in this situation?’ than ‘What do I know in this situation?’ Teachers seemed more concerned to ask questions of who they are than of what they know” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 3).

Most will agree that it is important for an individual to have a strong sense of self and a purpose or motivation that guides present actions. But is it really necessary for preservice teacher preparation to foster vocational identity development in teacher candidates? When there is limited time for teacher preparation, is there time to devote toward fostering a strong sense of professional teaching identity in career changers? Certainly it will make a difference in the lives of teachers, and it may even support retention efforts, but is it important for being an effective teacher of students? The answer to this question partly lies in the etymology of the verb, *to educate*. *Educate* is derived from the Latin *educere*, from *ex-*, or “out” and *ducere*, “to lead.” Education, therefore, is by definition a leading out. To truly educate the youth of America’s classrooms, teachers must be centrally concerned with leading children on a discovery of self. Because any true discovery of self involves an understanding of

one's interdependent relation with others as well as an imagined vision of the future self one wishes to become, education as a leading out may simultaneously lead a student toward self, others, and a vision of a better future. Understanding one's self as a person-in-community promotes the development of an "ethic of care" (Noddings, 2006). Noddings names self-understanding as the most important, and most neglected goal of education (2006). Wenger argues, "It is more important for the informational content of an educational experience to be identity-transforming than to be 'complete' in some abstract way" (1998, p. 273). Without attention to identity development, true education does not occur at all, for meaning emerges from a negotiation of self and other, and there is no knowledge without a knower and a context for knowing.

Teacher educators have long known that modeling is an effective way to communicate pedagogical knowledge. How can a novice teacher be expected to create a classroom community focused on identity-transforming curriculum if they have never experienced such a classroom themselves? Pinar notes that when education is viewed as identity transformation, "The possibility is staggering" (Pinar, Winter 1980, p. 74), but teachers will not be able to facilitate what they have not experienced.

Maxine Greene suggests that teachers concern themselves "with defining their own life purposes in a way that arouses others to do the same." She explains, "I believe, you see, that the young are most likely to be stirred to learn when they are challenged by teachers who themselves are learning, who are breaking with what they have too easily taken for granted, who are creating their own moral lives" (1978, p.

51). Parker Palmer asserts that without a sense of the “I” who teaches, one can have no sense of the “Thou” who learns (1998).

Essences sing to each other.  
I am sings to I am.  
To burn is to sing.  
Fire clings to its fuel, and sings  
of the joy of burning.  
And any flammable that gets close enough  
spontaneously joins the song. (P. Williams, 1994, p. 63)

Palmer argues powerfully, “We teach who we are” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 2). “Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 2).

Aoki echoes, “What matters deeply in the situated world of the classroom is how the teachers’ ‘doings’ flow from who they are, their beings” (2004, p. 160).

Levin expands this idea:

Being well-centered, we can encounter other beings in a more relaxed, open, receptive way. Finding our center is in fact a *necessary* step . . . to encounter other beings with equanimity, justice, and a presence that is deeply responsive, since the life which is lived *without* such a center of balance is ontologically too insecure, too vulnerable, to tolerate that measure of openness. . . . When we can encounter beings in a more relaxed condition . . . we can begin to *let beings be*. (1985, p. 274, emphasis in original)

Teacher candidates who are guided on a journey of self-discovery inherently learn ways to interact with students that lead the students out, on a journey of authentic becoming:

Self-understanding seems prior to mutual understanding, and in some ways it is. But any really deep understanding of why we do what we do, feel what we

feel, change as we change, and even believe what we believe, takes us beyond ourselves. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 232)

Most teacher preparation programs rest on the belief that becoming a teacher requires knowledge of students, subject, and community. But rarely is it acknowledged that one must know oneself in order to understand any of these other aspects of teaching in a meaningful way. Palmer argues that when teachers do not know themselves, they cannot know their students. Likewise, when teachers have a poor inner life, they are unable to experience their subject at the most personalized levels of embodied meaning (1998). Packer and Goicoechea echo this notion in their claim that “the work central to schooling is the effort to answer the question, ‘Who am I?’” (2000, p. 237). “Deep speaks to deep, and when we have not sounded our own depths, we cannot sound the depths of our students' lives” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 31).

My call for exploration of identity is not new. The tradition of humanism in education has a long history (see Greer & Rubinstein, 1972). In 1973, Greene wrote *Teacher as Stranger*, a book designed to make the teacher “visible to himself.” Greene explains, “If he is immersed and impermeable, he can hardly stir others to define themselves as individuals” (p. 270). In fact, Greene’s insistence on the value of the arts in education partly rests on the evocation of self that is required by a teacher confronting an art form:

[When confronting an art form, the teacher] is a human being trying to recapture some of his original perceptions, trying to identify himself, trying to see. He can only be present to his students *as a human being* engaged in searching and choosing, as someone who is willing to take the risk of new perspectives, as someone who cares. (Greene, 1973, p. 297)

Britzman views identity development not as a beneficial exercise for teacher candidates but as teacher education itself. She explains, “Learning to teach constitutes a time of biographical crisis as it simultaneously invokes one’s autobiography. . . . It is a time when one’s past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension. Learning to teach – like teaching itself – is always the process of becoming” (Britzman, 1991, p. 8). For Britzman, there is no choice regarding identity development; in order to become a teacher, one *must* engage in a process of becoming.

Exploring the depths of personal and community meanings can lead an individual to face inner shadows of insecurity about identity and worth. This honest confrontation of inner shadows can have a direct impact on the environment that students face in their classrooms. Teachers who have not confronted their inner insecurities tend to project those shadows onto other people, oppressing rather than liberating, creating classrooms that “deprive other people of their own identities” (P. J. Palmer, 2000, p. 86). In contrast, teachers who take the time to develop a strong sense of vocational identity may in fact realize the strengths that their shadows obscure and journey toward a place where their own desires meet their students’ needs.

Allen concludes her study of career changers with the following:

Providing adequate support to career changers will benefit everyone in the public schools. They are not just new teachers but individuals transforming and maintaining new professional identities. Career changers who succeed in the transition will be more knowledgeable of the students, the schools, and themselves, will more likely be successful in teaching, and will remain in the profession. (Allen, 2007, p. 247)

Any work a teacher or prospective teacher does to enhance his development of vocational identity carries implications for the classroom. Novice teachers are often

encouraged to develop an aura of authority in the classroom. The word *authority* finds as its base the word *author*. “Authority is granted to people who are perceived as *authoring* their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role at great remove from their own hearts” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 33).

Authority stems from a teacher’s vocational identity. Teachers with a well-developed sense of vocational identity speak with their own voice. Britzman unpacks the complicated concept of voice:

Voice suggests relationships: the individual’s relationship to the meaning of her or his lived experience and hence to language, and the individual’s relationship to the other, since understanding is social. It may be sparked by personal intent, but voice is always negotiated within context and situations, and by the meanings of others. (Britzman, 1991, p. 23)

One who can speak with voice and authority has the possibility of becoming a teacher whose soul and role are united (P. J. Palmer, 2004). The teaching enacted by this type of teacher does not stem from honed technique; rather, it comes from the teacher’s own identity and integrity. Rumi writes, “When you do things from your soul, you feel a river / moving in you, a joy. / When actions come from another section, the feeling disappears” (2002, p. 79). Palmer describes teachers who disconnect from self, students and subject in an effort to protect their vulnerability. These teachers fulfill a role as a play-actor, but not as a being with voice. Instead, they speak words “at remove from [their] own hearts,” their words become “the balloon speech in cartoons, and [they] become caricatures of [themselves]” (1998, p. 18).

Richert acknowledges that even if teachers have found their own voices, “being heard is not something that can be taken for granted in teaching” (1992, p.

193). If vocation were given the consideration it deserves, “[schools] and the people in them would support teachers in their continuing development and realization of meaning” (Huebner, 1999b, p. 380). This study attempts to give vocation such consideration, with an intent to improve the professional lives of teachers, and by extension, their students.

### *Purpose of the Study*

#### A Ritual to Read to Each Other

If you don't know the kind of person I am  
and I don't know the kind of person you are  
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world  
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,  
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break  
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood  
storming out to play through the broken dyke.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,  
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,  
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty  
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,  
a remote important region in all who talk:  
though we could fool each other, we should consider –  
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,  
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;  
the signals we give – yes, no, or maybe –  
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep. (Stafford, 1977, p. 52)

This study sets out to describe the process of vocational identity development in a subset of career changers: two former military personnel who become teachers.

The aim is to understand the sociocultural process of vocational identity development

and to understand more about career transition. Understanding the vocational experiences of military personnel who become teachers is essential to those developing programs for this population. How can teacher preparation and induction be structured to encourage career changers to develop a strong vocational identity?

As William Stafford so aptly states in the poem above, “We may miss our star” if consideration for each individual’s identity is not given careful attention. O’Donohue (1997) tells of a gravestone in London that bears the following epitaph: “Here lies Jeremy Brown. Born a man and died a grocer.” This statement is expressive of vocational identity gone wrong. Phenomenologist Alfred Schutz defines “wide awakesness” as an attitude of fully attending “to life and its requirements” (1967, p. 163). In vocation, one should be able to find himself, not lose his personhood to a role. Settling for acting a role rather than living a life dooms a person to the empty fate of Sisyphus, who, in Greek mythology, was punished by the gods and forced to unsuccessfully attempt to roll a boulder up a hill for all eternity. In Sisyphus’ fate there is no fulfillment, no becoming, only action without meaning. Teacher education must make certain that new recruits are not just handed a role to fulfill but rather given the opportunity to respond to a vocational call.

Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia assert, “Research on teacher education needs to take up the analytic challenge of portraying the features of settings that matter most in learning to teach” (1999, p. 24). In this study, I seek to understand various settings for teacher education by foregrounding the experiences of two individuals. By detailing what happens in their negotiation of vocational identity across three professional communities each, I am able to describe a process of

vocational identity development experienced by the military career changers who serve as my co-researchers, tell a vocational meta-story that unpacks the meanings of their experiences, and offer suggestions for identity development that may help “awake people be awake” (Stafford, 1977, p. 52). Through this study, I am adding to the literature base on career transition, especially the less-studied transition of former military personnel to teaching.

Parker Palmer argues, "Objectivism has pursued its goal of eliminating the self with considerable success" (1998, p. 54). In the early 1960's, the concern for *who* of teaching was more evident than it is today (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Gage, 1963). Ryans' landmark study, *Characteristics of Teachers* (1960), looked at 6,000 teachers and their tendencies to be democratic versus autocratic, adaptable versus inflexible, broad versus narrow, etc. Studies utilizing this frame were pushed below the professional surface with increased attention to cognitivist work in the early 1970's (e.g., Piaget, 1970). The attention to self now exists in the subcurrents of humanism (e.g., Farmer, 1984), autobiography (e.g., Pinar, 2004), personalistic reflection (e.g., Noddings, 1984), reflection in- and on-action (e.g., Schön, 1983), multiculturalism (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1995), and feminism (e.g., Carpenter, 1998) in teacher education research.

Through attention to identity, I hope to bring the self to the foreground of teacher education research. Because I view the formation of self in relation to community, I am able to merge the humanistic and the sociocultural, taking a stance between these two philosophical frames. By studying the professional teacher preparation and induction of two former military personnel, I document, with the

assistance of my participants who act as co-researchers, the subjective process of becoming and belonging, self-actualization as negotiated in community.

### *Overarching Research Question*

My overarching question for this study is as follows: What is the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for military career changers as they become teachers? This question is developed with two sub-questions which appear below, as well as with a number of more specific questions which are included under the heading, *Research Questions*, in Chapter Three. The sub-questions are as follows: (1) What happens when former military personnel engage with various communities of practice during their teacher preparation/induction to teaching? and (2) How does a co-researcher's participation in multiple communities of practice interact with the person's personal memories and imagined futures to create an individual trajectory of vocational identity development?

### *Case Study Approach*

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual-in-community. Two case studies are developed around the experiences of two former military personnel who are transitioning into a career in teaching. These individuals serve as co-researchers. Their experiences during their teacher preparation and induction to teaching are not simply viewed as personal. Rather, these experiences are examined within community contexts.

While the total vocational experiences of both co-researchers are examined, observational data are collected from a total of six communities of practice. These

communities of practice include two teacher preparation courses for each individual and English department meetings, held at each co-researcher's school.

### *Overview of Data Collection Procedures*

After two co-researchers were identified through a process of mutual selection, a preliminary interview was conducted with each to establish the personal memories and imagined futures that led each to a career in teaching. Each co-researcher worked with me to determine three communities of practice in which to be observed. I observed each co-researcher in each setting at least three times, once at the beginning of their participation in the community, once in the middle of their participation, and once near the end of their participation (for a total of 9 observations for each co-researcher, or 18 observations total). Each observation was followed by a debriefing with the co-researcher. In addition, each co-researcher and I engaged in three conversational interviews. These interviews focused on the developing vocational stories of each co-researcher and included discussion of communities beyond the three communities of practice selected for observation. Artifacts including assignments, projects, journal entries, portfolio entries, emails, and classroom materials were collected throughout the project, and I engaged in hermeneutical writing as a central tenet of interpretation and meaning making. The practice of hermeneutical writing is discussed further in Chapter Three under the heading, *Hermeneutical Research Journal*.

To fully understand the design of this study, it is necessary to examine its theoretical underpinnings. In addition, careful consideration must be given to the constructs used to make meaning within the context of this study. The following

section provides a discussion of the theories and terms that echo throughout the present investigation.

### Theoretical Underpinnings and Definitions of Terms

The world as we shape it and our experience as the world shapes it, are like the mountain and the river. They shape each other, but they have their own shape. They are reflections of each other, but they have their own existence, in their own realms. They fit around each other, but they remain distinct from each other. They cannot be transformed into each other, yet they transform each other. The river only carves and the mountain only guides, yet in their interaction, the carving becomes the guiding, and the guiding becomes the carving. (Wenger, 1998, p. 71)

Sociocultural theory distinguishes itself as a theoretical perspective in its dialectic understanding of self and society. As Wenger describes, individual action and contextual reality mutually constitute one another, like the mountain and the river. They are distinct, yet inseparable. This dialectic understanding of the individual within an evolving professional context provides the impetus for choosing sociocultural theory as a fruitful perspective for studying vocational identity. This section will begin with an overview of the tenets of sociocultural theory, with a specific focus on the ways sociocultural theory may prove useful in exploring issues of vocational identity development. Philosophical thinking will be used to develop a concept of identity and vocational identity development that will merge the sociocultural perspective with a focus on awareness of being. Time, communities of practice, modes of belonging, personal narrative, personal metaphor, conceptual and practical tools and trajectory will be explored as concepts that will be useful in the present study.

## *Sociocultural Theory*

Sociocultural theory is situated comfortably within the human sciences. It is lauded as a general approach in the human sciences, although it does not claim to encompass psychology, phenomenology, anthropology, linguistics, history, sociology, or any of the other social scientific approaches. Sociocultural theory, however, does appropriate concepts and understandings from these other disciplines in an effort to explore the relationships between human action and cultural, institutional and historical situations (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995).

Cultural anthropology and cultural psychology are clear precursors to sociocultural theory. Cultural anthropology teaches that there are qualitative differences among cultures and that each culture has its own histories and social qualities that must be understood in its own right (Haviland, Prins, Walrath, & McBride, 2004). Cultural psychology is less clearly defined; however, Bruner (1990) has developed an understanding of the field that positions culture and the human quest for meaning as the cause of human action. This emphasis on contextual action closely resembles the focus on *practice* within sociocultural theory.

In addition, sociocultural theory owes much of its conceptual basis to Lee Semenovich Vygotsky and his followers. Vygotskian scholars offer two themes that are appropriated by contemporary sociocultural thinkers, namely, *human action* and *mediation*. While the current understanding of action within sociocultural theory is not derived directly from Vygotsky, it finds its roots in his writings. Human action in sociocultural theory includes external as well as internal actions and may be undertaken by individuals or groups. Mediation is a “process involving the potential

of cultural tools to shape action, on the one hand, and the unique use of these tools, on the other” (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995, p. 22). The study of mediational means of cultural tools is central to sociocultural theory and will be taken up under the heading, *The Mediation of Conceptual and Practical Tools*.

Sociocultural theory has evolved to represent a view of learning as a process involving situational participation. Lave and Wenger (1991) conceptualize learning as a process of participation in communities of practice. When a newcomer joins a community of practice, he begins an apprenticeship in which he engages in the actual practice of the community, to a limited degree and with limited responsibility. Lave and Wenger define this as *legitimate peripheral participation*. Depending on the activities of the community, the newcomer moves along a trajectory, possibly achieving full participation in the community of practice. In this framework, participation is based on situated negotiation of meaning in the world.

As a pre-service teacher begins observing in a classroom, he might create a classroom display or enter grades into a grading program. These are peripheral activities, yet they are essential to the practice of teaching. With time and experience, the pre-service teacher may begin working with small groups of children, evaluating work, and, eventually, planning and implementing instruction for the entire class. Over time, the pre-service teacher’s identity changes through movement from a peripheral to a more central location within the community of practice as he develops the ability to view the situation as a teacher, seeing groupings of students and understanding assessment as integrated with instruction. This movement continues into the teaching years, as novice teachers evolve relationships with others in the

school and community and develop patterns of meaningful participation. From this perspective, learning and identity formation are conceived as changes over time in social participation patterns in the work practices of the community (Borko, 2004).

Central to sociocultural theory is the ontological belief that reality is a negotiated truth that develops within the context of relationships in communities of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In this way, reality is relational; it is something that exists *between* individuals. This reality is mediated by conceptual and practical tools that allow humans to interact with one another and with the evolving situation.

Sociocultural theory takes a pragmatic view that understands ethics and morals as conceptual tools that serve to guide action and interaction. Historicity is understood as individual trajectories encompassing both past (memory) and future (imagination) as they bear on the present, as well as group, institutional and broader societal trajectories in which the community is involved. *Practice* is the expression of the relations among people, contexts and tools along intersecting trajectories.

#### *A Sociocultural Perspective of Identity*

Without participation with others, there may be no basis for lived identity.  
(Lave, 1993, p. 21)

From a sociocultural perspective, identity formation is inseparable from learning (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Learning involves the negotiation of identities as participants change social locations from peripheral to more complete participation in the community. In this way, becoming knowledgeable is subsumed in processes of changing identity (Lave, 1993; Wenger, 1998). Identity is relational, so as people change locations in the social world, they are able to enact identity (Lave & Wenger,

1991). From a sociocultural perspective, identity may be conceived more as a verb than a noun. It is something that one *does*.

Imagine a teacher candidate who has discovered how to engage effectively with co-workers, administrators, parents, and students; who has developed an understanding of what helps and what hinders mutual engagement in the school community; who has a defined identity, sense of self, and voice as a teacher; who has strong collegial relationships; who knows who is who, who is good at what, who knows what, and who is easy or hard to get along with within the school setting. Now imagine the same teacher candidate who has made thoughtful choices about the alignment of her practices with the enterprise of her teaching team and school; accepted accountability for her actions and held others accountable for their actions; and engaged in thoughtful reflection about the definition and purposes of the educational enterprise. Finally, imagine that this teacher candidate has impressed you with a developed repertoire, style, and discourse related to education. She has renegotiated the meaning of various educational concepts; produced or adopted teaching tools, artifacts and representations; effectively recorded and recalled events; and achieved ownership of meaning related to terms, routines, and stories. This would be a truly remarkable teacher candidate! According to Wenger, (1998) each of these achievements is best learned in practice as one negotiates an identity in relation to a community of practice.

If one is accustomed to traditional theories of enculturation and socialization, the process of learning in practice may appear to perpetuate the status quo in schools. Sociocultural theory reveals, however, that the induction of novices into a community

actually prompts change and renegotiation of meaning (Wenger, 1998). Wenger describes this process as a dynamic reproduction cycle that exists in the tension between continuity and discontinuity. Even small perturbations in a system have large repercussions, and meaning is in a continual process of being negotiated.

Greeno (1998) claims that regularities of a participant's activities, in a trajectory that spans time and various communities, characterize an individual's identity. This identity is further described as being co-constituted by the individual's relation to communities and by the relation of those communities to the individual. Greeno suggests using a concept of attunements to constraints and affordances to understand individuals' negotiated participation, and thus their development of personal identity, within a community. Packer and Goicoechea also argue that individuals operate not with schemata and procedures as the cognitive scientists would have us believe, but rather through attunements to constraints and affordances (2000). In the present study, co-researchers will be observed in practice and asked to reflect on their experiences in community in order to determine their attunements to community constraints and affordances. As will become apparent, each community affords some teaching identities while constraining others.

One's attunements to the constraints and affordances of a community can be observed through one's participation in community. In this way, participation provides a key to understanding identity. On this point, phenomenologists have much to say. Heidegger asserts, "Each one of us is what he pursues and cares for. In everyday terms, we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of" (Heidegger, 1982, p. 159). Safranski (1998)

agrees that humans are never truly finished. At each point, an individual is open to the future and is charged with becoming. Levin (1985) places a similar emphasis on action and decision. He states, “Our decision is how we live: how we are moved to comport ourselves, how we bear witness to that which has moved us, the kind of stand we take, and the various postures and positions by which we have understood” (Levin, 1985, p. 103).

The concept of *identity* presents a nexus where self and community meet in active participation and ongoing negotiation. Boaler (1999) suggests that identity may hold the potential to cross the social-psychological divide. For Boaler, identity becomes a way of talking about how learning changes the individual and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of community. For others, construction of identities is less a personal experience and more a collective enterprise within a system of relations (Lave, 1993; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Moore, 2004). These views of identity are, in fact, very similar; however, they range from foregrounding the individual to foregrounding the community.

Perhaps the most extensive treatment of identity from a sociocultural perspective appears in Wenger’s *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* (1998). Wenger explores identity as lived, negotiated, fundamentally social, a learning process, a nexus of multimembership, and a local-global interplay. Wenger views identity as being interwoven with learning and participation. Practice becomes a way of expressing identity. In the present study, Wenger’s understanding of learning, meaning and identity will be combined with Greeno’s (1998) concept of

attunements to situational constraints and affordances to form a perspective for viewing individual in community.

If one thing is clear from the literature, it is that identity is tied up in complex relationships with many other elements of life. Identity is said to be inseparable from interpersonal and community processes (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995), person and environment (Coldron & Smith, 1999; D. Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000), narrative (Gover, 1998), knowing and social membership (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and practice, community and meaning (Wenger, 1998). Most authors present identity in a dialectical relationship with these other elements, or describe them as being mutually constituted. In this way, “inner and outer reality flow seamlessly into each other, like the ever-merging surfaces of a Möbius strip, endlessly co-creating us and the world we inhabit” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 5).

The view of identity as being intertwined with the social and contextual departs sharply from cognitive theories in which identity resides primarily within the individual. It is also divergent from theories that view identity formation as a one-way process in which the individual is trained or socialized in a work context. The perspective of identity employed by this study focuses on the multiple interactions between person and environment. Wenger aptly identifies this sense of identity as the “pivot between the social and the individual,” “the social, the cultural, the historical with a human face” (1998, p. 145).

Sociocultural theory falls short of fully developing the depths of personal identity touched upon by Parker Palmer (1998, 2000, 2004) and the attention to being

proposed by phenomenologists such as Heidegger (see Krell, 1993; Safranski, 1998). Its emphasis on individual-in-community often results in relative inattention to an individual's developing awareness of consciousness and acknowledgement of the interconnections of self with other beings and with the environment. In the present study, sociocultural theory will be the primary lens for viewing vocational identity development, with certain deficiencies of the theory ameliorated through careful attention to the moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects of self and the process by which awareness of consciousness is nurtured. After all, as Alan Tom (1984) explicates, teaching is, at heart, a moral craft.

### *Studying Vocational Identity Development*

Sociocultural theory provides a unique perspective for understanding vocational identity development. Due to its orientation to action, identity becomes something that may be observed. While an emerging identity in one context will affect a person's identity in another community (Wenger, 1998), *vocational identity* development may be foregrounded by a researcher's focus on the professional contexts in which a person participates.

This is not to say that sociocultural theory would only allow for observation data in the study of vocational identity. An individual's personal reflections, memories and imaginings are also essential to this endeavor, and these become especially important when attempting to uncover an individual's awareness of being. Cobb and Bowers (1999) contend that a sociocultural perspective allows for attending to both the diversity of an individual's interpretations and to the communal activities

in which they participate. The purpose of such research is to understand the meaning and significance that activity has for an individual.

In many ways, identity development from a sociocultural perspective is synonymous with learning. Beach frames learning as a process that involves “transformation, the construction of new knowledge, identities, ways of knowing and new positionings of oneself in the world” (1999, p. 113). This positioning of oneself involves discovering one’s location within a larger social system including students, colleagues, administrators, school district staff, the community, and state and national policymakers. It also involves negotiation of relationships within the school setting and sense-making activities that integrate an individual’s past experiences with new understandings of self. In addition, conceptual and practical tools must be appropriated to allow an individual to take action that is appropriate and meaningful within the new context.

Approaching this study from a sociocultural angle allows attention to process through careful, descriptive, narrative rendering. As Rogoff and others have noted, in sociocultural theory, “The process *is* the product” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 151). In this study, the process of vocational identity development is given priority, not the measurement of it at fixed points. The interaction of the individual and the community forms the context in which this process occurs. Research gains much meaning when teacher development is understood within the fluid, dynamic interchange of human action.

While sociocultural theory offers a productive perspective for understanding vocational identity development for career changers, it affords little attention to the

thoughtful discernment, moral struggles, and ethical decisions that are necessary for self-actualization, awareness and responsiveness to the vocational call. To understand these deeper aspects of identity, one must attend to an individual's memory and imagination as they interact with the situational present.

### *Time*

#### The Bright Field

I have seen the light break through  
to illuminate a small field  
for a while and gone my way  
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl  
of great prize, the one field that had  
the treasure in it. I realize now  
that I must give all that I have  
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future nor hankering after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush. To a brightness  
that seems as transitory as your youth  
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

(R.S. Thomas, as cited in O'Donohue, 1997, pp. 186-187)

An understanding of time proves to be considerably important in the study of identity development. Unlike the traditional Western view of time as a linear series of points, time can be conceived in a non-linear fashion, with the present extending through the past and future. In this way, time becomes, as Thomas suggests, "the eternity that awaits" in the present moment.

O'Donohue wonders, "Is there a place where our vanished days secretly gather? . . . Where does the light go when the candle is blown out? . . . The name of that place is memory" (1997, p. 171). In Greek mythology, Mnemosyne, daughter of

Sky and Earth and bride of Zeus is mother of the nine muses. Mnemosyne, whose name means Memory, gives birth to drama, music, dance, and poetry. Why is it memory, rather than imagination, creativity, or some other human function, which gives rise to the arts? Is remembering a creative act? Heidegger writes, “It is plain that [memory] means something else than merely the psychologically demonstrable ability to retain a mental representation of something that is past. . . . Memory is the gathering of recollection, thinking back” (1993d, p. 376). Memories must be recollected, that is, they must be collected again. *Collection* derives from the Latin *collecta*, a “gathering together” and *colligere*, a “binding together” (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 293). This etymology is especially appropriate. Levin explains that memory is, in its essence, a gathering and collecting of the past into the centeredness of a living present (1985). *Recall* is, in fact, a calling again, a re-call, of past experiences that can provide continuity with the present moment. As shall be discussed, the collection and calling that take place in remembering are indeed creative acts.

Memory is pervasive. It is a rare moment when one is not immersed in memory. Memory pervades our every step, our every word, and our every thought. In this way, the present is saturated in memory. “The past provides the very depth of memory, yet is continually reshaped in the present” (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 275). Edward Casey has conducted extensive phenomenological studies of both remembering (1987) and imagining (1976). What is it to remember? What is it to imagine? There are two major views of memory: the passivist and the activist. The passivist view of memory understands memory as a copy machine, a replicator of past experience. Passivism reminds us that memory is of the past. This means that

memory must be consistent with the past in certain basic ways. The other tradition, activism, views memory as “creative transformation of experience” (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 15). To an activist, the mind and one’s present situation have a significant influence on how things are remembered and precisely what is remembered.

E. S. Casey takes a moderate standpoint which leans toward activism, the same view of memory that will be taken up in the present study. He explains, “Recollecting . . . deals with past actualities, which it transforms rather than simply transmits. The transformative work of recollection belongs to a complex circumstance in which effort and resistance, recasting and re-viewing, are all in play” (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 272). The most compelling aspect of E. S. Casey’s phenomenology of memory is his insistence that when a person remembers, he gets the past back differently each time. He explains, “In remembering we do not repeat the past as self-identical, as strictly unchanging and invariant. We regain the past as different each time. Or more exactly, we regain it as different in its very sameness” (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 286). Consciousness is always partial access to an expanse of knowing. It is always possible to remember more deeply.

Gadamer urges respect for memory, expressing an activist bent to his philosophy: “It is time to rescue the phenomenon of memory from being regarded merely as a psychological faculty and to see it as an essential element of the finite historical being of man” (1960/1997, p. 16). Gadamer claims that any experience that is memorialized has lasting meaning for the person who has it. Experience is not recorded in the memory, to be played back verbatim, but rather is “preserved and dissolved” in the horizon of the before (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 69). In this way,

experiences make up one's historical being. Memory, as a matrix of dissolved experiences, forms a continuity of consciousness. It is defined by the *meaning* that experiences hold for a remembering individual. This is the way in which memories contribute to a person's identity. Memory presents a unified flow of experience, described by Gadamer as a continuum. This unified flow continually re-organizes itself in alignment with the present situation of the remembering individual. As a person's present situation changes, his remembered past will offer up details that provide continuity from the historical past to the shifting present.

Memory is essential to identity. Without memory, "one cannot even be certain of one's personal identity" (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. ix). An individual cannot disconnect his personal remembrances from his present identity. "Each successive self can re-orient itself by altering its hold on old memories and weaving in new ones; it can reinterpret its history in a different manner; it can even represent itself to itself in a variant manner. Everywhere there is the production of personal identity; a production proceeding by the free remembering of the self" (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 292). Freedom in remembering acts to select, emphasize, condense, expand, regroup, and reconfigure experiences to allow a more coherent sense of self to surface. The need for freedom in remembering is most poignant when one encounters a piece of writing one has penned in the past that is incongruous with one's present sense of self. "Did I write this?" one wonders. "Why would I have said such a thing?" I am actually guilty of writing in the margins of old journals to correct offending philosophy written by an earlier me.

In Jorge Luis Borges' short story, *Funes, the Memorious*, the main character, Funes, is capable of an unbelievable feat: he is able to remember with complete accuracy every detail of every moment. Rather than interpret this as a gift, however, the narrator is saddened. Funes can speak in many languages and recall anything he has read, but, the narrator explains, "he was not very capable of thought" (Borges, 1993, p. 90). Details of experience do not constitute one's sense of identity. Consciousness about identity requires active production of one's memories, not simple retrieval.

Sociocultural theory reminds us that remembering is not something one does in isolation. Even while sitting alone in a room, recalling days gone by, a person is wholly implaced in an historical, cultural, situational existence. A self is never separate from others, in essence or awareness. One's interdependence is central in the formation of one's rememberings and imaginings.

Imagination, as the traditionally conceived future-oriented faculty, is the route through which possibilities come to presence. It is just as important in the articulation of identity as memory due to the fact that individuals must be able to imagine possibilities of action and uses of conceptual and practical tools in order to be able to participate in practice. Casey, in his phenomenological study of imagining, states that imagining should be acknowledged for its intrinsic power and should be recognized as being significant in its own right (1976). Heidegger agrees, "Higher than actuality stands *possibility*" (1993a, p. 85). Imagination opens doors to novel ways of thinking. It is "the primary way in which the mind diversifies itself and its contents" (E. S. Casey, 1976, pp. 200-201). Thinking is most liberated in imagining. In fact, Casey

concludes, “The significance of imagining rests upon its possibilizing role, a role that consists precisely in giving to ‘infinite variety’ its proper due in human experience” (1976, p. 231).

Just as memory transforms each time it is re-remembered, imagination is ever new. Imagining individuals may not return to a favorite imagined object or event, but rather, must re-imagine it. With each imagining, the content is slightly different; these differences result from the always-changing present situation of the imagining individual.

Imagination is also essential in the construction of personal narrative and personal metaphor, as individuals cast themselves as characters or choose among possible metaphors to frame their perception. Individuals are “engaged in a day-by-day process of self-invention — not discovery, for what we search for does not exist until we find it — both the past and the future are raw material, shaped and reshaped by each individual” (Bateson, 1989, p. 28). Bateson describes a trajectory of self that has no fixed points. This concept is in stark contrast to the traditional Western belief that the past is past and that it does not change. In fact, there are no fixed points on a trajectory of vocational identity. The part of the trajectory that extends backwards into personal memory can change course, as past events are re-remembered in light of new meanings, understandings, concepts, and purposes that arise within the context of a new professional community. The part of the trajectory that extends forward into the imagined future also changes course in response to the same meanings and purposes that intersect with present practice. “Composing a life involves a continual reimagining of the future and reinterpretation of the past to give meaning to the

present, remembering best those events that prefigured what followed, forgetting those that proved to have no meaning within the narrative” (Bateson, 1989, pp. 29-30). In the gathering of memory, past experiences present themselves in a way that provides continuity for the remembering individual. “Memory moves us as surely into the realm of what shall be as it moves us back to what has been; by extracting what is indeterminately lasting from the latter, it allows the former to come to us” (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 279).

Remembering the past and re-imagining the future allows individuals to constantly reshape personal narratives and to give new meanings to their past and present actions. Packer and Goicoechea describe the process of striving to achieve identity: “This search is an effort to overcome division; not to root out or eliminate it so much as to transcend it” (2000, p. 234). Bateson (1989) finds in her case studies of successful women that each individual continually invents her own personal narrative. She writes that not only was it impossible to predict the future of the women with whom she worked, it also was impossible to know what their memories of the past would be the next time they were recalled. Due to a new and changed present context, the memories of these women necessarily involved a process of improvisation. Bateson claims that this improvisation is powerful in composing a life. She writes, “It is this second process, composing a life through memory as well as through day-to-day choices, that seems to me most essential to creative living. The past empowers the present, and the groping footsteps leading to this present mark the pathways to the future” (Bateson, 1989, p. 34). E. S. Casey agrees that the past develops. Furthermore, he acknowledges the value of narration in this reshaping of

memory (1987). The role of narration in the expression of vocational identity will be taken up further in the section titled, *Personal Narrative and Personal Metaphor*.

Heidegger explains the relationship of past, present and future a bit differently. According to Heidegger, one's being "is its past," but that past is viewed as occurring in the future (1993a, p. 63). How can the past be what has happened, but at the same time, occur out of a person's future? To Heidegger, too, memory is recalled and re-remembered in light of a person's present situation and interpretation of self. This interpretation reveals possibilities of being. In this way, one's past plays itself out through one's future. Remembering determines who we once were for the sake of the person we are becoming. Freedom in remembering allows a person to select features of the self from the past to carry forward in memory, a freedom "realized through assessing [one's] own past as a prologue for [one's] own future – an assessment carried out on the basis of values [one] is maintaining in the present" (E. S. Casey, 1987, p. 292).

Wenger discusses the notion of making an effort to create coherence in our lives. He asserts, "Our identities incorporate the past and the future in the very process of negotiating the present" (Wenger, 1998, p. 155). Identity expresses itself through a person's rememberings (past memories) and imaginings (possible futures) at the point where these elements erupt in the present moment and influence human action. In this way, interpretation, action, and imagination are essential to understanding vocational identity.

Within the present study, a co-researcher's memory as well as his imagined future form essential constructs for understanding data. At various points during their

teacher preparation/induction process, co-researchers are asked to reflect on their pasts and share a vision of their imagined professional futures. This information, gathered through conversational interviews, is used to understand the individual's current practice in the context of past experiences and long-term imaginings. The individual's imagined future is compared with the expressed ideals of his communities of practice to shed light on issues of the co-researcher's sense of belonging and identification with each community.

### *Communities of Practice and Modes of Belonging*

At once there is the need to make a community, in which a plurality of persons can participate and, through participations, choose their projects and themselves. (M. Greene, as cited in Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 711)

In 1955 biologist George Hillary found ninety-four different definitions of community in a review of contemporary literature (Westheimer, 1988). In recent years, the diversity of definitions of community has grown further with the introduction of many initiatives aimed at promoting learning communities, professional communities, and teacher communities in schools.

The purpose of this study is not to discover at the outset the situations that should "count" as community or even to distinguish in advance those communities that are effective or ineffective. Rather, it is to document the development of vocational identity within the teacher workgroups in which the career changer *already finds himself* with the hope of identifying aspects of community that facilitate vocational identity development. For this reason, an umbrella term, "communities of practice" will be used to refer to those various groups of educators who work together

in the schools and institutions of teacher education in which the co-researchers are involved.

Community of practice is a term first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991). A community of practice is built on a shared core of knowledge that evolves through mutual engagement of participants, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of skills and abilities that develop over time (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice are defined as groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Communities of practice must be distinguished from the more widely used term, *professional learning community*. The concept of professional community is a member of the larger conceptual family, communities of practice (Halverson, 2003). Labeling something a community of practice does not denote a positive or negative learning environment. It does not imply that the group is supportive, reform-minded, or even accepting of new members (Wenger, 1998). Gallucci (2003) presents a matrix of communities of practice that ranges from weak to strong and from open to closed. Open-minded communities of practice represent effective learning communities. Closed-minded communities of practice may reject certain experiences that its members bring, forcing a fractured self to engage vocationally. Gallucci uses the construct of community of practice to identify grade-level teams of teachers, teaching partners, and other configurations of teachers who work together for educational purposes. These communities of practice engage participants in the actions of

teaching, in interpersonal relations, in the creation of shared knowledge, and in the negotiation of meaning.

The significance of the choice of community of practice as the construct used in the present study is twofold. First, it allows one to name a workgroup a community of practice without requiring a preliminary judgment about the particular group's effectiveness or ineffectiveness, level of openness, or worth. Withholding judgment allows a researcher to discover what occurs within a certain community in the hope of identifying the elements of community that act as affordances to identity development.

The second reason why community of practice is a valuable construct for the present research is that it situates teacher learning and development of vocational identity within the context of relation. Britzman (1992) defines identity as a constant social negotiation that signifies relationships to other individuals or groups of individuals. Coldron and Smith (1999) explore identity as partly given and partly achieved by active location in social space. Social space includes the possible relations that a person can have to others, dictated by tradition. The authors present a notion of self as developing over time as the result of interactions between person and environment. Identity is discussed not as something people have but as something they use to justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relation to other people and to the contexts in which they operate. A person's position in social space is relational.

Wenger (1998) establishes that engagement in social practice is the process by which we learn and become who we are. He sees the community of practice as the

unit of analysis and learning as a social phenomenon. Participation includes being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities. Learning includes the components of community, practice, identity and meaning. Wenger stresses, however, that communities of practice should not be reduced to technical purposes: “They are about knowing, but also about being together, living meaningfully, developing a satisfying identity, and altogether being human” (Wenger, 1998, p. 134).

Arendt proposes, “The world opens among people; it should not, therefore, be understood as the sum total of all things, men, and events, but as the place where men encounter each other and things may appear to them, and where, ultimately, they produce something that is more than the sum of the activities of the individual” (as cited in Safranski, 1998, p. 381). Heidegger speaks of a *clearing* that opens in the midst of beings that allows access to others as well as access to one’s self (1993b).

All of these conceptions of identity and learning stress the importance of community to the individual. Meaning-making occurs in the space between people, and a person’s individual trajectory of vocational identity develops in relation to the trajectories of the various communities of practice with which one works. In this way, involvement with others influences the way individuals conceive of their remembered pasts and their imagined futures. All individuals exist in interdependence with others in their community, and interdependence forms an essential component of identity development.

The word *context* is derived from the Latin *contextus*, which means “a joining together.” The origination of the word is in the practice of weaving; *com-* means

“together” and *textere* means “to weave” (Harper, 2001). The sociocultural view of community preserves this original meaning of context as weaving. The past histories and nexus of multimemberships of the individuals within the community are woven together to form the special fabric that is the community of practice. The common root *textere* also provides the English language with *texture*. A community of practice boasts a certain texture, or feel, that is comprised of the woven interactions of the various individuals who form the group. Some communities of practice may present a smooth texture, with all members fully integrated, while others are rougher, with frayed edges. The Gaelic phrase *fighte fuaighte* expresses the interrelationships that are able to form in community. The phrase is translated as “woven into and through each other” (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 90).

Wenger (1998) details three modes of belonging that enable the development of identities of participation within communities of practice. These include engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement involves a person's active participation in a community. A newcomer can only become as engaged as he is permitted by his relation in social space. One must be given access to and responsibility for actions that contribute to the goals of the community. If an individual chooses alienation or is rejected by the community, she still may be participating with the community (though the participation may be negative participation), or she may exit the community altogether. As Gadamer details, “To be present means to participate” (1960/1997, p. 124). Being present in a situation requires decisions of an individual, decisions which expose the individual's extent of engagement and identification with the community.

Wenger (1998) claims that participation and non-participation can be observed in the following ways: how we locate ourselves in a social landscape, what we care about and what we neglect, what we attempt to know and understand and what we choose to ignore, with whom we seek connections and whom we avoid, how we engage and direct our energies, and how we attempt to steer our trajectories. Wenger describes identity formation as a dual process of identification and negotiability, both of which require decisions regarding participation.

Imagination, as previously discussed, is important for allowing a person to determine the possibilities for meaningful action within a community. Imagination also allows individuals to re-interpret their vocational pasts in such a way that provides continuity of self and identification or non-identification with a professional community's imagined future. The extent to which actions are meaningful discloses their alignment with the community history, values and aims. Originality is possible through imagination; yet, originality is always situated within a realm of possible imaginings that are made allowable through the negotiated reality of person and environment.

While individuals within a community may have negotiated a common repertoire of practice, an individual cannot simply rely on the practice of others to answer the individual's concerns. An individual must appropriate the practices that have meaning for that individual and then interpretively enact those practices. Even when drawing from communal practices, individuals act authoritatively through their own negotiations of meaning.

### *Personal Narrative and Personal Metaphor*

Narrative is closely aligned with community, as persons take up collective stories and make them their own. Stories allow individuals to make sense of the past in a way that has meaning for the present context. These stories are created, much like conceptual tools, from the borrowed narrations and transformations of the stories of others presently or previously involved in the community of practice (Silverman, 2000). Gover (1998) presents a sociocultural theory of narrative in which *personal narrative* is an oxymoron. Our personal stories are never solely our own, as they are used by others within our community. Narrative and identity emerge from a confluence of time, artifacts, affect, activity and self-reflexiveness.

Anton views human speech in a similar way; he quotes Jakob Boehme as saying, “Whatever the self describes, describes the self” (2001, p. 91). Words provide connections between individual and community. Most of the stories told are collective stories told by a collective voice (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). The ability to draw community together through story and speech holds culture together while still allowing for individual appropriation and interpretation.

At once, the researcher taking a sociocultural perspective must attend to an individual’s history and the history of a community. Individual memory is a vehicle for fashioning identities that fill a human need to create continuity of self (Wenger, 1998). The stories that an individual tells about her life may, in fact, change over time as the individual develops an identity within a new community. In *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) discuss the experiences of a group of individuals who have joined Alcoholics Anonymous. They

track the changing life stories of these individuals as they appropriate the views of the AA community. In the same way, teachers may re-fashion their memories of a past career as they negotiate a new identity within educational settings. Storytelling is intimately connected to being and identity.

Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner and Cain explore narrative as a process of making worlds. They claim, “Remembered stories, re-creations of one’s own story, can be purposively used...to interpose new actions and to cast oneself as a new actor in a new social play” (1998, p. 281). The authors link imagination with this form of creative remembering that creates a continuity of self. E. S. Casey also finds that narrative accounts can reilluminate and reinvent the past for the speaker (1987). An individual cannot make these changes in isolation, however. “The inner self needs an other to affirm its sense of continuity and identity” (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 100).

Heikkinen proposes that just such an autobiographical approach is conducive to meaningful teacher education. Through narrative, teacher candidates are able to explore what Heikkinen sees as an essential question in teacher education, “How did I become myself?” In the stories that teachers tell about their own teaching, the elements of interpretation, action and imagination come together. Personal narratives provide a window into a person’s interpretation of past events while offering a glimpse of the way in which the individual characterizes herself as protagonist. This characterization and the individual’s choice of narrative elements and structures provide clues to the imagined futures available to an individual.

Finally, the act of storytelling in a communal setting is an action that serves to place the individual in relation to the community of practice, whether in a central position or on the periphery. Examining the stories offered by teachers in various communities of practice provides openings for understanding the way memory, action, and imagination come together to express vocational identity.

Teachers whose stories are respected during their teacher preparation may be more likely to call forth stories from their own students, thus extending the experience of communal storytelling into their own classrooms. In Coles' *The Call of Stories*, the author traces his development as a psychiatrist to the time that he asked a psychiatric patient to "tell me a story or two" (Coles, 1989, p. 11). Rather than continuing to concentrate on *fixing* his patients, Coles begins privileging their stories and voices. He takes to heart the sage advice of William Carlos Williams, whom he quotes as saying, "Their story, yours, mine – it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (quoted in Coles, 1989, p. 30).

Huebner echoes the importance of storytelling and stresses the significance of story within a professional community. He posits that human life is "a journey with a narrative structure that is best expressed in story form. . . . Being able to tell our story to others and listen to the narratives of teachers who take their calling seriously may give us a picture, a moving picture, of where we have been, where we are, and where we are going" (Huebner, 1999b, p. 382). The success of communal storytelling relies on the culture of the particular community of practice in which stories are shared. Huebner continues, "Bringing journey into story form . . . is possible only when a

person is invited to be fully present. Any part of the self that remains hidden or suppressed because of threat, shame, or possible ridicule cannot be incorporated into a person's story line, for it distorts other aspects of the narrative” (1999b, p. 382).

Wenger disagrees with the view of narrative as a constitution of identity. He claims, instead, that narratives are reifications. They are tools rather than the essence of identity. He concedes, however, that stories have the power to be remembered as personal experience, thereby taking on an importance beyond reification:

Stories...can be appropriated easily because they allow us to enter the events, the characters and their plights by calling upon our imagination. Stories can transport our experience into the situations they relate and involve us in producing the meanings of those events as though we were participants. As a result, they can be integrated into our identities and remembered as personal experience, rather than as mere reification. (Wenger, 1998, pp. 203-204)

For Wenger, it seems that the power of story emerges as a result of the narrative ability to provide vicarious practice.

Shared storytelling certainly allows individuals to explore new ways of framing their past experiences and to experiment with purposes that stem from newly imagined futures. Listening to the stories of others allows a novice teacher vicarious access to practice and a chance to appropriate story elements, plots, motifs and metaphors that are common within the community. Maxine Greene extols the power of narrative in teacher education:

Looking back, recapturing their stories, teachers can recover their own standpoints on the social world. . . . Making an effort to interpret the texts of their life stories, listening to others' stories in whatever “web of relationships” they find themselves, they may be able to multiply the perspectives through which they look upon the realities of teaching; they may be able to choose themselves anew in the light of an expanded interest, an enriched sense of reality. (as cited in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 73)

Stories may be viewed as recommendations for meaningful practice. Van Manen argues, “In bringing life to speech, we are in a manner recommending a certain way of standing in the world” (2003, p. 170). Estola (2003) finds that the stories teacher educators pass on to their candidates have great significance. In his study of student teachers, Estola found that shared storytelling encouraged candidates to ask themselves, “Who am I as a teacher?” In this way, storytelling may be a catalyst for identity development.

Communal storytelling also provides an avenue for discovering shared truth. Parker Palmer remarks that many people believe that it takes big ideas to express shared truth among groups of diverse individuals. Actually, however, it is through the specifics of the personal narrative that those from diverse perspectives begin to identify with and understand each other. Through this understanding, shared meaning evolves (2004).

Within this study, the concept of personal narrative is used to understand the way in which co-researchers give meaning to their practice, stemming from personal memory and/or aiming toward imagined futures. The way they characterize their vocational selves in these stories is instructive to understanding professional identity, as are the story elements and other motifs they use. In addition, the stories shared within community are examined to determine the various identities afforded to community members and the social relations within the community.

Parker Palmer encourages the use of metaphor to help understand a teaching self. He explains, “Animated by the imagination, one of the most vital powers we possess, our metaphors often *become* reality, transmuting themselves from language

into the living of our lives” (P.J. Palmer, 2000, p. 96). Connelly and Clandinin determine that metaphors are part of a teacher’s “embodied knowledge,” central to identity (1999, p. 90). Metaphors are images which are powerful in shaping current practice. Lakoff and Johnson explore the power of metaphors:

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 156)

The development of meaningful metaphors is guided by one’s imagined future and processes of reasoning. In this way, metaphors are primary vehicles of understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). A teacher who imagines teaching as transmission of information may hold a metaphor of students as empty containers waiting to be filled. A teacher who imagines teaching as the shaping of individuals may hold a metaphor of students as unshaped piles of clay that await the sculptor’s hand. In stark contrast, a teacher who imagines teaching as an introduction to lifelong exploration may hold a metaphor of students as musicians and classroom interactions as an improvisational jazz performance.

Van Manen claims that through metaphor, “language can take us beyond the content of the metaphor toward the original region where language speaks through silence” (2003, p. 49). In this way, metaphor reveals the poetry of situated self. In their chapter in *Stories Lives Tell*, Brody and Witherell (1991) claim that they have the most success with classes of professionals who share a common metaphor. These teacher educators take their entire class on a whitewater rafting trip and then use the experience as a metaphor for professional practice throughout their work together.

The concept of metaphor is used in this study to understand how co-researchers conceptualize their practice. The speech that co-researchers use within a community of practice is analyzed to identify any metaphors that are expressed. These metaphors could be direct metaphors, such as, “an avalanche of papers to grade” or more subtle metaphors such as, “The students and I are just not on the same wavelength,” which implies a technological metaphor involving sound waves and receivers. In addition to analyzing naturally occurring metaphors, I ask co-researchers to identify metaphors that relate to their teaching at various points in their preparation/induction and use these to understand how they experience their lives as teachers.

#### *The Mediation of Conceptual and Practical Tools*

Two young children were playing naked in a fountain.  
One is asked by his grandmother, “Is that a boy or a girl?”  
“I can’t tell,” the young child replies. “She isn’t wearing any clothes.” (Fortes, 1983, p. 389)

Fortes uses the vignette above to assert that identity cannot be experienced without being put out into social space. He claims that if you want to know who you are, you have to show it, through ritual, ceremony, products you produce and activities you reject (Fortes, 1983). What is not chosen is just as helpful in forming identity as what is chosen. Wenger claims, “We know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive” (1998, p. 153). The *I* is said to author the world, but this *I* must use pre-existing meaning systems such as language, clothes, mannerisms and tools (Gover & Gavelek, n.d.; D. Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998).

Practical tools are strategies and immediately implementable practices that a member of a community of practice can appropriate. For example, a teacher may be given a new lesson planning format during a disciplinary team meeting. The teacher may implement this practical tool, and, in turn, the tool may shape the teacher's practice. A practical tool may also include a strategy that a teacher implements. In a seminar class, a peer may suggest that positive notes be sent home to the parents of students who have completed all assignments. A teacher who implements this strategy is appropriating a practical tool of the community of practice. Wenger (1998) asserts that tools such as terminology, artifacts, gestures and routines are useful not only because they are part of the community's history of mutual engagement but also "because they can be re-engaged in new situations" (p. 83).

In her doctoral thesis, Allen finds that having a shared repertoire of practical tools is correlated strongly with professional identity. The more a teacher feels that he engages in a shared repertoire with other teachers, the more closely he identifies with the teaching profession (Allen, 2007).

In the current study, special attention is paid to a co-researcher's appropriation of practical tools that are used within each of the various communities of practice in which he participates. The extent of appropriation of practical tools indicates the identification of the co-researcher with the community of practice from which the tool is appropriated.

Conceptual tools also must be taken up in the process of identity formation. Conceptual tools include ways of thinking about practice. Metaphors are a type of conceptual tool, as are learning theories and philosophies of education. Ways of

thinking about practice are negotiated among community members, and at times these conceptualizations are reified into policy documents, mission statements and the like.

All communities constrain certain forms of vocational identity development while promoting others. The conceptual and practical tools in use within a community can be especially liberating, but they can also be limiting if their historical uses preclude new ways of thinking and acting (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003; Wertsch, 1991). Wenger speaks of a form of imagination that can lead to non-participation. If a community espouses certain stereotypes and a new member adopts these ways of viewing the world, the individual (and the community) will be limited in response to the constraints of the stereotype. Imagination is necessary to break the bonds of the stereotype and negotiate new meanings within the community (Wenger, 1998).

Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia (1999) use the concept of tools in their study of teachers' professional development. Conceptual tools, practical tools and the five degrees of appropriation of tools are discussed, and the relationship between the individual characteristics of the learner and the appropriation process is explored. This treatment of conceptual and practical tools and an individual's appropriation of tools is especially useful in the present study for determining the ways in which individuals align themselves with a particular community of practice.

In the current study, a co-researcher's appropriation of particular conceptual tools from the divergent communities of practice in which he engages is examined to uncover the extent of alignment between the individual's trajectory and the trajectories of the multiple communities in which he participates. Although narrative

structures, elements, and motifs, as well as personal metaphors could be considered conceptual tools, for the purposes of this research, they are treated separately. This separate treatment serves to highlight the narrative elements at work in vocational identity formation.

### *Trajectory*

Identity is always expressed in the present. Safranski points out the following in his discussion of the philosophy of Kierkegaard:

Amid the complexities of life, we find ourselves time and again in situations in which we must decide who we wish to be. We leave the sphere of the merely thinkable; we must take a stand, assume responsibility; we cannot avoid turning from a possibility person, who can consider everything, into a reality person, who from the thinkable selects that which binds him in internal and external action. (Safranski, 1998, p. 83)

The decisions that individuals make, their actions in the situations in which they find themselves, form a trajectory of participation.

In the current study, trajectory is viewed as the expression of vocational identity through participation in community. A person's trajectory may align with the trajectory of a particular community of practice with which one engages, or it may run counter to the community's trajectory. This extent of an individual's identification with a particular community can be determined through the individual's appropriation or non-appropriation of conceptual and practical tools offered in the context of the community of practice and the extent to which his or her personal narratives and metaphors align with the narrative structures and imagined futures used by members of the community.

## Organization

This introduction has attempted to frame the study as well as offer a rationale for this work. The underlying theories that guide this exploration have been identified and relevant literature has provided background that serves to define important constructs and terms.

Chapter Two provides a literature review related to career transition and vocational identity development. Chapter Three includes a discussion of the research methodology, including ontological and epistemological concerns. In addition, the two co-researchers are introduced. Chapter Four details the communities of practice in which the two co-researchers engage through their teacher preparation programs, while Chapter Five explores school-based communities of practice for each co-researcher. Chapter Six presents a discussion of the nexus of multimembership and the reflections of the co-researchers related to vocational memories and imaginings. Chapter Seven offers a vocational meta-story, a discussion of synthesizing concepts surrounding identity and meaning-making, and several recommendations for teacher educators who engage with military career changers.

## Chapter 2: Career Transition and Vocational Identity Development: A Literature Review

Chapter One provided a comprehensive look at the phenomenon of vocational identity development, the rationale for the present study, and the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the research approach. Specific constructs that were explicated include vocation, identity, time, narrative, metaphor, conceptual and practical tools, communities of practice, modes of belonging, and trajectory.

Chapter Two presents a review of the relevant research that has been conducted in the area of career transition and vocational identity development. This chapter is a move away from the philosophical in an attempt to provide a broad overview of related literature in order to situate the present study in the field of teacher education. It will become apparent that most of this literature does not attend to the constructs mentioned above, or even to related concepts such as memory, interdependence, imagined future, calling, voice, and authority; however, the contrast between this study and those presented here is useful because it draws attention to a gap in teacher education research.

The literature review begins with an overview of what is known about the formation of vocational identity in the research on career change in general. Then it investigates specifically what has been offered as an exploration of identity formation in career changers who become teachers. A second subset of career changers is examined through an overview of what is known about post-military career changers,

specifically military personnel who choose to become teachers. Finally, implications of career change research for teacher preparation is analyzed.

By the end of Chapter Two, the need for the present study will be established; no other credible studies that provide an insider's account of career change exist for the population of post-career military who become teachers. In addition, none of the studies of career transition for this population include attention to constructs such as those which frame the present study. Finally, the study of vocational identity development from a sociocultural perspective has not been attempted at all in relation to those who have made a career change from the military to teaching.

### Career Change and Vocational Identity Development

Career change and the development of vocational identity that accompanies a change in career have been explored from many different perspectives. Literature in the fields of management, psychology, sociology, and organizational theory explores issues related to career change. This section includes an overview of occupational transition and change, classifications of career changers, and the subjective career, with a final section detailing why a sociocultural perspective is most productive for the present study.

#### *Occupational Transition and Change*

The most prominent type of career research focuses on the process involved in occupational transition and change. Research in this area focuses on the sequential steps that individuals make in changing careers or experiencing other life changes.

Researchers attempt to detail what happens in each of these steps, often explaining the experiences of career changers as a series of phases.

Helfand (1995) offers four types of changes that constitute a life transition, including change in role, change in relationship, change of routine, and change in assumptions about one's self or the world. A career change can conceivably include all of these types of changes, giving it the power to result in a radical life transformation.

Several researchers propose a linear progression of career development stages, including Bridges (1980), Super (1980) and Riverin-Simard (2000). Huberman (1989) takes a similar approach and applies it to teaching. In each of these studies, the individual's unique experiences are not taken into account in an effort to name common phases of development. In addition, contextual aspects of the change process are overlooked. Finally, a linear view of time prevents full understanding of the way in which past and future merge to create present perception for career changers.

More recent thinking about career change rejects a linear process of development. Sixteen years after the publication of his popular model of career change, Super and his colleagues oppose the idea of a linear process of career development, instead proposing mini-cycles of re-exploration and search. These mini-cycles include the phases of growth from Super's original (1980) model, with the addition of exploration prior to each cycle (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Noonan also concludes that adults can be involved in any of the career stages at any time in a work-life, and individuals may even be involved in multiple phases simultaneously

(2005). For example, a person may still be involved in disengaging from one career while maintaining a position in a new career.

The newly conceived cycles of career change appear to be more complex with regard to time, but they still lack any explanation of the interrelatedness of one's memories, one's vision for the future, and one's present contextual situation. Without attention to one's memories or imagined future, career transition is a leap in a vacuum, with no ledge from which to leap and no direction for the journey. Research in the field of occupational transition and change leaves one wondering about the individual, her placement in community, and the role of memory and imagination in the process of vocational identity development.

### *Classifying the Career Changer*

Other career change research focuses on the types of people who make career changes. Career changers are classified in many different ways. Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) use the terms homecomers, the converted, and the unconverted. Noonan (2005), classifies his career changers as explorers, homesteaders, and transformers. Nicholson (2000) finds four different categories of career changers.

Each of these classifications tells only a partial story of career change as experienced by an individual. Any individual may fit in more than one category at any time. What of the individual who is laid off and thereby freed up to explore new options that better match internal motivations? What of the homecomer who becomes disenchanted with teaching?

In addition, classification schemes oversimplify career change. Individuals experience a continuous life rather than a disconnected series of vocational events, so

Noonan's classification based on changes in lines of work proves difficult to use. The banker may indeed experience many forms of continuity between banking and computer repair and may not perceive these jobs to be divergent lines of work. Classification schemes ignore the ways in which a person's sense of vocational story mediates the process of career change.

### *The Subjective Career*

Career change literature in the fields of management, psychology, sociology and organizational theory typically focuses on the three areas of organizational, structural and internal aspects of career change. For example, changes in organizations such as downsizing, changes in the structure of family life such as the dual career family, and internal life-cycle changes such as mid-life crises have all been linked with a diverse career path (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990). Nicholson (2000) presents a career model that corresponds to this tri-part framework.

For the purposes of studying vocational identity development within this literature review, internal or subjective aspects of career change will be foregrounded, with interactive contextual aspects of professional community presented in dialectical relation with the individual.

The theory underlying the subjective career originated with the Chicago school of sociology and the idea of the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The subjective side of the career includes the internal interpretations of personal experiences, the place of career within a person's life, and the individual's sense of continuity and change. Early career research explored the subjective self through studies of self-concept. Becker and Strauss (1956) showed that

periods of career transition may cause substantial shifts in self-concept. Super (1980) explored career choice as an expression of personal self-concept. Deciding to change a career, according to Super, was linked with transformations in self-concept; either the transformation influenced the decision to change careers or the career change resulted in a change in self-concept. In Super's view, identity remains static while self-concept fluctuates.

Along the same lines, Holland (1997) develops the concept of congruence, which is the match between a person and his or her work environment. The better the match, according to Holland, the easier the career transition for the individual. This theory also views identity as fixed rather than fluid, however. A static view of identity is rejected in the context of the present study. Instead, identity is viewed in flux and responsive to a person's contextual situation, past memories, imagined futures, and present actions as well as interrelated with the lives of others in community. A central tenet of sociocultural theory is that learning is achieved through identity development. If identity were static, then no learning could occur.

More recent career change models recognize the significance of values, motivations, and personal pasts as they relate to changing identities (Noonan, 2005). Noonan reports that several of his participants describe their work situations in terms of identity. One speaks of his return to university work as "coming back to myself . . . the leaf falls back to the root . . . it's a saying the Chinese have . . . It's sort of a cycle that's completed" (Noonan, 2005, p. 235). Noonan finds that adults actively construct their work identities through a process of reformation, confirmation, and renegotiation. He also concludes that later-life employment may indeed provide a

continuity of identity from earlier-life employment, but it may also foster a returning to a person's true identity or a redefinition of self. In this way, a person's evolving vocational story employs significant memories to evoke continuity. Noonan's work calls to mind Bateson's metaphors for identity development. Bateson suggests a spiral as an appropriate metaphor for identity. She explains that individuals gradually gain more raw material and more refined skills to use in reconstructing personal identity. She writes, "The forging of a sense of identity is never finished. Instead, it feels like catching one's image reflected in a mirror next to a carousel — 'Here I am again'" (Bateson, 1989, p. 219).

Kanchier and Unruh (1989) find the subjective career to be extremely important. Those who decide to change careers are more likely to view their work as a mode of self-expression and personal development, while those who remain in one career are more likely to view work as a vehicle for attaining security, power, position, and lifestyle. It may be that the subjective career has gained prominence due to the fact that those who are most often studied are those individuals who have decided to change careers, not those who remain in the same career. If those who decide to change careers are more likely to view themselves as persons in flux, then the subjective aspects of their career transition are rightfully viewed as being important.

Research on the subjective aspects of career transition is useful, and it deserves more attention by those who are charged with assisting in the process of career transition. The subjective aspects research, however, only tells half the story of vocational identity development. Context and community interact with subjective

aspects to promote the development of vocational identity. Attention to sociocultural aspects of career change is also essential.

### *A Sociocultural Perspective*

A sociocultural perspective of the study of identity development acknowledges the mutually constituting nature of the individual and his or her context. Several studies of vocational identity development within the context of career transition make use of a sociocultural approach.

Teixeira and Gomes (2000) explore the sociocultural concept of action as an expression of identity. They state, “It is through acting that human beings express their uniqueness, and for this reason the profession has an important function in the process which constitutes personal identity. Thus, career change brings a perception of oneself characterized by an expression of a renovated position in the world” (Teixeira & Gomes, 2000, p. 80). Teixeira and Gomes’ conceptualization is similar to that proposed in the current study: identity development is evidenced through growth of self and growth of awareness of one’s situatedness in community.

Teixeira and Gomes find the career change process to be an interpersonal process in which the opinions, evaluations, advice and support of family members and friends play a significant role. Individuals evaluate their present situation by associating career change with personal changes such as maturation and transformation. Some view their change as interpersonal development, including development of self-determination and self-esteem, but others view it as steady development of personality, skills and interests continued from their previous careers. Teixeira and Gomes characterize career change as a “search for a new way for the

subjects to express themselves in the world,” and as a “series of changes in personal identity and in the relation of the subjects to their work” (2000, pp. 90-91). In this way, identity changes represent a metamorphosis rather than a search or a desire to match a stable identity with a professional career.

Although sociocultural theory does not express a belief in a stable identity that remains fixed as a person moves into and out of various professional contexts, there is a sense of historical continuity that is maintained through a community process of re-narrating past histories. Arthur, Inkson and Pringle explain, “Although [a person] is no longer a member of his old company, he still carries the legacy of the company with him, in experience, in opportunity, and in the support of others. . . . We are both products and producers of the work environments in which we participate” (1999, p. 7). This view is in sharp contrast to Holland’s (1997) theory of congruence and to developmental theories that require disengagement from old identities. Rather than encouraging career changers to make endings, sociocultural theory encourages individuals to use memory to find continuities in their new work contexts and to actively seek to reauthor personal stories to support emerging identities.

Sociocultural theory allows a blurring of the traditional three-pronged view of career change. Because the organizational, structural and subjective aspects are interdependent, sociocultural theorists often search for more encompassing ways of viewing concepts. Mirvis and Hall (1994) identify a modern phenomenon which they term the *boundaryless career*. A boundaryless career is in direct opposition to the historical view of a career ladder and a stable commitment to an organization. The boundaryless career involves cyclical career development marked by frequent job

changes. “The permeability of employment boundaries gives people more psychological freedom to explore ‘new’ identities and even return to ‘old’ ones with a richer sense of themselves” (Mirvis & Hall, 1994, p. 375). Within a boundaryless career, knowledge is amassed across career settings.

The concept of boundaryless career is also more encompassing than workplace identity. “Work and nonwork roles overlap and shape jointly a person’s identity and sense of self” (Mirvis & Hall, 1994, p. 369). Mirvis and Hall claim that a person’s level of identification with their occupational organization can be determined by asking, “What do you do?” People who link their identities with their organizations often respond by saying, “I work for company X.” Others refer to their skills and competencies: “I do Y.” The boundaryless career allows work identity to become tied to *life’s work* rather than to an organization. Mirvis and Hall see this as expanding the concept of vocational identity to include one’s work as a spouse, parent, and community member. In this conceptualization, a single calling can lead a person to live out his vocation in multiple communities.

In addition, the sociocultural perspective’s acknowledgement of the relationship between learning and identity corrects any simple view of identity as being comprised of community membership or enculturation (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Traditional theories of socialization do not account for the active ways in which individuals “refashion, resist, or even take up dominant meanings as if they were their authors” (Britzman, 1991, p. 56).

## Vocational Identity Development of Second-Career Teachers

The vocational identity of teachers has been the object of much recent educational research. Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) justify the importance of this research by explaining that teacher education must begin by exploring the teaching self as the basis for meaning making and decision making. Much of the recent research on teacher identity, however, is either inadequate or not focused specifically on teachers who have made a career change. Career changers have been identified as possessing different qualities, strengths, and motivations from first-career teachers, making much of the general research on teacher identity irrelevant to second-career teachers. The particular strengths that presumably emerge from prior career experiences are instrumental in the development of second-career identity within the teaching context. In addition, the motivations of career changers inform a vision of teaching which serves to guide new trajectories of participation.

### *Quality of Teacher Identity Research and Application to Career Changers*

Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) present a literature review of 22 studies on teacher vocational identity, including studies on identity formation, studies on the characteristics of teacher vocational identity, and studies of vocational identity represented in teacher stories. They found that ten of 22 studies offered no explicit definition of professional identity; the others did not converge on a coherent definition. Half of the studies were misplaced, and should have been categorized as studies of professional characteristics. Others studied teachers' personal practical knowledge but did not explain a relationship with vocational identity.

The authors conclude that within research on teacher identity, concepts of *identity*, *self* and *professional* need to be explained, more focus needs to be given to the way in which educational theory plays a role, and the uses of cognitive, biographical and sociological perspectives for studying identity need to be clarified. The authors present a definition of professional identity as an ongoing process involving person and context with various sub-identities and an element of agency.

While the literature review cited above relates to teacher identity, it does not necessarily relate to identity development of second-career teachers. In fact much of the research on transitions into teaching has been based on the study of individuals who are making a school-to-work transition following a traditional career path. Most studies have not focused on career changers who have already made a school-to-work transition in another career (e.g., Lortie, 1975; Yonemura, 1986). This is significant because one cannot assume that what is true for individuals becoming accustomed to their first career is necessarily true for those adjusting to a subsequent career (Hall, 1986). Louis (1980) posits that individuals who have already undergone a school-to-work transition have gained adaptation mechanisms for responding to occupational affordances and constraints that will come into play in any subsequent career transition.

#### *Career Changers as a Breed Apart*

But are career changers really different from those traditionally trained? Chambers (2002) finds that career changers believe that they hold ideas that diverge from traditional teachers' views of students and schooling. They believe that they hold more realistic expectations for students and a broader perspective that places

education within a wider world of work. In addition, career changers place a greater emphasis on real-life applications of classroom content knowledge. Chambers finds career changers to be willing to “adopt new and sometimes uncomfortable strategies, to teach in alternative programs, and to design exciting new curricula,” all in an effort to connect the classroom with the larger world (2002, p. 216).

In her study of urban science teachers, Rinke conceptualizes teachers as being on one of two career trajectories: a trajectory of integration or a trajectory of participation. Teachers who wish to integrate seek a long-term career and invest themselves in teaching and education in general. Teachers who choose to participate view teaching as a stepping stone on a career path that leads elsewhere. Rinke concludes that this orientation provides individuals with a particular way of understanding their experiences as teachers (2007). Career changers, by virtue of the fact that they have had other careers and are teachers by choice may actually be more likely to be integrators and more invested in teaching as a vocation. Could career changers be naturally primed for vocational identity development due to their likelihood of being integrators?

Freidus claims that the experiences of career changers are qualitatively different from those of traditional route students. Career changers bring “professional skills and knowledge, a sense of commitment, and an articulated sense of agency” (Freidus, 1994, p. 1). In addition, they bring an imagined view of teaching that informs their classroom practice (Bullough & Knowles, 1990). Freidus explains that career changers are teachers by choice, borne out of thoughtful struggle over career aspirations and possibilities. They have assessed their priorities and have developed a

mission and vision of education. These teachers hold the profession in high esteem and are often surprised at the lack of status afforded to teachers (Freidus, 1994).

Indeed, many career changers hold high aspirations and have entered teaching with a strong mission and vision. Does this contrast, however, with first career teachers? It is likely that as many second career teachers enter the field of education due to convenience or other non-altruistic motivators as first career teachers. Certainly the experiences of second career teachers are more diverse than their first career counterparts, but they may not be as different in regard to their motivation to teach as Freidus suggests.

### *Strengths of Career Changers*

It is well established that career changers bring qualities, skills and strengths to the classroom that differ from those of first-career teachers (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990; Freidus, 1994). Chambers (2002) describes career changers' belief that life experience has provided them with personal qualities and skills that are useful in the classroom. Expert knowledge from a prior career as well as experience in handling complex tasks are deemed to be useful in the classroom.

Career changers bring interpersonal skill, insight into human nature and a well-developed sense of self to their new career, presumably developed through former work (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991). They also bring a commitment to the profession, maturity and professionalism (Freidus, 1994). "Late entry teachers into teacher education who make the transition into a teaching career have the potential to enrich and diversify the profession by bringing their wealth of experience from other occupations into schools and classrooms" (P. W. Richardson & Watt, 2005, p. 488).

The strengths that career changers bring to their teaching careers are important to the study of vocational identity because those skills and competencies offer possibilities of action for the individual within the new professional context. Unfortunately, the maturity and skills that career changers bring from their old careers are not always acknowledged or translated into classroom practice (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990). Constraints of communities of practice may actually impede the expression of relevant skills and competencies as career changers negotiate transformed identities in their new professional environments.

### *Motivation of Career Changers*

Much of the career change research has focused on motivation, transfer of skills from the first career, and the effect of nontraditional teachers on educational reform. Chambers finds through her interviews of ten teachers making a career change that these nontraditional teachers are “activated by both altruism and perceived personal benefit” and that they “believe they offer valuable skills from their previous careers; new perspectives, including a commitment to helping students apply their knowledge to the real world; and a willingness to make use of innovative pedagogies” (2002, p. 212).

Motivation is central to the formation of vocational identity in that it steers one’s professional trajectory toward an imagined identity. Serow (1993) finds that career changers are motivated by a desire to help students, to “give back” some good that they received from their own teachers, to reform education, and to engage in personally satisfying work. Chambers (2002) confirms Serow’s findings and also reports significant evidence of motivators related to practical benefits of teaching as a

career, including job security, regular pay and hours, and potential for leisure time. Mayotte (2003) finds that younger career changers name happiness and personal fulfillment as reasons for entering teaching while mid-life participants name social relevancy and responsibility as their reasons for making the career change. All of Mayotte's participants state that their previous career work influenced their teaching philosophy. Mallon uncovers the existence of *converts* who find retrospective motivation for career change as a way of making sense of an involuntary change (job termination, layoff, etc.) that resulted in an improved situation (1999). Mallon's *converts* exemplify the narrative process in which memories are re-remembered in light of a changing present situation, and past events are reconstructed to provide continuity of self and a sense of movement toward an imagined future.

### *Possible Identities*

We have seen how imagination and experience both play a central role in opening possible futures to teachers, but community also plays a significant role. What possible identities are offered to potential teachers through their teacher preparation and induction communities? Zukas and Malcolm (2002) conducted a review of the literature on adult and higher education to determine the various identities attributed to educators within this literature. They converge on a framework of five pedagogic identities. Within the present study, this framework is used to guide the analysis of the possible identities that are afforded or constrained by each community of practice. Analysis is not limited to these five identities, but the framework serves as a guide for interpretation. Zukas and Malcolm's five pedagogic identities are as follows: educator as critical practitioner, educator as psycho-

diagnostician and facilitator of learning, educator as reflective practitioner, educator as situated learner within a community of practice, and educator as assurer of organizational quality and efficiency/deliverer of service to agreed or imposed standards. The authors further identify dimensions along which each of these identities can be analyzed. These dichotomies include learning in a community vs. individualized learning, disciplinary community vs. pedagogic community, moral/social accountability vs. organizational accountability, learner-centered evaluation vs. objective measures of learning, focus on process vs. focus on product, content contested vs. content as given, social orientation vs. psychological orientation, educator as person in the world vs. anonymous/invisible educator, and learner as person in the world vs. anonymous/invisible learner.

In 2002, Malcolm and Zukas put their framework to the test, exploring the way in which their participants see themselves as adult educators and the influences on their development of pedagogic identities. Their analysis focuses on one of the dimensions described in the framework above, the contrast between two poles of disciplinary community and pedagogic community. Malcolm and Zukas find that even after 10 years, one participant does not feel he has made a complete transition into the pedagogic community; 30-40% of his identity is still vested in social work. Another participant describes himself in a transitional phase, only peripherally involved with several work communities. He states, “Ultimately it’s going to be ‘James’, and not teaching as a profession, that will identify me” (Malcolm & Zukas, 2002, p. 252). The authors argue that this state of transition is common among those pursuing boundaryless careers. The opposing poles of disciplinary and pedagogic

communities do not manifest as a clear dichotomy. Rather, the authors describe identities formed around discipline and pedagogy as “partial, fragmentary and impermanent”(Malcolm & Zukas, 2002, p. 253). This preliminary study casts doubt on the dichotomies that form the dimensions of teacher identity in Zukas and Malcolm’s (2002) framework, however, a dialectical view of these dimensions proves useful in this nondualist, sociocultural study of teacher identity development.

### Vocational Identity Development of Post-Career Military Personnel

The American armed forces represent the largest national institution that is governed by standardized operations, policies and procedures. Although persons retiring from the armed forces are not in any way seen as a homogeneous group, it cannot be denied that they have experienced similar institutional contexts within their military careers. Similarities in organizational and structural backgrounds give military personnel a history and experience of vocational culture that identifies them as a group.

This section explores the barriers that military personnel in general, and specific ex-military individuals in particular, face as they transition from the military. The first experience that is explored is that of becoming a student, perhaps after a lengthy time away from college. The particular challenges to identity that await military personnel as they make transitions to the civilian workforce are detailed next. Finally, literature is reviewed that specifically considers military personnel who make a transition to teaching.

### *Becoming a Student*

Gena Verdugo, a military coordinator at a community college in Arizona speaks of the transition from the military to college: “Your authority is not sewn on your shoulder and your finest moments displayed on your chest. And you are older, maybe considerably older, than many who will soon be your peers. Never mind that you have taken live fire; disarmed IED’s, maybe killed people in life and death situations. This is the first day of college” (Czetli, 2006). Verdugo’s job is to ease the transition of military personnel to the college setting. Verdugo reports that most veterans experience anxiety, founded on a misunderstanding by other students about who veterans are and what they have done. Verdugo explains that most college students expect ex-military to be rigid and inflexible, where in fact they have been specifically trained to flexibly respond to situations to meet a goal. Besides overcoming stereotypes, Verdugo claims that ex-military must deal with the fact that things in the civilian world are not as structured, and the individual is given more decisions to make. In addition, rules are more easily bent in a civilian world (Czetli, 2006). These challenges present feedback to veterans, encouraging a reconceptualization of identity within their new situation.

Interestingly enough, some military personnel may begin to rethink identity prior to separating from the military. Covert (2002) studies active duty military personnel who are also actively pursuing other careers, but he neglects to attend to the subjective aspects that accompany training for a new career while still active in a present career. Some persons may have difficulty negotiating this multimembership in divergent communities, and the experience may present a constraint to vocational

identity development. More study is needed to determine the ways in which online or distance education can facilitate community building and identity development and the ways in which military personnel may mentor one another in this transition.

### *Transition to the Civilian Workforce*

Early research reveals great difficulties for military personnel integrating into second careers. Biderman and Sharp report that several small-scale studies indicate “substantial problems of military-to-civilian transition” for a minority of retirees, with reservists faring worse than regulars (1968, p. 384). In citing a 1961 U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Forces study, Biderman and Sharp claim that veterans have difficulty translating the experiences and competencies they gain in the military into civilian terms for potential employers. In contrast, a survey of military personnel just prior to retirement shows high optimism about the ease of transition and a confidence that they will be able to use their skills and abilities in a second career. A follow-up survey shows that the retirees in fact admitted to a relatively low utilization of their military background in their civilian careers. Biderman and Sharp conclude, “These expectations of ready and successful transition were somewhat overoptimistic” (1968, p. 385). They find that retired military demonstrate a preference for affiliation with large bureaucratic organizations, suggesting a desire for continuity in workplace culture. The difficulty with this preference emerges when those organizations have a seniority system that rewards time in the organization rather than expertise. Union-negotiated salary tables for educators penalize the career changer who must start at an entry level regardless of years of providing military training to adults.

Barriers to successful integration of post-career military into civilian occupations include the aversions of many civilians to the very traits cultivated by the military, such as authoritarianism. In addition, political attitudes may influence an individual's fit to their occupational institution. Biderman (1973) reports that the large majority of military personnel retire between 20 and 30 years of service. This places them in their mid-forties upon retirement. Biderman notes that by this age, political ideals are fixed, with a homogeneity of political outlook (tending toward the right) among military retirees. He acknowledges that there are those who fear military influences on civil society within the institutions in which they find second careers.

Biderman and Sharp report while civilian and military personnel may be concerned about contamination from the opposite sector, "both realms may profit by the inevitable interpenetration" (1968, p. 397). According to the authors, civilian institutions can benefit from the military's universalistic ethics, innovative uses of technology, public service, national identification, and comfort with rules.

The studies cited above must be situated historically. At the time Biderman and Sharp were investigating the integration of veterans into the civilian workforce, the Vietnam Conflict was ending and veterans were returning to a less than supportive civilian population. Perhaps this explains the confrontational nature of the military/civilian relations that Biderman and Sharp uncover.

Historical placement cannot explain why though, even as late as 1995, some authors were making claims such as, "With respect to career possibilities, ex-military personnel will find that military expertise, tactical skills, and wartime experience are not usually marketable" (Helfand, 1995, p. 284). Current military personnel entering

college or the civilian workforce must still deal with considerable stereotypes surrounding their military identities and experiences.

Parents of schoolchildren as well as some administrators may hesitate to hire individuals who have been trained to kill or be killed. How does this training express itself in the classroom? They might wonder the extent to which former military personnel will use the classroom as a recruiting station. How will discipline be handled? School reformers fear that military personnel who are accustomed to a large, bureaucratic system will only serve to reinforce unnecessary bureaucracy in schools (Jenne, 1996).

Many corporations, however, are welcoming veterans with open arms. David Sierra, manager of military relations for BellSouth Corporation claims that his company finds veterans to be well disciplined, highly trained, strongly motivated, technically and professionally skilled, goal- and task-oriented, bilingual, mature, responsible, quick learners, flexible, confident, self-reliant, and resourceful. He claims that they handle stress with ease, make an immediate impact on the work environment, and are accustomed to working in teams (Pattak, 2005).

#### Post-Career Military as Second-Career Teachers

In 2002, first lady Laura Bush called on members of the military to answer the call to teach during a political visit to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. She states, “Members of the military have been tremendous role models – you possess the greatest in character, commitment and resolve, and today our children need those qualities more than ever” (as cited in Elliott, 2002). While the first lady’s remarks are obviously politically motivated, they raise important questions: What is the

experience of post-military career changers who become teachers? How successful are they in the classroom? What particular teaching identities do they enact?

In this section, literature will be reviewed which discusses military personnel who become teachers, their struggle to overcome stereotypes, and the evidence supporting and refuting the effectiveness of military personnel who become teachers.

### *Troops to Teachers Program*

The Troops to Teachers program was prompted in 1994 by military downsizing after Desert Storm. Originally it was the Department of Defense Teacher and Teacher's Aid Placement Assistance Program and was reauthorized by the Troops to Teachers Program Act of 1999. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provided for the continuation of Troops to Teachers (TTT).

The TTT program is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support of the Department of Defense (DANTES), but the Department of Education is responsible for program funding and oversight. The stated purpose of the TTT program is to recruit quality teachers for schools that serve low-income families, although not all TTT teachers elect to accept jobs in schools that qualify them for TTT stipends and bonuses. TTT assists eligible members of the Armed Forces to obtain certification and become elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, or vocational or technical teachers. Eligible members include military personnel who have retired or who have six or more years of service. Troops to Teachers encourages participants to accept employment in high needs school districts and high needs school houses by offering a stipend of up to \$5,000 for teacher certification expenses if a participant agrees to teach in a high needs district for three

years, and/or a bonus of \$10,000 for participants who teach for three years in a school serving a high percentage of students from low income families.

It is important to understand that Troops to Teachers is *not* a teacher preparation program. It is a service that provides eligible military personnel with financial assistance, counseling, and assistance related to certification requirements, routes to state certification, and employment leads. Troops to Teachers maintains thirty-three placement assistance offices staffed by state program managers who work directly with candidates as they transition to teaching. In addition, TTT maintains an interactive website at [www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com) that includes a job referral system, a mentor connection with other TTT participants by state, and a WebBoard for online discussions of TTT participants.

TTT participants may elect to follow various routes of teacher preparation. Feistritzer (2005b) found in her survey of TTT participants that roughly 40% earn their certification through an alternative preparation program, 30% complete a traditional graduate teacher education program, and 28% earn their certification through a traditional undergraduate teacher education program.

The national profile of TTT teachers reveals that TTT candidates seek employment at all educational levels: 47% become high school teachers, 33% middle school teachers, and 20% elementary school teachers. Thirty-seven percent of TTT participants belong to a minority racial-ethnic group. This is in contrast with the 15% of overall public school teachers who belong to a minority racial-ethnic group. Similarly, while only 18% of all public school teachers are men, 82% of TTT participants are men (Feistritzer, 2005b). Forty-five percent of TTT participants teach

in the critical needs areas of math, science, or special education. Of the TTT participants who began teaching between the years 1994 and 2003, eighty-two percent were still employed as teachers or school leaders in June 2005 (DANTES, 2005).

### *Encountering Stereotypes*

McCree (1993) acknowledges that suggestions have been made that there are problems in considering post-career military as a prospective pool of teacher candidates, but he contends that these concerns originate from stereotypes and are not supported by evidence. “The stereotypical, swaggering, macho disciplinarian, order-barking soldier has become virtually obsolete” (McCree, 1993, pp. 2-3). The percentage of military personnel specializing in combat occupations is currently less than 15 percent for enlisted personnel and about 12 percent for officers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Certainly one cannot make assumptions about the combat experiences of those who serve.

The educational background of military personnel is admittedly less than desired though – only 71 percent of Army recruits entered with a high school diploma in the 2007 budget year. The rest were required to take and pass the General Educational Development test. The Army’s goal is 90 percent high school graduates, but the branch has not been able to meet that goal since 2004 (Hefling, January 23, 2008). Military personnel are, however, encouraged to continue their education while on active duty. From 1980 to 1986, the number of Army personnel earning Bachelor’s degrees increased by 9% and the number earning Associate’s degrees increased by 26% (McCree, 1993).

McCree argues that ex-military bring skills in personnel management, resource allocation, technology, counseling, and training to the public sector. In addition, they tend to be more mature, self-confident, and higher achievers when compared with civilian college students. McCree states that ex-military career changers are suitable for teaching positions due to their ability to function under adverse conditions. He characterizes the group as having teaching experience, firsthand knowledge of multiculturalism, dedication to community, pride, self-confidence, and a desire to succeed. McCree reports, “Military retirees are a good source of quality teachers and alternative certification of this group can produce teachers whose performance level is equal to or better than first career teachers who enter teaching through traditional undergraduate programs” (1993, p. 9).

McCree’s study is better classified as a position paper. Research methods are not detailed, and terms such as “quality teacher” are left undefined. It is interesting to note, however, that McCree characterizes ex-military as having more skills that fall within a technical-rational perspective than skills that serve more humanistic purposes. To what extent do military trained personnel succeed in subjective aspects of teaching?

Two post-military teachers highlighted in *EdTech* speak of the stereotypes that they have encountered. They claim that teachers from traditional backgrounds don’t always welcome ex-military people; military personnel are direct and to the point, and that can frustrate those who promote a more collaborative approach (Joch, 2005). John Gantz, the former national director of Troops to Teachers explains, “There used to be quite a lot of resistance among school administrators who worried about

bringing a crusty old Army sergeant in to teach the kiddies, but we've been able to prove our people weren't just going in and shouting orders" (as cited in Joch, 2005, p. 27). Indeed, the leadership style exuded by most military personnel who become teachers is one of teamwork, camaraderie, and motivation to achieve rather than order-shouting and intimidation (Joch, 2005).

### *Evidence of Success in the Classroom*

In 2005, Feistritzer conducted a 38-item survey of 3,000 randomly selected Troops to Teachers (TTT) participants. 1,431 surveys were returned. Using self-report data obtained from surveys of other populations of teachers during the same year, Feistritzer is able to draw conclusions about how retired military personnel differ as a group when compared with alternatively certificated and all K-12 teachers. It is significant to note that Feistritzer's findings represent comparisons of self-report data with no basis for follow-up.

The respondents rate their military career as "very valuable" as they transitioned to teaching, although specific memories that contribute to their feeling of continuity between military life and teaching are not explored by the survey. Among the most valuable aspects of military life identified by the respondents include life experience, discipline, problem solving, leadership opportunities, and professionalism. The TTT teachers report that they feel competent in all areas of teaching, including subject matter, ability to motivate students, time management, classroom management, classroom discipline, organizing instruction, dealing with fellow teachers, and dealing with administrators. Fifty percent of TTT participants report feeling very competent in all of these areas when they first began teaching

compared with only one-fourth to one-third of K-12 teachers in general. A higher percentage of TTT teachers believe that all children can learn compared with the general population of teachers. The data clearly demonstrate the high self-efficacy of ex-military who become teachers, even if it does not indicate their success in the classroom or the way in which their military memories contribute to their evolving identities as teachers.

Feistritzer's respondents also believe in setting higher standards for students than do educators overall; more TTT teachers favor testing for grade-level promotion and stricter requirements for high school graduation. Likewise, fewer respondents agree that schools should adjust to student needs. More TTT teachers favor getting rid of mediocre and incompetent teachers and recruiting individuals from other careers into teaching. Respondents also view most problems facing teachers as less serious than teachers in general, especially federal mandates, class size, extra duties, paperwork, testing, discipline, and dealing with bureaucracy. TTT teachers report that they are very satisfied with every aspect of teaching (Feistritzer, 2005b). According to Feistritzer's data, TTT teachers tend toward a technical perspective that favors high standards, testing, and school hierarchy. It is unclear whether this tendency is related to the participants' pasts as military personnel, to the fact that participants are overwhelmingly male and therefore less inclined to feminine ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), or to another unknown factor.

The top three reasons that TTT teachers go into teaching are desire to work with young people, value or significance of education in society, and interest in the subject-matter field. These reasons correlate with Huebner's (1999a) call of the

student, call of the institution, and call of the content. TTT teachers rank life experience as most valuable in developing competence to teach. Second is one's own teaching experience, followed by content courses. K-12 teachers in general rank one's own teaching experience first, followed by other teachers/colleagues and, third, life experience (Feistritzer, 2005b).

Owings, Kaplan, Nunnery, Marzano, Myran and Blackburn (2005) conducted a similar self-report survey of Troops to Teachers participants during 2005 with a response rate of 61 percent, but their survey focuses on the instructional and management strategies employed by ex-military teachers. Their results indicate that TTT teachers feel that their strongest areas of preparation include emphasizing the importance of effort with students, asking students questions that help them recall content, providing students with direct links to previous knowledge, and recognizing students who are making observable progress toward learning goals. The relative weakest areas of preparation include asking students to keep track of their own performance, prescribing assignments that require students to construct metaphors and analogies, giving assignments that require students to generate and test hypotheses, and ending units by asking students to assess themselves relative to the learning goals. The respondents rate themselves as very well prepared in the area of classroom management. Ex-military teachers feel that their military experiences helped them with organization for time and resource management, discipline for self and students, working with diverse populations, collaboration, leadership skills and motivational skills.

A related survey of administrators and supervisors of Troops to Teachers participants overcomes the limitation of the self-report surveys discussed above. Sixty-nine percent of the ex-military teachers who responded to the first survey also had their supervisors respond. This survey of school administrators and supervisors indicates that ex-military personnel “performed better in all instructional areas than traditionally prepared teachers with comparable teaching experience” (Owings et al., 2005, p. 39). Administrators rate TTT teachers highest in the areas of emphasizing the importance of effort with students, recognizing students who are making observable progress toward learning goals, assigning tasks that require students to practice important skills and procedures, and asking questions that provide students with direct links to previous knowledge. Administrators give relatively weaker ratings in the areas of asking students to keep track of their own performance on learning goals, asking students to represent new content in nonlinguistic ways, and asking students to construct verbal or written summaries of new content. Administrators note the strongest areas for overall teaching effectiveness for TTT participants are as follows: follows school regulations, policies and procedures; has a positive impact on student achievement; works well with other teachers and staff; and independently handles student discipline problems.

These surveys present positive data in support of recruiting post-career military into American classrooms. It appears that these individuals are making transitions that are translating into effective teaching as measured by school administrators and supervisors. None of these surveys, however, explores the process by which military personnel effectively make the transition to teaching. What

memories facilitate their transition? What imagined futures guide them? To what extent do TTT participants view their pedagogical work with children as interdependent with other educators, parents, and the children themselves? To what extent do TTT participants experience a sense of belonging in their educational communities?

Eric Combs, Ohio teacher of the year in 2006, claims that his twenty years in the Air Force prepared him for success as a classroom teacher. He jokes, “Teaching is not unlike troops. We’d like you to do the impossible in the shortest period of time – sounds like special ops to me!” (Combs, 2007b) He then becomes serious as he explains that there is an academy of life. Combs asserts that when teachers bring their past and their skills into the classroom, “suddenly we have lively classrooms.” He recommends to other military career changers that they “overcome” their success and importance, but remember their experiences (Combs, 2007a). Combs’ statement points to the need for one’s memories but highlights the equal need to work in collaborative interdependence with others in order to achieve success in the classroom.

### *A Dissenting Voice*

Not all of the research on soldiers in the classroom is as positive as the surveys presented above. Jenne (1996) uses a life history methodology to conduct four case studies of second career teachers with prior military experience. His intent is to examine the perspectives that post-military career changers bring to teaching to determine if these conceptions have been influenced by their military and other career experiences. Jenne concludes that the traits that make military career changers

attractive to school administrators are the very traits that predispose them to be conserving influences that maintain the status quo and frustrate educational change. Jenne determines that second career military apply their knowledge of the military institution to education uncritically. “As the participants entered schools, there was a feeling on both their own parts and the parts of those with whom they worked that experiences in institutional contexts perceived to be similar gave these participants the cultural capital to fit and function in schools without major dissonance to either their own perspectives or to current school culture” (Jenne, 1996, p. 18). Jenne argues that this perfect fit makes post-military teachers unlikely to prompt or support educational reform. Furthermore, Jenne implicates the apprentice model of teacher education that most career changers encounter as only reinforcing traditional, hierarchical views of teachers and teaching. Jenne asserts that the perspectives of second career teachers are less amenable to change than those of first career teachers.

Jenne (1996) uses a life history approach to uncover the emic perspectives of four case study participants. Within his paper, he presents the four cases and then attempts a cross case comparison. Unfortunately, not enough information is shared with the reader to determine whether or not Jenne is successful in uncovering the emic perspectives of his participants. In the first case study, for example, no quotes are given from the participant, and no explanation is given for the perplexing title of the case, *The Coaching Santa Claus*. No mention is made of the participant’s coaching activities, nor of his gift-giving or other Santa Claus-type behavior. The other case studies are similarly incomplete. The paper likewise presents a biased reading of literature cited. For example, Jenne cites Crow, Levine and Nager (1990)

as saying that the positive traits that career changes presumably bring to teaching may be overstated and false. In actuality, the closest that Crow, Levine and Nager come to saying anything negative about the traits of career changers is that career changers need help “identify[ing] those past skills that are relevant to teaching and creat[ing] opportunities for them to use those skills” (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990, p. 218).

While this study’s findings are suspect due to methodological problems, the criticisms leveled at military career changers are essential to consider. Teacher preparation must respond to these and other criticisms in designing meaningful programs of teacher education for these career changers.

### *Summary*

Through this entire literature review, only four studies were located that specifically look at post-career military as second-career teachers. Two of these are large-scale, national surveys (Feistritzer, 2005b; Owings et al., 2005) and one may be described best as a position paper (McCree, 1993). The fourth uses a life history methodology to develop four case studies of ex-military teachers with a cross case comparison, although the findings of this study remain suspect.

This review leaves much research to be desired. While excellent examples of research have been located that consider career change in general and career change to teaching in particular, no credible studies that provide an insider’s account of career change exist for the population of post-career military who become teachers. In addition, the concept of teacher identity as defined by a sociocultural perspective has not been explored at all within the population of those who have made a career change from the military to teaching.

The present study attempts to fill the gap identified in the literature by conducting a carefully designed study of two individuals making the transition from the military to teaching. A sociocultural perspective is used, and attention is given to the communities of practice in which the individuals engage and the more subjective aspects of being that contribute to vocational identity development.

Before examining the methodology of the present study, however, it is important to first consider the implications of the research on career change and vocational identity development for teacher preparation.

### Career Change Research: Implications for Teacher Preparation

Bullough and Knowles (1990) acknowledge that novice teachers must establish a vocational identity and build self esteem as part of their transition to teaching. What does the research have to say about ways that teacher preparation programs can facilitate vocational identity development, especially for the career changer?

This section offers a discussion of five major recommendations for components of teacher education that are expected to provide benefits to second-career teacher candidates in their formation of vocational identity. It will not address the issue of teacher education program *type*, but will sidestep the issue in an effort to bring forth the structures and activities that are expected to be helpful to career changers. Zeichner argues, “Instead of continuing the debate over which is better, 4- or 5-year programs, undergraduate programs or graduate programs, traditional programs or alternative programs, it would be more useful to focus on gaining a

better understanding of the components of good teacher education regardless of the structural model of the program” (2003, p. 506).

The act of sidestepping the issue of program type, however, does not concede that teacher education is irrelevant. Each of the recommendations outlined below is tied directly to teacher preparation. Clearly, teacher preparation is needed for career changers. Grossman highlights this need for professional preparation, asserting that content knowledge by itself is not enough to make a teacher. In her study of six beginning English teachers, three who had no professional preparation, Grossman finds that those without teacher preparation lack a framework for student learning and tend to expect their students to be as knowledgeable and interested in the subject matter as they remember themselves being (1989). These expectations are problematic for the beginning teachers. The discussion of *Changing Conceptions* below presents specific structures within a teacher preparation program that can be helpful to career changers in rethinking their expectations.

One may wonder why it is necessary to think about designing teacher preparation with the specific needs of career changers in mind. Wouldn't they benefit from the same improvements in teacher education designed for first-career teachers? Freidus and Krasnow (1991) claim that career changers need to be given a differentiated teacher education program. They conclude that where a program specifically designed for second career teachers is available, career changers are aided in rapid development as teachers (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991). With the pool of second-career teachers expanding, this consideration is an important one, and teacher education must provide attention to the specific needs of career changers.

Within the literature, there are five major recommendations for teacher preparation that emerge from the unique needs of the career changer. These include providing continuity between a first career and a subsequent one, fostering a professional support community for the aspiring teacher, helping the new teacher navigate the novice role, providing assistance in overcoming pitfalls, and working diligently to give second-career teachers opportunities to change and refine their conceptions of teaching. Each of these actions will facilitate vocational identity development *as teacher* for the new candidates.

### *Providing Continuity*

These Days

whatever you have to say, leave  
the roots on, let them  
dangle

And the dirt

Just to make clear  
where they come from (Olson, 2003, p. 117)

Research on career changers resoundingly advocates the use of active methods for providing continuity between a career changer's past career and the present endeavor. Preservice and inservice teacher preparation programs must assist the candidate in making explicit links between the skills learned in a first career and teaching (Chambers, 2002; Freidus & Krasnow, 1991). "It is important for second career teachers to have opportunities to discover how personal biography influences and shapes classroom practice, forums in which they can experiment with new ideas, and repeated opportunities within safe havens to practice and construct new

understandings about the meaning and enactment of emancipatory education”  
(Freidus, 1994, p. 6).

Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) find that teacher candidates often feel slighted that their past skills are not acknowledged as relevant; some even feel that mentor teachers are suspicious of their desire to infuse the curriculum with real-world applications of classroom content taken from their previous careers. The authors find that career changers who see continuity between their past careers and teaching are more likely to negotiate the novice role successfully (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990).

Mayotte posits, “Recognition and acknowledgement of previously developed competencies is critical in aiding [a career changer’s] transition to teaching” (2003, p. 683). Mayotte concludes that mentors of career changers must acknowledge the influences of previous careers and build upon them. Imel (2003) considers it extremely important that educators help individuals connect their career with other aspects of life, including a past career.

In order to provide this form of continuity, teacher educators, supervisors and mentors should take the time to get to know the career histories and understand the experiences of the second-career teacher candidates. Mentor and supervisor training should include a discussion of ways to help a career changer find continuity between past experiences and classroom practices and methods for unpacking candidate thinking about these continuities. As Horton and Freire state, “If you break the connection between the starting point, their experience and what they know themselves, if you get to the place where what they know can’t help them understand what you’re talking about, then you lose them” (1991, p. 152). Grumet argues

powerfully, “Supervision that is alien to the teacher’s own experience is burdened with . . . hostility and defensiveness” (Winter 1979, p. 254).

A constraint to identity development is a lack of response by those in authority within a community to the presence of a newcomer. Individuals whose meanings are not taken seriously by the community or who are dismissed as novices with no insight to offer will eventually develop an identity of non-participation that gradually becomes marginalization (Wenger, 1998). In addition, Lave (1993) finds that when knowledge is commoditized and rewarded only with grades or paychecks rather than serious consideration by community members as a source of meaning, negative identities are generated and institutionally subversive communities form.

But it is not enough to acknowledge only a career changer’s pre-existing skills and competencies; teacher educators must help candidates make connections with their memories of self. Pinar and Grumet (1976) argue for the application of *currere*, or autobiographical dialogue, as a way to engage the candidate and encourage meaning-making that engages memories, beliefs, and imagined futures. *Currere* is curriculum as conversation. It “provides a strategy for students of curriculum to study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction” (Pinar, 2004, p. 35). *Currere* includes classroom observations and journal writing that gradually allows the teacher to sustain the dialectic on his own through reflective writing. It is a method that shows promise for providing continuity as well as fostering vocational identity development through an understanding of self in relation to others. Coles (1989) similarly argues for the power of story as a tool for teaching, learning, and becoming.

### *Fostering Community*

Second-career teachers claim that adequate support is essential to their success in teaching (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001). A career changer's need for support "may be even greater than those who enter teaching directly from college" (Freidus, 194, p. 5). Resta, Huling and Rainwater note that older career changers often enter teacher preparation with defined expectations for support needed to make a transition into teaching (2001). Because these teacher candidates have experienced training and induction in other careers that are most often more collaboratively oriented than teaching, they feel a strong desire to participate within a supportive community of practice.

The support needed for career teachers to make the successful transition to teaching is needed into the induction years. Two troops-turned-teachers interviewed for *EdTech* magazine report that one of the biggest frustrations in their transition is the lack of ongoing professional development for teachers. They claim that this is a sharp contrast to the military where training and retraining are a regular element of work life. Ongoing professional development and support are sorely missed by these career changers (Joch, 2005). Career changers should not feel abandoned as they enter their own classrooms for the first time.

Freidus (1994) uses case study methodology to study the transitions of three cohorts of career changers and two cohorts of both second career and traditional entry teachers. Freidus concludes that a combination of opportunities for conversation between the career changer and his or her supervisor paired with weekly forums for peer exchange facilitated by a supervisor is most effective in meeting the needs of

career changers. Other studies also find that involvement in a conference group supports commitment to the teaching profession (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990; Mayotte, 2003). The timing of these peer meetings, however, must be sensitive to the family responsibilities common to older students (Mayotte, 2003).

In addition to regular conversations with a supervisor and weekly peer forums, career changers also may benefit from being paired with a first or second year teacher who has successfully transitioned to teaching from another career (Freidus, 1994). This strategy is proven in the business world. At Georgia-Pacific, one of the top 25 military employers, counseling is offered to post-career military by employees who are veterans themselves. A company spokesperson explains, “They can relate the most to the military structure and culture the new hires are leaving and talk about how that differs in terms of career-pathing. It helps to bounce your experiences off someone who’s come from a very similar environment. That helps you adapt” (Pattak, 2005). The national Troops to Teachers website provides a forum for beginning teachers to communicate with others who have made a military to teaching transition. Unfortunately, this forum is not publicized and is underused.

Gibson and Barron find that even those mentors who have not experienced a career change can serve as models for making changes in work identity (2003). Allen finds in her 2007 study that career changers need to be exposed to information about school routines and the culture of schools, have opportunities to share their stories with other teachers, and have experiences that enable them to feel comfortable in the faculty room and help them take part in the negotiation of meaning in the school. Mentors can assist newcomers in navigating the culture of schooling. Allen suggests

that exposing teacher candidates to this culture prior to their making a decision to teach may “produce teachers who view themselves as teachers more quickly as well as more strongly” (Allen, 2007, p. 235). Mentoring has the potential to be powerful, but to be effective, mentors may need training in adult learning theory, and, as stated above, be provided with specific guidance for fostering a sense of continuity between teaching and previous work.

Imel (2003) makes the following recommendations for addressing the career transition needs of older adults: provide a diverse array of support structures to meet the diversity in this group, provide role models, conceptualize career as belonging to an individual, and present change and instability as normal. Attention to aspects of the change process in the supervision, mentoring, and peer support structures appears to be especially important for career changers.

Sociocultural theory has much to say on the development of community that fosters identity development and the value of tension as newcomers join a community of practice. A major tenet of sociocultural theory is the negotiability of meaning. Meanings and appropriate practices are constantly being negotiated within an active community of practice. Tensions *should* arise as a natural part of this negotiation; new teachers are not expected to simply “fit in.” Smagorinsky, Cook and Moore, through their case study of Sharon, a student teacher, make the claim that tensions which require an intellectual resolution within a social situation are more productive in forming vocational identity than the simple practice of relational accommodation. Relational accommodation is defined as a teacher’s deference to more powerful forces in the environment, while socially contextualized intellectual resolution is

loosely described as philosophical contrast or conflict that the prospective teacher works to resolve (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Moore, 2004). The case of Sharon clearly demonstrates that tensions are not evidence of *failed* identity formation. In fact, tensions often accompany growth and should actually be viewed as enablers of vocational identity development.

Sociocultural theorists Coldron and Smith (1999) recommend that teachers be involved in professional communities characterized by trust and shared commitments for the purpose of engaging in moral questioning. Putnam and Borko (2000) discuss ways to create critical discourse communities within schools. Wenger (1998) in particular explores the communities that support learning and identity development from a sociocultural perspective. He explains that a community can enable identities of participation by incorporating its members' pasts into its histories and allowing those members to contribute to practice, by allowing participation that exists in the context of a valued future and by endeavoring to acknowledge the multimemberships of its members in other communities. Wenger's comments stress the need for an inclusive nature within a community in which newcomers and their histories are taken into the fold.

Lave and Wenger (1991) explore the concept of community by looking at examples of apprenticeship. They present cases of midwives, tailors, quartermasters, butchers and nondrinking alcoholics to bring forth the importance of access to community practices, the elements of productive mentorship and the importance of responsibility. Their discussion also highlights the use of ceremony or ritual to sustain the community and induct new members. Lave and Wenger describe identity

formation as coming about through action within communities of practice. “Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53).

Sociocultural theory promotes the idea that in a community of practice, individuals are interdependent. Communities that include trust, questioning, supportive mentorships, shared responsibility, full access and storytelling may enable the development of vocational identity. Sociocultural theory recommends apprenticeships within learning communities where modes of belonging are encouraged and tensions are jointly negotiated. Sociocultural theory, however, denies the ability of a context to be overtly designed to facilitate learning. Wenger asserts, “*Learning cannot be designed, it can only be designed for* – that is, facilitated or frustrated” (1998, p. 229, emphasis in original).

### *Navigating the Novice Role*

Interestingly, the novice role presents a two-pronged challenge for career changers. First, they must deal with feelings of inadequacy and incompetence that accompany career change. These feelings may be especially uncomfortable for career changers who experienced success in a prior job. Secondly, career changers must embrace and assert their novice role to ensure that they receive the support and consideration that is offered to first-career teachers.

Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) identify the central problem of taking on a novice role for second-career students entering teaching. They find that students are uncomfortable with their own feelings of incompetence after having experienced a

job in which they were successful. Freidus also notes that career changers may experience inadequacy that is related to their novice status (1994).

Career changers must, in fact, embrace and assert their novice status. Much research indicates that career changers do not always receive the support they need because they are older and are viewed not as novices, but as those with prior experience. Some career changers find that their mentors believe that their age and prior success in a career exempt them from novice standing. These mentors may not explain teaching fundamentals because they do not perceive the need to do so. Friedus (1992) finds that male career changers experience a lack of support from their mentor teachers during their internships. Their cooperating teachers state that they do not wish to appear condescending by offering advice to an individual with extensive prior experience and success in a previous career (Freidus, 1992).

Madfes (1990) finds that first-career novices make an easier transition to teaching than second-career novices. Due to their younger age and lack of experience, school personnel view first-career teachers as “new” teachers. Career changers are viewed as newcomers to the school, but not necessarily as novice teachers, so expectations are higher and less support is offered to them. To compound the situation, career changers also have to make adjustments in their expectations of work. Mayotte (2003) also confirms that older case study participants, while awarded a certain respect by parents, are not always treated as novices by their colleagues and administrators. Some even note struggles over the age difference between themselves and their mentors.

Teacher education programs can support the career changer by providing information about the novice role and the expectations for new teachers. Mentor training should include overt identification of second-career novices as *new* teachers who need support. In addition, supervisors and school liaisons must play a critical role in presenting the older teacher candidate to administrators and other school personnel as neophytes, not simply newcomers.

### *Overcoming Pitfalls*

Lortie describes the apprenticeship of observation in which teacher candidates view classroom experiences through the lens of their own experiences as students (1975). McDiarmid concludes that even with a focused effort to convince teacher candidates that the folkways of teaching should be abandoned, the effort can be likened to severing one strand of a spider web of “remarkable resilience” (1990). Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann call this the familiarity pitfall. They also name two other pitfalls that plague beginning teachers, the two-worlds pitfall, in which teacher education students must simultaneously achieve as a *student* in a teacher preparation program and as a *teacher* in a classroom; and the cross-purposes pitfall, in which a mentor teacher is primarily responsible for the achievement of children in the classroom, not for the success of the novice teacher (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). Freidus (1994) also notes that some mentor teachers are too busy to provide adequate support to their interns.

The familiarity pitfall will be addressed in the following section titled *Changing Conceptions*. Overcoming the familiarity pitfall is complicated and requires the active participation of teacher candidates.

The two-worlds pitfall is perhaps the largest constraint to vocational identity development (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). The two-worlds pitfall develops when an individual is simultaneously attempting to participate in two divergent learning communities. Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann use the example of a student intern who is urged to appropriate different pedagogical tools in university courses and in his student teaching placement. The authors describe the differences in role that a prospective teacher is expected to play in these two settings. This “two-worlds” experience constrains the development of vocational identity because individuals in this situation must reconcile conflicting forms of individuality and competence as defined in different communities. Wenger (1998) claims that reconciliation of this type may be the biggest challenge of identity development. Students may resort to impression management, in which they simply give each supervisor or instructor what they want in the form of inauthentic actions that are not integrated with vocational identity.

Smagorinsky, Cook and Moore (2004) find that even when the same term is used to refer to a conception of teaching across the “two-worlds,” the different goals and tools that are in use in different settings support very different conceptions. Diverse approaches reduce the chance of individuals completely understanding a concept or approach. Instead, the individuals may think that they understand a concept when they actually only have a partial understanding.

Pea (1987) highlights the sociocultural problem of moving from one context to another. Particular transfers of learning from the learning context to a new situation are never intrinsically “appropriate,” but only as judged against a set of conventions

reflecting the values of the culture to which the learner belongs. Elements perceived by the thinker as common between two situations are “read” as texts with multiple interpretations. Contexts are not defined in terms of physical features of settings but in terms of the meanings of these settings constructed by the people present. Pea’s (1987) conceptualization is significant for the study of teacher candidates who must negotiate multimemberships in university courses as well as school internship experiences, especially when these divergent contexts lack shared meanings.

The two-worlds pitfall and the cross-purposes pitfall can be minimized through careful structuring of the teacher education program. Requiring a career changer to develop simultaneous professional identities as *student* and *teacher* is overwhelming and unnecessary. Teacher preparation that is aligned with school system priorities and that requires student assignments that are directly related to classroom practice can help diminish this difficulty. Teacher preparation should attempt to align its expectations for students with school expectations for new teachers. The more that the professional identities of *student* and *teacher* converge, the less difficulty a career changer will have in negotiating a coherent vocational identity.

The cross-purposes pitfall also may be disabled by a reconceptualization of the goals of teacher education. Teacher preparation that attempts to increase K-12 student achievement and growth will not operate at cross-purposes with the partnering school or classroom teacher. By allowing the intern and supervisor to take on roles that support the efforts of the teacher of record in the classroom, all partners will be able to work together to achieve a common goal, all the while challenging one

another to strengthen teaching practices. For a thorough discussion of intern and supervisor roles that support student achievement, see Roth and Tobin's (2002) discussion of the reconceptualization of student teaching and supervision as co-teaching.

### *Changing Conceptions*

Kennedy explores the content of teachers' preconceptions and concludes that the central task of teacher learning must not be the development of skills nor the acquisition of theories but the changing of conceptions of teaching (1997). She reviews the psychological research related to the malleability of conceptions and concludes that this process will be extremely difficult, for "teachers' conceptions fit many of the criteria for resistance to change: They are formed early in life, they are connected to teachers' identities, and they form highly interconnected systems of ideas" (Kennedy, 1997, pp. 12-13). For career changers, these conceptions also may have been reinforced over years in a different job setting.

As has been detailed, many career changers enter teaching with a transformative view of education. Unfortunately, many career changers cannot imagine what their goals would look like in practice. They need to be assisted in developing a model of transformative education. Freidus strongly asserts that a constructivist approach is needed to call forth knowledge and experience, critically examine it, reconfigure it if necessary, and then build upon it (Freidus, 1994; Freidus & Krasnow, 1991):

Second career teachers appear to thrive in environments in which they are allowed to experience, reconstruct and reflect. . . . Adults, like children, learn best when there is acknowledgment of and respect for who they are and what

they know, when they can use what they know as a basis for building new insights, when they are allowed and encouraged to become partners in the dialogue of their own learning. (Freidus, 1994, p. 7)

Research finds that career changers are resistant to challenging the fundamental authority structures in schools and society (Freidus, 1994). They need opportunities for questioning, rewriting histories, and imagining the relationship between authority and education. To support this imagining, teacher preparation must reconfigure the role of supervisor as a facilitator of knowledge and expertise in others rather than as an hierarchical authority.

In the area of changing conceptions, research on traditional-entry teacher education students is helpful. Grossman explores ways to overcome the apprenticeship of observation within the context of a teacher education course. She proposes inviting students “backstage” to reflect on the teaching decisions that are being made by their professors. In addition, she offers overcorrection and use of extreme or outlier case studies as productive avenues for challenging the assumptions of teacher candidates (Grossman, 1991).

While not specifically focused on career changers, the work of Russell and Munby (1991) on reframing is instructive when considering the types of support that second career teachers need. All teachers come to teaching with a particular way of seeing their students, their content, and the interactions that occur in their classroom. Reflection-in-action sometimes results in sudden changes in a teacher’s way of hearing or seeing what is happening in the classroom or school. Schön calls this shift *reframing* (1991). Different framings open up different problem spaces for people to explore (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith,

McDonald & Zeichner, 2005). Russell and Munby (1991) concede that while reframing cannot be forced, it may be assisted through reflection on reflection-in-action and by the use of productive metaphors. Community-held metaphors and teaching stories play a significant role in the type of seeing that a new teacher practices and the teaching identities that are taken up. Individual experiential learning is transformed into community property when lessons of experience are shared as narratives (L. S. Shulman, 1998).

Smagorinsky, Cook and Johnson (2003) recommend structuring teacher education in a way that offers the best chance for this type of reframing. They recommend establishing the interdependence of the rules learned through formal instruction and the experiential lessons learned through practice so that concepts may remain in an ongoing state of reconsideration and redefinition. This process would require establishing an overarching concept (such as identity development) to guide a teacher education program, with integrated courses and cohort groups. In this structure, practical settings that enable continuity from university to workplace become essential. These settings could include induction programs, small teacher collaboratives, in-service programs, electronic discussions, or partnerships.

Certain actions and interactions within a community encourage newcomers to grapple with identity issues and negotiate engagement in the new context. Levine and Moreland (1991) focus on the use of common frames of reference within a group to develop shared thoughts and customs. Through interactions around routines, accounts, jargon, rituals and symbols, a shared understanding is negotiated. This suggestion points to the need for time for a community to engage in joint work and

critical discussion so that novice teachers have the opportunity to negotiate meaning, appropriate conceptual tools, and recognize their interdependence with others in the community. Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner and Cain (1998) report that an individual's emotional involvement with the projects of the community and a sense of responsibility toward the community and its goals facilitate the development of identity.

Each of these recommendations for teacher preparation deals directly with the content and structure of the preparation program, but experience also has shown that the recruitment process often serves to attract certain types of teacher candidates and repel others. The director of the Texas Troops to Teachers office reported at the 2006 annual Troops to Teachers conference that military training teaches an individual to establish a mission, analyze options, eliminate uncertainty, decide on a course of action, and act. The more uncertainty an individual retiring from the military perceives within a teacher preparation program, she reports, the less likely he or she will be to select teaching as a second career (Kettler & Reynolds, 2006). This creates an issue to explore, as teaching is not an endeavor of certainties. How might teacher educators use imagination to nurture the call to teach as well as allay fears regarding the uncertainty of the profession?

Pinar's edited book about Maxine Greene is subtitled "I am . . . not yet." (Pinar, 1998). This quote is taken from a speech Greene made in 1996 in which she acknowledges that life is a continuous process of self-actualization for those who are open to life's questions. Teacher education must be structured to facilitate the asking

of these questions, thus promoting vocational identity development for career changers.

### Conclusion

It appears that career change is fast becoming a way of life for many people in America's increasingly boundaryless society. The study of career change in general and career change to teaching in particular is important for understanding the negotiation of vocational identity within ever-changing work environments. Military personnel who are transitioning to teaching provide a convenient group to study due to their similar institutional and structural backgrounds and their consistent interpersonal experiences of rank. Military personnel who become teachers are also more racially diverse and represent more males than the overall population of American teachers (Feistritzer, 2005b; United States Government Accountability Office, 2006), so they represent a pool of highly underrepresented candidates. Determining the structures and contexts that facilitate their successful transition to teaching is a highly desired outcome of future research on military career transitions to teaching.

Chapter One revealed that the word *career* etymologically implies a crossing, specifically the journey of the sun across the sky. Greek mythology relates the tale of Phaeton, son of Helios, who attempted to drive his father's golden sun chariot across the sky, determined to prove himself regardless of the consequences. Sadly, Phaeton found that he could not control the immortal stallions that pulled the chariot, and the boy was killed instantly by Zeus' lightning before the careening chariot could destroy the Earth.

While career changers may not be as arrogant as Phaeton, they are most definitely driven to prove themselves. Handing them the metaphorical reins and expecting them to find their way across career transitions without guidance is foolhardy. Studying the process of career change provides teacher educators with knowledge that can be harnessed to make the career changer's journey not only safe but professionally rewarding and personally transformative.

## Chapter 3: Research Design

### Study Approach

Researchers have long debated the most effective methods to use in conducting human science research. More recently, some qualitative theorists have begun to assert, however, that the worldview from which a study is designed is of utmost importance (Christians, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Guba and Lincoln state, “Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). It is for this very reason that much of Chapter One was spent detailing the theoretical perspective of sociocultural theory. While sociocultural theory itself is not a worldview, it is representative of the participatory paradigm (see Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Basic ontological and epistemological features of this paradigm are outlined below. Finally, methodological implications of this worldview are explored.

#### *Ontology*

The ontological question asks, what is there that can be known? What is knowable? Ontology essentially deals with “the assumptions one is willing to make about the *nature* of reality”(Guba, 1990, p. 86).

Ontological questions have been answered in different ways during different historical eras. Medieval times found reality defined as mental and material substance. The Newtonian era viewed the “real” as being made of atoms and separate

particles. Today, "Nature is understood to be relational, ecological, and interdependent. Reality is constituted by events and relationships rather than separate substances or separate particles" (Barbour, 1990, p. 107).

Chapter One outlines the ontology underlying a sociocultural perspective in the section titled *Sociocultural Theory*. A participatory paradigm espouses an ontological belief in a participative reality that is both subjective and objective, co-created by the self and others within an evolving situation (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This ontology is directly in line with sociocultural theory which stresses the relational aspects of a reality that is negotiated between individuals with the mediation of conceptual and practical tools.

A participatory ontology has serious implications for the way in which a researcher enters a site and forms relationships with participants. In addition, it informs the way conceptions of ethics and rigor are addressed. Parker Palmer aptly states, "Our complicity in world making is a source of awesome and sometimes painful responsibility — and a source of profound hope for change" (2000, p. 78). A participatory ontology guides the design of this research study and my relationship with co-researchers.

### *Epistemology*

Epistemology answers the question, what is the relationship of the knower to the known? The answer to this question relies on ontological assumptions that define reality. While ontology defines what exists, epistemology details what can be known about what exists.

A participatory paradigm espouses an extended epistemology that includes experiential and practical ways of knowing in addition to propositional ways of knowing (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Knowledge is co-created in participatory interdependence with others, and meaning is negotiated in community. Wolcott describes a process whereby he “seek[s] to understand a social world that we are continuously in the process of constructing” (1990, p. 147). There is a refusal of foundational standards. Instead, agreements about meaning are based on community negotiations and dialogue that is created through community narrative (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The focus is more on understanding meaning than on discovering one truth.

A participatory epistemology likewise has implications for the processes used in research. Because knowledge can be known in experiential and practical ways, attention must be paid to participation, not just to a person’s conceptualizations regarding propositional knowledge. In addition, because knowledge must be negotiated in community, a certain relationship between researcher and co-researcher must be cultivated.

### *Methodology*

Discussions of methodology center on how one can go about finding out things. How one answers this question depends on one’s ontological and epistemological beliefs (Guba, 1990). Any discussion of methodology is lacking without sufficient attention to the paradigm from which the researcher operates. A participatory methodology must be responsive to the ontological and epistemological concerns raised by this worldview. Because meaning is negotiated in community,

Lincoln and Guba (2000) recommend a collaborative approach that is practically oriented. Participatory research calls for new ways of viewing research subjects and theory building. Participants in this study function as co-researchers, sharing in decisions made about the implementation of the project.

Theory is traditionally viewed metaphorically as a construction project. Researchers *design a framework, build* theory, and provide *support* for that theory. Laurel Richardson (2000) offers a new metaphor for theory that is more useful for participatory research: Theory as story. Collaborating with co-researchers to tell a community story *is* theory-generation. This theory makes use of setting, characters, conflict, plot, foreshadowing, themes, and metaphors, just as a good story does. In the current study, narrative analysis, theme analysis and hermeneutical writing will provide the methods for generating a communal theory-story about vocational identity. A hermeneutical research journal provides a written account of my dialogue with the various texts encountered in the study. Narrative analysis and theme analysis are used to open doors to meaning; any interpretations generated through these methods are then engaged as texts through hermeneutic writing.

Explicating the methods of making meaning that I use in the proposed study is a difficult task. As van Manen explains, “The critical moments of inquiry are ultimately elusive to systematic explication. Such moments may depend more on the interpretive sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent of the human science researcher” (2003, p. 34). This is in part due to the nature of interpretation itself.

Interpretation occurs continually. One cannot imagine *not* interpreting, or even defining what it would mean to listen or speak without interpretation. The interpretation that occurs in daily moments, however, is not the same as the type of thoughtful, focused dialogue of which Gadamer speaks in *Truth and Method* (Gadamer, 1960/1997). Gadamer outlines an approach that centers on a dialectic of question and answer. He explains that interpretation “is not really a beginning” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 472). The researcher does not sit with a text and begin to interpret it. Rather, the conversation is already in progress. One finds that the text itself poses questions. Interpretation is simply entering the conversation and remaining open to the event of understanding that is able to emerge through a dialectic of honest questions and answers.

Gadamer specifically identifies the goal of allowing the text to speak *for* us. This is in direct contrast to allowing a text to speak *to* us as researchers. By transposing ourselves, we find ways not only to engage in conversation with text in a back-and-forth format, but we also work ourselves into the text and come to understand how the words of the text can be our words. This is how truth is generated. When we understand how a text can speak for us, we have found a truth that has meaning for our lives. We truly understand when the meaning of the text becomes our own (Moss, 2005).

The dialectic exchange of question and answer about which Gadamer speaks is a form of philosophical hermeneutics (R. Palmer, 1969). Hermeneutics originally referred only to the interpretation of sacred texts, but in contemporary human science research, the texts that can be engaged in a hermeneutical manner include documents,

social customs, cultural myths, photographs, and anything else that can be “read” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Hermeneutics is a dialogic study of the meaning of text whereby researchers engage in question and answer to bring forward the meaning of separate parts of the text and the text as a whole. The aim of Gadamer’s brand of philosophical hermeneutics is understanding.

*Hermeneutical writing.*

Laurel Richardson (2000) encourages the use of writing for both inquiry and meaning making. She explains, “I write in order to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it” (p. 924). In this study, I use a research journal (Janesick, 2000) as the primary interpretive tool in my research. Through this journal I write my way to understanding and record my questions and my path of meaning-making. I also engage in hermeneutic interpretation of my own text. It becomes data for me to question and consider. Others may wonder about the process of a researcher generating her own data when she is really supposed to be studying someone else; however, Gadamer explains, “What is fixed in writing has detached itself from the contingency of its origin and its author and made itself free for new relationships” (1960/1997, p. 395). Meaning-making comes through thoughtful engagement of one’s own ponderings. In order to understand anything, I must be diligent about listening not only to my participants, but also to my own words, questioning the ideas that arise on paper. Laurel Richardson argues that when we as qualitative researchers write from our selves, we become “more fully present in our work, more honest, more engaged” (2000, p. 924).

Hermeneutical writing journals are conversations. In the various entries, I ask questions and try to answer them. In engaging with the text of my journal, I regularly go back to previous entries to see how my thinking has changed and to gain insight into my present situation.

The hermeneutical research journal necessarily engages and questions my own preunderstandings and biases. In this way, it also serves as an ongoing subjectivity audit (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) that brings forward influences on my own perceptions and actions related to the research. Through it, I engage in a process of reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) that critically appraises my self as research instrument. I focus on honing the skills necessary for observation and conversation, opening my eyes and ears to new ways of seeing and hearing.

A hermeneutic research journal differs from memo writing (Charmaz, 2000) in that memo writing often is a recording of a researcher's analysis of data, rather than a search for meaning. Strauss and Corbin (1990) discuss three kinds of memos: code notes, operational notes, and theory notes. Code notes operationalize the various codes used in analyzing data; operational notes include the researcher's own thoughts about practical matters related to research; and theory notes act more as a summary of ongoing analysis. These memos serve as an aid to analysis, but they are not viewed as the method of coming to understanding. Hermeneutical writing may attend to the same content as code notes, operational notes and theory notes, but it would do so by engaging in dialogue around the meaning of this content. Writing about next steps in the study would not simply be a recording of the researcher's thoughts, it would become a thoughtful investigation of how best to act with tact and care in interactions

with co-researchers and contexts. It would question the prevailing mores and hold them up for examination and questioning.

*Narrative analysis.*

In accordance with the theory-as-narrative metaphor that has been proposed, narrative analysis provides an opportunity to engage with discrete segments of data, but also with the overall study. In this way, it serves as a microanalytic and macroanalytic tool for making meaning.

Narrative analysis (Labov, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) allows a researcher to analyze the narrative structures in use, including elements of exposition (characterization and setting), conflict, plot and subplot development, climax and resolution. In addition, use of foreshadowing and flashback may be explored, as well as poetic elements such as metaphor, simile, repetition, alliteration and assonance. Plot lines can be sketched to uncover overlapping and/or disrupted stories (Burck, 2005). Finally patterns may be used to name themes, and overall story genres are able to be extrapolated. One of the strengths of narrative analysis is its ability to bring together person and community by focusing on “how accounts artfully use local cultural resources” (Silverman, 2000, p. 826).

The aim of narrative analysis is to illustrate but not validate theory. It allows the researcher to maintain the cohesion of stories offered by participants without fragmenting them through the coding process (K. Casey, 1995). In addition, it preserves the power of narrative to compel us, to lead us to reflect, to involve us personally, to transform, and to measure our interpretive sense (van Manen, 2003).

At the micro level, narratives are culled from the observations and conversations with co-researchers. These stories are analyzed and compared with other narratives and narrative structures prevalent in each community of practice under study. On a somewhat larger scale, vocational story conversations reveal the narrative structures that co-researchers use to conceptualize their worklife histories. Professional stories are studied to reveal particular genres or motifs that guide co-researchers in thinking about their vocational identities.

At the macro level, a story of vocational identity development emerges. Narrative analysis is used to turn the theory back on itself to provide openings for further hermeneutical questioning.

*Theme analysis.*

Van Manen describes a method of thematic analysis of text that provides a window to the lived experiences of co-researchers. Van Manen's thematic analysis is not a rule-bound process but "a free act of 'seeing' meaning" by identifying the structures of experience (2003, p. 79). He clarifies that experiential structures as themes are "not objects or generalizations; metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes" (van Manen, 2003, p. 90). I engage in a process of determining themes in an effort to grasp the essential meaning and experiential structures of co-researchers' lived experiences surrounding vocational identity development.

I conduct thematic analysis soon after observation and conversation sessions are transcribed, and themes are refined throughout the study in an effort to express

more fully the essence of co-researchers' experiences related to vocational identity development. Thematic analysis proceeds via the holistic or sententious approach and the selective or highlighting approach (van Manen, 2003). The holistic or sententious approach involves discerning the fundamental meaning of a text as a whole. The selective or highlighting approach attends to phrases or statements that seem to reveal the essence of the phenomenon being described. Thematic analysis is guided by a certain attentiveness and wonder aimed at the explication of meaning.

Through the process of thematic analysis, I use hermeneutical writing to question the themes that emerge. In this way, thematic analysis provides an entry into a way of understanding the data, but it does not stand alone as a data analysis technique.

*Methodology as a way of living.*

Smith and Deemer (2000) offer a view of inquiry as an act that is practical and moral, not epistemological. They argue that criteria for judging research must be practical and moral as well. They state that we should “recognize inquiry as a social process in which we construct reality as we go along” and prioritize human relationships (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 886). Richardson concurs, “The personal is the grounding for theory” (2000, p. 927). Using her metaphor of story, this statement may be more aptly stated: Characterization and character interrelations, character development, and the interactions of character with setting form the most important story element; without character there would be no plot. Relational characterization is, in fact, identity work. A person's character development is akin to his evolving actualization as a person, and the recognition of the relational aspects of character

highlight the interdependence of the person with his community. I attempt to conduct a study that meets practical and moral standards, prioritizing the character of those involved.

Prioritizing the human element positions inquiry as a way of being in the world. “Our thinking will always be genuinely ontological, Heidegger tells us, ‘if it opens our human existence to [being]’” (Levin, 1985, p. 24). Through this research study I endeavor to nurture my own vocational identity as well as the vocational identities of my co-researchers.

Levin discusses the kind of qualitative research to which I refer, research that “deepens our self-awareness, enriches our self-understanding, engages our sensibility, and gives focus to our perception . . . not in a way that conceals the ontological dimension, but rather in a way that enables us to attend to it much more carefully and thoughtfully” (Levin, 1985, p. 21).

Methodology within a participatory paradigm becomes less a set of methods and more a way of living. Gadamer (1960/1997) frees hermeneutics and understanding from method. “The concept of understanding is no longer a methodological concept. . . . Understanding is the original characteristic of the being of human life itself” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 259).

### Ethics

With a focus on relationship, community, lived experience, story, and understanding, ethical considerations become paramount. For that reason, the discussion of ethics related to the current study is presented as a central tenet of the research design.

Reflexivity is the “process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Reflexivity begins with an honest appraisal of researcher positionality prior to entering the field or even meeting one’s participants. All researchers find themselves immersed in a tradition of beliefs and preunderstandings that can serve to facilitate or frustrate inquiry (Gadamer, 1960/1997; Schwandt, 2000). Reflecting on those prejudices is essential for cultivating openness to new understandings. Reflexivity is a “conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183).

Ironically, once a researcher has identified her preunderstandings and biases, she should not try to forget or ignore them. If she does so, they may unexpectedly interfere with the research process. Instead, “Understanding requires the *engagement* of one’s biases” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 195). Researchers should examine unreflectively held prejudices and alter those that stand in the way of understanding self and others. When a researcher enters into conversation with a text, he must bring all of his personal preunderstandings and biases to the dialogue. “To try to escape from one’s own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to bring one’s own preconceptions into play so that the text’s meaning can really be made to speak for us” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 397). Through a dialogical encounter, here a written encounter, a researcher can come to terms with her assumptions, “turn[ing] this knowledge against itself, as it were, thereby exposing its shadow or concealing character” (van Manen, 2003, p. 47).

### *Researcher Positionality*

Issues surrounding identity have intrigued me since the beginning of my doctoral program in 1999 when I conducted a case study of a new teacher mentor in a large urban school district. My interest in the topic grew as my children were born and I wrote about the identity transformations in my own life and in the lives of almost thirty women who participated in focus groups with me over the course of a year (Fleming, 2004a). This area of interest continued through a study of turning points in the professional lives of six high school teachers (Fleming, 2004b) and culminated in a phenomenological pilot study detailing the lived experience of two former military personnel who are currently teaching (Fleming, 2006).

Experiencing change in my worklife has always been a significant experience for me. It has profound effects on my identity and sense of self. Surprisingly, I enjoy these changes, and I have a resume to prove it. As soon as I become comfortable in one role, it seems that I pursue a change. What is it about career change that intrigues me, drawing me in? I am not certain, but I clearly have a desire to understand this process that is tumultuous for many but invigorating for me. During the course of this research project, I have sought out opportunities to engage with others on this topic and actively reflect on my own vocational identity development.

In my most recent career transition, I have been employed as a grant facilitator for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). My current charge is to facilitate alternative teacher preparation programs in the state of Maryland. Each of these programs is to be designed with the needs of military career changers in mind.

As facilitator of these programs, understanding the needs of career changers, specifically those with a military history, becomes essential. In a recent request for proposals for new alternative preparation programs, MSDE required that funded pilot programs meet the needs of military career changers by “incorporat[ing] alternative approaches to achieve teacher certification, provid[ing] recognition of military experience and training as related to certification requirements, and provid[ing] instruction on or near a military installation or via distance education methods” (Maryland State Department of Education, 2006, p. 2). Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that while alternative approaches, military-friendly transcript reviews, and distance education may provide benefits to the military career changer, these requirements do not even begin to respond to the needs of military personnel as they embark on a career in teaching. Understanding the vocational experiences of military personnel who become teachers is essential to those developing programs for this population. As I improve my understanding of this phenomenon, I will help teacher educators act with tact and authenticity in a way that is sensitive to the experiences of individuals in career transition.

Clearly, I have a personal as well as a professional interest in the topic under study. My connection with alternative preparation programs has given me access to people who were able to direct me toward prospective co-researchers for this study. There was no conflict of interest because I am much more a state facilitator rather than a evaluator or manager of their programs. Participation was strictly voluntary and not linked to any fiscal rewards.

In fact, only two of the project directors with whom I work were minimally involved in the present study. Our contact revolved around determining a pool of prospective co-researchers and obtaining institutional permissions to conduct research. From that point forward, my interactions as a researcher in courses or other professional meetings merged with my interactions as a program facilitator. As a facilitator, I routinely observe cohort training sessions, seminars, and candidates in the classroom. In addition, I attend program steering committee meetings. I already have developed relationships with many of the people involved in program management, and I am comfortable offering suggestions for program improvement. My learning as a researcher only enhances my ability to make informed recommendations.

As an MSDE employee, however, I am careful in how I present myself to school system administrators and teachers. My experience is that many Maryland educators shy away from discussing any programmatic issues with MSDE personnel due to fear of evaluation and repercussion. I do not hide the fact that I am a contractual employee of MSDE, but I make certain that school personnel understand that my facilitator position is grant-funded by the federal Troops to Teachers program. I also stress my desire to learn from my interactions as a doctoral candidate.

My involvement with Troops to Teachers did not affect my relationships with college or school personnel, and it only peripherally entered my relationships with my co-researchers. I engaged with my co-researchers as colleagues, and I referred any questions related to the Troops to Teachers program to our Maryland state manager of TTT. I also assured co-researchers of the use of pseudonyms for all people and

institutions involved in the study to facilitate confidentiality and protect co-researcher identity from outsiders. Co-researchers understood clearly that their participation or non-participation in the study was in no way linked to TTT stipends or bonuses.

What puzzled co-researchers about me more than anything else was my relative lack of shared history with them. I entered teaching through a traditional undergraduate program at a four-year institution. I never have made an out-of-field career change, and I have little knowledge of military life. I do not come from a military family and actually have limited experience working with military personnel who have become teachers. I worked with one former military teacher at a middle school where I served as English teacher. She had little support and finally quit after the first month of teaching, complaining that her students would not follow directions. In addition, I completed a pilot study of former military personnel who had become teachers. One was a very impressive secondary math teacher who had won his school district's Teacher of the Year award. The other was a middle school social studies teacher who had difficulty reconciling his identities as Marine and as teacher. My limited experiences with career change, the military, and teachers who have served in the military might have been seen as a limitation; however, I hope that I was successful in turning this lack of shared experience into an asset that allowed me to view the situations of military career changers with fresh eyes and a true willingness to learn. Difference can be a powerful basis for communication, as each individual illuminates shadow areas not visible to the other. My lack of shared history may have in fact proven to be an opportunity for personal and professional growth and learning. I entered my relationships with my co-researchers with openness and respect,

attempting to understand the histories of my co-researchers by transposing myself into their pasts.

### *Ethical Considerations*

In addition to exploring my positionality and my preunderstandings related to the present study, I was attuned to the ethical dilemmas that may have presented themselves during this research.

Research that encourages co-researchers to explore their own vocational identities deeply may have certain effects on the persons and institutions involved. Van Manen suggests that co-researchers may feel “discomfort, anxiety, false hope, superficiality, guilt, self-doubt, irresponsibility – but also hope, increased awareness, moral stimulation, insight, a sense of liberation, a certain thoughtfulness, and so on” (2003, p. 162). Co-researcher participation in intense conversational interviews may “lead to new levels of self-awareness, possible changes in life-style, and shifting priorities of living. But if done badly, these methods may instead lead to feelings of anger, disgust, defeat, intolerance, insensitivity, etc.” (van Manen, 2003, p. 163). At all times in this research I attempted to foster self-actualization and a sense of interdependence for my co-researchers and myself. Identity development was not only the phenomenon being studied; it was the desired outcome of our interactions.

There is also a possibility of potential effects of the research on the contexts and institutions in which the research takes place. My simple presence as a researcher may have made people more aware of their own actions and interactions, which leads to critical appraisal of practice. Increased awareness of identity issues may have impacted program development and implementation. Finally, the research had a

transformative effect on me as researcher and practitioner, as I came to understand career change from other perspectives and came to appreciate my own vocational identity issues.

Because of these possible effects of research, I was vigilant in making certain that my interactions with individuals and institutions resulted in positive outcomes. Lincoln proposes a practical imperative for research: “Treat every man as an end in himself, and never as a means only” (Lincoln, 1990, p. 292). Following this practical imperative means being sensitive to the needs of participants. If, for example, a conversational interview uncovered painful memories, I had to consider the effects of re-living those memories on the co-researcher, and, if necessary, turn the conversation in a new direction. Fontana and Frey advise, “We need to exercise common sense and responsibility . . . to our subjects first, to the study next, and to ourselves last” (2000, p. 663).

In addition to being mindful of the effects and outcomes of the study, a major ethical consideration is the use of funding from outside sources. Cheek (2000) outlines the considerations to which a researcher needs to attend when accepting funding for qualitative research. The researcher must determine the level of independence she will be granted by the funding agency and the amount of freedom she will be given to make decisions regarding the study with an intact sense of integrity. Cheek suggests that researchers should inform participants of the agency that is providing the funding and how the funding is being used.

For the present study, the federal Troops to Teachers office defrayed research costs. NVivo 7, a qualitative data management program, was purchased, and

transcription foot pedals were purchased as well. TTT funded the transcription for the project as well as mileage, materials, copying and postage.

Besides having to gather three bids for transcription services and agreeing to hire the low bidder, decisions regarding the research project remained mine alone. Troops to Teachers is interested in the research and wished to promote studies of military personnel in the classroom. I will be presenting the study on a panel at the Department of Defense Worldwide conference in Atlanta in 2009.

When we discussed the informed consent form, I informed the co-researchers of the monetary support being provided by TTT for this project, and I emphasized the fact that while TTT is interested in their individual career change experiences, their identities would remain confidential. I explained that the study was not commissioned by TTT but that it is being funded in hopes that understandings gained may help other prospective teachers. This is indeed a situation which provides, as Cheek recommends, “the ability to do funded qualitative research in a way that retains the integrity of the researcher, the participants, the research project, *and* the funding body” (Cheek, 2000, pp. 418-419, emphasis in original).

### *Participant Relations*

#### Out Beyond Ideas

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,  
there is a field. I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,  
the world is too full to talk about.  
Ideas, language, even the phrase *each other*  
doesn't make any sense. (Rumi, 2003, p. 123)

Lincoln defines qualitative research as “a set of social processes characterized by fragile and temporary bonds between persons who are attempting to share their lives and create from that sharing a larger and wider understanding of the world” (Lincoln, 1990, p. 287). Relationships between researcher, co-researchers, and others involved in the study are paramount in participatory research in which *character* is given priority in the theoretical narrative.

Exactly how should such research relationships be characterized? Van Manen (2003) recommends nurturing a relationship with persons and situations that is as close as possible while preserving an alertness that allows one to step outside the relationship to reflect on meaning. Christians (2000) refers to this relation as an ethic of care. This moral approach gives primary consideration to human relationships and requires compassion and nurturance. Schwandt (2000) speaks of attentiveness that is characterized by an openness and willingness to be impacted by another’s life. Attentiveness leads to a way of knowing and understanding that is contextual and narrative (Schwandt, 2000). With the current metaphorical view of theory as narrative, nurturing a close relationship with study participants becomes especially important.

Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) discuss the purpose of qualitative case study research such as the present study. They propose that the purpose is to develop an understanding of a complex phenomenon through emic and etic perspectives. The emic is the participant’s viewpoint, while the etic represents the researcher’s viewpoint as an investigator of the phenomenon. The researcher’s role is to uncover

the emic perspective, making conceptual and theoretical sense of the case through the etic perspective.

While Gall, Gall and Borg's description of the emic and the etic is helpful in naming what it is that a case study researcher hopes to uncover, I doubt a researcher's ability to truly understand and generate negotiated meaning with a co-researcher while maintaining a separate theoretical viewpoint. Gadamer (1960/1997) offers an alternate perspective of the relation that is required for a researcher to gain understanding. He explains that hermeneutic understanding does not arise from attempting to make meaning of the world through another person's eyes. Instead, it requires the researcher to transpose herself. "If we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, for example, then we will understand him . . . by putting *ourselves* in his position" (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 305).

Allowing ourselves to be transposed requires openness. It involves a flexibility of language and a willingness to consider the understandings of another person. Being transposed does not mean looking at a situation from another person's point of view. Rather, it means looking at another person's situation from our own point of view. Through this process, I can come to realize the extent to which my co-researchers and I exist in interdependence.

This transposition of self requires that a researcher remain open to new truths that may be realized through the expansion of horizons. There is no traveling back to one's own place in the world at the end of the day. What is learned in research (as in any true conversation with another) changes the extent of one's personal horizons of understanding. In this way, research is always a process of becoming. All good

research involves the transformation of the researcher. “There is always a one-word answer to the question of what we might find by looking. . . . The answer is: ourselves” (Jackson, 1990, p. 163).

My own vocational identity was affected through this research. Through my thoughtful consideration of issues of identity, I deepened my own experience of self. I repeatedly asked myself, in what way am I responding authentically to a vocational call? What can I learn from my co-researchers? How is our identity work intertwined?

I nurtured close relationships with my co-researchers, becoming a co-participant with them and attempting to learn by transposing myself into their contextual situations. I attempted to treat them with respect, care, and concerned comportment (Anton, 2001) and was mindful of the true purpose of this study: bringing one another more fully into being.

### Case Study Approach

The methodology for the present study is framed by a case study approach. Stake defines a case study as the study of a specific, unique, bounded system (Stake, 2000). The preparation and induction experiences of the two co-researchers form the two cases in this study.

Cases are conducive to the type of exploration and personal reflection that this study strives to evoke in its readers. Bullough explains, “Case studies are stories that, in their telling, invite the reader to question and explore personal values and understandings” (Bullough, 1989, p. xi) . Through cases, educators can explore how

others confront situations and think through the implications for their own pedagogical decisions.

Van Manen asserts, “Theory of the unique starts with and from the single case, searches for the universal qualities, and returns to the single case” (2003, p. 150). In the current study, I begin with two unique cases. Within each, I seek meaning related to each of the research questions. Each individual’s vocational trajectory is a unique path, and cases are analyzed as separate and discrete entities. Cases were selected to provide a broad range of experiences so that the phenomenon of identity development during career change might be understood from divergent perspectives.

Beginning with the single case provides a detailed look at the meanings experienced by co-researchers and myself. The next step was to search for universal qualities. These universal qualities are not assertions related to generalizability of study findings. Instead, I seek nodes of human experience that may be useful in telling a transition story. I develop a vocational meta-story to allegorically characterize the experience of identity development during career transition.

The meta-story is supported by thick description from the case studies to aid the reader in making decisions regarding the transferability of the theory-narrative to other individuals and other situations. I will be successful if, as Coles suggests, my story has immediacy as it “connects persuasively with human experience” (Coles, 1989, pp. 204-205). The best stories not only provide this sense of connection but also provoke the reader to imagine a better future for one’s self and for society. Through my theory-narrative, I hope to promote realizations of truth, interdependence and becoming in educators.

The present study evokes hermeneutic understandings of descriptive text. Thick description is used to bring constructs and themes to life by recreating a situation, and hermeneutics brings forward the meanings and intentions that inhere in the situation. Chapter One outlined the major constructs (such as metaphor, practical tools and narrative) in use in this research. Themes emerge in the chapters to come and culminate in a vocational meta-story that breathes narrative life into the meanings evoked by the present study.

According to Davies and Harre (1990), the most fruitful opportunity for studying identity surrounds an individual's entry into new social contexts when social positioning is fluid and actively negotiated. This study is designed to follow co-researchers through their initial preparation and induction into teaching, a time that includes entry into several different social contexts.

### *Communities of Practice*

The concept of communities of practice is discussed in detail in Chapter One under the heading *Communities of Practice and Modes of Belonging*. It is included here to delimit the boundaries of the observational portion of the study. Because the co-researchers interact with many different institutions during their teacher preparation and induction experiences, including teacher preparation programs, schools, school districts, and the Troops to Teachers program itself, the observational portion of this study is limited to three communities of practice in which they engage. These communities of practice were identified collaboratively with each co-researcher. For each co-researcher, two courses that are part of their teacher preparation programs and their English language arts department meetings comprise

the three communities of practice to be studied in detail. One observation takes place at the beginning of the co-researcher's involvement with each community, one toward the middle of his involvement, and one near the end of his involvement with the community (or at the end of the data collection period if community involvement is ongoing). Each co-researcher is observed interacting in community nine times, for a total of 18 observations in community.

### *Co-Researcher Selection*

In selecting co-researchers, I was very aware of the fact that I was choosing to privilege some people's stories while not choosing others. Mallon (1999) and Miller (1999) point out the fact that career change is constrained by low socioeconomic background and other forces that limit opportunity such as sexism and ageism. Indeed, I am aware that the very concept of *career* may only be relevant for certain individuals who have the luxury of career choice (Mallon, 1999; Miller, 1999). Most veterans, however, separate from the military with some form of benefits or retirement, giving them a financial advantage and making career *choice* an option. The present study does not intend to suggest that only privileged individuals undergo identity development related to worklife. It does, however, acknowledge that adequate financing is necessary for individuals to change jobs or lines of work.

When I began the study I was aware of the fact that there were only an average of 6.7 TTT participants becoming teachers in Maryland each year, but I was still surprised at the low numbers of candidates with military backgrounds who made up my pool of potential co-researchers. My participant search began in the spring of 2007. I reached out to my network of colleagues, contacting people I knew at all 18

four-year colleges in Maryland with graduate programs and every alternative preparation program in Maryland. I asked if they had or anticipated having any students with military background who would be (1) taking classes for initial certification and (2) teaching in the fall. My goal was to locate individuals who would be involved in diverse communities of practice, ideally in teacher preparation contexts as well as in school settings. I received responses from all but two programs. This search turned up seven potential candidates.

My next step was to ask the coordinator of Maryland Troops to Teachers to send an email on my behalf to all eligible candidates in his database. His email put me in contact with two additional candidates.

In all, I had nine potential co-researchers. In selecting co-researchers to engage with me in this study, I followed Stake's advice on case selection. Stake writes, "The researcher examines various interests in the phenomenon, selecting a case of some typicality, but leaning toward those cases that seem to offer *opportunity to learn*. . . . Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness" (2000, p. 446, emphasis in original). Deciding which cases offered a greater opportunity to learn involved examining such factors as the following, which I used as loose guidelines in co-researcher selection:

1. The extent to which the individual would be involved in a variety of communities of practice during the data collection period.
2. The extent to which the individual would be interested in exploring issues of identity.
3. The extent to which the individual, his teacher preparation program, and his school were accessible (i.e., willing to work with a researcher).

In addition to the three guidelines above, I attempted to select two individuals who were alike demographically (in gender, race, age group, and/or type of

certification) but who had different experiences in the military. I also attempted to select two individuals who were engaged in different teacher preparation programs and teaching in different school districts.

The purpose of selecting co-researchers who are similar demographically but who have differing experiences and contexts is to capture a range of transition experiences while preventing the uninformed reader from assuming that the stories presented are ideal types or typical experiences of all male career changers or all African Americans with a military background. In addition, I wanted to prevent the naïve reader from explaining away differences between the two individuals by attributing them to the fact that, for example, one taught elementary and the other secondary. Because my study focuses on memory and context as important constructs in identity development, I sought individuals who had a range of experiences related to these constructs while remaining relatively similar in constructs not specifically being studied.

I began by attempting to make contact with the eight potential participants who were male. I was successful in contacting seven of the eight by email and telephone. From our initial conversations, I was able to eliminate four of these seven. Two had completed their coursework, one would be deployed to Iraq during my data collection period, and one decided to pursue other career options rather than teach.

The remaining three individuals and I had conversations about teaching, identity, and the study design. All were interested in exploring issues of identity and willing to engage in the study. I then contacted the program directors of each of their programs to ensure that there was a willingness to have coursework observed by a

researcher. One institution indicated that they would not be interested in participating due to the fact that the candidate had experienced difficulty with attendance and was in danger of not completing the program. Since this participant was also the only one of the three who had already taught in his own classroom under a conditional teaching certificate, I determined that my opportunity to observe him transitioning to teaching may not be ideal.

The remaining two individuals and I continued our preliminary conversations, and both elected to engage in the proposed work. They both signed the informed consent form found in Appendix A.

Even though my pool of potential co-researchers was small, I was able to select co-researchers who not only provide a wonderful opportunity to learn but who also have very different experiences with the military, are enrolled different teacher preparation programs, and teach in different school districts. Both are white males seeking secondary English certification.

### Research Questions

In the present study, the primacy of the question is obvious. Being open to the questions that emerge in conversation with others and with the research texts produced is a central tenet of the research methodology. In order to keep the phenomenon of vocational identity at the center of the investigation, however, it was important to develop an overarching research question to which my co-researchers and I could return again and again. Two sub-questions were also developed, along with more specific questions that served to guide the data collection process.

The overarching question asks, What is the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for military career changers as they become teachers? This question is explored in two ways: through observation of co-researcher participation in three separate communities of practice, and through interpretation of the nexus of multimemberships of each co-researcher and the interaction of these community memberships with individual vocational memories and imaginings. The two subquestions are as follows: (1) What happens when former military personnel engage with various communities of practice during their teacher preparation/induction to teaching? and (2) How does a co-researcher's participation in multiple learning communities interact with the person's personal memories and imagined futures to create an individual trajectory of vocational identity development?

Sub-question one is explored through the narratives and metaphors shared by co-researchers within the context of each community of practice, the conceptual and practical tools used by the co-researchers in each community of practice, and the imagined futures (statements of vision, projections, etc.) expressed by the co-researchers in each community of practice. In addition, each community of practice is examined to determine the constraints and affordances to vocational identity development that exist in the setting. Debriefings with co-researchers reveal co-researcher attunement to these constraints and affordances and the ways in which the co-researcher negotiates a sense of vocational identity within each context.

Sub-question two is explored by examining the ways in which co-researchers revise their personal vocational memories, imagined futures, and teaching metaphors

during the course of teacher preparation and induction. These revisions are explored in relation to the participation of co-researchers in various communities of practice. A co-researcher's nexus of multimemberships, participation in various communities of practice, personal memories, and imagined futures are explored to determine how these contribute to vocational identity development. Finally, narrative genres and elements are used to evoke representations of vocational identity development for military career changers.

Research questions were designed to uncover the becoming and belonging aspects of identity development discussed by Motha (2004) and suggested by Palmer (1998) as the two areas to grow one's practice. Sub-question one focuses on belonging with its attention to communities of practice and the individual's sense of interdependence. Sub-question two attends to issues of becoming or self-actualization, as it takes a more autobiographical stance. Together, these elements allow for greater understanding of vocational identity development.

A full list of research questions may be found in Appendix B.

### Data Sources

Five major sources are used to explore the questions and subquestions discussed above. The overarching question is informed by all five sources, including conversational interviews, which include vocational story conversations and observational debriefings; observation of participation in community; artifacts; and the hermeneutical research journal. Subquestion one makes use of observation of participation in community, observational debriefings, artifacts, and the hermeneutical research journal. Subquestion two is answered primarily through

conversational interviews and the hermeneutical research journal, but it is also supported by observation in community and artifacts. This section details each data source, explicating the theoretical underpinnings and operational practices of data collection.

### *Observation of Participation in Community*

Tedlock offers a discussion of observation of participation that is extremely useful to the sociocultural theorist, even though Tedlock discusses the method in relation to ethnography. Observation of participation (Tedlock, 2000) is contrasted with participant observation. Participant observation attempts to be both involved and detached at the same time, while observation of participation recognizes that the mere presence of the researcher changes the dynamic of the situation, affecting practice. The focus of observation turns to the participation that occurs within the setting, *including the researcher's own participation*. In this way, co-participation of all actors in a community is observed, and the researcher is not constrained by an illusion of detached objectivity.

Observation of participation occurs in six communities of practice. Audio and video recorders are used when possible to capture details of verbal conversation (audio) and broad-brush observations about the community and its members including non-verbal communication (video). I also took written notes, focusing my attention on specific elements of the setting, determined by the research study's guiding research questions. Stake (2000) notes that there is an essential difference between arriving at a site with a closed mind and arriving with an idea of what to look for. In this way, theoretical underpinnings and knowledge of current research in the

area under study act as an element of foreshadowing in the theoretical narrative. As in any narrative, one does not know what was foreshadowed until the actual plot develops. I observed with an open but informed mind that was able to focus on certain aspects of participation without becoming overwhelmed by the multitude of observational information available.

My written observations of participation in community focused primarily on the co-researcher and his actions and interactions within that community. Specifically, I attended to the personal narratives and other stories told by co-researchers, the conceptual and practical tools used by co-researchers, the imagined futures expressed by co-researchers, and the actions or interactions of co-researchers that served to negotiate a personal professional identity in that setting. Immediately following each observation, I wrote in a hermeneutical journal about what I saw, posing questions that opened the “text” of the context and the co-researcher’s participation with it.

Audiotapes were transcribed by an independent transcriber, and I checked each transcript against the original recording and edited as needed. Transcripts were also used to investigate the detail of conversation that they provided. Videotapes were viewed with a focus on the context as community and used as a back-up in the case that the audiotape was inaudible. When I analyzed video, I paid attention to data related to the constraints and affordances of vocational identity development that existed within the community of practice, the social structures prevalent in the community of practice, and the narrative structures, conceptual and practical tools, and imagined futures most common within the community. The ways in which

community members negotiated identity were also recorded. Casey (1993) notes that place functions to determine not only how one interacts with others but even who each individual becomes within the context. In this way, descriptions of setting provided data related to the constraints and affordances to vocational identity development offered within a community.

Each observation session was followed by an observational debriefing with the co-researcher, as detailed in the following section.

### *Conversational Interviews*

In the present study, much time was spent having conversations with co-researchers. Due to my intention to nurture a close relationship with co-researchers, a formal interview setting was not an appropriate or productive structure for these conversations. Instead, the conversational aspect of dialogue was emphasized, and the interview format was de-emphasized.

Having conversations rather than conducting interviews does not change the nature of the data gathered by the researcher. Fontana and Frey argue, “Interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (2000, p. 646). Even when a formal interview protocol is followed, the meaning that evolves from the method is a negotiated accomplishment.

Engaging in a true conversation is a difficult task. It is perhaps more unlike typical everyday dialogue than an interview itself. In an interview, the researcher maintains control of the content being discussed. The researcher’s internal self-talk often focuses on how to get the respondent back on track or how to transition to the

next question. A conversation, on the other hand, respects the phenomenon being discussed. Gadamer explains, “To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented” (1960/1997, p. 367). It is in this sense of *being conducted by* a conversation, rather than *conducting* a conversation that Gadamer speaks of a conversation having a spirit of its own.

Van Manen (2003) conceptualizes conversation as a triad made up of the speakers and the notion or phenomenon that stimulates the conversation. In van Manen’s conception, the conversation is hermeneutic in its orientation to sense-making and interpretation. The job of the researcher is to keep the question regarding meaning open and keep the phenomenon at the center of the conversation, to follow where the spirit of the conversation leads. Conversations invite us into a process so that we can come to an understanding and be at one with each other on a topic.

Prior to engaging in a conversational interview, one must enter into the right frame of mind. Gadamer suggests that we must realize the lack of our own knowledge and understanding and must view the conversation as an opportunity to learn. He writes, “In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know. . . . There is a profound recognition of the *priority of the question* in all knowledge and discourse” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 363, emphasis in original). The question provides an opening to understanding, so thoughtful, honest questions are essential to conversation.

After entering conversation with a questioning attitude, one must work to negotiate a common language around the subject and transpose oneself in such a way

that one is able to bring out the real strength of what is said in dialogue (Gadamer, 1960/1997). This is a rare stance. So often, researchers are encouraged to take a critical view of the information offered by participants. Bringing out the real strength of their perspectives is much more challenging. It requires a much deeper understanding and a willingness to be “transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, pp. 378-379). Both researcher and respondent are transformed in this process.

*Vocational story conversation.*

Three times during the course of the study, I met with each co-researcher individually to engage in an intensive conversational interview focused on the individual’s vocational story. These conversations lasted approximately 90 minutes each. The format for the vocational story conversation is borrowed from the Work-Life Story interview reported by Noonan (2005). Noonan’s procedure includes two parts: (1) Major Chapters, in which participants organize the major parts of their paid work lives into “chapters” and describe each chapter; and (2) Significant Scenes in which participants describe their work life high points, low points, and turning points. This format makes use of the tenets of narrative inquiry (Stake, 2000) and brings to the forefront the ways in which participants make sense of their vocational experiences.

One week prior to the scheduled conversation, co-researchers were asked to reflect on their vocational stories, as if they were about to write their own vocational autobiography or represent their worklife in a portfolio of photographs. They were

encouraged to make notes and/or gather images to bring to the interview and share with the researcher.

The Vocational Story Conversation was designed to call forward anecdotes that comprise the personal memories of co-researchers. Van Manen speaks of the value of the anecdote. He writes, “An historical account describes a thing that has happened in the past, but an anecdote is rather like a poetic narrative which describes a universal truth” (van Manen, 2003, p. 119).

During the first vocational story conversation, I roughly followed Noonan’s format as the conversation allowed, with the addition of a question regarding the co-researcher’s anticipated “next chapter” in his vocational story. This information provided a clue to the co-researcher’s imagined future. Subsequent interviews began with “revisions” to the vocational story. I asked co-researchers if they would revise their story or if different anecdotes had become important to them as they transitioned to teaching. I focused them on their current chapter, and asked them to explore what was currently occurring in their vocational lives, including any high points, low points, and turning points. I asked them to complete a metaphor, borrowed from Parker Palmer (1998): When I am teaching at my best, I am a/an (blank). At the final interview, I asked the co-researchers to project, telling me what they imagined for their vocational future. What did the next chapter in their vocational story hold in store for them?

A conversation guide for the vocational story conversation can be found in Appendix D. The included guide represents only a possible format for the conversation. At all times, I strived to respect the spirit of the conversation, keeping

vocational story at the center as the phenomenon of interest, but allowing the dialogue to flow.

### *Observational debriefings.*

Conversations were also held with co-researchers after each observational session. These observational debriefings occurred as soon after the observation as possible, usually before we left the site. In one case where the debriefing was not able to occur immediately following the observation, it occurred within the next 24 hours. The debriefing allowed the co-researcher and me to engage in an open-ended conversation about the actions and interactions that took place during the observation. Sample questions include, “What did you find most intriguing or useful in this class session?” “What did you find confusing or puzzling?” “What was going through your mind when you said \_\_\_\_\_?” “What made you choose to be a group leader?” Appendix E served as my guide for engaging in observational debriefings, offering appropriate topics of conversation as well as sample questions.

Observational debriefings lasted approximately 20 minutes. When possible, conversations were audiotaped and transcribed. I engaged in hermeneutical writing after each observational debriefing.

### *Artifacts*

Many qualitative researchers use document collection as a research method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Bogdan and Biklen’s (1998) framework categorizes artifacts as personal, official, or popular culture documents. This study made use of personal documents such as course assignments, statements of philosophy, portfolio entries, reflections, and original stories. In

addition, official documents collected include internal documents used within the school or teacher preparation program and external documents used to represent the school system or teacher preparation program to the public. These consisted of memos, minutes from meetings, newsletters, policy documents, recruiting materials, course syllabi, mission statements, and newspaper articles. Janesick (2000) suggests using interactive journals between researcher and participant. In a similar way, I collected all written communication including email that was generated through my interactions with co-researchers.

Official artifacts provided information regarding the conceptual tools (such as a philosophy or mission statement) and practical tools (such as a lesson planning format) that were offered in certain communities of practice. Personal documents provided data regarding the co-researcher's appropriation or non-appropriation of offered conceptual and practical tools and provided information regarding the imagined futures and ideas surrounding teacher identity espoused by co-researchers.

### Data Management

Upon selection of my two co-researchers, two file crates were organized with various file folders. These file folders hold the artifacts collected in connection with each of the two case studies. Files were created for documents related to the teacher preparation program, the partnering school district, and the co-researcher's school. In addition, files were created for artifacts related to each of the three identified communities of practice and the vocational story interviews. Finally, files for handwritten personal communication and other documents were created. All filed documents were assigned a number for quick reference.

Simultaneously, NVivo 7, a qualitative data management software program was used to organize and store electronic data. Miles and Huberman (1994) note the usefulness of computer software for data management. Three types of sources were stored on NVivo: documents, externals, and memos. Documents included any electronic artifacts collected, all conversational transcripts, transcripts of observations, audio files, and video files. The file named “externals” included brief descriptions of each of the numbered paper documents stored in the external file crates. “Memos” included all entries from the hermeneutical research journal. Files were cross-referenced to one another so that, for example, a transcript from an observation was electronically linked with its corresponding audio file, video file, observational debriefing transcript, observational debriefing audio file, and entry in the hermeneutical research journal.

As a researcher, I am sensitive to hesitations related to the use of technology of various types in qualitative research. Merriam (1998) discusses the implications of audiotaping for interviews, noting that some individuals are hesitant to be recorded. Prior to audiotaping, I sought permission from my co-researcher, reminding him that audio files would only be heard by my transcriber and me and that his name would never be associated with the audio file or transcript. In addition, all research materials will be destroyed in accordance with IRB regulations following completion of the study. I also made sure that co-researchers understood that they could request to have the audio recorder turned off at any time.

Similarly, I proceeded with caution in creating videotapes of observation sessions. I obtained permission for all video from the people whose images were

recorded. I positioned the camera so that a wide angle lens captured the majority of the action and interaction in the setting. I did not pan and zoom during the taping, as these actions are a form of interpretation that was unwanted. The videotape was intended to present a broad brush view of the community, so a wide angle lens was most appropriate.

Weitzman (2000) discusses what is termed “real fears” related to qualitative data management software. These fears include research that takes shortcuts through autocoding, leading to premature theoretical closure; untutored use of software; and software-mediated conceptions of hierarchical relationships among data sets. NVivo 7 is a program that facilitates many types of relationship-coding structures, including both hierarchical and non-hierarchical concept maps. It may be used the same way one might use index cards and file folders to group sets of data together under certain themes or concepts. Autocoding is not an option for me, as I do not trust a machine to make interpretive decisions.

### Rigor

Lincoln and Guba (2000) speak of a phenomenon that they term “Catholic questions directed to a Methodist audience” (p. 175). This phenomenon refers to “the ongoing problem of illegitimate questions: questions that have no meaning because the frames of reference are those for which they were never intended” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 175). In many ways, traditional questions of rigor fall into this category. This section will provide a discussion of objectivity, validity, and generalizability, three constructs that do not fit well within a participatory paradigm. For each of the three constructs, alternate criteria are proposed that will guarantee the

rigor of this research while remaining consistent with its ontological and epistemological underpinnings.

A rejection of traditional notions of rigor does not imply a lack of rigor. “The hermeneutical experience also has its own rigor: that of uninterrupted listening” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 465). Those who engage in hermeneutics will attest to the fact that artful conversation is no simple task. My hermeneutical writing journal provided an opportunity for me to critically engage my biases. In addition, it provides an audit trail that documents my thinking as the research progressed. My co-researchers were involved in all aspects of the research, including providing their own interpretations of my meaning-making. Member checks provided another method of cross-checking my analysis.

Human science researchers offer criteria for rigor that differ from traditional requirements. Van Manen seeks “interpretive descriptions that exact fullness and completeness of detail” (2003, p. 17). Wolcott’s criteria include being as “credible, balanced, fair, complete, sensitive, rigorously subjective, coherent, internally consistent, appropriate, plausible, and helpful as possible” (as cited in Jackson, 1990, p. 154). The current project attends to these types of rigor in all phases of implementation, including data collection, data management, interpretation of data, and reporting.

### *Objectivity*

“It is only through the adoption of a realist ontology that one can gain warrant for posing objectivity as a criterion. . . . Remove the realist ontology and the possibility of an objective epistemology disappears. *The need for objectivity is gone*”

(Guba, 1990, p. 87, emphasis in original). Guba's reasoning shows why, under a participatory paradigm, the criterion of objectivity is problematic.

More recently, Lincoln and Guba report, "We are persuaded that objectivity is a chimera: a mythological creature that never existed, save in the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower" (2000, p. 181). Donmoyer concedes, "We can no longer talk of raw data, if, by that term, we mean data uncontaminated by the language and the anticipatory schemata of the researcher" (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 196). Lincoln (1990) agrees that the sought-after uncontaminated description does not exist.

These researchers conclude that not only is there no need for objectivity in human sciences research, but also that obtaining objectivity is impossible even if there were a need. But what should replace objectivity as a criterion? Wolcott suggests the criteria of balance, fairness, and rigorous subjectivity (Jackson, 1990). Van Manen (2003) suggests retaining the terms objectivity and subjectivity, but ascribing new meanings to them. In van Manen's conception, objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive categories. Objectivity no longer refers to a researcher remaining detached from the object of study but rather a researcher remaining true to the object. Van Manen suggests that subjectivity must be used as a criterion along with objectivity. He explains, "Subjectivity means that we are *strong* in our orientation to the object of study *in a unique and personal way* – while avoiding the danger of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions" (van Manen, 2003, p. 20).

In the present study, Wolcott's and van Manen's descriptions of objectivity replace more traditional views of objectivity to provide a standard of research practice.

### *Validity*

A valid interpretation is closely aligned to matters of truth. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) offer the following as criteria for interpretive validity: usefulness, contextual completeness, researcher positioning, verisimilitude, triangulation, member checking, outlier analysis, long-term observation, representativeness check, and coding check. Moss (March 1994) proposes authenticity, directness, and cognitive complexity. In the present study, I attend to usefulness, authenticity, contextual completeness, cognitive complexity, long-term observation, researcher positioning, verisimilitude, and member checking.

But these criteria do not adequately address the question of truth as it relates to validity. Gadamer posits, "A discipline of questioning and inquiring . . . guarantees truth" (1960/1997, p. 491). On first look, this seems a preposterous statement. How can anything *guarantee* truth? Is this just a new way of framing old positivist notions of objectivity and experimental design? Are there really any guarantees about truth?

When one stops to think about the nature of truth, however, it becomes clear that Gadamer's statement, in fact, is not only correct but not assuming at all. As stated in the discussion of ontology and epistemology above, the paradigm that guides this research claims that truth is what is negotiated between people. It is something that emerges in context as people work to understand one another and the world around them. With this view in mind, Gadamer's discipline of questioning and inquiring is

indeed *the* way of negotiating truth; it is the only way truth comes into being at all. Hermeneutics does not *discover* truth, it *evokes* truth.

Wolcott explains the task of a social sciences researcher: to understand a social world that is continuously being constructed (1990). There is no *single* correct interpretation of a phenomenon, but there is a true representation of the reality that is negotiated by participants in a certain situation. Through my disciplined practice of artful, honest conversation and my central practice of hermeneutic writing, I aim to evoke this situational truth.

### *Generalizability*

Donmoyer makes a case for rejecting traditional understandings of generalizability. He claims, “Even statistically significant findings from studies with huge, randomly selected samples cannot be applied directly to particular individuals in particular situations; skilled clinicians will always be required to determine whether a research generalization applies” (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 181). Imagination is required for this work. Even if generalizability were possible, Schofield (1990) states that there is broad agreement that generalizability that seeks to produce universal laws is not a useful goal for qualitative research. Donmoyer (1990) proposes that it may be more useful to think of generalizability in psychological terms than in terms of mathematical probability.

“People find in case reports certain insights into the human condition, even while being well aware of the atypicality of the case” (Stake, 2000, p. 443). Studies of one situation can be used to “speak to or help form a judgment about other situations” (Schofield, 1990, p. 208). In this way, reader/user generalizability (Gall, Gall, &

Borg, 2003) is the most appropriate way to speak of generalizability for interpretive case study research. Thick descriptions are used to allow readers to make a reasoned judgment as to the transferability of meaning from the studied situation to another situation.

### *Limitations*

Every research study has limitations, and the present study is no exception. The biggest limitation is my own lack of experience as a researcher. Although I have been pursuing this line of study for several years now, there are others who have more developed conversational and interpretive sensibilities. I am aware of this limitation and have tried to be diligent in my efforts to deeply understand the process of career change that my co-researchers experience. Other personal limitations have been explored previously under the section titled *Ethics* in this chapter.

The second limitation is the scope of the study. Two co-researchers in one geographic area hardly provide a comprehensive view of the common experiences of military career changers as a group. It is not my intention, however, to generalize to a large group. Readers will need to use the thick, rich descriptions I provide to decide if the experiences of the co-researchers offer insights that are useful for other individual career changers, other teacher preparation programs, and other geographic locales.

The scale of the study is also a limitation. The intent to follow two co-researchers from their teacher preparation program into their first experiences as classroom teachers takes steps toward a more longitudinal view of career change, but the study would be enhanced by a more comprehensive examination of the teachers' entire induction experience. It would have been ideal to follow the co-researchers into

their second and third years of teaching, but resources and logistical constraints prevented this.

Finally, this study is limited to aspects of identity related to worklife, although non-professional factors also influence identity development, and non-work identities interact with enacted professional identities. Non-vocational experiences such as family relocation and adjustments to a new salary and lifestyle are not studied as they relate to vocational identity development for career changers. The focus on vocational identity is intentional, not because it is in any way viewed as separate from other aspects of identity, but because vocational identity is an often overlooked concept and the way in which professional contexts can facilitate identity development deserves attention. By spotlighting the vocational identity development of career changers, I hope to bring sustained focus to this phenomenon.

### Summary

By grounding this study in clearly articulated ontological and epistemological beliefs, an appropriate methodology has emerged. This methodology views co-researchers as partners in the endeavor to understand the phenomenon of vocational identity development in a process of career change.

A case study approach has been presented as the most useful design for the in-depth examination of the vocational lives of the participating co-researchers. Research questions and data sources have been detailed, and the data management techniques that I used have been fully disclosed. My methods of data interpretation are diverse, but these diverse perspectives were used in such a way to open multiple doors to understanding. This study was conducted with attention to qualitative,

interpretive rigor that respects subjectivity and is sensitive to the needs of those involved and those who may be affected by the research. In this way, an ethic of care formed the central tenet that guided this exploration of vocational identity development in military personnel who choose to become teachers.

I conclude this chapter by introducing the men whose vocational experiences make up the central phenomenon of interest in this study. Both are white males pursuing secondary English certification.

#### Rob Bowen\*

Rob begins his vocational story in fifth grade when he, a quiet and shy child living with his sister and mother, is put into Gifted and Talented by his teacher. He is in gifted classes in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. It is there, in middle school, where Rob gains the skills in reading and writing that carry him throughout many ups and downs in his life.

Rob has a scholarship to a private high school, but his mother remarries, and Rob rebels. He leaves the Irish section 8 housing projects that he calls home and moves in with his grandmother who allows him to live with her for \$50 per week. Rob feels like an outsider at his high school and begins skipping school and drinking. He realizes he can skip school and then show up for the unit test and still pass it. When it comes time for graduation, school authorities tell Rob he needs to put in 300 hours to earn his diploma. Rather than waste his time, Rob takes and passes the GED.

After high school, Rob enters the National Guard and attends community college. From age 21 to 24, he works as a valet/bellman at a hotel. He spends six

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\* All names are pseudonyms.

years in the National Guard in an infantry division, from 1987 until 1993. He is activated and sent to Fort Irwin, California for a time with his guard unit.

After the valet job, Rob begins working for Verizon as an outside technician. While at Verizon, he graduates from college with a four-year degree in criminal justice. He works his way up the corporate ladder at Verizon, from outside technician to inside technician to manager.

When Rob makes manager at Verizon, he feels that life is good and that he would be able to contribute and have a successful military career at that point. Rob re-enlists, with the Army Reserves this time as a signal operations (communications) specialist. Simultaneously, he continues climbing the ranks at Verizon, becoming a program analyst.

In 2003, Rob's Reserve unit is deployed to Iraq. In all, he spends 14 months in wartime Iraq, installing shortwave radios, GPS and panic buttons in trucks as needed. Rob also becomes instrumental in assisting soldiers in obtaining their GEDs. He applies his training expertise from Verizon and soon has a makeshift classroom in Iraq where he teaches his comrades everything from basic skills to computers.

Although Rob claims he hates his entire time in Iraq, he wants to re-enlist when he returns. His fiancée, however, is not supportive of that decision. At the same time, Rob is promoted to project manager at Verizon and attempts courses in Geographic Information Systems, finally settling on an MBA program instead. His return from Iraq is a time of great transition. Rob explains:

I'm very quick to adapt because I wanted to get on with my life. It's the feeling that you have when you go away is you feel that you missed so much of your life. Fourteen months seems like so much when you are away, so you want to really dive back in, and I did.

The only person with whom Rob stayed in touch during his time in Iraq is his fiancée.

When he returns home, however, he slowly comes to realize that their relationship has soured. He finds that he has organized his life to suit her wishes:

A lot of our friends are mutual friends and I did not have a lot of friends. I'm in an MBA program and I don't want to be an MBA, I don't want to be a Project Manager and I'm making all of this money. I'm flying to Tampa or Dallas every week.

Rob and his fiancée call off the wedding; Rob takes his money out of their house and he re-enlists with the Army Reserves. After the breakup, Rob's life spirals downward and he spends over a year drinking. Rob knows he needs a change. He explains:

I could have stayed [at Verizon] and done the job. I was becoming a pretty good Project Manager. But I was a mess; that's not what I wanted to do. That was the fact of the matter that I was somewhere, I didn't know anyone, doing a job I didn't want to do, for reasons that weren't my own.

Rob is offered a reduction in force from Verizon, and he takes it. Unfortunately, without a job, Rob sinks further into depression:

I didn't even want to leave the house for a while, I had nowhere to go or know what to do. I didn't have tons of family down here, so it was weird. So I don't know how I finally realized it. I was losing the friends that I had already.

When Rob's severance package is depleted, Rob decides it is time for a career change. Encouraged by his work with soldiers studying for the GED, he decides to pursue teaching. He enrolls in an English graduate program but quickly realizes that what he needs to become a teacher is a Masters of Arts in Teaching program, so he enrolls in an MAT program at Bachman University\*. He credits his teacher preparation program with much more than preparing him to become a teacher:

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\* All university, school district and school names are pseudonyms.

Probably what got me out of [my depression] was Bachman, that's how much I love that program. Those guys don't know, but I found a whole new me. I love the people there, and it's good to have people that are good people that you can emulate.

Rob immerses himself in the teacher preparation program, taking long-term substitute jobs in the city for income. His first long-term substitute job is for sixth grade math, in a classroom where half of the students are over 14 years old and only 8% meet state proficiency levels. On his first day, a student ushers him to his classroom and he enters. The class is in such chaos with desks flying across the room and people yelling and screaming that the students don't even notice him enter. He sits down and says quietly to a little kid sitting nearby, "They don't even know I'm here, do they?"

Rob's second long-term substitute experience goes better. He attributes this to the fact that he has taken more teacher preparation courses and knows what he is doing. By the time I meet Rob, he is working in his third long-term substitute position at the school where he eventually completes his internship. Rob explains,

In terms of life, this teaching experience was really the first time that I really started living life again. I started working out again. Paying bills like a normal person....It really forced me to be a human person again. I finally found something that I care about doing. And it helps.... Maybe I found something that I was connected to emotionally. I do get connected to teaching emotionally....I finally had somewhere, an outlet, something to care about. In return people cared about you, maybe I didn't have that.

Rob begins to experience a sense of interdependence in his teaching, but he also suffers some disappointments connected with that long-term substitute position. The English team leader does not feel he has done the best job and recommends that he complete a traditional internship the following year rather than be given a job as a first year teacher. At first, Rob feels that he has been treated unfairly, but he comes to

realize the wisdom in completing an internship experience before taking over his own classroom.

When I first meet Rob, he has determined that he will not re-enlist in the Army Reserves unless they are willing to grant him a transfer to Civil Service as a military reporter. Weeks later when I talk to him, he has decided to re-enlist, he explains, for the money only. But when it comes time for a decision, Rob accepts a direct commission as an officer. At the time of this study, Rob is a 38-year-old full-time student completing his professional year of a Master of Arts in Teaching program while serving as a Second Lieutenant for his Reserve unit.

#### Thomas Averman

Thomas begins his vocational story with his advanced history course in high school, a course which serves as a turning point for him. In this course, Thomas feels he is able to develop his writing skill and discover that he is a very good writer. After that course, he begins taking writing classes regularly. Thomas graduates from high school in 1975. He attends a branch campus of his state university for a couple years and then finishes up his English degree from another nearby college in 1980. Thomas explains that his love of writing draws him to his major in English. He spends his time writing articles for the college newspaper and works briefly with the local newspaper writing obituaries. Mostly, however, he works his way through college as a janitor at his former grade school.

Two memorable teachers from Thomas' high school and college careers are his advanced history course instructor in high school and a history professor in college. Both ask philosophical, "what would you do" questions and challenge

students to think for themselves. His college instructor also effectively uses humor in the classroom.

After college, Thomas' father encourages him to enlist in the Air Force. Thomas' father has completed a tour as an Army Sergeant and has spent 32 years as a high school science teacher specializing in biology. Thomas enlists with the Air Force in 1982 at 24 years old. Basic training is his first time on his own.

Thomas is classified as open general; they determine from his background that he could work with photography, even though he has no prior experience in the field. The Air Force sends Thomas to a 15-week photo school in Denver, Colorado, and his career as a photographer begins.

Thomas' first assignment is in England for a two year tour. He spends much time studying the Career Development Course (CDC) manual so that he can pass the test and advance in rank. During Thomas' assignment in England, he says the Air Force saves his life; an Air Force surgeon removes a large cyst from the right side of his neck under his ear.

He is then assigned to Los Angeles Air Force Base in 1984. He lives off base in an apartment and becomes a Senior Airman. He studies for one month for Staff Sergeant and makes Staff Sergeant in 4 years. Thomas graduates with an Associate's Degree in photography from the College of the Air Force in 1989.

While at the Los Angeles Air Force Base, Thomas writes and takes photographs for the *Astro News*, a base paper. In 1990, he is awarded the top unit public affairs representative in the Air Force Aerospace Audio Visual Squadron. In

1992, Thomas photographs the L.A. riots. In all, he spends 9 ½ years in Los Angeles, despite repeated requests for transfer.

In 1993, Thomas is finally granted his request of an overseas post. He is transferred to Yokota Air Base in Japan, where he serves three years. At Yokota, Thomas runs the photo lab, develops his administrative skills, makes Technical Sergeant, and is influential in the lives of three airmen who are in danger of losing their careers. Through Thomas' support, they all succeed, and 14 years later all are Technical Sergeants or higher. During this time, Thomas even learns a bit of Japanese.

A highlight of Thomas' time at Yokota is when he takes security photographs for President Clinton's visit to Tokyo. He photographs the guarding of Air Force One at his base during Clinton's visit, and he is involved in unearthing a 500-pound explosive from World War II that is found on his base. He says that at the time, he thought, "If this thing goes off, I'm going to be the last casualty of World War II." He also becomes involved with the Yokota Players, a base acting troupe. Thomas produces their advertising images in the base paper. In Japan, Thomas makes some lasting friendships he will never forget.

For his next assignment, Thomas requests the East Coast, but he is stationed at Vandenberg AFB, again in California. He is there for the next six years. During that time, he actually does little photography. He is involved with administrative work and customer service. He finds he is good at procuring hard-to-get items, making sure everyone has everything they need. In his twentieth year in the Air Force, Thomas advances to Master Sergeant. This is the last rank that requires testing with the CDCs,

so Thomas is permitted to pursue an assignment as a CDC writer. He explains, “I had a writing degree after all.” This is his final assignment before retirement.

Photo CDC writers are stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi. There is a big move at the time to eliminate testing items related to chemical photography and to replace these items with items related to digital photography. Thomas is appointed to remove all the material in the training manual relating to chemical photography. He is able to eliminate an entire volume from the CDC, and test scores go up.

Thomas also helps write CDC exams in San Antonio. This work allows him to meet up with people from his entire career and serves as a reunion of comrades. At this point, Thomas meets the woman who will become his wife. She is from New Orleans, but she evacuates before Hurricane Katrina strikes. During that fateful storm, Thomas serves on a Shelter Management Team in Biloxi. He cares for civilians in disaster conditions and assists with evacuation. Even though Thomas’ photographer days are through, he uses his personal camera, and his pictures from Katrina are now in the archives at the Air Force Museum.

Thomas acknowledges the great power of the photograph. One year prior to Katrina, he photographs some water damage done to Thompson Hall, the building that becomes the shelter. Thomas’ photographs lead to repairs that bolster the structure and improve its safety as a Katrina shelter.

Ironically, that same building holds Thomas’ retirement celebration in 2006, after 24 years of Thomas’ dedicated military service. Thomas delivers a moving address which he describes as follows:

You never know how your actions are going to affect others. As either a teacher in the sense of the CDC writer, as an instructor, because I did do some

informal instruction, or as a supervisor. You never know how your efforts are going to pay off.

Thomas retires after a full career with a long list of awards and medals. He considers himself lucky to have avoided combat for 24 years and to have had so many rewarding experiences.

After Thomas' retirement, he thinks he might go to Ft. Meade to teach at the photo school, but they don't need teachers. He moves to Memphis and is married. Thomas enrolls with Troops to Teachers as a prospective English teacher. Thomas acknowledges that English was always his "first love"; he has had a lifelong fascination with the subject and feels that his writing skills have served him well throughout his life. Memphis is not hiring, but a Troops to Teachers coordinator contacts Thomas and tells him that his state needs teachers. This state, on the Eastern seaboard, is especially enticing to Thomas because it puts him only an hour away from his family and his hometown. In addition, an Air Force Base is centrally located. Thomas successfully interviews for a slot in the Union County Resident Teacher program.

I ask Thomas how he would characterize the different phases of his career. He says in England, he is an airman, learning the ropes. In L.A., he matures; in Japan, he learns to help others solve their problems. In Vandenberg, he hones his administrative skills. While working on the CDC, he learns to expect the unexpected, and he gains expertise working with students who call to ask questions one-on-one. Coming into the resident teacher program, Thomas believes this last experience will be immediately applicable in his new teaching career. He begins the program as a 50-year-old Air Force retiree.

## Chapter 4: Communities of Practice – Program Communities

### Thomas' Program Community

#### *Thomas' Entry into the Program Community*

When Thomas first meets with the selection committee for his teacher preparation program, he is not a complete stranger to education, but he comes with less experience than most. Thomas' father has been a high school science teacher for 32 years, and his sister is in education as well. Thomas has been told he would make a good teacher, and when he retires from the Air Force, he registers with the Troops to Teachers program to see what is available. Teachers are not needed in Memphis, but Thomas receives an email from one of the recruiters for the Union County Resident Teacher program who informs Thomas that English is a high need area in Union County and asks if he would be interested in being interviewed. Thomas flies to Union County and interviews with the selection committee.

The screening process for the Union County Resident Teacher program consists of a writing sample and a personal interview conducted by a screening committee of at least three educators including a school-based administrator and a representative from the Human Resources Department. The screening committee rates applicants in the areas of critical thinking, achievement, constant learning, commitment, sense of perspective, sensitivity and high expectations.

Shortly after his interview, I receive an email from a program representative informing me that a candidate with military history has interviewed and that he may be admitted to the program. At that point, program personnel are concerned that

Thomas does not have experience in schools; they request that he observe in a Union County high school for two weeks before considering his application.

Thomas immediately arranges another trip to Union County and stays in a motel for two weeks while observing English and social studies classes at Mid-County High School. Mid-County High School houses grades 9-12. Ninety-two percent of the 1,643 students are African American, and 35% receive free and reduced lunch. Mid-County High has a 78% graduation rate.

At this point, Thomas acknowledges the fact that he has no experience in schools, but he feels that he brings many relevant skills to the classroom: “I have lots and lots of books, and I have done lots of writing. I can talk quite well.” During his observation period, Thomas teaches mini-lessons on Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, and interpretation of art. He gets favorable reviews from the teachers at Mid-County, and two teachers offer to write recommendations for him. The students react to Thomas in a predictable way. When they find out he is an Air Force retiree, they ask how much flying time he has. Thomas replies, “None.” This exchange reminds him of a time when he was photographing a children’s recital at the base community center. One child approached him and asked, “Do you carry a gun?” Thomas replied, “I’ve been taught how to, but I only shoot with this camera.”

After two weeks of observing, Thomas tells the program personnel that he is more convinced than ever that he wants to be a teacher. They admit him to the program. Thomas travels back to Tennessee, takes and passes the Praxis exam, and begins preparing for his move. I make contact with him while he is packing. Interestingly enough, his principal-to-be also calls him and speaks with him as well.

Thomas and his wife relocate on Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. His program begins on Monday morning.

### *The Union County Resident Teacher Program*

The Union County Resident Teacher program began in 2005 as a fast-track to certification for teachers in Title I schools. In 2007, the program expanded and was made available to any Union County teacher in need of certification. It is an in-house program developed and run by the school system with no involvement from higher education. Union County has a great need for such a program. Union County is in the top 20 of the nation's largest school systems, with 135,000 students. The public school system includes over 134 elementary schools, 30 middle schools and 24 high schools. Approximately 1,300 new teachers are hired each year.

Until 2007, many of the teachers in the local school system were hired on a conditional certificate with the understanding that they would work on meeting full certification in a specified period of time. Union County's new superintendent, however, had recently decided that all county teachers needed to become highly qualified under the No Child Left Behind Act. He informed all conditionally certified teachers that they needed to enroll in the Union County Resident Teacher program during the summer of 2007 if they wished to continue teaching in the fall.

For this reason, the Resident Teacher program swells with participants. On the first day of the program, the project director prepares for 80 candidates, and 117 show up! Thomas is one of those 117. Of the group, about half have prior teaching experience as conditional teachers. Many of these candidates are not enthusiastic about their forced enrollment in the program. Their presence also changes the nature

of the program, which was originally designed for talented individuals with no previous teaching experience or educational coursework.

The program begins in the summer with a five-week intensive course from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm daily. For four of those weeks, candidates spend the mornings in an expert teacher's summer school classroom in an internship and the afternoons meeting as a group. During the school year, candidates assume the role of a full-time resident teacher. They meet once weekly for a seminar and reading course and are mentored by one of the instructors from pre-employment training who conducts classroom observations and provides support and guidance to the resident teacher. Instructors in the Resident Teacher program are current or retired Union County Public Schools administrators or teachers. The program is designed so that mentors of resident teachers confer regularly with building principals to discuss strengths and weaknesses of residents and discuss actions for targeted growth.

Instruction in the program is based on the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards, Union County content area standards, and standards for PreK-12 students. While the program is not designed specifically to foster vocational identity development, a stated program delivery component is how to become a professional.

Enrollment in the Union County Resident Teacher program commits participants to three years of teaching in Union County. Candidates in the Resident Teacher program have the opportunity to complete all requirements for a Standard teaching certificate within one year. Tenure is available at the beginning of the fourth year of teaching. Beginning resident teachers earn \$43,481 plus benefits. Salary credit

is provided for military service, so presumably Thomas begins on a slightly higher salary step.

The program timeline includes program admission in the spring, pre-employment training and internship in the summer, and residency throughout one entire school year. Data were collected during each of the four components of Thomas' teacher preparation and induction program. In this way, Thomas' case provides a longitudinal view of transition from program start into the first year of teaching.

### *Place*

In *Getting Back into Place*, Casey (1993) states that place functions to determine not only how one interacts with others but even who each individual becomes within the context of place. Thomas' program community meets in various locations that influence the interactions of individuals participating with the community of practice. During the summer, candidates and instructors gather at Carver Middle School in Union County. This middle school adjoins with an elementary school, offering ample space for meeting. In fact, this middle school offers so many professional development opportunities during the opening week of the Resident Teacher program that there are registration tables set up in the front lobby, and aides are stationed in the hall to direct candidates to the appropriate classroom. This affords candidates with a view of teachers as ongoing learners.

Due to the large size of the group, they meet in Carver's media center. The media center is not the ideal location for a training session. Program directors have to spend time organizing the space, moving dividers, and setting up tables. Even once all

the preparations have been made, the vaulted ceilings in the room and floor-to-ceiling windows make for a squinting bright space with substandard acoustics. The instructors repeatedly ask students to repeat their statements. It seems that the only noise that carries well is the squeaking of candidates' chairs. One affordance of this space is the fact that candidates are seated at round or rectangular tables. This seating encourages conversation and community building while facilitating group work.

In certain instances, candidates are divided into subgroups and meet in classroom breakout rooms. These rooms are set up with individual desks in rows facing toward a large chalkboard or whiteboard at the front of the room and a wall of windows on the side. Because it is summer, walls and bulletin boards are bare, but occasionally remnants from the previous professional development class are posted on the front boards. On the day of presentations, the quote that greets candidates on the chalkboard reads, "Excuses are tools of the incompetent, Built upon monuments of nothingness, And people who specialize in them are seldom capable of anything else." Other environmental writings include recommended websites and a list of eight reasons for misbehavior. These writings remain on the board throughout the class meeting in some cases, setting a background in which the community engages.

In one sense, this connection to other communities of educators may provide candidates an imagined feeling of belonging to something bigger. In the case of the "excuses" quote, however, which is posted on the day of student presentations, it presents an unintended threat to novices.

Meetings in the fall are held at Marshall High School. This high school is not as inviting as Carver. Marshall is under construction, so a great portion of it is

inaccessible. The parking lot is riddled with potholes, and the tennis courts have so much grass growing through them one cannot imagine repairing them. The resident teacher program meets in the media center which is a surprisingly cozy place. Walking in the door, you pass under a detector that I presume checks to see if any books are being removed from the library illegally. The circulation desk is immediately to the right; this is where candidates sign in. They sit at rectangular tables on one side of a row of low bookshelves. On the other side, mentors and instructors congregate. This separation may have inserted an unintended *us* and *them* social structure into the community of practice. On the other hand, the effort taken to place all residents on one side of the divider definitely sends a clear message: You are in this together.

The final setting for the RT program is a classroom just down the hall from the media center at Marshall. This classroom is set with rectangular tables and chalkboards at the front and back of the room. This interior room has no windows. Although the classroom is currently being used by a high school teacher and students, there are no bulletin boards or posters that identify the content area that is taught in the room. Many cabinets and loose computers line the perimeter of the room, and on one occasion, a quarter of the tables in the room are filled with boxes of collected student notebooks. This classroom is far from a model learning environment.

Interestingly, the 'front' of this room changes during the course of my observations. During my first and third observation, when the instructor is present, the candidates face the side of the room with the screen and teacher desk. On the occasion when the class is student-taught, the entire class faces in the opposite

direction. Is this an indication that a new direction has been appropriated by the members of the group who decide to give their presentations in the absence of their instructor?

In each of these ways, place mediates the formation of the Resident Teacher Program community and affords certain social interactions that are negotiated within that space. Particularly, seating arrangements serve to strengthen the bonds among cohort members as will be explored in the following section.

### *Community Social Structures*

For the first week of the program, students are divided into elementary and secondary groups for reading instruction. Forty-two secondary candidates meet with instructor Candice Orman for five full-day sessions. Candice confides to me that it is very difficult to condense a full-semester course into a one-week format but that it is necessary since candidates will begin their internships in a week.

Due to the short timeframe and large amounts of material to be covered to meet the state requirements, students are immediately placed in a position where their interdependence is essential. The jigsaw method is used extensively throughout this program so that student groups can become experts on a portion of the lesson's material and rely on other groups to teach them the other portions that they do not have an opportunity to study.

During the reading course, Candice, as the candidates call her, interacts on a collegial basis with candidates. She states, "I'm learning from you" and "I'm learning things I never would have thought of." Candice emphasizes the fact that candidates could and should benefit from each other's experiences and stories.

After the first week, the remainder of the summer session is conducted by a lead instructor and mentors. The lead instructor, Dr. Ledford, models active learning strategies and is remarkably successful in keeping all 117 candidates involved. He exhibits his role as an authority figure more assertively than Candice. Dr. Ledford praises those students who volunteer to answer questions (e.g., “Latoya is going to get an A today.”), calls on students randomly to ensure their participation, and demands active involvement from all candidates. At one point, he says, “I want you to write down the answers....I expect you to write it down, so write it down!” That said, however, he fosters a congenial atmosphere and uses humor to keep the tone light. During summer training, candidates begin to bond with one another, offering to send each other slide shows via email and sharing food at their tables.

A major project during the summer training period is a group assignment of a high impact teaching strategy (HITS). Groups of about six candidates work together to prepare a 20-minute lesson on one of eight HITS. I am able to observe the groups planning and also presenting their lessons. The format of the group planning session is illustrative of the instructor-student relationship that exists during summer training. Groups are given a detailed rubric that is used in grading their presentations. They are also given a detailed description of the instructors’ expectations. Mentors monitor the group work for one hour, collect a list of who is in each group, and then leave groups on their own to complete the work. The mentor monitoring Thomas’ classroom simply writes on the chalkboard, “The rest of the day is yours to figure out who will do what and how...then do it. Just remember, you will be presenting.”

At this point, candidates are afforded responsibility to complete collaborative tasks without instructor guidance, but they are still protected somewhat by the program trainers. For the most part, candidates do not have information regarding program details and future activities. I joke with Thomas that he is only given information on a need-to-know basis, and he verifies that that is exactly what is happening. Dr. Ledford acknowledges that the program instructors are attuned to the anxiety and learning saturation of the candidates.

In the fall, the program's instructor-directed approach eventually leads to a candidate-directed approach. Dr. Ledford still remains more authoritative than Candice, but incidents of candidates challenging his statements increase, signaling the increased status of candidates now that they are all teachers of record. Even their dress more closely mirrors that of their instructors. While the majority of candidates dress in jeans, shorts or capris during the summer, they dress professionally during the school year.

In Candice's fall reading course, she shows her comfort in drawing on candidates' knowledge and allowing them to question her instruction. When a female candidate is not satisfied with the explanation she receives from Candice, she turns to her classmates: "Does anybody else have a...?" Another student offers an interpretation, and the discussion continues with very little involvement from Candice for the next several minutes.

The scenario that best exemplifies the move from instructor-directed to student-directed instruction, however, occurs in late November during Candice's reading course. Students are scheduled to present mini-lessons using reading

strategies. Candice calls one of the students on his cell phone and informs him that she is stuck in traffic and will be late. After much deliberation, students decide to begin the presentations without Candice. When it becomes apparent that she is not going to get there, not one student leaves early, even though it is the night before Thanksgiving break. A female student takes on a leadership role, keeping time for the presentations, calling “time out” when the class gets embroiled in a heated political debate, and finally dismissing class. Candidates in general are mostly cooperative with the demonstration lessons. There is some playfulness, but they monitor each other too. They spontaneously applaud after each presentation and provide assistance when a presenter loses his train of thought as he is speaking.

The next week, when Candice returns, she beams: “I’m so glad you guys still gave your presentations even in my absence because it’s not about me, it’s about you and sharing instructional strategies between colleagues.” This scenario demonstrates the extent to which the candidates recognize their interdependence upon one another and acknowledge one another’s authority.

Ironically, while candidates are demonstrating professional responsibility in one arena, they are falling short in another. Dr. Ledford feels the need to call the group to task in late November, drawing a parallel between the group of candidates and a group of elementary school students. He chastises them for not completing their assignments, sets a final deadline for semester assignments, and informs candidates of a mandatory meeting which, he explains, is the equivalent of keeping them in from recess to do their homework. If they fail to attend the meeting, their absence signals

their resignation from the program, and if they fail to submit their assignments by the stated deadline, they will be suspended from the program.

From Dr. Ledford's comments, it is unclear how many candidates are missing assignments. It is ironic, however, that the same group who voluntarily engages with one another's demonstration lessons without an instructor's presence is so negligent in their duties as students. The group clearly articulates a number of times how important they feel it is to share stories, support each other, and advocate for their own needs. Perhaps in some way the assignments are not adopted by the group of candidates as valued work according to the conceptual tools that they appropriate. Clearly, social accountability works in this community in a way in which organizational accountability does not.

#### *Conceptual Tools Appropriated by the Community*

According to transcripts from observations of the program community, over eighty conceptual tools are employed by community members during the period of observation. Among these tools, however, are several that are consistently reinforced and used by the greatest number of community participants. These include the following:

- Use your Resources
- Educators Agree on Best Practices
- Objectives Guide Instruction and Assessment
- Good Instruction = Involved Students + Effective Strategies
- Classroom Management is 50% Instruction
- Model, Practice, and Debrief
- Survival is the #1 Goal

Throughout the training, instructors and mentors urge candidates to use their resources: to ask for assistance from media specialists, special educators, and school-

based mentors; to tap into parent expertise; to rely on more experienced teachers; to use websites, books and other publications; and most importantly, to use one another as a peer network for support and information. When groups meet to discuss a number of suggestions for new teachers as a class activity, a few groups converge on the idea of self-advocacy and use of resources as being the most significant piece of advice for new teachers. This pervasive concept, along with the program activities utilizing the jigsaw strategy, encourages the growth of a strong sense of camaraderie, support and interdependence among candidates.

Because of the condensed timeframe of the Resident Teacher program, most concepts presented to the candidates are regarded as undisputed fact. High Impact Teaching Strategies (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) are presented with percentiles listed by each strategy to show how much more effective a teacher could become by using the stated strategy. For example, a teacher identifying similarities and differences with students could expect those students to perform at the 45<sup>th</sup> percentile above students who are not taught using similarities and differences. No mention is made of the fact that many of the claims made in *Classroom Instruction that Works* are hotly contested, such as the claim that there isn't research to back up discovery teaching as a worthy approach. Instead, candidates are given the impression, which they quickly appropriate, that there is educational consensus on best practice, and that their textbook may be used as an authoritative guide.

This concept is further reinforced in the fall when a transcript of an Internet forum for new teachers sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa is given to students. The students are led in a jigsaw activity during which they and their group members read

and discuss the contents of the transcript. When introducing this activity, Dr. Ledford states, “Much of what is discussed in here are the same types of things that we have talked about during the summer, and I want to reinforce those with you because I think they are important. I also think that it is important to see that other people are saying the same types of things that we are saying to you.”

If there is one concept that is totally engrained in the community from the start, it is that objectives guide instruction and assessment. The first reason why this concept is so unambiguously communicated is due to the time constraints of the program. Repeatedly, instructors have to refocus on the lesson objective to keep the class moving at the appropriate pace. In all presentations and demonstration lessons, candidates post as well as verbally articulate lesson objectives related to student learning. Stating objectives is presented and upheld as a norm of teaching.

In meeting stated objectives, candidates are urged to use a formula for success. This formula goes roughly as follows: Good Instruction equals Involved Students plus Effective Strategies. Because community members have not problematized the concept of *effective* strategies, this equation works well for the community in defining good instruction. Effective strategies are those held up as best practices; involved students are those who are actively engaged in learning, primarily by writing or speaking, although multiple ways of engaging such as acting or drawing are also mentioned. There is great value placed on student *doing*, and learning in pairs or groups is extolled as being more effective than learning on one’s own.

Throughout the program, effective instructional strategies and high involvement strategies are modeled by instructors and candidates in presentations and

demonstration lessons. This is especially notable given the fact that for much of the summer, instructors endeavor to promote the active engagement of 117 candidates simultaneously!

This formula for success is extended to classroom management, and Dr. Ledford teaches that 50 percent of classroom management can be handled through good instruction. This concept places even more emphasis on the importance of high involvement and the use of effective strategies for classroom success.

In the fall, a female student shares one of her techniques for effective classroom management: planning. Dr. Ledford asks, “Is it good to have a strong lesson for 88 minutes [of a 90 minute class]?” She replies, “No, I need to plan for 100 minutes.” “Glad to hear that,” comes the reply. Dr. Ledford goes on to say, “Your problems start exactly when she said, when there is down time.”

Another conceptual tool in use in Candice’s class in particular is another, perhaps competing, formula for instruction: Model, Practice, and Debrief. Candice emphasizes, and candidates appropriate the importance of modeling as an essential instructional strategy. In their final presentations, candidates remind one another on feedback forms to remember to model strategies, and Candice offers:

The one thing I want to keep encouraging is model...model...model... model...model...model...model. I can’t say it enough. So rather than just presenting a lesson, make sure that you’re teaching the lesson. Make sure that you’re modeling whatever it is that you’re expecting them to do, that you’re providing modeling for them and that it’s available for viewing.

Practice and debriefing are explored as the steps to take after a strategy has been sufficiently modeled; however, these concepts are not emphasized to such a degree.

The final concept debuts at the beginning of the school year when candidates begin to face challenges in their own classrooms. This concept is that survival is the number one goal for the novice's first year of teaching. Self-actualization is far removed from the equation for success within the Union County Resident Teacher Program. Struggling candidates such as Thomas latch onto the concept of survival as consolation. Thomas reasons that while he might not have superb classroom management or polished instructional practices, he can certainly survive the year, and he becomes determined to do so.

### *Community Metaphors*

Closely aligned with the conceptual tools appropriated by the community are the metaphors used within the community of practice. Metaphorical language is used extensively by the members of this community, with most metaphors centering on the actions of teachers. By grouping similar metaphors, one can reveal the metaphorical understanding of teacher identity as it exists in the community. In *Metaphors we Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson say that metaphors have the power to alter conceptual and social systems and the meanings, perceptions and actions of those who participate in those systems. Metaphors do not simply describe reality, they create reality. "We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 158).

Four overarching metaphors emerge in the community, with three being reinforced and one being constrained. The first metaphorical concept is that a teacher is a tailor. During group work, a student proclaims, "Our kids in *Pathways* are naked.

They come with nothing.” While another group member disagrees with this statement, several metaphors are offered that align with the view of teacher as tailor. Candice asks candidates to *tailor* their instruction to *fit* the needs of students. She also adds that *one size will not fit all*. A student responds that as a teacher, she is attempting to *add layers* of meaning. Similarly, candidates are asked to take off their teacher hat and slip into the student role, as if these identities were garments to be worn or shed.

A second metaphor in use in the community is that of teacher as builder. The teacher works to build a skyscraper of student knowledge. In many cases, the builder can “start from what [students] know and *build* on that,” but in some cases, the builder must first “give them the *foundation* that they need.” Instructional activities are *building blocks* of student learning held together with *nuts and bolts* knowledge. These *connections* to concepts must be made or instruction *doesn’t hold any weight*. Teachers *build* a repertoire of strategies *on a base* of what students know and often use *scaffolding* to support this work. Candice, Dr. Ledford and the candidates use this metaphor throughout the program to refer to the teaching and learning enterprise.

Perhaps the most prevalent metaphor in use in the community, however, is teacher as miner. In this metaphor, content knowledge is a mineral to be excavated in the depths of mines. Teachers lead students on a dangerous journey into the mine and assist with the excavation. Candidates talk of teachers *pulling* information from the source and *tapping* prior knowledge. This work obviously takes place in the depth of a cave or cavern: teachers and students must *step-off into* content, *slide* into concepts, and conduct *in-depth exploration*, all in the hope of *deepening* understanding. When

teachers are successful, they are praised that they are *so deep*. This mining work is dangerous, however. One candidate remarks that in becoming a teacher, “there is the threat of taking away my own life.” Teachers and students must avoid *pitfalls*, and take care to *illuminate* what is there. Often teachers must perform a rescue mission, “meet[ing] students where they are . . . and get[ting] them outside of their frustration level.” Students can get *tripped up* “when they’re *not equipped* with the right kind of strategies.” When students are in trouble, *a lightbulb goes out*. An effective rescue mission will make use of *a device*, will help a student *backtrack*, and will create an *outlet*, without the teacher *getting worn out* or the student *abandoning* the project.

One final metaphor emerges early in the school year but is quickly constrained by Dr. Ledford. Several candidates enter the seminar in animated conversation. “World War III broke out in my school today,” one remarks. In the class discussion that ensues, four different students make reference to the *weapons* they use as teachers: “A very strong lesson plan is the biggest weapon for my success,” “The biggest weapon that I can have is . . . having full knowledge of what I’m going to teach.” Finally, one student remarks that what he really needs to be effective is strong mentoring and a stun gun.

Dr. L: And what?!?

WM: Stun guns.

Dr. L: Stun guns? Come on, come on.

WM: You want to come see my kids?

Dr. L: I’d put them up against any kids that I’ve ever had.

WM: Remember, I’m at Bethune, I have a reputation to uphold for my students.

Dr. L: Actually you would be surprised at the reputation that should be upheld at that school because Mary McLeod Bethune is probably one of the finest educators ever. So yes, you should be having a very high standard to uphold.

Dr. Ledford effectively constrains the *teacher as warrior* metaphor by holding up an example of an educator whom the candidates should emulate, an educator who most definitely would not have used stun guns on students.

### *Practical Tools and Narratives*

If there is one thing that distinguishes this community of practice, it is the absolute abundance of practical tools suggested and modeled within this community. While theoretical concepts and metaphors are definitely present, practical tools are pervasive. For the most part, practical tools take the form of modeled strategies, narratives, verbal suggestions, recommended references, and reified documents.

During the summer training, about half of the candidates have limited prior teaching experience. At this point in community development, many of the practical strategies offered are in the form of narratives. These narratives include *personal teaching narratives* in which experienced educators (both instructors and candidates) share something that has happened in their classrooms, *borrowed teaching narratives* in which instructors share teaching narratives that they have heard but did not experience directly, and *personal student narratives* in which candidates recall memorable teachers and school experiences from their own pasts as students. Only one *hypothetical classroom narrative* is shared.

Narratives provide a context for novices in which to understand the strategies and suggestions being proposed. As an example, one candidate shares a story detailing the way she uses art to teach the concept of mood in her English class. Within her example is embedded the conceptual tools of scaffolding and guided

practice. Note the way in which the candidate almost acts out the classroom dialogue to provide context for the tool she is suggesting:

One thing I have done in the classroom, and it follows the pattern of scaffolding and guided practice, is starting from what they know, so I'll show them a picture, and I'll ask, OK, what do you think the artist is trying to get at, convey, what mood? And that's an easy one. Happiness, right? Maybe there's sunshine, happiness, light. Or someone's crying. It's obvious, the author is trying to convey sadness. And then I just try to step it up as I go. So one that I used this past year is called *The Potato Eaters*. And that's not an easy one, so I modeled it. Look at the light, is the light bright? No it's not. How would you describe the light? It's a dim light, a dark mood. Look at their faces, are they smiling? They're not smiling. Are they crying? No, they're not crying. So, how would you describe their faces? Well, maybe there's wrinkles or lines, they look worried or stressed. What's on the table? There's just one plate; there's five people at the table but there's just one plate. There's not a lot. So, how do you think these people are feeling? Maybe they're worried, maybe they're depressed or frustrated. So I would guide them through a painting or two. And then I would have them maybe do it in pairs or groups of three and then release them to try to do it on their own.

Other non-narrative suggestions are just as detailed, filling in student responses to the strategy for those who cannot imagine them for themselves. One student suggests that candidates copy homework on half-sheets of paper because it is less intimidating for the students, and they are more likely to complete the assignment if it is not a full page.

Finally, practical tools are offered as reified documents such as scoring rubrics, graphic organizers, and handouts detailing the steps of an instructional strategy. Instructors and candidates alike suggest references in the form of books, local school system documents, websites, and computer software.

Modeling is present during the summer training experience, but its use as a method to propose practical tools surges during the fall. Once all candidates are teaching in their own classrooms, the use of narrative to convey practical tools

diminishes, and strategies are instead modeled or suggested. Candice spends the majority of an entire class teaching the candidates as if they are struggling readers learning how to use summarizing as a reading strategy. Demonstration lessons form the capstone project for both semesters; however, during the summer, the emphasis is on the content of the presentation, while in the fall, candidates are asked to model instructional strategies as if they were teaching a classroom of children.

Practical tools are abundant in the Union County Resident Teacher Program. In all, over 100 practical tools are modeled, suggested, or offered in narrative form or reified document during the observed sessions of this community of practice.

### *Imagined Futures*

As focused as this community of practice is on practicality, it is no wonder that the work of imagination is given a backseat. Stories of imagined futures are conspicuously absent in the summer training, especially given the fact that many of the candidates are preparing for a career which they can *only* imagine. Perhaps these candidates defer to the personal teaching narratives of experienced educators, because, as Thomas explains, “Chances are, I’m going to have the same [experiences].” During the observed summer sessions, only one candidate shares an example of a classroom lesson that she imagines sharing with her students once she becomes a teacher.

In the fall, there is more talk of the imagined future, but this limited conversation centers on the future of the teaching profession in general or the candidates’ future within the Resident Teacher Program. Candidates do not articulate a global view of the teacher they hope to become or their overarching purposes as

teachers (except for one candidate's vague conception of being relevant to minority youth). They do, however, provide hypothetical classroom scenarios in the form of, "If you implement *that* teaching strategy, the students will respond in *this* way." For example, "If you ask them to give you a summary, they're going to tell you the entire story from beginning, middle, to end." These statements, however, seem to emerge more from past experiences than any imagined conception of future interactions with students.

The Union County Resident Teacher Program places little emphasis on imaginative work. In a way, the community's strong focus on immediately implemented, practical instructional tools may inadvertently constrain community members from forming conceptions of themselves in an imagined future.

#### *Community Promotion of Certain Identities*

As in the example above, within the community certain identities are constrained while others are nurtured. Borrowing from Zukas and Malcolm's (2002) conceptualization of five pedagogic identities, the identity that is most nurtured in this community of practice is that of educator as assurer of organizational quality and efficiency and deliverer of service to agreed or imposed standards. Other identities are afforded, of course, but not to the degree to which candidates are encouraged to plan lessons based on given objectives using best practices to deliver services. Candice even speaks of "the children that we're servicing." Although this conception of teaching as providing a service is quite common in America's schools, Pinar (2004) asserts: "Education is an opportunity offered, not a service rendered" (p. 5).

Pinar's comment points to an essential difference in understanding the relation among teachers and students. If education is a service rendered, students are passive, and education is something that is done to them. If education is an opportunity, however, students must be active participants in the educational process.

Zukas and Malcolm's (2002) framework is supported by a list of dimensions along which various pedagogic identities may be analyzed. Conditions found within the Resident Teacher program constrain the development of certain of these dimensions in specific ways. In the training, candidates are either instructed as a whole group or are divided according to grade level taught (i.e., elementary or secondary). They are not divided by content area for any significant period of time during the observed lessons. For this reason, the program may foster development of pedagogic communities while constraining development of disciplinary communities.

As stated previously, candidates are often asked to engage with content in a jigsaw format. They are required to depend on their colleagues to supply them with the information which they do not have the opportunity to study. In this way, the program fosters a sense of interdependence. Program instructors also emphasize the effectiveness of group learning. As a result, an identity as a collaborative educator is nurtured at the expense of a conceptualization of teacher as individual learner.

One of the conceptual tools prevalent in this community is that educators agree on best practices. The local school system curriculum and pacing guide are held up as models for instructional design. A teaching identity in which pedagogical as well as disciplinary content is given rather than contested is clearly promoted.

Candidates are held to certain standards during this program. Dr. Ledford states, “Everyone is responsible for the same amount of work and everyone is going to do the same amount of work.” Candidates are given scoring rubrics for assignments and are graded using objective measures. This modeling affords a focus on objective measures of learning as opposed to learner-centered evaluative practices. In addition, students are chastised for not completing assignments given by the program hierarchy. The program instructors’ emphasis on organizational accountability is disconnected from the grassroots social accountability that candidates develop to one another.

Candidates are constrained in their view of teaching as an act of social justice. Political outspokenness is allowed only to a certain extent, and democratic, critical approaches to education are absent from community conversations. I find this to be especially intriguing given the high minority, urban setting of Union County and the fact that the majority of candidates in the program are African Americans.

Similarly, discovery learning and more humanistic approaches to teaching are deemphasized. Candidates are encouraged to make lessons relevant to students, connecting to their prior knowledge, but they are encouraged to do so within a technical, objectivist frame. Student performance on objective measures of learning is given more priority than development of the whole child as a person in the world.

Finally, due to constraints in the location of the training, candidates are not nurtured to become sophisticated users of technology. Besides an overhead projector and an instructor-supplied laptop and projector, technology is absent from the community’s space. Candidates are, however, encouraged to utilize their resources,

including their technology support staff and media center specialists, so presumably candidates could tap into this technological knowledge in the context of their own schools.

The following table summarizes the identities that are afforded by this community. As evidenced by Thomas’ development of pedagogical identity, detailed below, the fact that the community nurtures a particular identity does not directly result in similar identity formation in individual community members. Instead, vocational identity development is a complex interaction of negotiation among *individuals* in community.

<u>Affordances of the Program Community</u>
Educator as... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliverer of Service</li> <li>• Implementer of Best Practices</li> <li>• Assurer of Quality</li> <li>• Member of Pedagogic Community to whom Educator assumes Accountability</li> <li>• Collaborator</li> <li>• User of Resources</li> <li>• Objective Evaluator</li> <li>• Subordinate Employee</li> <li>• Bridge between Student Prior Knowledge and Curriculum</li> <li>• User of Knowledge</li> <li>• Communicator of Knowledge</li> <li>• Participant in Ongoing Staff Development Seminars</li> </ul>

Thomas in his Program Community

From the community of practice that develops around the Union County Resident Teacher Program, described above, one might assume that a candidate like Thomas who enters the program with few preconceived notions about teaching would absorb the teacher identity promoted by the community, developing most in the areas that are afforded most attention. This is not the case, however. Thomas develops in

complex ways which are related to his multimembership in various communities of practice as well as his past history.

Even within the program's community of practice, Thomas does not fully assume the identity promoted by the community. Certainly he is influenced by it, but his actions and interactions exemplify the sociocultural idea of person-in-community, where the person who exists within the community and the community itself are mutually constituted.

### *Thomas' Social Relations in Community*

Thomas distinguishes himself from most other candidates during the summer training by his dress. While most other participants wear casual clothing, Thomas comes dressed each day in a pressed button-down dress shirt, khaki slacks, and dress shoes. His closely cut salt-and-pepper hair and his silver wire-rimmed glasses complete his look to give him a studious, serious appearance. Thomas dutifully wears his nametag throughout the summer training as he has been asked to do; few others in the group are compliant with this request. Throughout all observed sessions, Thomas distinguishes himself by arriving early; he is sometimes among the first few students to enter class.

Thomas first gravitates toward a woman whom, from their initial introductions, he discovers is from the same hometown and attended the same high school. I also observe Thomas conversing with the male instructors before and after class and during breaks. In general, however, Thomas does not interact during the summer with the other community members except during structured groupwork. Thomas describes himself as trying to absorb everything. He is "delighted to hear

ideas from experienced teachers” and typically defers to those with classroom experience. He articulates that he feels that their experiences will directly benefit him once he begins teaching. Thomas does not experience a sense of interdependence, however, because he still feels that he has little to offer the other candidates.

During group work, Thomas exhibits a businesslike demeanor, often directing the group’s attention to reified documents such as a grading rubric, written explanation of expectations, and textbook. He reads passages from handouts aloud to group members to focus their attention on what they have been asked to do. Once, he asks a question of his group members, “Have you ever met a kid who was completely unreachable by scaffolding?” This question is extremely productive and elicits a heated discussion among group members. It is an example of Thomas contributing to the development of conceptual tools appropriated in the community.

Thomas describes himself as working very well in groups, and his group participation within the program community goes smoothly in his estimation. It is telling, however, to hear Thomas discuss the presentation he and his group give at the conclusion of the summer training.

KF: Do you feel like your group did a pretty good job?

TA: Oh, they did an excellent job.

KF: What do you think were some of the best things about your presentation?

TA: About my group’s presentation, or mine?

From this brief snippet of conversation, it is clear that Thomas somewhat disengages himself from his group as he reflects on their presentation. He refers to his group as *they* rather than *we*, and he asks me to clarify whether I want to hear about how he thinks everyone else performed or how he performed specifically.

During the summer training, Thomas is deferential to the program hierarchy. He speaks of his role in the internship as “serving” the expert teacher and is thrilled when his expert teacher “let[s]” him teach a mini-lesson. Thomas also takes it as a compliment that his expert teacher allows him to grade papers and “let the grades stand.” Thomas does not exhibit a sense of authority or a strong voice in his program community.

Thomas is enthusiastic about serving his instructors. He informs Dr. Ledford and Candice that I have videotaped student presentations in their classes and arranges for me to make copies of the videotapes or transcripts for the instructors to use. In addition, he looks to the program mentors for feedback on the classroom decisions he makes. One time in particular, Thomas is not certain if he has made the best decision regarding a student with missing grades. He decides that he has, explaining: “I wrote it up in my journal and there was no comment from any of the mentors on how I handled it.” Thomas interprets this lack of correction as approval. He clearly views the mentors and instructors as being there to correct him if necessary.

The importance Thomas places on the hierarchy of the program is exemplified by the fact that although he is scheduled to present on the night that Candice is stuck in traffic and candidates are self-taught, Thomas does not present. That evening, he is not feeling his best, having just returned from the funeral of an elderly family member, but before class, Thomas indicates to me that he is ready to present. As the class nears its conclusion, the young African American woman who assumes the leadership role during this particular night’s class asks if there are others scheduled to present that evening:

AAF: (There is a 7 second pause after the conclusion of the previous presentation.) ¿No mas? (13 second pause) Is that it? ¿No mas?  
M: ¿No mas?  
AAF: ¿Está todo?  
M: Muy bien.  
AAF: Adios. Alright everybody. Goodnight. We'll conclude these presentations next Tuesday at 4:45.

During this exchange, Thomas sits with his hands folded in his lap, looking down at his desk not making eye contact with anyone. After about half of the class has packed up and is on the way out of the classroom, Thomas approaches me and apologizes because everyone is leaving and he will not have an opportunity to present. The following week when I ask Thomas if Candice's absence influenced his decision not to present, he answers, "Yes, and the fact that people were halfway out the door. I mean, they would not have appreciated me calling them back to do something that I was not all that anxious to do."

Whether or not Thomas understood the conversation in Spanish asking if there were more people who needed to present is unclear. He does not volunteer to present and acknowledges that he is slightly uncomfortable giving his presentation without an instructor present. When Candice returns the next week, he makes it a point that I communicate with her and offer her my videotape and transcript of the class she missed. This is evidence of the importance that Thomas places on the role of the classroom leader.

Thomas' social interactions with other candidates remains somewhat limited during the remainder of the program. He sits with a colleague from his school, Mr. Mackay, during the later fall reading course sessions. Other county English teachers

fill the table, creating an informal disciplinary community within the pedagogic community of the class.

Clearly Thomas feels that feedback from his peers is important. After his demonstration lesson, he spends most of the remainder of the class reading and re-reading feedback forms from his colleagues. He also comments on many of their suggestions, either acknowledging that they made a good point or explaining why he did what he did.

Thomas' demonstration lesson uncovers somewhat insecure social relationships present in the community, however. As Thomas assumes the teacher role, he greets the class with his eyes on his wristwatch, setting a timer. One student notes on the feedback form that Thomas needs to make eye contact to establish rapport with the class. The first two questions Thomas poses to the class result in two students giving answers that are not what Thomas was seeking. After the first, when Thomas redirects the question to another student, the African American female who answered rolls her eyes and whispers under her breath. The next Caucasian female gives an answer that Thomas feels is also incorrect. She begins arguing with him; he breaks in and calls on another student. Several candidates comment on this exchange on their feedback forms: "Allow students to finish their statements," "Acknowledge effort even if they got it wrong," "Let Kay speak her mind." When Thomas' watch indicates that his time is up, he quickly wraps up the lesson, even though he admits to me that it caused him to gloss over the most important part.

While these exchanges could be interpreted as strained relationships between Thomas and his colleagues, I believe they are due mostly to Thomas' insecurity and

lack of experience as a teacher. As will be evidenced in the discussion of Thomas' school community, while teaching, Thomas is often so focused on his interior monologue regarding what he should say and do next to keep the lesson flowing that he misses important social cues from students. Thomas writes in his journal in late November that he is "learning to make eye contact." He explains that he is naturally shy and tends to avoid eye contact. Perhaps smooth social interactions are not as effortless for Thomas as they are for some.

### *Thomas' Use of Metaphor*

Thomas' metaphors do not directly align with the other metaphors in use in the community. He tends to speak of the teacher as athlete or, interestingly, as photographer.

In one sense, Thomas sees teaching as a sport, one which requires quite a bit of training and conditioning. He states that he needs to get *up to speed* before being given a full load of classes, and he speaks of himself as not being on top of his *game* at one point.

In another way, Thomas sees teaching as similar to his career as a photographer. His memories of a lifetime as a photographer naturally mediate his understanding of his role as a teacher. Thomas feels that collaborating with other teachers allows him to *develop a clearer picture* of how to teach, he speaks of lessons that needed to be *polished* like artwork, and he talks of *exposing* students to required content. In many ways, Thomas looks at the curriculum guide provided by the local school system as a *solution* through which students could *develop*.

Thomas refers to students as solid surfaces, though. He says that his students are like *statues*, that they show incredible *resistance* to learning, even *ironclad* resistance. From Thomas' language, it becomes clear that Thomas is increasingly frustrated that his students are not *soaking up* the *solution* that was designed to *develop* them.

### *Thomas' Use of Conceptual Tools*

Thomas actively adopts several of the major concepts in use by his program community. He believes how important it is to use his resources, and he repeatedly talks about how helpful it is to hear stories from experienced educators. In addition, Thomas expresses a belief that he will continue to use the materials from the summer training into his first months of teaching and beyond. Even at the end of the fall semester, Thomas expresses that there are many strategies he hasn't tried yet; that he will have to go back to his course materials as he gains confidence to try new strategies.

Thomas utilizes instructional objectives for lessons that he plans and implements. During his group presentation, Thomas writes the objective for the lesson on the chalkboard. He unquestioningly accepts that good lessons are guided by desired student outcomes. Likewise, Thomas accepts the idea that students must be engaged in order for successful teaching to take place. He looks to strategies suggested by his peers and his instructors and evaluates them on their perceived ability to engage his students. In the summer, Thomas latches onto the idea of journal writing as an engaging strategy, and in the fall, he turns to vocabulary instruction.

It is unclear whether or not Thomas appropriates the concept that good discipline is half instruction, but he does believe in the importance of solid planning. When I ask Thomas about the need to revise a group lesson, he responds, “Well, they always say ‘be prepared, be prepared, be prepared, be overprepared.’”

Finally, Thomas adopts the concept of survival as a first year goal. In addition to this, he adds his own concept: that of hope. Thomas discovers that a quest to survive has to be matched with hope for a better future. In speaking of the behavior issues in his own classroom, he articulates, “I think it will turn around soon.” This sense of hope is encouraged by Thomas’ ability to imagine a classroom scenario in which teacher and students work collaboratively.

One of Thomas’ overarching concepts that he speaks of often in his program community setting is learning by trial and error. Rather than grasping onto the best practices espoused by his program, Thomas articulates that he plans to learn what works for him in his classroom through trial and error. In addition, trial and error serves as his guide as he tries to figure out who he is as a teacher. He explains, “I’m just not going to know what kind of teacher I am until I do it.”

Finally, Thomas expresses a belief, confirmed by the metaphors he uses, that there are many similarities between his experience as an Air Force photographer and his impending experiences as a teacher. On our first interview, as I explain the purposes of the study, I say that I will be “looking at what is the transition like for someone who has a military career and is transitioning to teaching.” I comment, “Maybe there are similarities, but maybe there aren’t.” Thomas emphatically states, “There are.” Later, he expresses the idea that since he has given presentations in the

Air Force, he will do well giving presentations for candidates in his Resident Teacher program and delivering lessons to high school students.

### *Thomas' Imagined Future*

The continuities that Thomas sees between his previous career as an Air Force photographer and his new career as a high school English teacher allow Thomas to create an imagined future prior to his first day of teaching. While there are not many images of the future shared during the summer training portion of the Resident Teacher program, Thomas draws from community teaching narratives, the information presented by his instructors, the classes he has observed, and his own past to piece together an image of his future as a teacher.

When I ask Thomas how he imagines teaching to be similar to his past career, he articulates that he thinks that there will be many similarities, especially if he is to be granted a position at Parkview Military Academy, a school where several people tell him he will “be a natural”. Thomas explains:

TA: That’s probably the atmosphere or should I say, environment that I would be most used to.

KF: Because it’s a military academy?

TA: Yes, after you’ve worked so long – It’s a real high school, but it’s set up along military lines in discipline.

KF: What does that mean?

TA: Everyone will probably be giving reporting statements, they may very well march; they will come to attention when someone walks into a room. I have not been there and I’m only guessing. But that’s how military schools run. Everyone’s in uniform, in my case a real military uniform. They come to attention when the teacher comes in; they obey the rules of discipline that the teacher sets down.

Thomas expects that students will ask questions like, “What is a gerund?” and that he will provide explanations to them. In this way, teaching will be much like the tutoring he provided to students studying for the CDC in the Air Force.

From his summer training, Thomas expects teaching to be intense. He notes that he will have to have everything orderly. Furthermore, Thomas describes teaching as being collaborative and acknowledges that he understands that the day doesn’t end when the bell rings.

When I ask Thomas what he thinks the biggest difference between teaching and Air Force photography will be, he states that he thinks that understanding unique state laws related to education and being a member of a union will be the biggest changes for him.

As Thomas begins teaching, his idyllic view of teaching shatters, and his musings on the future turn toward his students. He speaks frequently about the future of his students. He feels they are setting themselves up for failure and is worried about the life that awaits them. He worries that they will not survive in the world after high school.

Thomas also imagines his future as a teacher, but at this point, his conception centers on “mak[ing] it.” “Perseverance,” he says. “I’m not giving up. No way.” Occasionally Thomas also discusses his future in the Resident Teacher Program. Program details are no longer on a need-to-know basis, and Thomas discusses his portfolio that he will create in the spring, his Praxis II pedagogy test, and his eventual full teaching certification, which Thomas does not feel is guaranteed.

### *Thomas' Practical Tools*

Thomas' strategy for learning during the summer, as he describes it, is to listen to the ideas and experiences of people with experience, to "truly observe" in his internship to see what works, to look to his textbook and handouts to "pick and choose" strategies he'd like to try, and to draw on his past experiences. He quickly picks up on community norms such as posting the lesson objective and using index cards or the whip around technique to involve all students. But Thomas states, "I've discovered one time on another occasion I did attempt to teach the way another teacher taught and it just didn't work. I simply have to do it my way." During the internship, "his" way is presenting a line by line explication of texts, drawing connections between the text and his students' perceived lives. Thomas is pleased that his expert teacher allows him to teach "the way I wished." At the same time, he has confidence that if he implements the strategies and activities he has been given, he will do well as a teacher.

Thomas begins the year trying to strike a balance between adopting practical tools he has learned about or observed and finding his own way to teach through trial and error. He discovers that teacher directed reading, what had been "his way", doesn't work with his students. He begins experimenting, using strategies from his training such as grouping students and using crossword puzzles to teach vocabulary. Thomas also adopts a strategy that he calls "touching a nerve." He finds this strategy to be useful in engaging students, most likely because it evokes student voice. Although this strategy aligns somewhat with the practical tool of value statements

modeled in his reading class, Thomas' conception of it does not appear to emanate from his experience in his program community.

Thomas contributes a practical tool to his community that previously had not been modeled. On every handout he distributes in his demonstration lesson, Thomas includes copyright information. Because his demonstration lesson occurs at the end of the fall semester, I am unable to determine if others in the community appropriate this tool.

### *Thomas' Narratives*

The occurrence of narrative structures in Thomas' speech follows an inverse trend compared with the program community. While the community offers the majority of narratives in the summer and fewer in the fall, Thomas uses almost no narratives in the summer and many narratives, especially personal teaching narratives, during the fall semester. This pattern makes sense due to the fact that Thomas does not have teaching experience until the fall, so he previously had no contextually rich teaching stories to share.

In the summer, in fact, Thomas' only narratives were drawn from *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2007), a movie he had seen about teaching, his own experience as a student with memorable teachers, and his experience giving an impromptu speech to a group of peers in an Air Force training scenario.

Once Thomas begins teaching, his use of the narrative structure increases sixfold. While Thomas still shares memorable learning experiences and references to media stories, he also begins sharing borrowed teaching narratives gathered from colleagues at his school and personal teaching narratives. Thomas even shares one

hypothetical teaching story in which he speculates what would happen if he announced to his class that the room was on fire: “They might listen.” He contrasts this with what would have happened if he had made the same announcement just a few weeks prior: “No student would have responded in any appropriate way.”

Thomas’ personal teaching narratives center on the theme of conflict between Thomas and his students. They tell of misbehavior (e.g., students skipping class), student excuses for not doing work (e.g., the student who said she couldn’t read because she didn’t have her glasses even though her contact lens case was sitting on her desk), insults (e.g., a student telling Thomas the Air Force is the “wimpy branch” of the armed forces), or differences of perspective (e.g., Thomas and a student disagreeing about the wisdom of rap artists). Seventy-five percent of Thomas’ personal teaching narratives fall into this category. Thomas’ proclivity for stories about classroom conflict may signify his own attempt to discover a comfortable relational place for teacher and student.

Thomas shares one positive experience with a student, when he calls a student’s mother and the child gets himself turned around. At parent conference time, Thomas’ class is the only class in which the child is performing to standard. Thomas also shares a few stories with a “strategies I’m trying” theme.

### *Thomas’ Vocational Identity as Negotiated within his Program Community*

Within his program community, Thomas expresses a strong desire to be an efficient, effective deliverer of instruction. He truly aspires to meet the standard of organizational and instructional quality promoted by his program’s community of practice. When Thomas worries that he is failing in this endeavor, however, he

quickly assumes a new, more productive identity, that of a novice with limited (but legitimate) participation in the established teaching community.

Within his training program, Thomas only rarely deviates from the “true observer” role that he lays out for himself. He engages in the community in the sense that he participates as required. In group work, he is hesitant to take on major responsibilities, with one candidate even commenting, “Thomas, you’re going to have to take on more than that!” In another instance, his group members ask him to report out for their group. Thomas does so reluctantly, after an African American female points to the part of the text that he should read aloud. Thomas’ view of himself as absolute novice may have even influenced his desire to postpone his demonstration lesson for another week.

At school, Thomas’ mentor intervenes to get Thomas a modified schedule which allows him to teach only two classes and observe for the remainder of the time. This modified schedule affords Thomas the time to be an apprentice, beyond the summer internship period.

Thomas certainly aspires to be the type of educator held up as a model by his community of practice, but he thinks of himself as having to get “up to speed” before he can do so. Rather than viewing teaching in general as a community in which educators are *always* situated learners, Thomas views his role as a learner as being mostly temporary until he can develop the skills to become an assurer of organizational quality and efficiency and deliverer of best practices in accordance with local school system standards.

Thomas clearly appropriates the affordance of using resources so prevalent in his program community, and he happily assumes the role of subordinate employee, striving to perform all tasks to meet expectations of instructors, mentors and his expert teacher. Both of these roles fit well with Thomas' overarching view of himself as novice, operating on the periphery of the teaching community.

For the future, Thomas hopes to gain enough expertise to move toward full participation in the teaching community as an upholder of standards in education. As Thomas expresses to his small group one day in class, "You have to enforce standards. That's the bottom line."

#### Rob's Program Communities

We now turn to Rob, whom you will remember has returned from a tour in Iraq, suffered a devastating personal loss when he and his fiancée split up, accepted a reduction in force from Verizon, and enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching program at Bachman University. While Thomas and Rob are preparing to become teachers in the same state, and they are seeking identical certifications in secondary English education, their programs approach teacher preparation in different ways. Program format differs, as Thomas' program includes only one summer of training prior to full-time teaching, while Rob's requires several semesters of classes. In addition, the two programs take different philosophical stances regarding what it means to be a teacher. Transitioning to teaching is a very different experience in these two communities.

*Bachman University Master of Arts in Teaching Program*

Bachman University began in 1866 as the State Normal School. It existed primarily as a teacher's college for 100 years until it expanded to become a state college. Bachman University now offers a full range of degrees, but it is still the largest producer of teachers in the state. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program at Bachman began in 1990 to meet the needs of busy, working adults who are interested in becoming teachers.

The secondary English MAT program, which is housed in the Department of Educational Technology and Literacy, consists of eleven courses, as follows:

- Inclusion for the Classroom Teacher
- Principles of Learning, Development and Diversity
- Curriculum and Assessment
- English Methods
- Integrating Instructional Technology
- Using Reading and Writing in the Secondary School
- Internship I with Seminar
- Teacher as Researcher
- Internship II with Seminar
- Proseminar: Problems and Issues
- Reading in the Content Areas

Graduates of the program earn a Master's degree and become eligible for a state Standard Professional teaching certificate. Courses are offered in the evening with experienced practitioners serving as faculty. Each course requires an 8-hour observation in schools. The final year requires an internship of one day per week in the fall and a full-time 18-week internship in the spring. All internships are completed in professional development schools that have established relationships with Bachman University. Candidates create professional portfolios based on the INTASC standards as a program exit requirement.

The Bachman MAT Program has a published mission which states, in part:

Becoming a teacher involves more than acquiring a knowledge base of specific teaching skills and competencies. To educate a teacher is to influence the premises upon which a teacher bases reflection and reasoning about teaching in specific situations. The teacher must be able to engage in inquiry and to identify the problems and issues in the classroom. To this end, the MAT program is carefully structured to provide course work required for licensure and a supportive induction to the complex world of teaching.

While the mission does not mention vocational identity development specifically, influencing the premises upon which a teacher bases reflection and reasoning is closely related to an individual's beliefs and identity. In addition, the MAT program mission to induct candidates to the "complex world of teaching" is important given the current study of the various communities of practice in which Rob engages.

When I meet Rob, he is completing his fifth course in the program. In addition, he is teaching as a long-term substitute at James Madison Middle School (Madison) in Ellis County, a professional development school with Bachman. Rob is teaching at Madison three days a week and writing substitute plans for the other two days a week, when he is in class. As soon as the university semester ends, Rob teaches five days per week until the conclusion of the school year.

In the fall, Rob begins his professional year. He takes three classes, English Methods, Teacher as Researcher, and Internship I with Seminar. Although Rob is only required to observe at Madison one day a week, he typically serves at least three days a week, and in November, he takes a long-term substitute position at Madison which requires him to work full-time. The program communities in which I observe Rob include his Teacher as Researcher class and his Internship I Seminar class.

*The courses.*

The Internship I Seminar is designed for candidates in their next to last semester in the program. Students are placed in a professional development school for one day per week. The course meets one evening per week. It is designed to address the following, taken from the official course description:

Best practices for creating and maintaining a positive and productive learning environment are explored. Participants analyze a variety of learner characteristics that influence student development and academic achievement including gender, ethnicity, physiology, values, family, and geographic regions, as is appropriate for age/grade level and professional specialization.

The Internship I Seminar is taken concurrently with Teacher as Researcher. Teacher as Researcher meets irregularly during the semester. The course is described as addressing “Theory and methodology for conducting classroom research with an emphasis on descriptive research approaches.”

*Place*

Within the two courses observed as part of Rob’s MAT program, place serves to add a professional dimension to the community of practice. Seminar I meets at Franklin High School. This school gives an air of professionalism. There is a business office immediately to the right as one enters the school, and even after hours, a staff member is able to direct me to the classroom where the course is being held.

The classroom in which Seminar I is held is obviously one in which business classes are offered during the school day. Posters and displays throughout the room highlight business law, tourism, marketing, and management. Long tables are arranged in a double U shape facing the teacher desk and front screen. There are

cushioned office-style chairs at all the desks, and while there are no windows in this interior classroom, it feels open and comfortable.

The Teacher as Researcher course meets in the education building at Bachman University. While it is not decorated like the classroom at Franklin, there are padded chairs at each desk and a wall of windows along the left which brighten things up. Adequate air conditioning or heat makes the room comfortable. At the front of the room is a very loud overhead projector and a presenter's table. Long tables are arranged in rows throughout the class. Most candidates position themselves in the back rows.

The instructor of the Teacher as Researcher course makes efforts to transform the blank classroom into a learning environment. On my first observation, walls are lined with display boards from the previous year's class. These serve as models for the visual that students will create to accompany their research presentation at the conclusion of the semester. Sample display boards read, "Do extrinsic rewards help to increase student productivity and achievement?" and "Does stating the objective(s) on the board increase understanding and completion of work?" The front table is piled with boxes of past research reports. The instructor posts behavioral objectives, a class agenda, and announcements on a dry erase board. Certain agenda items are distinguished by drawn smiley-faces.

On one occasion, the instructor meets with candidates one-on-one in his office suite. He places a cinnamon strudel cake on the conference table where we meet and offers it to us as we sit. This offering places him in a host role with us as welcomed guests. It engenders a positive, non-confrontational meeting.

### *Community Social Structures*

While the two courses under study have some individuals overlapping, they function as two separate communities. The instructors are different, although both share a background as former school administrators. The Seminar course includes 15 students, with a majority (13) Caucasian and a majority (9) female. The Teacher as Researcher course includes 17 students, with a majority (14) Caucasian and a majority (10) male. All students in the Seminar course are placed within the same local school system for their professional year internships. Those in the Teacher as Researcher course are all in the MAT program but may be completing their internships in a number of different school districts.

Because most of the students have traveled through the MAT program as a cohort, they know each other well. From the beginning of the semester, they exhibit signs that they are a cohesive group, sharing candy with one another, lightly teasing one another, and answering each other's questions. When a student in the Seminar class asks, "Did the state legislature just pass some laws...getting rid of writing from standardized testing in the state?" another student responds without a pause, "They did, but it's not until 2009." Obviously the candidates look to each other in this community as sources of knowledge, at times bypassing the instructor without thought.

Candidates also openly disagree with one another. During Teacher as Researcher, one candidate discusses the fact that the students like her much more than they like her mentor teacher. She attributes this to the fact that she has spent time building relationships with students. Another candidate counters, "I think there's a lot

of truth to that, but the other thing I would caution too is you probably haven't had to discipline them." Another joins in, "They'll think you're the cool person because you're so nice and positive but when you really have to come down on them..." Finally, a third candidate offers a personal teaching narrative that confirms the fact that relationships with students change once the teacher begins enforcing discipline policies.

While candidate-to-candidate interactions in these two communities are pivotal to the overall social structures in the community, the instructors also set a tone for social interactions. The instructor in the Seminar course, Mr. Green, takes on the role of discussion facilitator and clarifier of assignment requirements. From the way he speaks, it is evident that the assignments for the course have been devised by a larger group of instructors who are teaching the same course in other school districts. As an example, Mr. Green tells students, "The other teachers and I have been talking mostly by email now for the last few days. I think the handout...maximum three pages is about what it says. We're questioning that. We think maybe if you want to go to a fourth or fifth page, that's fine." In fact, whenever Mr. Green discusses assignments for the course, he uses the pronoun *we*, as in "that's the kind of thing *we*'re looking for." For the major assignment of the semester, Mr. Green emphasizes that he is not the intended audience, although he will be grading the assignment. Instead, candidates should be writing for unknown portfolio reviewers. By positioning himself as neither the one who makes the assignments nor the audience, Mr. Green deemphasizes his role as an authority figure in the community.

Students have many questions for Mr. Green about assignment format. One-third of one class is spent discussing the requirements for the following week's assignments. Even the seemingly simple assignment of an exit ticket listing three "keepers" from the evening's presentations generates discussion. Students want to know if assignments should be typed or handwritten, in narrative or list form, and how much detail is expected. The constant clarification is tiring to some, especially Rob. At the conclusion of the discussion referenced above, he scowls in exasperation, "Come on, people! Three things!"

Mr. Green is not afforded great respect by his students. In a class at the start of the semester, he has trouble with the projector. One student asks, "Did you take ISTC 501?" Her reference is to an instructional technology class that all the MAT students have completed. Many students laugh. Students also snicker at the professor's lack of updated language, for example when he uses the term *multiple choice* rather than the currently favored, *selected response*. They give him a hard time about not having information about where they will be placed for second rotation, three months away. One student playfully threatens, "I'll kill you if you put me in Upper County."

The instructor's word is questioned by candidates. They question his interpretation of the legality of an uncertified intern teaching advanced placement courses, and they question his assessment of morning traffic:

Mr. G: If you're not in by 6:40, you're not going to get in.

WM: That's a lie.

Mr. G: Okay, 6:45.

WM: 6:50.

The community of practice that develops around Internship I is a community of candidates and an instructor who is not completely trusted to provide accurate

information. He does, however, function as an organizer of discussions and class activities in which students who are interdependent look to one another for information.

In the Teacher as Researcher course, the instructor, Dr. Heathman exudes a friendly, calm, presence that could be interpreted as somewhat condescending considering the fact that his students are adults. He distributes candy to students when they offer a correct answer and gushes praise for elementary answers. For example, at one point, Dr. Heathman instructs students to look at sample research papers to discover the required parts of the paper. When the graduate students are able to extract the parts of a research paper from the headings in the exemplars, Dr. Heathman beams, “I think you got them all! Wow!” He generously uses phrases like “There you go!” and “Good for you!” with great enthusiasm.

Some students appreciate Dr. Heathman’s overwhelming support for their efforts. On the final night of class when Dr. Heathman asks for verbal feedback, one female student shares, “I liked your voice and style. You speak very slowly and whenever I get really frustrated, I can hear your voice saying, ‘You can do this.’ It’s funny, but good job!”

Other students like Rob, resent the fact that in class everything is laid back but on assignments students lose points for simple things like going over the page limit. For one large assignment, Dr. Heathman waits until just before he returns papers to show students a model of what he was expecting. Rob complains, “Who shows the model after the assignment is already done? Didn’t they teach us to show the model first?”

Dr. Heathman takes strides to make candidates feel appreciated. In addition to his verbal praise, extrinsic rewards, and offering of cake, he listens to students voice their concerns about their research projects and projects in other classes, and he consistently sides with them. He explains to students how they might be able to align their research project with their big project in the seminar course to reduce their workload. And he shows great appreciation for all their efforts.

The final night of class takes place during a snowstorm. When the instructor arrives, he states to the few students present, “There’s an old saying: You never talk about the people who aren’t here, you’re appreciative of the people who are here. So, given the circumstances, I appreciate your being here.” Dr. Heathman decides to abbreviate class due to the weather. Before he eliminates student presentations, however, he takes care to ask students individually if they are okay with the change. In fact, Dr. Heathman asks so many times if this change is acceptable that students begin to poke fun:

Dr. H: Well, I wanted to ask. Some people really enjoy presenting findings, and it’s an important part of this class.

WM: Let’s do one a week for the rest of December.

WM2: (with feigned enthusiasm) Christmas Day we’ll meet!

Dr. H: Because it’s an important part of class to be able to share your results. Sarah, I got your opinion real clearly. Anybody else? Reggie? Meg? Are you all okay with the format?

Dr. Heathman places himself as a candidate ally rather than a traditional authority figure. He treats the candidates as being younger and less experienced than they are, but he is also deferential to them and appreciative of their participation. With this balance, he is able to maintain a general focus on his intended course agenda and promote on-topic student discussion.

In both of these program communities, candidate-to-candidate interaction is central to the social fabric of the community of practice. Both instructors play an important, if somewhat peripheral role in the operations of this cohort community.

### *Conceptual Tools Appropriated by the Community*

Although the social structures of the two courses observed function as separate communities, the conceptual tools promoted by these two communities are aligned. Concepts and theories are prevalent in both communities, with conceptual tools in use even more often than practical tools in the Seminar class!

Within the two communities, there are certain concepts that are most often mentioned and reinforced. These can be summarized by the following statements:

- Educational research is inconclusive regarding best practices.
- Teachers should look to research for ideas but must test strategies for effectiveness within the context of their own classrooms.
- Reflection is important for growth.
- Student learning can and should be measured.
- Increased student performance on objective measures is the ultimate goal.
- Teachers must strive for social and psychological understandings of students.

Interestingly, the same text is used in this community's Seminar class as is used in the Union County Resident Teacher program. The two communities of practice, however, draw opposite conclusions from it. While the Union County Resident Teacher Program looks to Marzano's (2001) *Classroom Instruction that Works* as an uncontested compendium of best practices research, Mr. Green, the instructor of the Bachman University Seminar course, states, "The book says there is no clear research that indicates positive effects exactly just from doing one thing." Both communities use the same text, but one determines from it that certain strategies

lead to increased student academic achievement while the other determines that the research is inconclusive.

Similarly, in the Seminar course, students are directed to read and present on a number of texts related to classroom management. Once various approaches to classroom discipline have been discussed, students are asked to develop their own *personal system* of discipline. They are given conflicting views about what works and then are expected to determine for themselves what they will implement in their own classrooms. This strategy may be intended to promote self-actualization through the encouragement of authority and voice among teacher candidates.

In another instance, students in Mr. Green's Seminar debate the relative merits of extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards. A female candidate offers a positive view of extrinsic rewards: "I think that extrinsic motivators motivate. That's what they do. They get people to do what you want them to do." Another responds, "I don't agree with the extrinsic at all. I think as a teacher it's our job to completely do the whole intrinsic thing, to get them motivated to be there and want to learn. That's your job as a teacher." This debate is encouraged by the instructor. It continues for a third of the class with Mr. Green finally recommending, "Evaluate the situation and decide whether you think what you're doing will make a difference. I do not think that you will want to say, 'I will never do this' or 'I will always do that.'"

Within the program communities, candidates are encouraged to look to educational research for ideas. They are encouraged to take those ideas and test them in their own classrooms to determine their effectiveness. Mr. Green comments after a series of student presentations based on research, "You can't assume that all these

things that have been suggested tonight for you to do will always work with everybody, but they're good ways to try."

The entire Teacher as Researcher course is based on the idea of candidates trying to implement strategies in their own classrooms to see if they work. Candidates are directed to search the literature to find three possible solutions to a problem they have observed in their classroom. They then choose one of these solutions to implement and study. In their final research paper and presentation, candidates evaluate the strategy's worth as an educational tool. Dr. Heathman takes a one-sentence summary from each candidate. He promises to compile the statements into a list of learnings which he will mail to all class participants. In this way, the community is seen to value contextualized research conducted by members of the community over research presented in texts or articles. The community also privileges candidate authority to make pedagogical decisions.

Another conceptual tool in use in this community is that candidates and teachers alike must reflect on their practice. This concept works in tandem with the idea that teachers must try strategies within their own classrooms to determine what works. In both the Seminar class as well as in the Teacher as Researcher course, candidates are required to complete reflections on their own experiences in the classroom. It is implied that these reflections are the source of much learning. Mr. Green distributes a lengthy definition of what is meant by *reflection* in his course and in the MAT program in general. He explains, "It doesn't necessarily mean just looking back on something, it doesn't just mean that. It means looking at your sense of consciousness about your own learning process." While the definition is

amorphous, candidates do not question it and seem to have no problem grasping the idea of reflection as a metacognitive description of learning.

An unstated but widely assumed concept in the Bachman program communities is that student learning can and should be measured. Although there is some discussion about the merits of current state assessments, candidates are taught that accountability is a fact of life. In the Seminar, the major semester project is the ESL or Evidence of Student Learning project, in which candidates use pre- and post-tests to determine the effectiveness of their instruction during a three-day period. In the Teacher as Researcher class, candidates are required to have some baseline data against which to compare the data they collect after they have implemented the strategy being researched.

All students do not accept this requirement without question. One female in the seminar class has trouble implementing her post-test due to a scheduled assembly and benchmark testing date. She asks,

WF: Is it okay not to have a post-test? I personally am fine with it, but I just wanted to know if it's...

Mr. G: I understand your situation.

WF: I know that they learned because we talked about it all day today in the review.

WM: We're looking for data proof.

Mr. G: It's not okay for the ESL report.

In the Teacher as Researcher course, another female asks if she can compare and contrast student grades before and after the implementation of cooperative learning groups:

Dr. H: What's the general consensus in the College of Education and in the MAT program about evidence of student learning? Is it using grades or is it using pre-test post-test?

Class: Pre-test post-test.

Dr. H: I think it's probably pre- and post-test.

Clearly, within the MAT program, a widely held belief is that student learning can and should be measured. The preferred method for measuring student learning is through objective pre-tests compared with post-tests.

Increasing student performance on post-tests is the teacher's ultimate goal. Dr. Heathman explains it clearly to Rob in their one-on-one meeting:

Dr. H: Maybe this percentage was 20% comprehension rate and maybe it's 20% here [on the post-test]. So what do we say about this student and your technique?

Rob: For him, it didn't.

Dr. H: It didn't do a damn bit of good, right? If it goes from 20 to 80, wow! If it goes from 30 to 10, ouch!

Candidates do discuss promoting positive student behaviors because "That's going to be important in life," but the general consensus is that the most important measure of success in a classroom is a student score showing improvement on objective tests.

This is evidence of the essentialist tradition in teacher education, as described by Imig and Imig (2006a).

With the emphasis on student academic achievement, it is somewhat surprising that this community of practice stresses the importance of teachers understanding students socially and psychologically. This makes sense, however, when one examines why the community values understanding the psychosocial lives of students. A male candidate explains, "If the students don't feel respected, they're going to kind of rebel, they're not going to do their work, they're not going to relate to the material, they're not going to be cool with the teacher, you know, they're not going to do things when you ask them." Candidates encourage one another to get to know students, to build relationships, to psychoanalyze students to determine their

social positioning, to be proactive in meeting student needs, to foster belonging, dignity and hope, and to show respect and care. They do this, however, with the main goal of managing a classroom of cooperative students. It is only rarely that candidates speak of developing meaningful personal relationships with children as an outcome in itself. This may be partially due to their position as beginning teachers concerned with managing and controlling a class.

### *Community Metaphors*

Metaphors serve as a type of conceptual tool, so it is no surprise that there are so many used within the Seminar I community of practice, where talk is more theoretical than practical. There are almost 125 identified metaphors used in that community alone.

Across the two program communities, there are several overarching metaphors around which much metaphorical language is clustered. These overarching metaphors are teacher as researcher, teacher as travel guide, and teacher as machinist.

Perhaps the most obvious metaphor in use in these communities is teacher as researcher. That is even the name of one of the courses! Understandably, within that course community especially, teachers are spoken of using language that applies to researchers. I do not consider language applying directly to the research that candidates are conducting as being metaphorical. If they are actually measuring and counting, they are not using metaphors. The *researcher* metaphor spills over, however, into discussions about classroom activity and the interaction of teachers with students. In addition, the *researcher* metaphor is just as prevalent in the Seminar course. Candidates speak of teachers having a *base case* against which to compare

student performance and a *base definition* of significant terms. Teachers are said to *design a plan* and *monitor results*. They *tick numbers*, *measure* student understanding, and *judge* outcomes. Within these communities of practice, research is not something that candidates are doing as part of a course requirement, it is teaching itself.

A very important note, however, is the way the *researcher* metaphor is constrained. Within the Bachman community, *research* refers to a technical rational way of understanding student academic progress as measured through pre- and post-tests. This is a very narrow conception of research that does not fully exemplify a more complex understanding of research and the *teacher as researcher* identity (see Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Noffke & Brennan, 1991; Valli & Price, 2005).

The second overarching metaphor in use in the Bachman MAT program communities is teacher as travel guide. The journey of the teacher is one in which the teacher guides the student toward a destination. Teachers do not always know exactly which way to go, but they believe that the *process will lead*. On this journey, teachers must take care not to *take the negative route* or *step on each other's toes*. Along the way, teachers must decide if their route is acceptable: they may either *take it a step further*, *move on*, or *go somewhere else* with the class. Students *bring baggage*; they also are known to *get tripped up* and *give each other a hand*. Teachers can encourage students to look from different *standpoints*. A power trip is a *no-go*, but rules and consequences are *in the same alley*, and teachers are encouraged to take their students there. Along the way, teachers may be agitated by a *burr in their saddle*, but if they pay close attention, it should take only *a short time to recognize the sun comes up in*

*the East*. If teachers avoid the *wrong way to go*, students may *come up and plateau at a level*. When it's all through, teachers realize that all along, all students have had the same final destination: they are all *headed for* a test.

The third metaphor in use in these communities is teacher as machinist. In this extended metaphor, the teacher is the machine operator, the students are the machine, and the keys to the machine are made of the content of the class. Teachers tinker with the machine, adding different strategies and activities to make it work smoothly. During this process, teachers must *put in a strategy*, pick out the *key* content, *monitor the results*, *gauge* comprehension, and *turn a crank*. Unfortunately, sometimes strategies can *backfire* as teachers strive to make the class function. Then the teachers *have to fix things*. If they are unable to discover the things that *grate on* the student machine, the machine might *exhibit failure*, *shut down*, or worse, *explode*. If all else fails, the teacher is to *kick it into gear* and get things *working* again.

Grumet discusses the poverty of the machinist metaphor when applied to education:

The machine is impervious to both its maker and its products and permits only the most miniscule manipulation of its parts or the whole works jams and must be completely retooled. Implicit in [the] mechanistic metaphor is the assumption that if we only knew how it worked, we could fix it. (Grumet, Winter 1979, p. 199)

Education is much more complicated than machine repair because students are not machines with discrete parts needing to be “fixed”, and subjects are not pieces of metal. Education is an interaction of human beings around subjects that contain the greatest questions of the disciplines. Grumet argues that the machinist metaphor runs the risk of communicating a simplified, dehumanized view of teaching that may

impoverish classroom life. As will be noted, the machinist metaphor is prevalent in multiple communities being studied. It is perhaps one of the most pervasive metaphors used in educational circles, and those who use it may wish to consider its implications.

### *Community Practical Tools*

In contrast with the Union County Resident Teacher program, practical tools for classroom use are not a major focus in either of the Bachman University classes. While practical tools are shared mostly through personal teaching narrative or modeling in the Union County Resident Teacher program, they are discussed in relation to hypothetical classroom scenarios or review of research in the Bachman courses. Instructors model far fewer teaching strategies in the Bachman communities, as well.

In the Seminar course, very few teaching strategies are explicitly taught. The professor models a few strategies, including posting a class agenda, stating objectives, small group work, informal debate, and exit tickets. Most practical tools mentioned in class are brought up by candidates in discussions of hypothetical classroom scenarios or problems that are posed by other candidates as exercises. Candidates assume that other candidates share knowledge of these tools; perhaps this common knowledge has been generated by this cohort's interactions in past courses.

Candidates are directed to record practical strategies that they see their mentor teachers using. They report these on a worksheet that is submitted to Mr. Green. After a week, the instructor returns these sheets to the candidates without comment and asks them to exchange papers:

Take a look at how much similarity you see in terms of what is in these papers. . . . How many of you have this feeling reading through this that you could almost be looking at your own? That's a point that I want you to understand. There probably are a limited number of options for many of these topics.

The instructor goes on to explain that although candidates have many different ideas about how they would implement their own classroom routines, he expects that within five years of teaching, their classrooms would all function in very much the same way.

The instructor, however, does not give any hints about the best way to run a classroom. When he speaks of classroom strategies, he uses absurd examples such as cutting off a child's finger as a punishment for being late to class. Because these examples are non-options, they serve to put the responsibility of finding acceptable strategies on the candidates themselves. Even examples of strategies given in the various course texts are questioned. The instructor announces that although the textbook proposes webbing as an effective strategy, he personally finds it meaningless.

After several student-led seminars on various ways of ensuring student cooperation, the instructor explains, "Some of you will find different ways of getting them to do that besides the couple we've already mentioned." This reinforces the underlying concept that trial and error is the most effective way to discover appropriate teaching strategies. Ironically, the message is also deterministic: once you go through this process of trial and error, you will converge on a narrow, pre-defined set of effective teaching strategies. This deterministic prediction undermines the previous attention given to candidate authority, voice, and self-actualization.

Understandably, this is somewhat frustrating to candidates. When one male receives back his assignment detailing the classroom policies he'd like to implement, he notes the instructor's complete lack of comment:

Jim: (Sarcastically) Thanks for all your feedback.

Mr. G: Jim, what kind of feedback did you expect?

Jim: A gold star, a smiley face, anything!

In the Teacher as Researcher class, practical tools emerge from a review of educational literature. As part of their research project, students are directed to research a problem that they have observed in the classroom where they are placed. They are required to identify three strategies suggested by the literature and choose one to investigate using a pre- and post-test methodology. The understanding is that these tools must be proven to raise test scores within the context of the candidate's classroom before they are adopted as effective strategies.

Dr. Heathman does model strategies in his classroom, but to a lesser extent. He models verbal praise, use of extrinsic rewards, a card strategy, gallery walk, and discovery lesson. Dr. Heathman also suggests asking schoolchildren what *they* think might work in the classroom. He gives examples of ineffective teachers throwing erasers or chalk or physically harming students. Dr. Heathman directs candidates to outside sources such as books and articles, but these are treated as sources for ideas to test, not as sources of uncontested best practices.

Students in the Researcher course are explicitly taught research strategies such as pre- and post-testing, using tallies, graphing, and citing sources, but practical tools to be used while teaching are again left to the candidate's own research findings. One male student is held up as a model. This student has designed his own program called

In the Way, On the Way, a program that teaches children the difference between behaviors that will impede them from academic success versus behaviors that will allow them to succeed. The candidate-designed program as well as findings from candidates' action research projects are the ultimate practical tools that emerge from the Teacher as Researcher course. This fact demonstrates the community's attention to candidate voice and pedagogical authority.

### *Community Narratives*

Within the Bachman University communities, instructors are the main storytellers. Mr. Green tells over two-thirds of his community's narratives. More than half of these are *last year* stories, personal teaching narratives about the past year's seminar course. Mr. Green uses these stories to spotlight past students who either did a very good or very poor job on course assignments or to justify his reasoning for course design and delivery. Mr. Green's other stories include four other personal teaching narratives and one hypothetical classroom story.

Dr. Heathman is also a prolific storyteller. Almost half of the stories shared in the Teacher as Researcher community are shared by this instructor. Most of Dr. Heathman's stories are evenly divided between personal teaching narratives in which he tells of his own classroom experience as teacher, and personal student narratives in which he speaks of his experience as a student. Dr. Heathman also shares a couple personal narratives that are only loosely related to the content of the course, presumably as a way to allow candidates to get to know him better.

Candidates share far fewer narratives in the Bachman communities than in the Union County Resident Teacher program, most likely because these candidates have

limited classroom experience. Of the candidate narratives in the Seminar course and the Teacher as Researcher course, roughly half of the candidate narratives report what candidates have observed in schools. The other half includes personal teaching stories and one hypothetical classroom narrative. In these communities, narrative does not function in any significant way as a mode of sharing practical tools among community members.

### *Imagined Futures*

Similarly, communication regarding imagined futures is quite limited in the Bachman communities. Candidates in the seminar attempt to engage the instructor in discussions about their future within the program, specifically their future placements. Mr. Green, however, defers their questions, telling them that he has backburnered the issue.

Both instructors provide minimal details about their predictions for the future career of candidates. Dr. Heathman tells candidates that when they are teaching, they will not have time to read even one article. Mr. Green predicts that all candidates will eventually converge on very similar classroom management practices.

Students themselves do not project a future image of themselves as teachers either. In six classroom meetings, only one student offers a projection of his plans, an imagined opening lesson for an upcoming unit on the Italian Renaissance. No other mention is made of the way in which candidates imagine themselves as future teachers or the way in which they envision their future classroom lives. Future imaginings are all but absent in the Bachman communities.

### *Community Promotion of Certain Identities*

The two communities observed within Bachman University, while functioning as separate communities of practice, are aligned in their promotion of certain teaching identities. Using the five pedagogic identities established by Zukas and Malcolm in 2002 as an organizing structure, it is clear that Bachman University most strongly promotes a conception of teaching that defines the educator as a reflective practitioner. To a lesser degree, the educator is also a psycho-diagnostician and facilitator of learning.

For the most part, candidates within the Bachman program community are encouraged to try various strategies with real students in real schools in an effort to discover the best practices for that particular teacher in that particular context. In order to be successful in this endeavor, candidates must be reflective practitioners, continually assessing and reassessing their techniques, lessons, and interactive practices. Personal, and to a small degree, group reflection is the method by which candidates grow as educators and develop their own beliefs, personal systems of discipline, and strategies.

Candidates are given specific information on the tools necessary for this reflection, although the tools provided constrain reflecting individuals from straying far from the technical rational orientation. These tools include pre- and post-tests, methods for disaggregation of data, and instructions on creating meaningful data displays. In addition, candidates are given tools for evaluating the various social positions of students, their psychological and physical needs, and motivating factors.

These tools and the emphasis of course assignments communicate the ideal of educator as psycho-diagnostician.

Instructors within the Bachman program community act as guides for candidate learning. They rarely teach content as fact; instead, they facilitate candidate thinking regarding possible actions and theoretical underpinnings. These instructors model the ideal of educator as facilitator of learning. Candidates must find their own answers related to questions of teaching and learning. Whether or not this modeling is enough to convince candidates of the value of the *educator as facilitator* identity for their own teaching is unknown.

Like the Union County Resident Teacher program, the Bachman program promotes pedagogic communities over disciplinary communities. Rob takes three classes during the semester I observe. The third is an English methods class in which undergraduate and graduate prospective English teachers gather to form a disciplinary community. In this way, the Bachman program provides more of a balance along the disciplinary vs. pedagogic continuum than the Union County program is able to provide.

While students in the Bachman program do occasionally work in small groups, have whole-class discussions, or make presentations in pairs during their seminar class, learning is for the most part an individual endeavor. The Teacher as Researcher project is solely individual, and the instructor even meets with students individually to discuss progress on the project. Likewise, the major assignment in the Seminar class, the Evidence of Student Learning project, is a solitary endeavor.

Students typically read portions of the assigned text for homework and submit individual assignments for evaluation.

Organizational accountability is the impetus for action within these communities of practice. When he comments on the classroom routines and practices of the candidates' mentor teachers, Mr. Green states, "I didn't see anything that struck me as being out of line. Out of the ordinary maybe, but not out of line." The assumption is that there is an invisible line over which teachers must not cross.

Similarly, students are required to design their pre- and post-tests using the format of the state assessments. Even though many candidates complain that their students are unable to demonstrate proficiency when the questions are worded in this way, they are required to continue to use this state-endorsed format. Mr. Green comments, "You will learn to realize that there are other methods of assessing besides selected response and brief constructed response questions from the high school assessment. Unfortunately, the high school assessment hasn't learned that, so you still have to get them prepared for that kind of questioning." The message here is clear: Even if it is not the best pedagogical practice, teachers are accountable to the organization of state educational policies.

As in the Union County Resident Teacher program, candidates are evaluated using objective measures, especially rubrics and analytic scoring tools. Instructors focus mostly on candidate products, spending a considerable amount of class time going over requirements and formatting issues. In the Teacher as Researcher class, all assignments for the entire course build to the final research report and presentation. Interestingly, on the final night of class, however, Dr. Heathman dispenses with many

of the student presentations due to inclement weather. He says, “I feel like I’ve done my job – which is to ask you to continue your own research and activities on your own to improve your instruction.” At this final turn, the emphasis shifts from product to process, and Dr. Heathman wishes his students, “my best to you in your teaching professions.” It is as if product is most important while the candidates are students, but process becomes most important when they fully become teachers.

A major contrast between the Bachman program and the Union County Resident Teacher program is the view of content and educational best practices. While the Union County program presents content as uncontroversial and given, Bachman treats it as contested. Competing theories are explored, texts are questioned, and even school district resources, such as curriculum and pacing guides are presented as tools for a teacher to judge. Mr. Green discusses student learning objectives in a major classroom project. Many of the candidates have simply listed objectives from the local school system guides, but that is not acceptable, according to Mr. Green:

Just listing them and saying they’re from the county handbook was not enough. I need to know according to the ESL why they are appropriate objectives for the class you are going to teach. The fact that they’re in the pacing guide is not the answer. You’re going to make an evaluation, in a sense, of the pacing guide. Say, these are good objectives for these students because they have already been exposed to this, this, and this, and therefore, we are ready to move here.

Finally, the instructors within the Bachman community strive to create a learner-centered environment. In the Seminar, almost one-third of the semester is devoted to student-led presentations. Class meeting times are flexible to meet the needs of candidates who have to return to their schools for back to school night, and

the agenda for the class is adjusted based on candidate interests and questions. Both courses require students to think for themselves, developing their own classroom-tested best practices.

Individuals within the Bachman program communities are not encouraged to be critical theorists or crusaders for social justice. Candidates are directed to disaggregate data to determine how various groups of children respond to instruction, but the groups they choose to study are not necessarily underprivileged groups of children. Mr. Green suggests facetiously that they may even study a particular group of children who “dress funny.” The ESL project affords an opportunity to discuss critical theory, but the community avoids the issue.

In addition, the Bachman courses do not specifically help candidates see themselves as situated learners in a larger educational community. The instructors model collaborative work as they discuss collective decisions they have made regarding course requirements, but candidates are not afforded the opportunity to discuss their place within their schools. Although each candidate is placed with a mentor teacher in a partnering school, their relationships with these experienced educators are not discussed within the communities of practice. In fact, mentors are referred to most often as sources of ideas which must be tested by the individual candidate. Their classroom experience is viewed as no more valid than the researched methods presented in the candidates’ textbooks.

In total, the Bachman University program forms communities of practice devoted to developing, as stated in their program mission, “reflection and reasoning about teaching in specific situations.” In addition, candidates engage in inquiry about

their own teaching and learning processes to become ongoing learners and constructors of knowledge. The program nurtures candidate voice and pedagogical authority in one way while undermining it with a deterministic message in another. Through the cohort structure, a loose sense of interdependence among candidates is established at Bachman; however, students are rarely encouraged to work together on academic projects, and no wider sense of interdependence with instructors or other educators is fostered. The following table summarizes the affordances of the Bachman program communities in promoting certain pedagogic identities.

<u>Affordances of the Program Communities</u>
Educator as... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Practitioner</li> <li>• Psycho-Diagnostician</li> <li>• Facilitator of Academic Achievement as measured by State-Approved Objective Assessments</li> <li>• Constructor &amp; Source of Knowledge</li> <li>• Researcher</li> <li>• Ongoing Learner</li> <li>• Objective Evaluator</li> <li>• Ensurer of Student Cooperation</li> <li>• Organizer and Planner of Learning Activities to meet Instructional Objectives</li> <li>• Professional</li> </ul>

#### Rob in his Program Communities

From the affordances of the Bachman communities described above, one might assume that all candidates within that community would enjoy debate and revel in the presentation of knowledge as contested and contextual. In the case of Rob, however, neither is true. Within his program communities, Rob develops in ways that are not always aligned with the affordances and constraints provided by the program.

*Rob's Social Relations in Community*

Rob clearly sees himself as being somewhat different from the other candidates in his cohort. He is friendly and personable with several of them, but he views them as “kids.” When asked about the other cohort members, Rob says:

RB: Some of these kids aren't even teaching yet. Because they don't...they're nervous.

KF: They're just observing, sitting in the back?

RB: Yeah, and this thing they're asking questions about, for some I believe it will be their first exposure in front of the classroom for three days.

KF: You're so far ahead.

RB: Meanwhile, I'm teaching. Like tomorrow. She's like, “You got social studies tomorrow.”

Rob is closest with a female student named Lara who is placed at his same school. They present a student led seminar together and sit next to each other in the Seminar course. His estimation of her is as less than a colleague, however:

Let's take the typical student with my same, where I started. There's a lot of them coming out, Lara, she hasn't even sunk or swum yet. She hasn't thrown herself in yet. She's nothing but a student right now. I'm a teacher. And I said it to her. I remember one time her saying, I was like, you are a teacher right now. If you're teaching, you're a teacher. She doesn't see herself. If you don't see you as a teacher, then you haven't started teaching yet.

In this statement, Rob asserts a belief about identity: if you do not see yourself as a teacher, even if you are physically in the classroom with children every day, you have not started teaching yet. Being a teacher is something more than fulfilling a role.

Rob's estimation of his classmates continues to go down during the semester. At one point, he remarks, “I don't know what's happening with my classmates.” He explains that many of his classmates seemed more intelligent in past classes he has had with them and wonders if everyone in the MAT program is “losing brain cells.”

Rob has very little patience for the seemingly neverending stream of questions from his classmates regarding assignment format and course expectations. For this waste of class time, he faults both his classmates and his professors. At one point in the Seminar class, when the class discussion turns to morning traffic and a debate about whether there is a turn arrow at a certain intersection, Rob hits his limit of tolerance. He says, "I was going to shove my books into my bag, look into the camera and say, 'You getting all of this?' and walk out the door. But I can't do that. That's unprofessional." Instead, he waits until break and then suggests that I pack up my camera and follow him out, explaining that he will not be returning for the remainder of class.

Early in the semester, Rob begins to disengage from his classes. After my first observation of him, he either sits in class with his backpack on the desk in front of him, unopened, or else he removes his folders and places them in a neat stack to the side. Rob always looks as if he could pack up and be out the classroom door in less than a minute.

Ironically, when given the option of meeting with Dr. Heathman in a one-on-one session to discuss his action research project, Rob chooses to schedule a meeting. He explains, "I like talking to teachers." He is receptive to Dr. Heathman's suggestion during the meeting that he collect baseline data and use pre- and post- testing, even though to me Rob has expressed a preference for survey instruments. Similarly, when the semester finally ends and I ask Rob his estimation of Dr. Heathman's leadership in retrospect, he says, "I don't necessarily bust him, really. I feel that the class right there should be a piece of another class. What can he do?"

Rob shows more respect for Dr. Heathman than he admits to having. He routinely speaks of the two courses I observe as being a waste of time and taught by horrible instructors. He reports going into the MAT administrative office and joking with the assistant that he is going to write on his course evaluations, “Who hires these people?!?” He tells the Director of the program not to hire any more retired administrators. At the conclusion of the semester, however, Rob says he cannot fault Dr. Heathman, but he stands by his conviction that Mr. Green is “not a good teacher at all.”

The best way to characterize Rob’s social participation in his program communities is distanced engagement. He completes all assignments to a high standard, attends an acceptable amount of classes, and thinks about the content of his courses, but he distances himself from other community members and doubts the value of community activities. In short, Rob experiences no sense of interdependence with the other members of his program community.

### *Rob’s Use of Conceptual Tools*

Rob does not appreciate the conceptual, theoretical nature of many of the discussions in his courses. He wants to focus on *doing*, on seeing what works with kids. Rob explains:

RB: I don’t need to discuss people’s issues. I don’t mind discussing them if it’s going to result in some solutions, but so what? Intrinsic, we just discussed it for a half hour, and what? Is it good? Is it bad? How should I use it? Nobody told me. I understand both sides of the story. It’s whatever we think. I don’t need to discuss it for a half hour if we’re just going to go on what we think.

KF: So you just feel like it’s left to your own personal decision?

RB: It is. I don’t feel that way, it was. No, absolutely no resolution on that, both sides of the debate.

KF: Did it change your opinion at all?

RB: No.

Rob does think deeply about issues in his classroom, but he does not value his program communities as a venue for discussing these problems. Throughout the semester, Rob is extremely concerned with the literacy levels of students in his class. He remarks that it is pointless to discuss ways to motivate kids in reading class; if they can't read, they can't keep up.

KF: Are you able to bring up questions like that in any of your classes?

RB: I could, but I'm not getting answers, so I don't bother. I don't want to be there any longer to listen to 'What do you think?' I already know what I think. I don't need to reflect to find the answer.

KF: You're looking more for research-proven strategies?

RB: Some strategies, but really not even. I'm ready to just teach. I'm utilizing my own action research in classes. There's nothing concrete coming out of these [courses].

While Rob wishes for a more practically oriented program community and claims to despise the overabundance of theory, he actually actively appropriates the majority of the overall conceptual tools in use by his communities of practice. Rob wholeheartedly believes that one must test strategies in one's own classroom to determine their effectiveness. He also engages in active reflection about his teaching; he simply chooses not to do so in a group setting. Rob believes in modeling behavior and is especially interested in using visual imagery to engage students. He views classroom management and achievement as being related, but in a different way than many other candidates. While many other candidates and community members express the idea that good classroom management will make students cooperative so that they may achieve in school, Rob expresses the belief that skills must come first: Students who can achieve goals will feel a sense of belonging and will cooperate in

class. This belief stems directly from Rob's memory as a student who survived based on the skills he gained in middle school. As a result of his own story, Rob stresses skill development as his primary goal. He also gives priority to building solid relationships with students, more for the purpose of personal connection than for ulterior motives related to classroom management. Skill development and personal connection are the ways in which Rob feels called to work with students in his teaching career.

### *Rob's Use of Metaphor*

Rob's language within the context of his program communities indicates that he appropriates two of the three overarching metaphors in use in his communities to a limited extent. He uses metaphors consistent with both the teacher as travel guide (i.e., *facing roadblocks*) and teacher as machinist (i.e., *slipping in content, getting something out of it*) metaphors.

Rob's most extensive uses of metaphor, however, converge on two different overarching metaphors: teaching as a mountain climbing expedition and teaching as a sea voyage. Interestingly, Rob's metaphorical mountain which he and his students climb is a *mountain of data*. Rob conceptualizes himself as being higher on the mountain than his students, who are struggling to reach the summit. Rob refers to teachers as being *up here teaching* and says that as a teacher he does not want to just sit *up there* telling students what to do. When teachers succeed, the whole range of students *comes up*. But sometimes teachers just barely *hang on*. Students can *get lost*, and if a teacher lets just one student *slide*, there will be an avalanche of problems. The

biggest challenge for a teacher is the *rift* among the *high students* and the *low students*.

Another cluster of Rob's metaphors centers on the idea of teaching as a sea voyage. In this extended metaphor, the teacher sails in a lead ship, and students are in their own smaller vessels sailing (hopefully) nearby. The teacher's and students' boats are tethered with learning activities, and the sea itself is the disciplinary content. Rob speaks of *getting students into content*, trying to *connect* to students using activities, and not allowing students to *float off*. He says that he is *not going to give leeway* (a nautical term meaning sideways drift), or else his classroom management might be *blown out of the water*. Some students are *real behind*, *real slow*, or have a difficult time *keeping up*. Rob seeks to draw them in, because he knows they *don't follow unless they're connected*.

These metaphors serve to emphasize Rob's focus on teaching as a leadership activity. He perhaps views himself as the more experienced guide who strives to lead his students along the slippery slope or raging sea of content, using activities and strategies as his tools.

### *Rob's Practical Tools*

Rob does not view his program communities as being sources of practical classroom tools. He often laments the fact that everything is theoretical and anything that is practical is a review from another course. When I ask if Rob has found anything useful in either of the courses, he answers bluntly, "No." Many of the topics are so theoretical that they are devoid of meaning for Rob. He explains, "They tell you what you need – cooperating, belonging and self-development. What the heck

does that mean?" In another conversation, Rob expresses his frustration with these amorphous concepts:

Belonging, cooperation, self-control is reliant on routine, being able to do their own routines, and on dignity and hope? What the hell is hope, by the way? Dignity and hope. That's just a name of nothing, something for me to be like, what does that mean? How is that a discipline strategy?

In his Seminar course, the instructor conducts a class lesson on summary frames, tools used for summarizing information. Students have been instructed to work in pairs to brainstorm a classroom application for various summary frames. Since Rob was not at a previous class, he has not been assigned a frame, but the instructor mentions that no group has selected the narrative frame. During six minutes allotted for group work, Rob sits back with his fingers interlocked behind his head and his feet stretched out in front of him, crossed at the ankles. I wonder if he is deliberately being uncooperative with the instructor, but when it comes time for groups to share and the instructor asks students to think about a narrative frame, Rob holds up a worksheet and announces, "We used one to do the five elements of literature the other day. We did title, character, setting, plot and theme." Later, when discussing this, Rob says, "He asked about a frame, I pulled out a frame I made two nights ago." He stresses that the practical tools offered in the courses are nothing new: "I've done summary frames... I make summary frames. I use summary frames."

Similarly, the practical research tools stressed in the Teacher as Researcher class are nothing new to Rob either. He explains, "You reflect on problems in the class, you identify problems, research problems, implement the strategy, you record the results, you look at them, and then you start. That's a process that's very familiar to me."

Rob appropriates many of the suggestions offered in one of the Seminar course textbooks, Linda Albert's *Cooperative Discipline* (1996). He states that he really believes it works, that if a teacher can have ninety percent of the students monitor themselves, then he only has to worry about ten percent, and it is easier to individualize when one is only worried about ten percent. Interestingly, *Cooperative Discipline* actually proposes that teachers help students feel a sense of belonging, interdependence, and self-development. These are concepts that Rob rejects as meaningless when presented in class. After reading this text, however, the practical implications of the theory are more apparent, and it becomes more appealing to Rob.

Rob actively resists the practical tool of using schoolwide policies and procedures. Although many other community members stress the importance of being consistent with schoolwide policies, Rob offers the example of a particular binder policy in place in his school which he claims is disastrous for disorganized sixth graders. Rob encourages his classmates to question all policies to determine if they are in the best interests of children. When another student tries to make a suggestion that would allow Rob to work within the framework of the schoolwide policy while meeting the needs of students, he is resistant. Later, he says, "I felt like slapping that chick....You don't know my kids. You don't know what grade I'm teaching! So if you want to offer suggestions, that's one thing, but don't you think my 30-year mentor has thought of that?" Rob asserts his authority and voice as an individual but rejects an interdependent relationship with his classmates as well as with his schoolwide community.

Although Rob is resistant to some of the practical tools offered as possibilities within his communities of practice, he offers many practical tools for use by fellow community members. Besides the narrative frame, Rob offers embedded video as a tool for tapping the visual memories of students. He also introduces his Teacher as Researcher classmates to the *State Assessment Coach Practice* workbook. Rob uses concepts such as achievement gap, action planning, and real life contributions in his class presentations. Although Rob speaks rarely in class, when he does, he is generous with potentially community-transforming concepts and tools, and his classmates appear receptive to his ideas.

### *Rob's Narratives*

In communities in which personal teaching narratives told by candidates are almost nonexistent, Rob is a major contributor to the narrative knowledge of his community. He shares two personal teaching narratives with community members, and in the Seminar class, Rob's story detailing his use of the narrative frame with students is the *only* candidate-generated personal teaching narrative that has a positive outcome.

Rob's second story is one in which he describes how students respond when he questions how they have arrived at an answer:

*Why do you think that? You're right. You're right. Where's the detail in the book? And they just get blank. And I'm just like, Relax. Relax. You're right. Why did you think that? They have a hard time figuring out why they thought it. Because you read it. You read it. You're right.*

Because this narrative segment includes specific teacher-to-student dialogue, it serves as a model for other community members.

In connection with his action research project, Rob begins writing original stories to use with his sixth graders. His first story, one he does not end up using in his classes, is titled *Astronomy Notes*. In this story, a high school basketball player is intrigued by an astronomy lecture at school. On his way home, he is looking up at the stars and is clipped by a passing car. The accident breaks both his legs. Instead of being a broken man, however, he immerses himself in astronomy while his legs heal, and when he returns to the court, he does so with the knowledge that his future is to work with NASA. The boy continues to play basketball, but his focus is on academics.

The second story, which Rob uses in his sixth grade classroom, is titled *I Found Myself in Egypt!* In this story, Rob specifically integrates social studies content from the Egypt unit with an original story that centers on a character's internal conflict. Rob uses this story to reinforce social studies concepts and teach the concept of internal conflict to his English students.

*I Found Myself in Egypt!* is about an American boy who is half-Egyptian. His father died in Egypt when the boy was young, and his mother is taking him to Egypt to reconnect with his heritage. In the beginning of the story, the boy is hesitant to accept the Egyptian side of himself, even going so far as to jump off a roof to try to injure himself and prevent his trip. By the end of the story, however, after the boy has met his relatives and learned about his father, he is proud of his heritage and feels an affinity to Egypt.

While these stories reveal themes that are meaningful to Rob (e.g., the importance of academics, the significance of family) and may uncover some of Rob's

own internal conflicts (e.g., Rob has never had a relationship with his own father), the vital aspect of these narratives is their existence in the first place. Rob takes it upon himself to construct narratives for use in his English class, despite the fact that his class has adequate textbooks and his local school system provides a detailed pacing guide that specifies which stories teachers should cover and how many days should be spent on each story. Rob positions himself not only as a teacher, free to select the strategies and activities that he feels will benefit his students; he also assumes the role of curriculum writer. The act of creating narratives allows Rob to employ pedagogical imagination and negotiate an identity that is not available to most teachers.

### *Rob's Imagined Futures*

While Rob does not discuss his imagined future with his Bachman community members, he does discuss his future with me as we debrief his experiences in community. I ask specifically about his future as a curriculum writer:

RB: I should be writing stories. Could be onto something...I'm sure I am. I believe that. You know, in [the MAT program] we talk about reading in the content area. I'm not going to read in the content, I'm going to make sure you, I'm going to jam the content into language arts is what I'm thinking. But these are all good stories too.

I also ask about his future as a researcher, after his well-crafted presentation on the final night of his Teacher as Researcher course.

KF: You could publish that.

RB: (Laughs.)

KF: For sure, you could. There are a lot of teacher as researcher journals.

RB: Yeah?

KF: Yeah, if you're interested in that.

RB: Not really.

KF: Yeah, I know. (Laughs.) I know you're not, but you could.

RB: (Laughing.) I have it if I need to. . . . No, I'm just interested in teaching.

Rob expresses an interest in curriculum writing but rejects a conception of himself as a teacher researcher. More than anything, though, Rob just wants to be “teacher.” Our conversations about the future center on Rob’s eventual full-time teaching employment. This future is a moving target for Rob. He does not know where he will be employed, and he is hesitant to make a move too soon because he wants to complete the long-term substitute position with his mentor at Madison. Rob balances his desire to stay at Madison where he has established relationships with his need for income after his long-term substitute position ends and his commitment to do well in his MAT program. He does not want to seek a job too soon, but he also wants to be able to transition into a full-time position when he is ready to do so. Rob is confident that he will be able to find employment when this time comes, so he is laid-back about completing his application materials.

#### *Rob’s Vocational Identity as Negotiated within his Program Communities*

Rob’s identity within his program communities is complex. He is somewhat disengaged from the community, but he is a major contributor of community narratives and practical tools. He rejects both his classmates as well as his instructors, but cares deeply about his performance in the community. When Rob receives a grade lower than he expects on an assignment, he states, “I don’t care. I am past caring.” The fact of the matter is, however, Rob knows exactly how many points he has in each class and what assignments are still due. He organizes his participation at Madison Middle to ensure that he is “caught up” on his work in his Bachman classes.

Although Rob denies the value of debate and group reflection, he is a strong proponent of the communities’ belief that teachers must test ideas in their own

classroom context with their own students and actively reflect on what works. He states that his classes are a waste of his time, but he is highly engaged in his action research project, changing its focus several times until he settles on just the right structure, one which mirrors the communities' focus on objective measures of learning and state assessments.

Rob resents the fact that his courses provide no answers. He considers group discussions to be “social hour” and notes that course content is all opinion. However, Rob expresses a belief that others truly cannot provide answers for him. He uses ideas from colleagues or research reports, but he must test these ideas in his own classroom context with the specific individuals who comprise his classroom community to see if they are effective. Rob even applies this conceptual view to disciplinary knowledge. Rather than accepting the local school system curriculum as provided, Rob begins writing his own curriculum. He views the content of his sixth grade English class as malleable and assumes the role of generator of both pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge.

As will be noted in the discussion of Rob's school community, Rob appropriates certain conceptual viewpoints in the context of his program communities that do not transfer across community borders. Within his program, Rob is accountable to the organizational hierarchy, striving to earn points to succeed in his courses. In school, however, Rob demonstrates a moral and social accountability to the students he serves and a relative disregard for the school hierarchy. Similarly, in his program context, Rob focuses much more on objective measures of student learning than he does when he is actually with learners in his school setting. Finally,

in his courses at Bachman, Rob assumes a more theoretical view of *student* and *teacher* as generalized concepts and is able to avoid acknowledging an understanding of the complexity of students and teachers as individuals that he appropriates in his school setting.

Overall, within his program communities, Rob asserts an identity as a psycho-diagnostician and facilitator of learning. He expresses a belief that his pedagogic role as a teacher is to act as a leader in an effort to develop the skills of learners. Within this paradigm, Rob must understand his students and select or create content, activities and strategies that meet student needs and develop their skills. In this endeavor, he acts as an individual, and although he has cohort members and instructors who engage with him in community, Rob's views his development as being separate from other community members. His almost global appropriation of community conceptual beliefs, however, indicates that Rob's identity may be more mutually constituted than he cares to acknowledge.

### Conclusion

The Union County Resident Teacher program and the Bachman University program represent two highly divergent approaches to teacher preparation. Their differences range in program design, delivery, focus and content. The intent here is not to compare and contrast these programs but to demonstrate the wide variance in teacher preparation, from social structures to conceptual views of pedagogy in use in these communities.

We have seen that Thomas and Rob react in different ways in relation to their program communities. Each develops his own conception of a teaching identity both

as an individual with a career and personal history and as a member of a program community. Each influences and is influenced by his community in a process of mutual constitution.

But even the interactions of an individual's historicity in concert with a teacher preparation program community are not enough to make a teacher. One must also explore the other communities in which novice teachers engage, namely their school communities.

## Chapter 5: Communities of Practice – School Communities

### Thomas' School Community

We now return to Thomas who is engaged in Union County's Resident Teacher program and is seeking employment in Union County Public Schools. Union County offers easy access to the city, a plethora of cultural resources, and a diverse population. According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics, over 841,315 people live in Union County, with 66% African American and 28% Caucasian. Approximately 27% of the population over the age of 25 has a Bachelor's degree or higher, and the median household income is \$55,129. The County encompasses almost 500 square miles in an urban atmosphere, with 1,653 persons per square mile.

With Thomas' acceptance into the Union County Resident Teacher Program and satisfactory completion of the summer training and internship, he is guaranteed a teaching position in one of Union County's 56 middle or high schools, but Thomas must be selected by a school principal and interview team in order to be placed. Thomas begins the job search process only a few weeks into his training. By the end of July, he is one of only 16 candidates out of 117 who have not been placed. This is after going on several interviews, and even interviewing with his mentor teacher from his internship. Thomas begins to become discouraged, but he pins his hopes on a position at Parkview Military Academy, where people tell him he would be a natural fit. The principal at Parkview is interested in staffing his school with former military personnel; he calls Thomas on the telephone even before he relocates to welcome him to Union County and tell him about Parkview.

Parkview Military Academy is a selective school for students interested in the Junior ROTC program. It is a public school in Union County, following the same curriculum as other high schools in the county. Parkview houses grades 9 through 12; there is a student enrollment of 1,011 with 96% of the population African American. Student mobility is 19% with an 89% attendance rate and an 88% graduation rate.

Parkview was Parkview High School until 2002 when the local school system tried an innovative experiment to turn the chaotic high school into one of the nation's few coeducational public military schools. The school began to turn around, and during the 2006-2007 school year, Parkview made adequate yearly progress according to the state assessment system for the first time. Thomas is interviewed and offered a job as one of 12 teachers on Parkview's English team during the summer of 2007. He is assigned tenth grade in a shared assignment with another new English teacher, Mr. Johnson. Thomas is the lead teacher in the classroom, and Mr. Johnson is his co-teacher. By the middle of September, however, Mr. Johnson is given lead teacher responsibilities and Thomas is assigned a modified schedule with only two small classes of 11<sup>th</sup> graders. During the remainder of his day, Thomas is assigned to observe veteran English teachers.

At Parkview Military Academy, several different departments function as overlapping communities of practice within the larger school community. My observations of Thomas at school center on his interactions with the members of the English department, both informally and at formal monthly department meetings. Occasionally, the overlap of this community of practice with others in the school is

apparent, as boundary crossers such as the technology specialist engage with the community.

### *Place*

Place functions as an element that binds Thomas to the other members of the English Department. At the beginning of the year, Mr. Averman and Mr. Johnson share a classroom and a planning period as well as students. They have both the time and space to engage in collaborative planning and discussion. With the introduction of Thomas' modified schedule, he technically no longer shares a classroom with Mr. Johnson, but he continues to use that classroom as his home base, hanging his coat in the closet and using a filing cabinet drawer and the computer. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Averman continue to share a planning period, so they interact regularly.

After he begins the modified schedule, Thomas describes himself as a “floater.” This term refers to the fact that Thomas has no classroom of his own; he teaches in the classrooms of other English teachers during their planning periods. He teaches one of his eleventh grade classes in the classroom of the English department chair, Ms. Campbell and the other in the classroom of Mr. Mackay, a veteran teacher who is in the Resident Teacher program with Thomas. The “floating” arrangement acts to promote professional conversation and collaboration among colleagues. Thomas reports that Ms. Campbell informally observes him on a regular basis and is able to offer her advice and feedback. Mr. Mackay is also on hand to assist with technical difficulties with Thomas' laptop or projector and to offer occasional advice. Mr. Mackay offers Mr. Averman a permanent wall in his classroom, and Thomas posts student work, his teaching philosophy, his classroom rules, a discipline policy,

and overall goals for the quarter. Thomas says, “It is fortunate that the person whose classroom I use is also in the resident teacher program and understands what I have to do.” This comment serves to reveal the fact that Thomas creates this wall to satisfy program requirements, not necessarily because he believes it is good teaching practice.

Because Thomas does not have his own classroom, he is unable to arrange student desks in new configurations. Both of the classrooms in which he teaches as well as Mr. Johnson’s classroom have student desks in rows with the teacher desk at the front or back of the classroom. I observe Mr. Averman teach, and he stands either by his mobile cart or behind a lectern for most of the lesson.

The English Department meetings occur in Ms. Campbell’s classroom. During the meetings, Ms. Campbell sits at the large teacher desk at the front of the room while the rest of the English teachers sit in student desks in rows, facing front. There is a sign-in sheet and handouts by Ms. Campbell’s desk.

Despite the inconvenience of being a “floater,” the arrangement of shared space promotes Thomas’ active participation with the English Department in his school. Place also functions to create a view of teachers as being the focus of the classroom; desks are positioned so that students face front, and the front of the classroom is where the teacher is located.

### *Community Social Structures*

The English Department at Parkview Military is comprised of 12 teachers, with one of those teachers, Ms. Campbell, designated as teacher coordinator. The English team as a community is positioned within the school as one of several

departmental communities. Ms. Campbell serves as the liaison to the team from the school administration. She also acts as a broker to other communities such as the High School Consortium, the warehouse, publishers, students, and parents.

Ms. Campbell positions herself as an organizer of and messenger to the other English teachers. Her interactions with the members of the English Department are playful, yet they serve to establish and maintain her authority while downplaying her role as an actual authority figure. She berates the teachers for having their cell phones on during their meeting, telling them they are just as bad as the kids. At the end of the meeting, she says, "Next time please silence your cell phones before our meeting." Then she adds, "I'm just kidding about the cell phones. We need some levity in here."

During meetings, Ms. Campbell sits behind her desk at the front of the room while the teachers sit in rows like students. Ms. Campbell tells an African American male teacher, "Behave yourself before I call Lt. Col. Striker on you. Like I tell the kids, I'm threatening with Lt. Col. Striker. I know you're going to be good." At one point, a teacher says she has to leave, and Ms. Campbell says, "Oh, no you don't. You leave from these meetings too much. You're not leaving today." A few minutes later when the teacher holds up two fingers, the Ms. Campbell concedes, "If you have to leave, you have to leave."

In another instance, a teacher complains about an edict from the principal that Ms. Campbell has just communicated. Ms. Campbell states, "Okay, well I don't like your tone, but I'll take it from you because I've been knowing you a number of years." When the teacher continues to playfully challenge the teacher coordinator, Ms. Campbell threatens, "I know where you parked. Don't play." This banter

between two African American females who have a longstanding relationship is clearly benign, but Thomas perceives Ms. Campbell to be “ironclad strict” with the teachers.

While Ms. Campbell asserts her authority by playfully treating the other teachers like students, she also makes an effort to position herself as just another teacher. She explains, “I am not exempt from the things I’m telling you.” She shares stories about times she has received reprimanding pink slips from the administration and expresses a desire to avoid being chastised again. To this end, Ms. Campbell says, “I don't mind turning in your names. If it's a choice between your fall or mine, I'm not going to be the one who takes the fall. I'm telling you now, I love you all, but I do not love the principal to get behind Ms. Campbell.” Ms. Campbell is subject to the same policing as the rest of the teachers, and she must even take responsibility for the collective actions of her team.

Ms. Campbell and the other teachers are clearly subject to a multitude of authorities who oversee their actions. During the English Department meetings, Ms. Campbell repeatedly refers to a number of people and organizations who monitor the teachers. The Technology Center “will monitor and they will call up the school if [the students] are on inappropriate [Internet] sites.” Cameras are in place throughout the school, and Ms. Campbell warns teachers to “be careful.” Teachers can expect unannounced classroom observations from supervisors, administrators, English specialists, and various members of the High School Consortium, a local school system organization developed to monitor and support Union County high schools. In addition, the school undergoes a Middle States evaluation during November.

Teachers can expect observers to stop students randomly in the hall to ask them about their English teacher and what they have been doing in class. In addition, all of these observers should have access to the teachers' lesson plans and to collected student work, which is to be displayed in the classroom or stored in folders.

Most of this monitoring is done in an effort to ensure that Parkview achieves Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a state measure of school performance. Ms. Campbell is exceptionally proud that the school made AYP last year, and she explains to the teachers that the school's reputation is improving as a result. The principal, too, has been affected by the school's rising status. Ms. Campbell explains, "He is giving unsatisfactory evaluations to teachers if we're not doing what we're supposed to do. He does mean business. And as I've been telling folks, he has a taste of AYP and he wants to meet it again."

Tenth grade is the year when students take the state high school assessment in English, so tenth grade teachers are in the spotlight. Ms. Campbell tells the tenth grade teachers, "[The observers] have a special interest in you because of HSA." Teachers identify themselves in this way as well. When I ask Mr. Johnson what grade he teaches, he says, "The HSA year."

In many ways, within this community, outside governing agencies are lumped together as one policymaking body that functions in large part without the input of or concern for teachers. Ms. Campbell questions the decisions of the local school system superintendent related to a new policy forbidding the failure of ninth grade students, she scoffs at the local school system's summer school program, and she faults the state with making uniformed revisions to the high school assessment. But, she

dismisses all of these concerns with a casual, “But they don’t listen to classroom teachers.” Teachers are presented as completely powerless to effect change in the policies that govern their work.

At the school level, however, Ms. Campbell has slightly more influence. She presents the principal, Mr. Fowler, as being supportive of teachers, especially during conferences. He is also one who can be approached. Ms. Campbell tells the teachers, “If I’m not here in this room, I’m in the office fighting with the principal about something educational.” Ms. Campbell warns, however, that Mr. Fowler will change student grades if he thinks that teachers have not done what they were supposed to do: “So be careful, if he changes a grade, he changes a grade. And all you do is just move on, because it has happened.” While the teachers have a voice within the school, their voice is clearly not the final word.

Students and their parents are presented as adversaries to teachers. Ms. Campbell warns that parents “tend to beat up on new teachers.” She instructs teachers not to let parents browbeat them. If teachers do not feel that they are being treated respectfully by parents, they are to end their conference, saying that they will not be disrespected, and offer to reschedule the conference at another time when the conversation can be more productive.

Ms. Campbell speaks of the high school students as “children” and “babies.” They naturally seek out trouble and act like “knuckleheads.” They “work on our nerves” but “there’s nothing we can do except love them.” Ms. Campbell admonishes the teachers not to put their hands on the children, but rather be patient with them.

Within the community, there is tension between Ms. Campbell and the previous year's teacher coordinator, Mr. Mackay. Mr. Mackay never attends department meetings, and Ms. Campbell openly blames him for the disorganization of textbooks in the school. At one meeting, several teachers discuss ways to prevent Mr. Mackay from abusing his printing privileges.

Other teachers appear to get special treatment. When one asks a visiting technology specialist to help her get her computers functioning, the specialist says, "Because it's you and you're nice, I'll help you out." A few minutes later, another teacher asks for the same favor and the specialist replies, "See Mr. Ledso about that." For the most part, however, the English teachers are treated equally and addressed as a group.

### *Conceptual Tools Appropriated by the Community*

In Bullough's case study of Kerrie, the author reveals how a hidden curriculum within school "send[s] powerful messages to the novice about where the boundaries of appropriate behavior lie and what the appropriate ways of understanding teaching and the responsibilities of teachers are" (Bullough, 1989, p. 93). This is true in Thomas' case as well.

Most of the conceptual tools adopted by Thomas' community of practice relate to teaching and the place of teachers in relation to the wider educational landscape. Community members, for the most part, subscribe to the following overarching concepts:

- Students have a natural proclivity for trouble.
- Teachers must manage student behavior.
- New teachers need practice and must build a reputation.

- The goal is to help students pass the High School Assessments.
- Teaching involves implementing administrative policies and procedures.

As explored in the section on social structures, within this community of practice, the teenage students are referred to as children. As children, these individuals have a natural tendency to get into trouble. Ms. Campbell explains, “They’re children and they’re going to do things they shouldn’t do.” When discussing the teacher’s role, Ms. Campbell further states, “Children are going to be children unfortunately, and they’re going to try to get away with what they can.” A widespread belief in the community is that for children, nothing is interesting and everything is boring. Teachers have little hope of changing these natural inclinations of their students. Instead, they must be vigilant in managing student behavior.

Because students are more interested in getting in trouble than in learning, teachers must work hard to manage their classes. Ms. Campbell advises:

Teachers have to have a little bit of aggression. Not too much now, you don’t have to get violent, but you have to have a little bit of aggression in you.

Teachers are encouraged to use their role as an authority figure to encourage students to comply with rules. If they do not assert their authority, teachers are in for a rough time. This message is reinforced by other teachers who encourage Thomas to “toughen up.”

New teachers are viewed by the community as having a more difficult time managing their classes than more experienced veterans. This is due to two factors. First, new teachers simply do not have enough practice, and according to the community, “practice makes perfect.” Secondly, novice teachers have not had the chance to establish a reputation as a firm teacher with parents and students. Ms.

Campbell explains to the community, “New teachers do have a hard time, and the teachers who have been here a while, we have our reputations, and there are some things they won’t do with us that they’ll try with you.”

This view of new teachers as being different from veterans is not intended to exclude. Ms. Campbell openly states, “Everybody started out once.” She even relates stories about what it was like for her when she began teaching:

When I was a new teacher, probably over thirty years ago, I thought everybody had to learn. You just gotta learn. You gotta learn. You were like that (pointing to another teacher). You’re gonna learn. And after a while, I figured out, you do what you can do. You still may not meet the needs of the child, but you keep trying, you don’t give up.

This narrative serves to illustrate the fact that this community expects a novice teacher’s idealism to eventually be replaced with a more pragmatic approach: You cannot make a child learn, but you should never stop trying. What are the implications for a teacher who feels called to teaching by the students? When the goal changes and all a teacher can do is try, does the call fade?

Regardless, learning is the ultimate goal, and in this community, student learning is clearly defined: A student has learned if he is able to pass the high school assessment. Ms. Campbell is convinced that the HSA is “here to stay,” and she clearly expresses the centrality of the test within Parkview:

Ms. C: The focus of the school is on the ninth and tenth graders.

KF: Because of the HSAs?

Ms. C: HSAs.

The ninth and tenth grade teachers encounter more monitoring, but they are also given first priority (after Ms. Campbell) in selecting resources, and they are given top priority in scheduling time in the computer lab to practice public release exams. Their

students' success defines the success of the entire school. Making AYP gives the school "bragging rights" at meetings. Ms. Campbell says of the teaching enterprise, "It's an uphill battle, but we're winning. We're winning because our scores went up."

For the most part, teaching is merely a function of implementing the many policies and guidelines set forth by local school system supervisors, curriculum specialists, and school administrators. Teachers must use curriculum guides which specify required texts and activities and the order in which to teach them, pacing guides which tell how long to spend on each topic, and school policies which govern student dress and movement through the school. A great portion of English department meetings is used to describe the "look fors" that observers want to see when they come into the classroom: graded student papers displayed in the classroom, lesson plans, students in compliance with the dress code, and no heads down or horseplay in the back of classrooms. New teachers must submit their plans for review on a weekly basis, and all teachers must keep accurate records of attendance and communication with parents. The implied message is that if teachers fulfill each of these requirements, they will be successful. Never is a teacher encouraged to develop his or her own curricular materials. In fact, Ms. Campbell states as fact, "You can't teach without a teacher's edition." This approach denies the need for pedagogical imagination.

### *Community Metaphors*

The conversation of the English Department centers almost solely on practical issues, so metaphorical language is somewhat limited. There are three metaphors, however, that are repeated enough to represent a community norm. These include the

teacher as warrior/teaching as battle metaphor, the teacher as child metaphor, and the content as object metaphor.

The most prevalent metaphor in this school community is the very metaphor that is suppressed by Dr. Ledford in the Resident Teacher program community: teacher as *warrior*. Teaching itself is an *uphill battle*, but teachers are *winning* when test scores go up. Teachers know that they sometimes have to be a *dictator*, and as a teacher you must *stick to your guns*. Teachers must defend their materials, only lending them to one another *under armed guard*. One teacher states, “I *guard* mine *with my life*.”

It is unclear whom the warrior teachers are fighting. At once, it seems to be the administrators and supervisors, the parents, and the students. Supervisors *turn on you* and the principal is said to be *on the warpath*. Teachers decide to let him *sock it to people*, trying to keep themselves out of his way. Teachers defend themselves against parents too. They gather proof and documentation as *ammunition* and are instructed not to let parents *browbeat* them. Even the students are described as *relentless* in their disrespect. Clearly, teachers in this community view themselves as being bombarded with demands and requirements against which they must put up defenses.

Another metaphor used in this community, although not as pervasively, is teacher as *child*. In English department meetings, teachers assume the student spots in the classroom while Ms. Campbell enacts the teacher role and place at the front of the room behind a large desk. Teachers at Parkview see themselves as being the *stepchildren* in the local school system due to low test scores. Ms. Campbell

repeatedly refers to the English department as children, telling them that English meetings are “like having *children* in here in the afternoon.” She reprimands them “like I do the *kids*” and playfully jokes that they are “as bad as the *kids*.”

The final metaphor in use in this community is that of content as object. Without exception, teachers refer to disciplinary knowledge as something that exists outside themselves, something that can be contained in a curriculum guide or teacher’s edition. Teachers complain, “The county gets something new, a new program, and they *stick it on us*,” or “They just *throw stuff* at us sometimes and we have to incorporate it.” One gets an image of a teacher with wads of paper, binders and texts as eternal burdens. Because this content “is driven by the high school assessment,” the teacher cannot even determine the direction in which to move with the disciplinary load.

### *Community Practical Tools*

One might expect a team of high school English teachers to be all about sharing practical teaching tools with one another, but curiously, the English team meetings at Thomas’ school offer very little opportunity for this type of sharing. Many practical tools are in fact shared during these meetings, but these tools focus more on how to meet institutional and administrative requirements and avoid reprimand.

Department meeting agendas include items such as “Maintaining Micrograde” and “Daily Lesson Plans on Your Desk for Everyone.” One such agenda contains twenty-six items to be covered in seventy minutes. The agenda is covered at a rapid pace with little conversation or input from the attending teachers. Many items are

prefaced with, “This comes from Mr. Fowler” or “This is from the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.” One-third of the practical advice given to teachers at meetings deals with things they *must* do, things they *should* do, and things they *don’t have to* do.

Modeling is not an apparent function of the meetings, but Ms. Campbell shares many mini-narratives that exemplify ways to meet requirements. These are her *What I Do* stories. In addition, she offers to “show” teachers how to do certain things, like how to keep student papers in folders and how to display student work to meet the requirements of those who will be coming to observe.

The English department meetings also consist of much discussion of available resources. On this topic, teachers are more vocal and help one another locate needed items. Their discussion ranges from locating forms in the office to using electronic resources provided by the local school system. Teachers are encouraged to use the technology available in the school; the school’s technology specialist speaks for at least twenty minutes at one meeting about the opportunities available to teachers.

While use of some resources is clearly encouraged but optional, use of other resources is mandatory. Teachers are required to not only use a computerized grading program; they must also provide grade printouts to students every two weeks. None of the teachers is in favor of this practice, including Ms. Campbell, but they are instructed to do it anyway because Mr. Fowler wants it that way.

Compliance with requirements is essential in this community. The professional judgment of teachers is no excuse for not fulfilling requirements. When Ms. Campbell asks the teachers to turn in their phone logs to her so that she may

submit them to Ms. Mullen, a teacher asks, “What if you haven’t called anybody’s parents?” Ms. Campbell stops short of saying that the teacher should fabricate the phone log, but she says she needs something “by tomorrow by the end of the school day.” The understanding is that the teacher is to make phone calls in the next 24 hours so that she can fulfill the requirement. The rationale for this is “Ms. Mullen writes pink slips.”

Although team meetings are more about avoiding reprimand than about developing teaching practices, Thomas’ interactions with the English team are not limited to monthly meetings. After Thomas is put on the modified schedule, he spends two class periods each day observing English teachers engaged in practice. From these teachers, he gains many practical tools and strategies to use in his own teaching practice, but Thomas has a difficult time identifying specific strategies he has appropriated from these observations.

### *Community Narratives*

Ms. Campbell is the primary storyteller in this community. Of the stories recorded, she tells nearly all of them. Ms. Campbell’s stories are mostly personal teaching narratives, stories in which she tells about a school experience in which she was involved. Ms. Campbell also relates non-school personal narratives and borrowed school stories which involve others in her school or other schools.

Interestingly, Ms. Campbell’s stories most often do not involve students. Many of her stories are intended to instruct the English team on ways to navigate the constant monitoring and their interactions with supervisors and other authorities. Ms. Campbell tells stories about exchanges with observers, police officers, and parents.

She talks about receiving pink slips and having her name sent to the Board of Education. In addition, she relates a borrowed story about a teacher who falls ill from Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), or as Ms. Campbell calls it, “that strep.” She also relates tales of teachers experiencing problems with parents or administrators.

Ms. Campbell’s narratives are clearly intended to instruct. Through her stories, she offers warnings, advice, and situated instruction for the teachers on the English team. Ms. Campbell ends many of her stories with a summary statement such as “This is the condition of education in this country” or “This is what the state has wrought.” Thomas learns much from these stories. He mentions particular stories to me and expresses surprise at the outcome or gratitude for the advice. At least for him, Ms. Campbell’s narratives serve to give him a sense of his place within the broader educational landscape and help him define appropriate actions to take in certain situations.

Compared to Ms. Campbell’s stories, the other narratives offered in this community are rare. Teachers do swap stories, but these are mostly what I term *updates*. These include the mini-stories that are elicited when a colleague asks, “So, whatever happened with...” Mr. Averman and Mr. Johnson routinely share these updates during their common planning time.

### *Imagined Futures*

Thomas’ school community is characterized by a practical focus on the here and now. Talk of the future is for the most part limited to the very near future for which plans are being made. Conversations such as when to close out grades to make

the end of quarter deadlines are common, but although these are future-focused, they do not assist community members in picturing a long-term trajectory of themselves as teachers.

Ms. Campbell as well as other seasoned veterans, however, are living examples of career teachers, what Wenger terms paradigmatic trajectories (1998). Ms. Campbell describes herself and several other teachers on the team as “some of the originals that came with the academy.” She says that she had planned to retire once the school made AYP, but she thinks she will stay on for a few more years. Thomas and other newcomers can look to these long-term teachers and imagine their own futures after years of dedicated teaching.

Ms. Campbell actually has more to say about the future of the teaching profession than the futures of the teachers in her department. She says that career changers are the wave of the future, but she is concerned that so many new teachers leave “because they can’t handle the kids.” She admits that children are different than they were when she began teaching, but she also notes, “Kids are kids!”

Ms. Campbell predicts that the High School Assessments are “here to stay.” She instructs the teachers to get used to assessment as a way of life. Ms. Campbell says little about the futures of her own students or the students in the school, but other teachers make dire predictions for their students’ success. Mr. Johnson says of his students, “When they take the HSA, they won’t have the time to complete it.”

When I ask Ms. Campbell about Thomas’ future specifically, she is matter of fact: he will teach only small classes throughout his first year. After the second

quarter, he will pick up two tenth grade classes and teach a full load of classes for the remainder of the year.

In this community, the future is something that is rarely discussed, and teachers have only a vague conception of the possible futures that are open to them within the community. Supervisors and administrators are presented as a breed unto themselves, and there is no clear pathway from the classroom to any leadership position other than Ms. Campbell's position, teacher coordinator.

### *Community Promotion of Certain Identities*

Within Thomas' school community, teachers are expected to fulfill certain expectations. A successful teacher is one who meets requirements, keeps up with the pacing guide, and has well behaved students who pass the state assessments. Vocational identity is molded by certain constraints and affordances of the community and school.

Of the five pedagogical identities proposed by Zukas and Malcolm (2002), three are clearly constrained in this community. Rather than being encouraged to be critical practitioners, educators are encouraged to teach the prescribed curriculum without question. Teachers are discouraged from expressing opinions about or questioning the systems in place. They are told in a matter of fact way that politicians and people in central office "don't listen to teachers." There is clearly no sense of interdependence among educators beyond the English department.

Likewise, teachers are discouraged in subtle ways from taking on the role of psycho-diagnostician, determining the learning needs of their own students and designing interventions to meet those needs. Instead, teachers are faced with

dilemmas such as a classroom full of children who need work on basic skills but for whom the curriculum says advanced instruction must be given. Ms. Campbell is in this position with her open-enrollment Advanced Placement class. She tells the team that she will keep up the rigor because she is required to do so, even if it will make the coursework a struggle for a majority of the students.

A third identity that is somewhat constrained in this community is that of reflective practitioner. Rather than encouraging teachers to reflect on their own teaching and learn from their experiences, the community looks to administrators and other observers for evaluation of teaching episodes. The goal is to fly under the radar. Ms. Campbell explains, “You want people to come in and just leave, and say I had a good time and you’ll never see them again.” The idea is that if you are in compliance with the requirements, people will leave you alone, and you can continue doing what you are doing.

One identity in particular is afforded by this community, and that is educator as assurer of organizational quality and efficiency and deliverer of service to agreed or imposed standards. Teachers are given clear standards and goals to which they and their students must aspire. They are also given lesson plans in the form of curriculum guides and pacing guides and are expected to deliver instruction according to the timetable set forth by the local school system. Teachers are expected to maintain control over their classrooms and ensure student compliance with school and classroom rules. Most importantly, teachers are expected to prepare their students to pass standardized tests.

A secondary identity that is allowed within this community is a special identity reserved for newcomers. Teachers are permitted to be situated learners within a community of practice to the extent that they are novices who are slowly making their way toward full participation as a deliverer of service and assurer of organizational quality. Ms. Campbell and others express how difficult teaching is for new teachers who do not have established reputations. One colleague tells Thomas that his original schedule was just too much for a new teacher. And the principal at Parkview is said to have a “soft spot” for new teachers. It is unclear how long this exemption for novices lasts, but the implication is that it is temporary and that even new teachers will work up to having a full load of students and being held to the same standards.

Because Parkview is organized into teams by content area, disciplinary community is prevalent in the school. This is a contrast with Thomas’ resident teacher program where residents from all disciplines take the same classes. Thomas seldom interacts with those outside the English team. This is both a constraint and an affordance. It is a constraint in the fact that it is difficult for Thomas to get a big picture understanding of the workings of the school. Administrative mandates dictate alignment of the disciplinary communities within the school, but it is not always easy for the teachers to understand why the mandates are in place, and it is almost impossible for Thomas to conceptualize schoolwide interdependence.

The insulation of the English department is an affordance because the teachers provide support to one another, offering advice, instructional stories, and camaraderie. In the English department, Thomas finds a community where he really

“fits” as a teacher. Since the accountability structure of the school and district is set up along organizational lines, however, the wider school community does not reap the benefits of this tight-knit team. The English teachers do exhibit a form of social accountability to one another, but it is more in the service of keeping each other out of trouble than meeting school or local school system mandates. The community does, however, enable a certain grace period for novices by accepting higher class enrollments so that new teachers such as Thomas can experience a modified schedule with class sizes around 15 students. In this way, the social accountability the teachers feel to one another affords an identity for new teachers that is not available to seasoned teachers.

Prevalent in this community is the idea of content as given rather than contested. Teachers do not question the curriculum guide except to ask if it is okay to flip two stories as long as they are sure to go back and cover what they skipped. Likewise, objective measures of learning are viewed as the most accurate way of determining student and school success. Assessments are a necessary evil, and teachers must take them seriously because their collective reputation depends on student demonstration of achievement through objective measures. Wenger points out the dangers of separating knowledge production from implementation. While this strategy can simplify alignment by decreasing the need for negotiation, the cost is a loss of engagement and imagination among community members (Wenger, 1998). Aoki’s fear goes further: he wonders “whether a concern for total fidelity to an external curriculum-as-plan and a lack of simultaneous concern for the aliveness of the situation do not extinguish the understanding of teaching as ‘a leading out to new

possibilities,' to the 'not yet'" (2004, pp. 162-163). Here, Aoki is suggesting that straightforward implementation of curriculum-as-plan without regard for the contextual situation prevents true education.

Within Thomas' school community, teachers are expected to take on a teacher persona in the classroom, leaving some of their own personality at the door and assuming a tough, authoritative stance. In many ways, learners are also supposed to play the student role. Unfortunately, this role as conceived by the teachers involves goofing off and seeking out trouble. Only occasionally does a glimpse of learner as person in the world make its appearance in team meetings, as when Ms. Campbell discusses homeless students or those who are suffering abuse.

The following is a table that summarizes the affordances present in Thomas' school community, namely his English team. Several of these affordances overlap with those present in Thomas' resident teacher program, and these will be examined under the heading *Interaction of Multiple Communities* in Chapter Six. While Thomas aligns himself most closely with this school community, his own development of vocational identity is not dictated by this community but is rather negotiated in practice with community members.

<u>Affordances of the Program Community</u>
Educator as... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliverer of Service</li> <li>• Implementer of Imposed Standards, Policies and Procedures</li> <li>• Manager of Children</li> <li>• Assurer of Student Performance on Objective Tests</li> <li>• Member of Disciplinary Community to whom Educator has Allegiance</li> <li>• Member of System to whom Educator is Accountable</li> <li>• User of Resources</li> <li>• Subordinate Employee</li> <li>• Conveyor of Content Knowledge</li> </ul>

- Builder of a Reputation
- Evader of Reprimand
- Novice or Veteran, but never both

### Thomas in his School Community

Thomas' identity as a teacher within his school community is both influenced by the community and serves to form the community itself through his participation with others. It is not a case of Thomas being shaped by the community but rather one of an individual coming to a community as a self engaged in multiple communities. In his interactions with others, Thomas is shaped by and engaged in shaping his professional colleagues. This becomes apparent when one examines Thomas' social relations and uses of various tools within his school community to express a vocational identity.

#### *Thomas' Social Relations in Community*

In early September, when I attempt to identify a school community in which to observe Thomas interact, he informs me that the English department meets on the first Wednesday of each month, when Thomas attends his reading course. He says he has no other team or committee in his school. The only time he will meet formally with other teachers is at the 30-minute faculty meetings from 3:10 - 3:40 on the first Thursday of each month. By the next time I observe Thomas, however, this arrangement has changed. Ms. Campbell chances upon a meeting between Thomas and his mentor from the resident teacher program, Ms. Reed. Thomas describes this conversation: "One of them's saying I have to attend staff meetings and the other one's saying I have to attend English content to get certified." After this encounter,

the English department meetings are changed to Tuesdays. Later, Ms. Campbell asks Thomas, “Was that person from the high school consortium?” Thomas answers, “Yes.”

Ms. Reed is also instrumental in getting a modified schedule for Mr. Averman. After she observes him in early September, Ms. Reed meets with the principal, Mr. Fowler. Thomas is surprised to see them hugging as they greet each other in the hallway. He asks, “Do you two know each other?” and Ms. Reed answers, “Oh yes, for years.” Soon after the meeting between Ms. Reed and Mr. Fowler, the principal approaches Thomas and explains that the eleventh grade teacher is overloaded with students. He would like Thomas to give his tenth grade classes to Mr. Johnson and take a modified schedule in which he teaches one eleventh grade class per day (A day and B day) and observes English teachers for the remainder of the day. Eventually, the principal explains, Thomas will pick up more classes until he has a full schedule once again.

Ms. Campbell explains that Mr. Fowler has always had a soft spot in his heart for first year teachers, that he remembers what it was like to be a novice. He does unprecedented things, and this is not the first time a new teacher has been put on a modified schedule at Parkview. Dr. Ledford credits Mr. Fowler with recognizing a floundering new teacher and taking measures to support him. At the same time, however, Dr. Ledford admits that the resident teacher program and Ms. Reed were the catalysts for this change.

These two changes set the stage for Thomas’ social interaction with the English department. He attends all English team meetings, teaches one class a day in

either Ms. Campbell's or Mr. Mackay's classroom, shares his planning period with Mr. Johnson, and spends two periods a day observing other English teachers, sometimes teaching lessons or portions of lessons to their classes. Thomas is immersed in this community of practice, and it is to them that he feels most connected:

KF: As a teacher, is there a group of teachers where you feel like you really fit?

TA: Oh, that definitely would be with the English teachers.

KF: Here at the school, with the English team?

TA: Oh, absolutely. Yes, we all, to different degrees we all handle grammar, we don't handle it the same way, but nobody does. The other eleventh grade teacher, we go over the same stories, we compare how we teach it. I ask them about management, classroom management and things like that.

Thomas not only submits his lesson plans to Ms. Campbell, as he is required to do as a nontenured teacher, he also receives feedback from her on a regular basis as she informally observes him teaching in her classroom while she works at her desk. Teaching in Mr. Mackay's classroom, I observe Mr. Averman ask Mr. Mackay for help with the LCD projector, and Thomas reports that Mr. Mackay offers him advice from time to time. Mr. Johnson offers helpful advice such as to whom Thomas should talk about getting an elevator key so that he can move his cart from floor to floor and assists Thomas in recovering his jacket when it is stolen from the classroom closet.

The English department is exceedingly supportive of Thomas. In fact, Thomas says that the entire school faculty and staff is "encouraging me, praising me, welcoming me with open arms, even the janitors." Ms. Campbell especially is a support to Mr. Averman. He says, "Thank God she's here. During the interview with

Mr. Fowler, she said he was a little concerned because I'd never been in front of a class, and she said, 'We'll make it work.'”

Thomas' view of parents diverges from the articulated perceptions of the community. In the parents of his students, Thomas finds allies. Calling home for good or poor behavior quickly becomes one of Thomas' hallmarks, and he tells stories with a repeating theme of students who turn themselves around after a call home. Thomas experiences a true sense of interdependence with the parents of his students.

Thomas' view of students also differs slightly from that of the community. He does not view them as children or babies but as a group of people who are more interested in socializing than learning and have no concern for their own future. Thomas is taken aback by “their refusal to learn anything, their complete lack of respect.” By mid-year, Thomas feels that he is beginning to understand the student perspective:

I have learned that I had been out of high school too long and I forgot to see things the way a teenager sees them. Simply because I have no children of my own and I have very little contact with teenagers. The closest I ever came were the airmen I met in the Air Force, and they were already well disciplined before I met them. This is an entirely different situation. And I had simply forgotten to see things from that point of view. Now as each day goes on, I'm understanding it better and better.

Even mid-way through the year, however, Mr. Averman is making new discoveries about the realities faced by his students. He explains, “It was a real eye-opener to me when Ms. Campbell pointed out that some students are homeless. I didn't know that. Or how several of them are pregnant. In fact, that would explain the behavior of some of my students.”

When I observe Mr. Averman's eleventh grade class, students make great efforts to monitor one another's behavior. Students shush each other, yell "Shut up," or say, "At ease, cadets." A few times, a student complains, "I'm trying to read here."

Students are still a mystery to Thomas, and even halfway through the year, he is perplexed by the teenage perspective. Thomas describes himself as "naturally shy." He has a sophisticated vocabulary that alienates him from his students and perhaps others as well. In his English department, however, Thomas finds a home where he is accepted as a novice with quite a bit to learn.

### *Thomas' Use of Conceptual Tools*

Thomas easily appropriates each of the five main conceptual tools in use in his school community. Thomas views students as teenagers who care more about socializing than learning. He says, "They're still teenagers, they still can't resist taunting each other and touching each other." Thomas routinely quotes bits of wisdom that he has gathered from his fellow teachers, such as "some students just don't care" and "99% of what a student says is a lie." His impression of students is that they have little control over their own actions since they are so young.

Thomas is quite proud of the fact that he is getting tougher with students, although he still feels reluctant to impose strict boundaries. More than any other concept, however, Thomas adopts the view of new teachers as different from more experienced teachers. He adopts a role of peripheral participation in the community, with a focus on learning from veterans. Mr. Averman believes in the power of practice. He says, "The more practice, the better." He turns to other community members for support of this view: "The teacher next door pointed out that I was given

too much for a brand new teacher. Not just new to Parkville, new to teaching altogether. It was too much too fast.” Thomas views his modified schedule as the appropriate path for a true novice to enter the field of teaching. He is thankful for the opportunity, but I do not believe he realizes what a rare opportunity it is.

Although after the modified schedule is in place Thomas no longer prepares students for the state assessment, he still keeps a long-term goal in mind for his students. He sees his role as preparing them for the SATs or other exams they will take as well as for their life after high school. Thomas is dismayed that his students do not share this same goal, but he does not attempt to identify the goals that the students do have for themselves.

Thomas easily adopts a view of teaching as implementing required policies and procedures. In fact, this view parallels his expectations prior to entering the school. The week before school starts he expresses his intentions to “do as I am told.” He says, “I can’t argue, I don’t know better.” Thomas also questions his own ability to stray from the required script. In one instance when the school is in lockdown and his class is unable to take their planned trip to the media center, Thomas has to improvise a lesson. He tries to advance to a lesson from the curriculum guide that he is planning to teach the following week, but because the students do not have their textbooks, it does not work. Thomas concludes from this experience, “I just don’t teach well when I improvise.” In December when I ask Thomas about the curriculum guide he uses, he opens his briefcase and pulls out a one-inch binder, stating, “I literally carry it with me all the time.”

The situation surrounding the lockdown helps Thomas develop one of his most powerful conceptual tools, a belief that perseverance is the most essential teacher attribute. One day while Thomas is teaching in Ms. Campbell's ground-floor classroom, a group of expelled students dress in the Parkview uniform, enter the school grounds and engage another group of students in what Thomas describes as a "fight between neighborhoods." The violence is intense, and students are hospitalized as a result. The brawl occurs directly outside the classroom where Thomas is teaching.

This experience shakes Thomas' resolve. He says he is stunned by the violence, and the situation spurs a weekend of soul-searching. Thomas asks himself, "Do I want to teach in a place where there's violence and from what I hear, there may continue to be more violence? And I decided yes, I'm not going to let it scare me away. As far as I know, no teacher has left. And I'm not going to be the first either."

Thomas' resolve gives him increased confidence in the classroom. He is determined to stay, no matter what challenges present themselves. "No," Thomas says, "I'm not going anywhere. We'll just see what happens." With an imagined future of steadfastness in adversity, Thomas defines himself further, not just as a novice teacher engaging in peripheral participation in the school community, but also as a novice who is on an inbound trajectory toward full participation in the community.

### *Thomas' Use of Metaphor*

Thomas uses a wide variety of metaphors to characterize his role as teacher; however, these metaphors do not easily congeal into a set of overarching conceptions.

This is most likely due to the fact that Thomas does not have a well-developed sense of who he is as a teacher or what a teacher in essence is supposed to be. Without a developed conceptual system, metaphors become mixed, like Thomas' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

In two instances, Thomas speaks of success as a teacher as following a prescribed path and persuading his students to exhibit prescribed behaviors. He states, "I must make sure I stay on track all the time." He also expresses a desire to keep students from getting "out of line." These metaphors expose the fact that Thomas believes there are certain specific behaviors that good teachers and students consistently exhibit.

A second metaphor that Thomas uses is that of teacher as seafarer. Because he does not have a classroom to call his own, Thomas considers himself a *float*er. At the same time, he speaks of finding his *sea legs* and explains that little by little, he has *stabilized*. Thomas may feel that he is cast adrift, simply riding the currents, trying to get used to the ebb and flow of his surroundings.

A final metaphor of note that Thomas uses is that of blending in with the landscape. When I ask if his racial and ethnic differences from students have an impact on classroom interactions or instruction, Thomas explains, "At first it might have, but I don't think so anymore, no, I think they just accept me now with part of the landscape." This identification with the landscape of the school may represent the fact that Thomas closely identifies with the English team and tries hard to behave like a typical teacher. The other possibility, however, may be that Thomas' own identity is

camouflaged while he is in the teacher role. Thomas offers the following example as clarification of being part of the landscape:

TA: We were talking about civil disobedience, and about the Montgomery Bus Boycott in particular, and one student just piped up out of the blue and said, "We should boycott all whites!" Then she looked at me and her face turned red and said, "Oh, Mr. Averman, I'm so sorry." Apparently forgetting who I am (a white male).

KF: And what did you say?

TA: Nothing, I just smiled, she was so embarrassed, I thought it best to just walk away. I don't know, some of them seem so comfortable with me, I think they forget.

Are Thomas' students as comfortable with him as they are with the rest of their surroundings? Or do they disregard him personally, treating him as just another desk or chair? What does it mean to "be" landscape?

### *Thomas' Practical Tools*

Ms. Campbell describes Thomas as very responsible. He clearly adopts the belief that to be successful as a teacher, he must do as he is told. As a result, many of Thomas' most consistently implemented practical tools involve fulfilling requirements set forth by his teacher coordinator and administration. Thomas completes his weekly lesson plans and turns them in to Ms. Campbell on time. He is also diligent with his phone logs and attendance.

When teaching, Thomas justifies his pedagogical decisions to his students by explaining that he is fulfilling requirements. When the students ask if they can line up, Thomas tells them, "I have been strictly told by the administrators not to have you line up at the door at the end of the period. The only place I can dismiss you from is your seats."

Similarly, he appeals to outside authority as he gives assignments. When Thomas introduces the first quarter essay assignment, he explains that it is a required assignment from the local school system that everyone has to do and that it will go in student folders for the High School Consortium to review. He speaks of the High School Consortium as the audience for the paper. Later, when I ask Thomas who or what the High School Consortium is, he is not sure. He suggests that we ask Ms. Campbell for clarification. He explains that this essay will go into student files and that pretty much anyone can see it. What is of note in this circumstance is the fact that Thomas does not ask the students to complete assignments because he thinks it is best or for their own edification, but rather to satisfy the mandates of an unknown authority.

Thomas' approach to discipline is similar. He simply follows the authoritative advice of his administrators. Thomas explains, "I have done what our administration tells me to do." When students misbehave, Thomas presses a button to call security and the security guard removes the offending students. I ask Thomas whether he has tried any of the disciplinary approaches he learned during his Resident Teacher training, and he explains, "I'm working the way that the school does it. Because each school has its own methods."

Thomas does, however, attempt to squelch minor disciplinary infractions on his own. He tries to involve chatty students by asking them to read. He also asks students to be polite, and he takes away the paper of a student who is doodling. Unbeknownst to students, Thomas also reduces their class participation points for off

task behavior. This is a strategy he has picked up from one of the English teachers he has observed.

Thomas' most successful strategy is calling parents. During the course of the first two quarters, Thomas calls each of his students' parents multiple times. He calls to praise students who have been working hard and are earning good grades, and he calls to report absences, misbehavior or substandard work. Thomas feels that these phone calls are effective. More than one student improves classroom behavior and performance after a phone call home.

Thomas' practical tools also include the local school system curriculum, pacing guide, and a lesson planning format he finds on a local school system Internet site. At the suggestion of Mr. Fowler, Thomas begins using a timer and setting time limits for each section of his lesson to keep things moving along. Using a timer becomes common practice for Thomas, even to the point where he times himself giving a presentation to the resident teachers.

Thomas uses his limited knowledge of the workings of the school to locate resources to support his work. When I visit him at school, he introduces me to the schoolwide instructional coach, and he mentions talking to a technology specialist for help with a malfunctioning computer and to other staff about getting an elevator key. In addition, Thomas reports that he has gotten many excellent ideas from observing the other English teachers. Thomas actively seeks new ways to fulfill the requirements of a teacher at Parkview Military Academy. He acknowledges his dependence on others within his school, but he does not view himself as a contributor of significance, so he does not experience interdependence.

### *Thomas' Narratives*

In sharp contrast to the stories Ms. Campbell shares in community are Thomas' narratives, which are exclusively about students. Even when Thomas speaks of parents, it is always in reference to their children and student performance. Seventy percent of Thomas' stories are personal teaching narratives. Twenty percent are borrowed teaching stories, or *I heard* stories. These are also focused on students, albeit students whom Thomas may have never met. Finally, Thomas shares a small number of school stories that are crafted from a combination of his own experience and stories he has heard. One example of such a school story is the time the school went to lockdown during a major fight. Mr. Johnson and Thomas tell me this as a *shared story*, each adding in his own information and impressions.

The majority of Thomas' personal teaching narratives relate incidents which leave Thomas incredulous, such as the eleventh grader who cannot rephrase a simple sentence or the student who falls asleep on his desk when Thomas is being observed. About half of these stories include Thomas' intervention or reaction to the shocking student behavior. Thomas repeats the following story more than once as an example of taking a tough stance with misbehaving students:

I was watching another teacher's class the other day -- he was gone -- and students were getting rowdy. One girl was especially screaming, and I called up her parents and handed her the cell phone right in front of the class. "They want to talk to you." She was screaming, "He's not even my teacher!" "So?" She said, "Everyone else was loud!" "So?" She came back to the teacher later and complained. Last I heard, he was going to give her some extra work.

Thomas attempts to share personal narratives from his Air Force days with his students, but their response is less than enthusiastic. Thomas tells of an heroic police officer in Biloxi after hurricane Katrina hit. He remained with the civilians in the

shelter long after he was required to do so, providing a sense of order and authority in a chaotic situation. Thomas describes his students' reactions to this story:

TA: Some kids were yawning. One was laughing hysterically.

KF: Laughing?

TA: Well, he wasn't paying attention. I said, "Do you think losing everything you ever owned is funny?" He said no. I said, "Then you weren't listening." Some of them were bored. They asked, "Why are you telling us this?"

After sharing a story, Thomas pays careful attention to the responses of his listeners. He uses these responses to check his own interpretation of events. When telling me a story, he often follows it by relating how other teachers responded when he shared the story with them. In this way, Thomas uses storytelling to gain information about acceptable ways of understanding situations and acting as a teacher.

### *Thomas' Imagined Future*

Taking the lead from his community, Thomas speaks very little about his own future as a teacher. His concern is with only the immediate future for which he must plan lessons. Thomas shows concern, however, for his own students. They express to him that they do not intend to go to college, and Thomas sees them "ready for a bad fall." He tries to impress upon his students the realities of adult life, but they resist this message. When students complain that the work is dull, Thomas wonders if they will refuse to complete a 1040 form when it comes time to file taxes. Thomas is visibly discouraged that his students are not future-focused.

In regard to his own future as a teacher, Thomas explains that he knows his load will increase with the new year. He also expresses that he gets more confident

every day with increased practice. He defines his success by measuring the academic success of his students, so he says there is no way to tell if his first year was successful until he sees how successful his students are on their assessments. In this way, Thomas' view of himself as a teacher is intimately connected with student success as measured by objective tests.

*Thomas' Vocational Identity as Negotiated within his School Community*

Through his interactions with students, parents, colleagues, administrators and supervisors, Thomas has an opportunity to express his vocational identity and receive feedback while actually shaping the school community. Thomas adopts the idea that as a teacher, he is to deliver service in such a way that he meets imposed standards. Thomas strives to fulfill all responsibilities given to him. He submits his lesson plans, phone records and attendance on time and follows the prescribed curriculum according to the pacing guide. Thomas even makes certain that he is using the resources that have been suggested to him by team members. He wants badly to be a successful teacher, and he believes that if he implements the curriculum efficiently and fulfills all requirements, his students will demonstrate academic achievement on their assessments.

Thomas allows himself some leeway, however. He does not expect himself to get it all right all at once. Instead, he accepts a role as novice practitioner who participates on the periphery of the community. Thomas feels that it is fitting that an individual new to teaching be given a modified schedule. At the same time, however, Thomas expects himself to move toward full participation in the community. He

views others on the team as being “there” and does not expect himself to be a situated learner much past his induction year.

Actions of school personnel serve to reinforce this idea. Although Thomas is a floater who must wheel a cart from the second floor to the first floor and back each day, he is not given an elevator key for several months. When he finally receives his key, he is told most new teachers don’t last, so they don’t bother issuing keys at the start of the year. As of December, Thomas still does not have a key to Mr. Johnson’s classroom where his supplies are stored. It is almost as if Thomas must put in a certain amount of time or establish a certain type of reputation before becoming a permanent member of the staff.

At Parkview, Thomas does much learning in community as opposed to individual learning. He almost always has another teacher observing his classes, even if they are doing so informally while they are working at their desks. He routinely asks their opinions about classroom events. In addition, while Thomas is on the modified schedule, he spends half of each day observing other teachers. Thomas, in turn, begins to offer ideas to his colleagues and even teaches mini-lessons to the classes he observes. One idea that Thomas brings to the school, making crossword puzzles from vocabulary words, is adopted as standard practice by more than one of the English team members after Thomas shares how well it works for his own students. This is the beginning of Thomas’ interdependence with his community.

Although Thomas is aligned closely with his English department and more loosely with parents, his is mostly a disciplinary community, and Thomas does not appear to relate to the larger pedagogic community of the school or school system. He

has only an amorphous understanding of the organization of the school system and the varied responsibilities of the school, the district, the state department of education, and lawmakers related to school policy. Thomas does not need to know this information, however. Within his community, all policymaking bodies outside the school are “they” and “they” don’t listen to teachers anyway, so there is no reason to engage with any of these individuals or institutions.

Thomas is wholly focused on the products of his students. He is concerned about their grades and their eventual performance on objective measures of academic achievement. Thomas does not concern himself as much with the process of learning. He implements the curriculum as given and trusts that if he executes the lessons well, positive student outcomes will result. Thomas holds himself accountable to the organizational structures of his school, district, and resident teacher program.

During the course of my observations, Thomas begins to view his students as people in the world rather than as a group of anonymous learners. Thomas eventually begins to understand the interests and personalities of his students. By December, he even begins to loosen up and joke with them a bit, all the while cognizant of getting too loose for fear that the students will let loose as well. Thomas does not change his instruction as a result of getting to know his students better, however. I ask, “If you look at the curriculum guide and see something that you think is not going to be relevant to them, you still are required to teach it?” Thomas replies emphatically, “Absolutely. And I do teach it.” He enjoys getting a reaction in class but will not alter the curriculum to do so.

Although Thomas slowly gets to know his students better, he offers little opportunity for them to get to know him as a person. In the classroom, Thomas plays the role of traditional teacher. He says that his students know that his background is in Air Force photography, but he rarely relates stories from his own life because experience has taught him that students do not respond the way he expects. They tell him his stories are boring, or they refuse to listen. One student early in the year calls the Air Force the “wimpy branch” of the military. Thomas tries not to let these comments bother him; he responds by limiting the personal aspects of his life that he shares with students. This may contribute to the fact that some of his students treat him more as “landscape” than as a human being with a story to tell.

#### Rob’s School Community

James Madison Middle School is located in Ellis County. According to the most recent statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, Ellis County has a population of 509,300 with approximately 80% Caucasians and 15% African Americans. It is a well-educated population, with 31% of adults holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher. The median household income is \$66,087. Ellis County covers slightly over 416 square miles with 1,177 persons per square miles.

James Madison Middle houses grades six through eight. Of its 574 students, 68.6% are white and 25.6% are African American, with the remaining 5.8% in other racial categories. The school has a 93.3% attendance rate and a 9.7% mobility rate. Although the majority of the teachers in the school are teaching on an advanced professional certificate, 11% of the students are not taught by highly qualified teachers according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. While the school made

adequate yearly progress according to state standards in 2006, they did not meet AYP in 2007 due to the poor reading scores of special education students and those students receiving free and reduced meals. In 2007, only 68.8% of sixth graders were proficient or better in reading and 66% in math.

Rob begins teaching sixth grade language arts as a long-term substitute teacher at Madison in the spring of 2007. Because he is still taking a full load of courses at Bachman, Rob teaches three days a week and writes substitute plans for another substitute for the other two days. He is also involved in intramural sports. Once the university semester ends in May, Rob substitutes full time until the end of the school year. He knows there is a language arts opening at the school for the following school year, and he expects to be offered the position, but with only one week left in his college semester, the language arts department chair approaches Rob and explains that he has been falling short in his teaching and that she thinks it is best for him to do traditional student teaching in the fall.

Rob says, "I felt like I got the rug pulled out from under me." Other teachers on the team are also surprised. They say they thought it was a "done deal" and tell him that he just took one on the chin. Although Rob is hurt and wonders if he really wants to be a teacher, he thinks carefully about the points the department chair makes and finally comes to accept the fact that student teaching will benefit him.

Rob signs up to intern with Carol Mercer, a sixth grade language arts and social studies teacher at Madison who was especially helpful during his substituting experience. Throughout the summer, however, Rob continues to weigh other options. He thinks he might be able to get a position at one of the county's high schools as a

ninth grade English teacher. Rob even takes the Ellis County curriculum with him during his summer military training so that he can begin planning for a possible ninth grade position. Prior to the first day of school when Rob has still not been offered a position, he explains to me that he will go to Madison on the first day of school, and “If they tell me there’s an opening in the middle school down the street, I’ll take it.”

Later, I learn that the only application Rob submits to Ellis County during the summer is for another long-term substitute position. He does not apply for a teaching position, so it is no surprise that he is not offered one. This action is deliberate; he is waiting to make his application once he is aware of an open position and convinced that it is one in which he will be able to succeed as a teacher.

Rob begins the school year as a student intern. I observe him interacting with the new language arts department chair and the sixth grade language arts team during three team meetings, and I observe him interacting with his mentor teacher and students throughout the fall semester. In November, Rob takes on the role of a long-term substitute as a sixth grade special educator assigned to co-teach with his mentor, Ms. Mercer. When I complete my observations in mid-December, Rob is once again considering putting in his application for a full-time teaching position.

### *Place*

James Madison Middle School is a large, well-kept school. It was originally designed as a high school, so the facilities are spacious, and the athletic fields and tennis courts are first rate for a middle school. The front doors are locked, so visitors must buzz in and enter the office. Office staff members are friendly, and they have a streamlined system for checking visitor IDs and printing photo badges.

The language arts team meetings are held in the department chair's office. It is a small rectangular room with a long table, boxes of books, a desk area, and computers. On the wall, there are two posters. One lists four content planning questions:

- What do I want my students to know and do?
- Where are my students?
- What evidence do I have to know that?
- What do I plan to do about it?

The other is a list of "Meeting Participation Norms." These have obviously been brainstormed. They read, "Arrive on time. Share responsibility for the success of each session by sharing your knowledge and experiences. Be flexible and open to new ideas. Ask questions – divergent questions can be useful. Collective minds working together can be extremely influential."

The meetings take place around a large conference table with the department chair, Ken Shaw, sitting in a middle spot and the rest of the educators sitting around the table. During each meeting, a reading specialist sits at the desk, working at the computer. She does not participate in the meeting except when Ken hands her something to type, and jokingly says, "Thanks, honey."

Ms. Mercer's classroom, where Rob teaches, is fully decorated, with kites hanging from the ceiling, a six-foot mummy, and many books about history and other topics. Three computers line the back wall; it is at one of these computers where Rob does his own schoolwork for his Bachman classes if time permits during the school day. The daily schedule and objectives are posted, and vocabulary words and their definitions line the top of the walls. The classroom has much natural light as one entire wall overlooks the tennis courts and outdoor fields. Desks are positioned in

cooperative groups of six students each so that every student may see the front board, where the screen and classroom maps are located. Ms. Mercer's desk is positioned at the front of the room, to the side. Also occupying the front of the room is a teacher cart with an opaque and overhead projector positioned for use.

I comment on the classroom, and Rob shares that he thinks for some students the ample decorations may be overwhelming. He states that if it were his own classroom, he might choose to display, for example, only the vocabulary words that pertain to the day's lesson.

Rob is most at home in the school's media center where a spectacular glass enclosure fills the space with natural light and offers a beautiful view of the sports fields below. On my first visit to the school, Rob takes me to see this sight. He says, "This is what it's all about right here. For real." The combination of the beautiful media center and a phenomenal media specialist make for a place that Rob cannot help but feel welcomed. He says, "I love it here."

### *Community Social Structures*

Sixth grade language arts team meetings at Madison occur weekly on Wednesdays during the sixth grade planning period. The composition of the group who attends meetings varies during my observations. Always present are the team leader, Ken Shaw, one or two reading specialists, and the sixth grade language arts teachers. Occasionally, special educators and others who provide support to the sixth grade team also attend the meetings.

The feel of the meetings varies by the members present. One meeting that I observe consists of Ken, Rob, and the three sixth grade language arts teachers (all

female). That meeting is especially collaborative. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a common assessment that will be administered to all sixth grade students so that the school will have an indication of how well the students can be expected to do on the local school system assessment. Each of the three language arts teachers brings draft questions with them to the meeting. They begin working while Ken is out of the room making copies, and they work together to select the best questions, revising each other's wording, and praising each other for especially well-crafted questions. The meeting progresses with little conflict. Those involved in this meeting clearly experience a sense of professional interdependence with one another. After the meeting, Rob states, "It's when everybody else has their opinions, people that don't teach, that it gets ornery. If you notice, it went pretty smoothly right there. [At the full meetings] everybody goes in with almost a, looking to start a fight. But because it's the three teachers, you can't start fights with any of them."

Indeed, the meetings that include the media specialist, reading interventionists and special educators are more contentious. Ken is clearly aligned with one female reading interventionist named Pat who takes on a role as enforcer of requirements and standards. She assumes authority during meetings, clarifying requirements and questioning teachers about their practice. Ken tempers Pat's remarks by assuring the teachers that he understands that they must meet the students where they are, that it might take time to build student skills enough that requirements might be met fully, but Pat persists. In these full group meetings, teachers disagree or defend themselves, but they ultimately resort to congregating in the hallway after the meeting in a small

group. Rob calls this “the meeting after the meeting.” It is when the teachers can air their grievances and support one another.

In one particular instance, I observe Ken and Pat meeting before anyone else enters the room. Pat expresses concern about the performance of one teacher in particular. She says that when she pops her head in the classroom, the teacher is always working at her desk or computer, and as soon as she sees Pat, she hops up and begins interacting with the class. Ken and Pat agree that the only way to really know what is going on is to begin observing regularly. At their meeting, Ken informs the teachers in a tentative way that observations will be forthcoming: “We’re going to come by and just take a look at what’s going on, how it’s going, offer suggestions where you guys need some help, just kind of fine tune. Like we said before, we have everything in place that needs to be there, we just have to make sure we’re doing it effectively, it’s time efficient, it’s task efficient so that you guys aren’t stressing out to fit everything in.” Ken presents the planned observations as a support for the teachers rather than a monitoring visit, but clearly for at least one teacher, it is just that.

For the most part, however, Ken attempts to keep the meetings light and conflict-free. He gives out pens to all attendees at one meeting, makes jokes occasionally, and offers his help with things like importing grades into a required database. Ken consistently stresses that the goal of the meeting is to help ensure that all of the work the teachers are doing is “purposeful.” The purpose to which Ken refers is passing the state assessment. All discussion in the meetings somehow relates to preparing students for this assessment. This is especially the case because Madison

did not make adequate yearly progress in 2007 and there are new monitoring programs in place to carefully track student progress.

Teachers feel the stress. Rob's mentor, Carol, explains that the blame for student failure rests on the teachers' shoulders: "They say we don't want you to redo it. We want you to figure out a new way to teach it. Because it's me. *I* can't get it across to them. It's me." Another teacher admits that she is on 2 ½ hours sleep due to stress. There are local school system unit assessments for each unit, and teachers must all give the assessment on the same day, whether their students have mastered the concepts in the unit or not.

The language arts teachers at Madison have room to exercise their professional judgment with students, but the room is narrow and the choices are limited. Each class period must include the following different components in a 72-minute period: sentence composing, grammar, teacher-directed reading, read aloud, monitored reading, and writing. Ken points out that portions of the read aloud may be combined with the teacher directed reading and that other elements may be combined as the teacher sees fit. He also concedes that some days it all will not fit for a million reasons, but this is the goal, and all teachers are expected to work toward it. Likewise, the sixth grade teachers have the leeway to decide how to handle vocabulary instruction as a grade, but all this means is that they can choose to have students write the words in a section in their binder or in a separate journal. Ken and Pat offer, "If you are struggling, we can help you implement it. Let us know." This situation affords the teachers responsibility without acknowledging their professional authority.

Occasionally a teacher will openly disagree with the requirements. Carol Mercer, Rob's mentor, has a reputation for speaking her mind at meetings, and she is vocal about having too much to squeeze into one class period and being expected to keep up with a pacing guide that is not appropriate for her students. Another language arts teacher, Debi, who is new to Madison also speaks up in meetings to defend her practice. When Pat grills her, she responds, "It works for me. Don't worry about it. Don't try to understand. It works for me." But Pat insists that Debi should teach all the reading strategies simultaneously rather than focusing on one at a time:

Debi: We can do all four in one day. We use them all the time, but on a story like this if I'm going to chunk it a certain way, just one of those is sufficient for a day. I decide what they can handle because I know them.

Pat: I think that predict and summarizing you could probably do together, I would think.

Debi: But again, summarizing is going to be for Friday's lesson. Because this week, that's how I'm doing it. It all depends on whether I think the words and the vocabulary is too out of their league.

Time and again, teachers defend their right to use professional judgment in planning their lessons rather than adhere to strict requirements.

Interestingly, with all the talk about requirements, there is surprisingly little mention of the school administration, and no mention of any local school system supervisors at any meeting I attend. Others in the school, however, are discussed as being collaborators and colleagues. Those who provide interventions to students require student data from teachers. And those who teach other sixth grade subject areas must also do the work of teaching reading. Teachers are expected to work with other grade-level teachers and support providers to coordinate services for students.

The seventh and eighth grade language arts teams are also mentioned, but although these teachers are viewed as facing the same challenges and having similar

meetings, they function as separate communities within the school. Only Ken and a few other support specialists cross the grade level boundary in their community multimembership. Nevertheless, at Madison, there is a developing sense of interdependence among educators, even beyond the sixth grade language arts team.

### *Conceptual Tools Appropriated by the Community*

The sixth grade language arts team at Madison Middle School operates with some common conceptual assumptions as well as a healthy conceptual tension.

Within the community, five major concepts are appropriated:

- The ultimate goal is students passing the state assessments.
- Education must be purposeful, that is, aligned to the state assessments.
- Teachers can only be successful if they work at their students' instructional level.
- All grade level teachers must be reading teachers.
- Collective minds working together produce a better product than a mind working independently.

As stated previously, the focus of each topic introduced within the language arts team meetings in some way relates to the goal of students passing state assessments. Madison is under considerable pressure to have their students pass the 2008 tests. Direct instruction of vocabulary is touted as a solution to the problem of students not understanding test questions. Common assessments are designed to give the school a good indication of how their students will perform on the state test.

In fact, Ken speaks of the team goal as designing *purposeful* instruction. He explains, "If they're not exposed to it on the test, we're not going to worry about it. . . . We have to be a little bit more purposeful." Teachers are encouraged to use "proven" strategies such as direct vocabulary instruction to raise scores. They are to prioritize those elements of instruction that most closely align with the state

assessment and allow others to fall by the wayside. Ken explains, “On [the state assessment] they’re not asked to do extensive writing. So they don’t need to do that for the stories.”

This sole focus on tested competencies creates tension within the group. Ken tells the teachers, “You don’t have to finish the stories. On [the state assessment], they’re never asked to read four or five pages at a time. They’re asked to read a page and a half, two pages and then they’re answering directed questions.” Carol takes issue with that concept: “That says to me you don’t have to finish anything. Start a book, you don’t have to finish it. So I have an issue with that. Alright. I’ll shut up. If we read a novel, we’re going to read the whole stinkin’ novel.”

This issue surfaces at a later meeting when Carol is not present. Ken broaches the topic with the other teachers:

Ken: I know philosophically some people don’t agree and they want kids to finish novels, they want them to finish a reading, but realistically they’re not, I mean, how often are they going to sit and read 150 page novel? We’re looking at shorter pieces where they’re analyzing more so, critically thinking. That’s more important to me than finishing a novel.

Pat: And they can always finish it during monitored reading.

Other teachers seem to buy into this reasoning. One even talks of students losing interest in novels because they are “too drawn out.” Instead of spending instructional time having students read a complete narrative, teachers are encouraged to focus on strategies, including reading strategies, strategies for understanding vocabulary, and strategies for composing short answers. All instruction must be aligned with the local school system curriculum and pacing guide, which are directly aligned with the state assessment and voluntary state curriculum. Unfortunately, this move to privilege the interpretation of passages of text over complete stories may deprive students of

narrative as a conceptual building block and tool for learning about self and world. Even worse, it may deprive children of the chance to experience what it is to be whole (McCaleb, 2003).

Teachers are also expected to implement the lesson planning format required by the school, a format which includes mandatory daily instruction in the six different areas. While no one disagrees on the worth of the various lesson elements, the teachers push back with their own conceptual tool: expectations must be *realistic*. Spending seven minutes on this and eleven minutes on that does not match the realities of the classroom:

Debi: But you can't follow that, not to the minute.

Carol: You can't or you're going to be stopping in midsentence. Saying, And then Gilly picked up the knife and, I'm sorry, you're out of time today. Eleven minutes kids. Beep, beep, beep, beep. Take out a piece of paper.

Not only does the required lesson planning format not work because it prematurely cuts off productive discussions and teachable moments, the teachers argue that implementing it actually prevents them from meeting student needs. Ken replies that he saw the format effectively used in a seventh grade classroom, and Carol takes issue with the comparison:

There's a huge difference between sixth and seventh, especially this time of year. It takes forever to do everything. Just the sheer lack of knowledge of basic vocabulary especially with the kids that we have really requires that everything be slowed down. I have a real hard time racing through it because then they're not getting any of it. . . . So it takes a lot longer, and you can't slam through it and you can't do every part of it every day and do something that is really benefiting the students. So that is what we're looking at, what is it that they really need?

In this statement, Carol proposes two concepts that vie for position against the mandate that teachers prepare students for the state assessments according to the

curriculum and pacing guide. She argues that students must progress from a basic level and work their way toward higher level thinking skills, that steps cannot be skipped or students will be lost. In addition, Carol presents a powerful argument that teachers must meet students where they are and slowly work with them to move them toward eventual success on the assessments. This argument is aligned with the content planning questions posted in the meeting room.

While this issue is not resolved at that particular meeting, when the topic arises again in relation to instruction of reading strategies, Ken concedes, “You gotta start somewhere. You can’t give them a page or two full pages if that’s not where they are, you’re not going to get anything from them.” The tension between intensive test preparation and meeting student needs is one that defines the sixth grade language arts community of practice.

This community views itself as being closely related with the other sixth grade content area teams. In fact, they have a major discussion about how to increase alignment between these content area teams so that all teachers begin to view themselves as instructors of reading. Ken explains, “All curricular areas in middle school and high school are concept-driven. So that means we’re all reading. It’s not on *our* shoulders to teach the kids reading. Anybody who’s accessing any kind of text becomes, has to become, a reading teacher.” The language arts teachers welcome the idea of sharing this burden in interdependence with other sixth grade teachers and begin planning to talk with them about teaching reading strategies in their content areas.

The final conceptual tool adopted widely by this community is that collective minds working together produce better results than a single person working alone. On the wall, this concept is stated as a Meeting Participation Norm. The teachers appreciate each other's ideas and often say that they are going to try another's idea. The session where the teachers collaborate to create a common assessment is evidence that the teachers value one another's ideas and believe that working together is mutually beneficial. Unfortunately, teachers are not often permitted to work together to determine the direction of their instruction. This direction is provided, and the teachers are faced with the task of struggling to implement local school system and school-mandated instructional frameworks.

### *Community Metaphors*

Within the sixth grade language arts team community, several metaphors prevail as teachers and support personnel discuss the teaching and learning experience. The three most prevalent metaphors in this community are education is a race, teaching is operating a machine, and content is something that must be owned.

In this community, education is a race, and the students are the runners. Teachers meet with one another to *divvy up the team*. Unfortunately, some students are behind before the race even begins. The teachers try their best to assist their students, but in many cases, there is *no way to catch them up* once they get *so far behind*. Teachers spend much of their time on *crowd control*. They offer encouragement to the runners by offering a *prize at the end*. Unfortunately, not all students are motivated by this prize, and some *dodge* the race altogether.

A second metaphor is aligned with the teacher as machinist metaphor used in the Bachman communities. At Madison, sixth grade team members speak of teaching as operating a machine. At times, teachers reason, *if it ain't broke, don't fix it*. They are given certain components to add to their machine and told to throw *it in sometime this week*. Teachers are surprised when the machine begins working. One describes a moment of excitement: *The wheels were going slowly, but they were going*. She exclaims, *It's working!* Another describes a *Eureka* moment when *all circuits go off*. Although it is not clear if this machine produces anything in particular, the teachers are thrilled when it operates smoothly.

A final metaphor views content knowledge as something to own. Students need to *develop ownership* and *master* content. Interestingly, this process often involves violence, including *getting it down* and *beating it to death*. Sometimes there is so much violence done to the content that it is described as *overkill*. Teachers assist in this process by providing a *trigger* for students to help them *deal with* content. At other times, teachers decide that it is just too much hassle. They look at the curriculum and decide that their students will *not touch* certain aspects of content knowledge. They reason that their students are not up to *struggling with* these powerful concepts.

Of the three metaphorical concepts, two place the teacher as being removed from the real action. The student himself must run the race, and he also must wrestle the concepts down on his own. Even as a machinist, the teacher has little knowledge of the internal workings of the machine. Teachers use trial and error to find out what makes the wheels turn, and they are often surprised when something works.

### *Community Practical Tools*

Although the metaphorical speech of the community indicates that the teachers may not believe in their own efficacy, the educators on the sixth grade language arts team devote considerable energy to developing a common repertoire of practical tools to use in the classroom. They collaboratively share resources, ideas, and strategies with one another, and they work together to improve their practice.

Sitting in on a meeting of this community, one feels a bit left in the dark. Acronyms and casual mention of local school system initiatives make an outsider such as myself feel like one who has arrived late for a movie. Team members all appear to be familiar with the voluntary state curriculum, the state assessment, the local school system pacing guide, the Links vocabulary strategy, test generator, QAR, reciprocal teaching, monitored reading, conference cards, and various state websites. These resources and strategies are mentioned with no explanatory content.

When Ken introduces a new approach to vocabulary instruction, he holds up a book by Marzano and recommends that the teachers read it in their spare time. This engenders a laugh; teachers do not have spare time. Ken then distributes a summary page outlining Marzano's six steps. He explains that the first three steps are similar to the Link strategy, and most of the teachers at the table nod.

At times, teachers share useful strategies directly with one another. Several teachers tell teaching narratives, and more than once, others indicate that they would like to "try that." One teacher communicates a method for getting students to clarify their understanding as they read: "Clarify. I always tell them it's spelled incorrectly. RRR. Read, reread, read again. 3 Rs. How many Rs does clarify have? 3 Rs." Debi

especially likes this trick. “I like that!” she says. “I’m definitely going to use that one.” Others share strategies for minimizing transition time in the classroom.

Teachers learn from one another in this community. When they come together to write a common assessment, each language arts teacher brings suggested questions. They then work collaboratively to choose the best questions and revise the chosen questions. They comment on each other’s wording: “This seems as unfair though as the other question we had.” They make suggestions to replace or reorder words to make the questions more complex and stronger. And when a question is finalized, they comment on why it is effective: “They’re not going to guess, but they have to read the whole thing in context to see that there really only is one answer.”

Although teachers are viewed as knowledgeable, reading specialists and the department chair assume the role of disseminating advice on how to best meet school and local school system requirements. They speak of providing a packet of practice games for vocabulary instruction, and they engage Debi in a lengthy discussion about teaching reading strategies, driving home the point that it is more favorable to read a small section of text and use all four reading strategies simultaneously than to focus on only one strategy at a time. Ken offers to assist teachers with a website designed to clarify lesson outcomes and with completion of a required spreadsheet. Finally, Ken assumes the role of broker between the grade level language arts teams. He offers ideas from both the seventh and eighth grade meetings and shares good instruction he has observed throughout the school.

This community spends equal time discussing higher level theoretical concepts and immediately implementable practical tools. They function as a group of people with a common mission: to help their students pass the state assessments.

### *Community Narratives*

The sixth grade language arts community is unique among the communities studied due to the fact that the leader of this community tells no more stories than the collective members of the community. In all other communities under study, the lead member (instructor or teacher coordinator) is the main storyteller. On the sixth grade language arts team, however, Ken tells exactly as many stories as the members of his team. Ken's stories are of a different nature, but storytelling is a shared feature among community members.

Ken's stories fall into four categories. More than half of his stories are personal teaching narratives. He also tells what I call *broker's teaching narratives*. These are stories that he has learned or acquired by virtue of his contact with the seventh and eighth grade language arts teams at Madison. Ken tells one hypothetical teaching narrative and one personal narrative in the context of language arts team meetings as well.

Eighty percent of Ken's stories follow a problem-solution pattern. He shares a problem he had as a teacher, or a problem a teacher on one of the language arts teams is having. He then tells how the problem was solved or what should have been done to solve the problem. In the case of the broker stories, Ken shares the solution he and the teacher have agreed upon. Each of these stories offers instruction to the teachers

on the team. Ken's problem-solution stories offer practical tools in context for the teachers to appropriate.

The teachers in the group are the only other members who share narratives, and all of their stories are personal teaching narratives. Interestingly, most of these narratives tell of events that had positive outcomes in their classrooms. Teachers use these stories as idea-generators. Only twenty percent of the teachers' stories tell of classroom challenges. Another twenty percent are narratives posed as questions. Teachers tell something that routinely happens in their classroom and then ask, "Can I do that?" In this way, teachers are able to describe classroom practice and find out if it meets mandated requirements.

Storytelling in this community serves many purposes: to instruct, to share ideas, to communicate "I am like you," to request approval, to assist members in negotiating their identity within the community, and to open possibilities.

### *Imagined Futures*

When considering the future, the members of this community concern themselves mostly with the immediate future for which they are planning instruction. For these educators, time is conceived as units of study, and future units are mapped by the district curriculum and pacing guide. Teachers focus on the upcoming unit assessment and make sure their students will have been exposed to all material necessary to pass that assessment prior to the test administration date.

Educators in this community do not speak of their own futures as professionals. They do consider the futures of their students, but only to the extent that they are concerned with the alignment of curriculum during sixth, seventh and

eighth grades. Sixth grade teachers know that if concepts and terms are going to be reinforced during seventh and eighth grades, the entire burden for student mastery is not their sole responsibility.

Although members of this community do not directly speak of imagined futures, the veteran educators on the team provide a model for newcomers to emulate. Among the teachers, Carol takes a leadership role, speaking her mind at meetings and defending teacher autonomy. More novice teachers can definitely look to her role as a potential future. In addition, novices can look to the reading interventionists or the department chair as models of possible futures for themselves. Within this community, the future is not often acknowledged, but possibilities live within the professional roles of the community members themselves.

#### *Community Promotion of Certain Identities*

Within the sixth grade language arts community, two major competing identities are promoted. One is openly promoted by the department chair and reading interventionists while the other is subtly promoted by the teachers on the team. The resulting tension is a defining characteristic of this community, one which makes meetings vibrant.

The “official” identity promoted by the department chair and reading interventionists is educator as assurer of organizational quality and efficiency and deliverer of service to agreed or imposed standards. Ken and Pat encourage the teachers to design “purposeful” instruction that teaches to the test, within the confines of the required lesson format.

Carol is the ringleader for the alternate identity. She and the teachers argue for the right to act as psycho-diagnosticians and facilitators of student learning. The teachers believe that their job is to diagnose student needs and meet students where they are. They have no problem preparing students for state assessments, but they believe that it is most worthwhile to do so at a level and pace dictated by the student's skills and needs.

What emerges is an overarching identity of teacher as problem solver. Teachers desire to facilitate learning by meeting student needs, but they must do so within a number of given constraints, so they must act as creative problem solvers, striving to do *both*. This stance is similar to that taken by the ESOL teachers studied by Motha (2004) who found ways to work for social justice within a constraining context. Ken, as the leader of Rob's school community, intuitively understands the need to remain true to oneself while meeting requirements; he enables the teachers to find their own way to reach their students, as long as they do so within a certain framework. For example, teachers do not have to follow the pacing guide perfectly, but they must teach all required objectives before the unit assessment. Teachers can even skip lessons if they can justify that their students have daily practice with the targeted skill. In addition, teachers may combine lesson elements in creative ways, but they must strive to incorporate all elements in some way in each class.

Because this identity is developed by the teachers as a coping mechanism and because it is indirectly approved by the department chair, teacher as problem solver becomes the most prevalent identity appropriated in this community of practice. This identity allows teachers to negotiate the tension between their moral and social

accountability to meeting the needs of their students and their organizational accountability to their school, school system and state. Interestingly, tension such as this is the very type imagined by Schön (1991) as driving professional practice.

One might wonder what might happen should the teachers find it impossible to reconcile the tensions. Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) story of Huber offers such a case. In this case, the teacher, Huber, is faced with a dilemma. She cannot live out two conflicting identities, one imagined by her principal centered on the planned curriculum, and one of her own making centered on classroom community. This dilemma causes Huber much tension and dread. The teacher finally chooses to build classroom community and tell a cover story when she interacts outside her own classroom. One wonders to what extent the teachers in Rob's school community would resort to the same behaviors given a slightly more authoritarian team leader.

Within the sixth grade language arts community, much learning is done in community, and educators look to one another for assistance and ideas. The team is a disciplinary community, so the teachers tend to talk the same language, face the same challenges, and benefit from sharing with one another. Due to fully developed curriculum and pacing guides, the teachers often even find themselves teaching the same story on the same day.

Although the teachers have so many similarities, they are permitted to engage in the community as people. One, for example, is known as the environmentalist. Rob comments that she will get a recycling box for anyone who needs one, and Ken states, "I walk out of this room, turn off my lights and everybody says why'd you do that?"

Because Peggy yelled at me.” In this community, educators are not simply anonymous persons who fulfill an organizational role.

Learners, too, are seen as more than just a mass of students. They are viewed as individuals with certain demographic characteristics. At times, students are referenced as persons with home lives (that may or may not be stable), medical conditions, and individual interests.

Although the individual qualities of some students are acknowledged, evaluation as understood in this community is not learner-centered. Instead, objective measures are used to measure student achievement, and the focus is on the assessment as the product of student learning. Content is given rather than contested; indeed, it resides in paper and electronic documents made readily accessible to teachers.

With the low skills of the students, the challenging curriculum, the fast-paced pacing guide, the incessant objective assessments, and the myriad requirements, educators in this community are placed under a great deal of stress. They cope by bonding with one another, sharing ideas, and trying to figure out ways to teach the way they know is best while meeting stated requirements.

<u>Affordances of the School Community</u>
Educator as...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Problem Solver</li><li>• Psycho-Diagnostician</li><li>• Facilitator of Academic Achievement as measured by Objective Assessments</li><li>• Communicator of Knowledge</li><li>• Objective Evaluator</li><li>• Organizer of Required Assessment-Driven Learning Activities</li><li>• Preparer of Students for State Assessments</li><li>• Active Member of Disciplinary Learning Community</li><li>• Collaborative Colleague</li></ul>

## Rob in his School Community

Rob Bowen interacts as an individual who is finding his place in a new community. He brings with him his view of self, fashioned from his interpretation of past events as well as his conception of who he will become as a teacher. His negotiation of identity within this community, however, is a dynamic process. He is both shaped by his school community as well as a contributor to the community. Who he becomes within this community is partially his own doing and partially the community's doing; it is always a process in flux.

### *Rob's Social Relations in Community*

Rob is appreciative of the language arts team at Madison. He contrasts his experience substituting in city schools with his experience as part of this community:

RB: My experience with some of the city schools and then working here...

KF: Oh, this is a gorgeous school.

RB: The people had closed doors and stayed to themselves. It was so insane, but here I love it.

Rob is not the most vocal member of the language arts team, but he fulfills a role. At the first meeting I observe, after a heated discussion about vocabulary instruction, Rob slams his palms on the table and says, "So, in summary, we need to use direct instruction to teach vocabulary." Everyone on the team laughs, and the tension melts for a moment. Rob explains that he "always does that" at the end of the meetings, simply summarizing what needs to be done.

Admittedly, Rob disengages when the conversation settles on minutia. He says, "There was a good ten minutes there I was like (makes a stare-into-space expression)." He yawns while Pat is questioning Debi about her exact approach to

teaching reading strategies, and he makes efforts to keep the meeting moving by giving his notes to another teacher when she enters a meeting late.

Rob is treated as a legitimate team member from the start of the school year, even when he is only an intern. When, after one especially heated meeting, Rob expresses his belief that direct instruction in vocabulary will actually be a time saver, Pat and Ken ask, “Why didn’t you say that in the meeting?” Rob explains, “I’ve got my mentor teacher right beside me and I’ve got her back as long as we’re in here.” He promises to talk to Carol, however, and express his opinion that the vocabulary instruction will not actually be the drain on time that she expects it to be.

Once Rob is given the long-term substitute position, he doesn’t feel any different, and his status at the meetings does not change. He is asked and is able to give an opinion related to a certain student’s performance, and at one meeting when Carol is absent, Rob speaks of the status of Ms. Mercer’s class, noting where they are in the pacing guide and how he thinks they will proceed with guided reading. He acknowledges that he cannot “speak for” Ms. Mercer, but the community accepts his word regarding the class status.

Rob also offers support to other sixth grade language arts teachers. He hand-picks guided reading books for students in another teacher’s class at her request, and he visits Debi after she is grilled by Pat to offer his support: “I came and talked to her afterwards. I was like, What the... And she was like, I don’t know.”

Rob also has a positive relationship with his students. Although the school needs substitutes during Rob’s internship phase, and although Rob desperately needs the money, he decides to forego the substituting to be able to spend time with his own

students. He says, “I hate leaving my class. I’m invested now.” Rob likes sixth graders for the most part. He says they are not “too cool” to do fun things, but they do not have higher level thinking skills yet either.

When teaching, Rob makes an effort to justify incorrect student responses or give students a chance to redeem themselves after making a mistake. His approach appears to work: at one point in a lesson, 80% of his students have their hands raised to share an answer. The biggest challenge, according to Rob, is the rift between students. The students in his classes are “standard” and “support” students, meaning that they either have low test scores or they receive special education services. In each class, Rob has a number of non-readers and students with other special needs. It is Rob and Carol’s biggest challenge to reach these students while not “losing” any of the other students. Rob explains, “We actually have standard kids getting bored. Meanwhile these ones are getting unengaged, all those words we talked about, failure avoidance, all that.”

Unfortunately, Rob has a low opinion of the school’s support providers. When I ask about the title of a woman who attends the language arts team meeting, Rob guesses that she has “some superfluous title, guidance something coordinator intervention specialist. Something like that.” Rob experiences no sense of interdependence with the school’s support providers and sees the services of the assigned reading specialist as disruptive and useless:

The one typing there. She’s a reading interventionist. She doesn’t do anything, she’s useless. All she does is come in and take kids from our classes right in the middle of class, so we need to reteach that kid, so it’s not like they’re getting that one-on-one training that’s bringing them back with skills. If they were taking them and coming back and the kid could read or do a BCR that would be one thing, but we don’t even know what they’re doing.

Rob talks to Ms. Mercer, and they decide to prepare a folder of course materials to give to the reading interventionist one day so that the student will not get further behind. But that particular day, the reading specialist does not come! “I guess we’re on their schedule, you know what I mean?” Rob complains. “That’s aggravating too.”

Rob’s estimation of Ken as a team leader is more favorable, but not glowing. Rob sees Ken as a “young” with only eight years of teaching experience. In Rob’s opinion, Ken does not “bump heads up” enough. He should take on the role as a buffer between the teachers and the administration. Instead, “he just takes the initiatives and rolls with it. Alright, I’ll take it and I’ll try to do with it what I can to get it to them.” In addition, Rob does not feel that Ken acknowledges what teachers are already doing in their classrooms. Rob explains that Carol is already doing direct instruction of vocabulary in her classroom and it is pointless to spend an entire meeting trying to convince her that she should *start* doing it.

Finally, Rob thinks that the meetings could be much more efficient. “I’d wrap that meeting up way under that.” He, like many teachers, tires of being told what to do: “Our point is why don’t you come down instead of telling us how, why don’t you come down and show us how? Why don’t you teach three days in a row? Why don’t you teach how to write a BCR on a certain reading and do it for three days in a row? We’ll watch. If you’ve got all the answers.”

Rob has little contact with the administrators at Madison, but he suspects that one assistant principal does not like him because he asserts his authority in assuming an administrator-type stance with students, and at times he has disagreed with her

approach. Rob explains his role as the only male language arts teacher on the sixth grade team:

RB: A lot of people say it, but when I walk around, even here, I act like an assistant principal. Meanwhile I'm a substitute teacher.

KF: What do you mean? What do you do?

RB: I stop kids, I talk to them. I go into rooms when I see, because this population again is defiant and difficult with women. And teachers are mostly women. And I see them, they try and be mean, try and, it comes off differently, so I step in sometimes, be that male role model figure, whatever it is that's needed for that situation. And it has worked.

KF: How do other teachers respond to that?

RB: Some don't want any part of it. Most here love it. Love when I come down and talk to the kids.

By the end of the first semester, Rob has gained the confidence to begin imagining himself as an administrator. He asserts his authority in situations that develop between students and other teachers on his team. Rob offers his authority to his community, but he does not feel the need to depend on anyone else; as a result, he cannot be described as experiencing a sense of interdependence with his teammates. Nevertheless, Rob feels he has developed positive relationships with his colleagues on the language arts team. Despite the critical remarks, Rob concedes, "I love the staff. They're all good."

### *Rob's Use of Conceptual Tools*

Rob's priority in teaching, borne from his own memory as a student and his calling to teach is promoting student literacy. While this goal aligns nicely with the state assessments and school initiatives, Rob's orientation toward instruction is less assessment-driven than most on his team. He explains, "This is my love affair with teaching. Reading. That's really what I'm into teaching. . . . If you can read and write, honestly I think you can do anything."

In addition to promoting literacy, Rob cares deeply about impacting the lives of his students. As he writes his unit for his English methods class, Rob chooses to focus on the hero figure in literature. He does this because he thinks it is essential for students to have models to emulate, and he wants to help students be mindful in their selection of heroes. Rob writes a story, “I Found Myself in Egypt” that he uses with his language arts students. This story not only exemplifies the language arts concept of internal conflict, it also promotes a healthy message: Get to know your family history, and be proud of your heritage.

On the debate over whether to have students read a whole story or only study certain parts, Rob sides with whatever approach will allow the students to access *meaning*. He says it would be ridiculous to have ninth graders read *The Odyssey* (Homer, 1996). Instead, he plans to provide a plot summary so that students understand the importance of the narrative. He will lead them through intensive study of the parts of the epic that exemplify the concept of “hero” that he is trying to communicate.

Rob’s hero unit and his use of his “Egypt” story exemplify his belief that the teacher knows best when it comes to making curricular decisions. He explains, “I think the case is on the teacher. I know what I need to do with my kids. That’s my feeling.” Rob is less concerned about following a prescribed curriculum that may or may not meet student needs. He is confident in his lesson planning abilities, attributing them to his preparation through Bachman.

Rob feels equally confident in his role as a classroom leader. He says, “I know when not to yell and when to be stern.” He takes a no nonsense, no excuses stance

with the students, and as of the middle of the year, he is planning to take this approach one step further:

What we're trying to approach it as is enough's enough. The ones that don't get it, step it up. . . . You're going to non-participate your way into an E, or you're going to get it.

Rob explains that while there is a time for supporting students, sometimes overreliance on that support can be a limiting factor in student growth. He decides to scale back the services he provides to students in an effort to encourage their independence:

There's no more of me walking over there. *I need help*. No. What do you need help with, and what do you not understand? Because I'm not reading it for you and I'm not pointing at anything anymore. You read, and you tell me a specific question. That's it. They need to learn to do it on their own.

Rob feels a sense of urgency in his teaching, but it is not the same sense of urgency felt by teachers trying to cram many different instructional formats into a small amount of time. Rob knows that his students will take the unit exam on the same day as all other students in the local school system, so each unit has a predetermined end. He and Ms. Mercer must teach what they can to their students in this specified period of time. After one particular social studies lesson, Rob explains, "I still didn't get as far as I wanted to. But I felt we were at the pace we needed to be." He considers the pacing of the lesson for both his special education students and his standard students: "And we didn't lose any of the kids that were quick too. It needs to be somewhere in between."

A final concept that guides Rob's actions and interactions in the classroom is that of teacher as actor. Although his metaphorical language does not support this conception, Rob's "performance" in the classroom verifies his belief in this analogy.

As Rob teaches, one gets the impression of an actor on a stage. He is animated, acting out his words, using broad hand motions and charade-like gestures for concepts such as “money” and “weaver.” He speaks of getting ideas across to students in every way possible: not only through his voice and the class text but also through his body and various visual elements.

### *Rob’s Use of Metaphor*

While the teacher as machinist metaphor is prevalent in both Rob’s Bachman communities and in his school community, Rob rejects this metaphor. He uses virtually no related metaphors; clearly the machinist image does not resonate with him. The race metaphor is more appealing, however. Rob speaks of students who are *slow* and *behind*. He tries his best to help, but students *stumble*, and Rob remarks, *I don’t think I caught him*. Even when Rob is right there his students sometimes *slide*. But Rob acknowledges the fact that if he is not there, *nobody wins*. Clearly, Rob sees the teacher role as being more important than that of a bystander at a race.

Rob also carries the “doing violence to content” metaphor into his language. He speaks of students *punching up* a document, teachers *hitting* content, and students *bombing* assessments. Interestingly, when students *bomb* assessments, they do poorly, but when they *blow the top off* assessments, they succeed. Students *struggle* with curriculum, but the curriculum appears to fight back. At times, students’ notebooks look *like a bomb hit*.

Teachers, according to Rob’s metaphorical language, have much to fight. The rift between students *kills* the teachers, and *every day is a battle*. Rob makes every

attempt to *load up* with lesson plans, but he is still *blown away* by students' lack of knowledge.

Even among themselves, teachers battle. Rob and Carol are allies. They define where they *stand* in relation to the curricular requirements, and in the presence of others, Rob explains that he *has Carol's back*, meaning he will defend her from surprise attacks. Rob expresses a wish that Ken would act as a *buffer* for the teachers to protect them from the onslaught. He also thinks Ken should *bump heads* with those in administrative and supervisory positions in defense of the teachers' positions.

Although much of the metaphorical language used is violent, none of Rob's metaphors or the metaphors used by the sixth grade team express violence toward students. Teachers are on the defense against administrative demands, and they do their best in assisting their students in dominating content.

### *Rob's Practical Tools*

During community meetings, Rob shares or employs several practical tools. Some of these are in the service of moving the meeting along, making it more efficient. As stated previously, Rob shares his notes with a teacher who enters late. He explains that it is easier than having to rehash everything to catch her up. Rob also makes it a practice to summarize the content of a meeting with a one-sentence statement at the meeting's end. This has a humorous effect; teachers laugh at the way he simplifies complex discussions and offers a pointed directive instead. His comments and actions do hint at an underlying dissatisfaction with the organization and efficiency of the meetings, but nobody takes offense.

Rob also shares practical tools for classroom use with the other teachers on the English team. He hand-selects books for other teachers' students, and he offers an idea of using a book club format for monitored reading. The other teachers seem to appreciate these contributions.

In his own classroom, Rob uses a number of practical tools in his instruction. He is an enthusiastic speaker who uses his voice as well as hand and body language to convey ideas. He easily incorporates definitions into his speech, defining unknown or problematic words as he goes. Rob also uses repetition to make content "stick." He makes ample use of classroom resources such as maps and the opaque projector, on which he displays worksheets and pages in the textbook as he talks. Rob makes a concerted effort to locate meaningful visual or auditory aids which enhance his lessons. He often uses embedded videos and images in his presentations and uses music to teach poetry.

When Rob's students enter the room and see him at the front, they immediately begin their drill, which is posted on the screen. This is obviously a well-practiced routine. From the drill, Rob moves quickly to the side of the room where the daily objectives are posted. He reviews the objectives with students and then gets right to the heart of the lesson. Rob keeps the lesson moving. He stops discipline problems with a quick word or by involving the offending student. "What are you discussing over there?" Rob asks. Two startled boys look up and one says, "I was asking if he had an eraser." Rob softens a bit, "You guys get that squared away? Alright."

Rob holds his students to a high standard. When several students complain that they do not have the work from the previous class, Rob exclaims, “I have three people who say they don’t have it. Two have it and didn’t do it. One had two days to get it and didn’t. No more with the excuses. If you have an excuse, save it.” He clearly explains his expectations; even before a student answers a question, Rob reminds, “Speak up and give me a complete sentence.”

During class discussion, Rob attends to issues of student motivation and self-efficacy. When one student gives an incorrect answer, Rob turns to Carol and checks to make sure his own answer is correct. He says, “That’s right, isn’t it? I had to check because Samantha had another answer, and she’s usually right.” In another instance, I watch a boy slump in his chair after getting an answer wrong. Rob notices too. He says, “Don’t worry about it. Today is not about memorizing.” Then he calls on that same student for the next question, and when he gets it right, the boy sits up, once again engaged in the lesson.

A final practical tool that Rob is able to develop is the art of co-teaching. For the first several months of school, he teaches with two other full-time teachers in the classroom, Carol and Linda, the special educator. Rob becomes so comfortable with a co-teaching relationship that when he is offered a job in a nearby school district, Rob asks if a special educator could be paired with him to co-teach. Within his own classroom, Rob has clearly recognized his interdependence with co-teachers.

### *Rob’s Narratives*

Rob does not share stories during language arts team meetings, but narratives are extremely important to him. Rob peppers his conversation with many narratives,

both those from his own experience and those from literature he has either encountered or authored. Rob also tells *shared stories* with his mentor, Carol, as they relate the events that take place in their classroom.

Rob and Carol have a comfortable relationship. Their storytelling is seamless, much like their co-teaching, with each adding details or offering a slightly different perspective as the story proceeds. They tell of their challenges in the classroom, the interventions they have attempted, and the emerging outcomes. Telling these shared stories help both Carol and Rob process teaching events and generate new solutions.

More than anyone else in this study, Rob draws from short stories, novels, television shows and movies as he speaks. For him, the meaning behind these stories is instructive and relates directly to lived experience. Rob pours himself into the development of a unit for his English methods class. He calls it “From Beowulf to Batman,” but he really thinks it should be called “From Homer to Homer,” as it traces the hero from roots in Homer’s *Odyssey* (1996) to the anti-hero of Homer Simpson (Groening, 1989). He believes focusing on the concept of hero can help students thoughtfully identify role models for their own lives. Identification of role models may also aid students in developing imagined futures that guide them toward self-actualization.

Rob is especially drawn to epic tales. He buys copies of *Gates of Fire* by Steven Pressfield (1999) for six of his students, and he says that *Thirteenth Warrior* (McTiernan, 1999), a movie based on Chrichton’s *Eaters of the Dead* (1988), is one he aspires to use in an instructional setting.

The stories Rob writes for use in his own classroom are not epics, but they clearly are designed to have meaning for students beyond the social studies and language arts concepts he weaves through them. *I Found Myself in Egypt* is all about embracing one's own heritage, and *Astronomy Notes* focuses on setting career goals to inspire oneself. Rob is one for whom narrative is extremely important. In fact, it is the opportunity to give the gift of reading and writing to students that calls him to become a teacher in the first place.

### *Rob's Imagined Future*

Although Rob's school community does not include much overt conversation about the future, Rob's own future as an educator is very much on his mind. During a team meeting, he shares with the entire team his plan for implementing monitored reading. He explains that he has been talking to Ms. Mercer about setting up book clubs, limiting students to one of five pre-selected books. Rob is not totally sure that he and Ms. Mercer will implement this plan, but he tells the team, "I'm going to push in that direction in my career, anyway. That's what I would like to set up."

Rob thinks deeply about his career. He writes his heroism unit with the intent purpose of using it in his first teaching assignment:

I'm going to apply for jobs eighth, ninth, and then when I roll in, wherever I'm going in, they're not going to be caring too much, just happy they have a teacher, and I'm going to be like, you guys, this is what I'm doing the rest of the year. If I can.

He plans to structure his classroom so that students have a writing assessment every Friday, with Thursday night's standing homework assignment being the preparation of notes for the written assessment.

Rob also considers how he will solve problems that he currently faces once he is in a full-time teaching position. Rob plans to address head-on the inadequacies he perceives in the reading intervention pull-out program. He imagines a future conversation with a reading interventionist:

RB: I will stop at the door and be like no, this is what we're doing, this is what you're doing, unless you want to come give me your curriculum so I can okay it.

KF: Since it's supposed to be a support.

RB: That's what I would do. That's in the future for me.

Although he speaks with authority, Rob does not expect his first full-time teaching position to be easy. At one point, we discuss the situation of a first year teacher who is struggling in a challenging teaching position. Rob says, "Mine will be the same when I'm done with here, but I'm expecting it, and I'll be loaded up with lesson plans. I've got all this junk already made." Indeed, Rob feels well prepared. He feels confident in the preparation he has received through his Bachman program, and he believes he has grown immensely from his substituting and internship experiences.

For his students, Rob has a wait and see attitude. He feels that his students are working hard and participating in class, but unfortunately those indicators do not always predict future success on the next assessment. Rob explains, "I have high hopes. Hopefully, we'll see on the next test. That's all we can do is wait and see. They just have not been retaining anything in their heads, and it's so frustrating because what good was teaching all day today if they don't remember a thing? On a daily basis? It gets ridiculous." Rob hopes to find an answer to this problem, a way to more securely link instruction and achievement so that his students' future performance is more predictable. In addition, he stays positive by imagining the life

skills his students are acquiring and the possible futures of students who become proficient readers and writers.

*Rob's Vocational Identity as Negotiated within his School Community*

Although teacher as problem solver is the most prevalent identity in this community, it is not an identity that Rob finds necessary to appropriate. Rob has no hesitations in asserting the fact that he views the teacher as being the decision-making element in the classroom. He unabashedly plans instruction to meet the needs of his students with a relative lack of concern for including required elements in his lessons. Rob states, "You cannot fit everything that they want in a day." He views the abundance of educational initiatives as barriers to effective instruction. It is as if Rob is given a choice: either use your own experience and expertise as a resource for the production of meaning or rely on the adoption of other's proposals for meaning. Rob clearly chooses to take ownership of his own meanings.

In the face of specific curricular and pacing guides, Rob chooses to create his own curriculum for language arts by writing his own short story and using it to infuse both language arts and social studies content. He believes that he is "on to something" in his infusion of content in narrative form, and he intends to continue refining this technique. In this way, Rob is a reflective practitioner. He reflects on the effectiveness of each lesson he teaches and works with Carol to determine new strategies to increase student achievement.

Rob looks to student scores on required assessments as measures of student academic achievement, but he also considers the fact that students may do poorly on the assessment due to the format rather than due to a true lack of content knowledge.

Rob acknowledges the importance of the state and local school system assessments in the current educational landscape, but he is also in tune with more subjective ways to measure student learning. Rob considers himself a facilitator of learning. He diagnoses what students need and tries to provide it for them in an effort to increase their knowledge and skills. Rob holds himself accountable to students and their progress rather than to the formal accountability structures set forth by the school, district and state.

Rob is critical of the required pacing and lesson framework, but he is not a critical practitioner in the sense of being emancipatory or advocating social justice. Rob perceives differences in the way male and female teachers are able to relate to students, and he enjoys being the strong male role model on the sixth grade language arts team. He intervenes when female teachers need assistance in controlling unruly students. In this way, Rob may actually contribute to differential expectations for males and females within the school community.

Rob takes time to get to know students. He hand-selects books that he thinks certain students will like, and he even purchases books as gifts for several students. He uses his knowledge of students to personalize his classroom interactions, being more forceful with one student, and offering encouragement to another. Rob understands what a challenge it is to teach two standard and support classes. He chooses to volunteer his time in Ms. Mercer's classroom rather than take paid daily substitute jobs at the beginning of the year. Although Rob is only required to spend one day a week in school to fulfill his internship requirements, Rob usually volunteers four days per week. Rob explains, "I teach a lot because I like to." Once Linda goes

on maternity leave, Rob is her long-term substitute. He says, “Thank goodness I am there.” He knows how hard it would be for Carol to teach the class by herself or with an ineffective substitute. Rob has high self-efficacy; he knows that he makes a difference with the students in his class.

In team meetings, Rob takes on the role of Mr. Efficiency. He provides succinct summaries of complex discussions, and he makes efforts in meetings to keep things moving. He is supportive of other teachers, but Rob avoids the “meeting after the meeting,” when the teachers commiserate with one another. He wants to know what is required and get on with the work of teaching as quickly as possible. Rob exhibits a sense of interdependence in his own classroom with his co-teachers. He is generous with the assistance he offers to others on his team, but he resists depending on anyone outside his own classroom. For this reason, Rob experiences only a limited sense of interdependence with his school community.

### Conclusion

The analysis of Thomas’ and Rob’s school communities reveals two different ways school disciplinary communities may operate. While Rob’s school community affords a view of educator as a problem solver, Thomas’ encourages teachers to implement imposed standards and deliver required services. Because both schools are borderline for making adequate yearly progress, both communities exist within an environment of intense accountability. The language arts teachers at Rob’s school use the accountability measures as a starting point, striving to discover the places where their own pedagogical knowledge and the required learning activities meet. In

contrast, the English teachers at Thomas' school are encouraged to fulfill requirements, even if required learning activities fail to meet student needs.

Teachers in both communities are placed under considerable stress, and the description of their communities presents ways in which teachers cope with this stress, support one another, and enact their responsibilities. The teachers at Rob's school collaborate with one another, share classroom success stories, and support one another's right to exercise professional judgment. The teachers at Thomas' school share resources and provide each other with valuable information regarding ways to avoid reprimand. These actions, as well as the pedagogical identities afforded by each community serve to uncover the various meanings teachers collectively ascribe to their work.

Thomas and Rob respond in different ways to their different communities. They respond not only as members of a school community, but also as members of program communities and individual selves. Thomas acts as a legitimate peripheral participant in the school community, taking on only as much as his novice status requires. Rob rejects imposed requirements and relies on his own abilities as a reflective practitioner to refine his work in the classroom.

The identities which Thomas and Rob negotiate with their school communities are forged through interactions of multimembership in multiple communities, a view of self that emerges through understanding of past events, and a conception of the future that is always in flux. These complex interactions can be understood by examining the *nexus of multimembership* (Wenger, 1998) experienced by Thomas and Rob as well as their own stories and reflections of becoming. By

exploring each of these analytic elements of experience, one can understand Thomas' and Rob's vocational development as an emerging meta-story of identity negotiation.

## Chapter 6: The Nexus of Being

While it is instructive to examine the various program and school communities in which Thomas and Rob engage, and while it is revealing to uncover the identities they assume within those communities, analysis at the level of community of practice is not akin to lived experience. When Rob goes to an English team meeting, he goes as a team member, but he also goes as a Bachman student as well as a Second Lieutenant, a son, a brother, a coach, a Red Sox fan, a white male, a friend, and a study participant. When Thomas goes to his reading course on Wednesday evenings, he is not only a student, but also a high school English teacher, an English department member, a husband, a Roman Catholic, a white male, a son, a brother, a study participant, and a Steelers fan.

A person's identity at any given moment is not only a function of which community space they are currently inhabiting. Individuals bring all their many community affiliations with them as they move across community borders. And that is only a third of the complicated nexus of being. Not only do individuals carry their present affiliations with them, they also bring an interpretation of their past and a conception of possible futures. Thomas is just as much a retired Air Force photographer when he attends his reading course as a high school English teacher. His understanding of past events as they relate to his present is key in his development of identity.

This study necessarily excludes many of the communities of practice in which Thomas and Rob are members. I limit this investigation to communities that directly

relate to worklife. Such a limited view can never tell the full story, but by exploring the interaction of program and school communities and understanding how past experiences and imagined futures help shape one's understanding of present events, it is possible to provide a glimpse of the nexus of being that allows one to experience a sense of self. The relationship of *nexus of being* to *identity* will be explored fully in Chapter Seven in the section titled "Identity as Place."

### Interaction of Multiple Communities

Even though only a fraction of possible communities falls within the scope of this research, there is still considerable interaction among communities. Certain individuals act as boundary crossers, and certain situations arise in which one's multimembership becomes apparent. Sometimes, when two communities interact, the individual who is a member in both communities experiences coordination, and the burden of negotiating multiple communities decreases. Sometimes, however, the communities conflict with one another, and it becomes more challenging to be a member of both.

### *Coordination of Multiple Communities*

Thomas' situation is unusual. Most career changers like Rob enter teaching through a teacher preparation program administered by an institution other than the school system in which they begin teaching. Sometimes these institutions have established partnerships with school districts or particular schools, but they are separate institutions. In fact, seventy-nine percent of alternate route programs are

administered by an institution other than the school district in which the candidates teach (Feistritzer, 2005a, p. 64).

Thomas' resident teacher program, however, is operated solely by the school system in which he is employed. It is Union County's resident teacher program, and all but one of the instructors and mentors have worked in other capacities for Union County Public School System. This makes coordination of the program with the school much more simple. Dr. Ledford explains, "That is one of the things that we feel is also one of the strengths of the program."

Not only do the varied segments of the resident teacher program function as one seamless community of practice (albeit with minor membership changes from summer to fall and from Dr. Ledford's seminar to Candice's reading class), the program is designed to facilitate a smooth transition to Union County schools. Residents are asked to write lesson plans as assignments for their reading courses, and just as is required in school, their plans must align with local school system curriculum and pacing guides. No institutional boundary lines exist. Thomas' mentor, Ms. Reed, is an old friend of Mr. Fowler's, and they hug in the hallway when they see one another. It is no surprise that Mr. Fowler would listen to the recommendations of a person with whom he has worked professionally for a number of years. Dr. Ledford explains how the interactions between the resident teacher program and the school lead to Thomas' modified schedule:

With all due respect, I don't think that it would have happened if it was not in this program. That is part of the type of support that we give to these folks when we see that they may be floundering, trying to work with the school personnel and I don't want to take full credit for it. I want to give more credit to the school because the school recognized it as they often don't and were agreeable and saw things in Thomas that they thought were worth salvaging

and consequently were willing to work with him and do what was necessary to help him out.

Had Ms. Reed been from a university-based teacher preparation program and gone to the principal to report that one of her interns was floundering, Dr. Ledford explains that the outcome may not have been so positive. “The more likely scenario,” he says, “would have been okay, then now our job is to start documenting so that we can go through the dismissal process.” But instead, the resident teacher program staff, the school administration, and the English department work collaboratively to provide support to Thomas. This collaboration of support may be due to who Thomas is:

Dr. L: It’s people like Thomas that I like to take special care with. Folks that really want to succeed, I want them to succeed. So we will give him every resource that we possibly can.

KF: The other teachers and the department chair, I think they’re really pulling for him.

Dr. L: They are. And that’s what’s amazing. It doesn’t always happen quite that way. For some reason or another, Thomas seems to have gotten their heart also. He has a way of doing that.

Another way in which Thomas’ communities of practice coordinate with one another is through overlap. Mr. Mackay is not only a fellow student in the resident teacher program, he is also a colleague at Parkview. When Thomas is assigned to teach one of his classes in Mr. Mackay’s room, Thomas is grateful to be placed with someone who understands the requirements and pressures of the resident teacher program. He says, “I’m so glad I’m in his classroom.” I observe Mr. Mackay and Thomas discussing program assignments during the school day and providing support to one another. Because Mr. Mackay is a seasoned Parkview teacher, he is able to offer valuable school-specific guidance to Thomas.

One specific instance of program/school overlap begins as a contradiction of communities but ends with coordination. Ms. Reed and Ms. Campbell meet one another while Ms. Reed is observing Thomas one day. Their meeting is tense as they discuss the need for Thomas to attend his reading course and the English department meetings, both scheduled for Wednesdays after school. Up to this point, Thomas has missed all department meetings. After a professional discussion, Ms. Campbell decides it is in the best interest of the school to change the English department meetings to Tuesday. This is a major benefit for Thomas who comes to see the English department as his professional home.

Rob's situation is somewhat different. Although Rob's program at Bachman is removed institutionally from Ellis County Public Schools, there is a longstanding professional development school relationship between Bachman University and James Madison Middle School. This in itself affords a sense of coordination among Rob's communities. Part of this partnership involves the MAT program director, Megan Crosnore, being in close contact with the staff and administration at Madison. When Rob is processing the comments of the language arts department chair after his spring long-term substitute position, Ms. Crosnore is able speak with the department chair and then meet with Rob about his options for employment.

Rob's seminar instructor, Mr. Green, is also a boundary crosser or broker (Wenger, 1998). He is a retired administrator from Ellis County Public Schools. In class, he is able to knowledgeably discuss local school system-specific policies and procedures that the interns are encountering in their schools. Unfortunately, his status as a retired ECPS employee does not guarantee conflict-free interactions with current

mentor teachers. Carol and some of the other mentors are dissatisfied with his coordination of the internship experience.

Within Rob's Bachman courses, there is a concerted effort by his instructors to coordinate assignments. The Seminar instructors collaborate, and Dr. Heathman, the Teacher as Researcher instructor, is aware of the assignments being given in the seminar course. While this effort is laudable, it does create conflict, as students play one instructor off the other or ask questions about seminar assignments to Dr. Heathman. When Mr. Green collects projects, a portion of which has already been graded by Teacher as Researcher instructors, he comments, "Because I didn't see the contextual factors and the benchmark and was reading them for the first time, I am not sure I would have liked them the way they turned out, but because they had already been seen by someone else, I didn't object to them as much as I might have, except when I saw what looked like obvious flaws." Students are placed in a difficult position of pleasing two instructors with one assignment.

At Madison, Rob makes efforts to coordinate his multimembership in a number of communities by being open with students and staff about who he is in addition to being a language arts teacher. Rob uses any spare time he can find at school to do his coursework for his three Bachman classes. He routinely uses one of the computers in the back of the classroom to work when there is time during the school day. In addition, Rob's role as intramural coach merges with his teaching. Several of the students in the school engage with him as a coach, and they bring this relationship into the classroom.

Rob also brings his identity as an Army Reservist into Madison. When an eighth grade teacher asks him to come in to do a presentation about Iraq for Veteran's Day, Rob is at first hesitant, but he wears his uniform to school and gives presentations to all the students. A newspaper reporter picks up the story and the school gets positive press. Afterwards, Rob is enthusiastic about the experience. He says, "Oh, it went awesome. It was phenomenal. It was fantastic, yeah." In the hallway, Rob now sees eighth graders who yell to him, "Hey, Mr. B!"

Finally, both Rob and Thomas report that they experience coordination among communities as a result of participating in this study. Because our conversations bring together their experiences from the past, their hopes for the future, and their experience in both their program and school communities, Thomas and Rob say that while their participation has sometimes been "one more thing on a plate that was already too full," it has brought them to new understandings of their experience. Rob says that it has forced him to reflect at a terribly busy time in his life, and he is grateful for that: "I'm sure I just learned about myself just talking. You do, you learn about yourself, you remember something. In fact, when you don't, you don't. You lose it. So it's been helpful." Thomas says that my questions and comments have helped him see his experiences in a new way, that he likes my characterization of his career as coming full circle, with him finally able to pass on his love of writing to the next generation.

### *Contradiction of Multiple Communities*

Negotiating multimembership is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of identity development. When communities of practice to which a person belongs

actually contradict one another, it takes a considerable amount of energy to reconcile differences and figure out who one can be in the face of these contradictions. Wenger says that this work may be the “most significant challenge faced by learners who move from one community of practice to another” because “learners must often deal with conflicting forms of individuality and competence as defined in different communities” (1998, p. 160).

When communities contradict one another, life is more disjointed and feels busier. At one point, I point out to Rob that it is almost as if he is living three lives at once, and he says, “You’re right! I am.” Both Thomas and Rob get confused when I ask non-specific questions like “How’s school?” or “How is your Wednesday class?” They have to ask, “Which school?” or clarify whether I’m asking about the class they teach or the class they take.

Rob experiences more contradictions of community than Thomas, but the separateness of Thomas’ program and school communities is enough to cause Thomas some confusion. At the beginning of the year when Thomas experiences so much student misbehavior, I ask whether Thomas has tried any of the classroom management strategies he learned in his resident teacher program. Thomas replies that he has not because he was instructed at the school level to press the button in the classroom to call the security guard if things get out of control in his classroom.

Thomas’ belief that the strategies and techniques he learns in the resident teacher program may not be applicable in his particular school persists. Well into the fall semester, Thomas reflects:

TA: I think I had to learn how this particular school operates. Because all schools are different. I had to learn what’s allowed and what isn’t, here.

KF: So it's not something that you necessarily could have been prepared for in your summer training because it's more school-specific?

TA: Yes, the things I most needed to learn are more school-specific, yes, exactly.

Thomas takes the curriculum and pacing guide very seriously. He is committed to presenting all required information to students in a timely, efficient manner. This becomes his first priority as a teacher, to deliver the curriculum. Methods and strategies become secondary; Thomas needs to feel comfortable with a number of other elements before he can engage in pedagogical experimentation, as he sees it.

TA: I'm getting used to being in this particular school. I'm getting used to teaching these topics. I'm getting used to doing it in a certain way. And once I feel comfortable with that, then I will try these different methods like scaffolding and jigsaw, that sort of thing. Because my number one desire is to get out the information first.

KF: So those are methods that you feel like you're learning through the resident teacher program?

TA: Yes. But do I feel comfortable enough to try them? I have to feel comfortable enough with myself, with my knowledge of content, with my students and with the situation before I feel comfortable enough to experiment.

Thomas incorporates traditional teaching strategies such as lecturing during the time period in which he becomes comfortable with the situation at Parkview.

While it is not immediately apparent, Thomas' understanding of the relationship between content, students, and pedagogy is a direct function of his belief that program and school communities are not aligned. In his program communities, Thomas hears about active learning and classroom management. At school, he hears that it is essential to deliver required content in a timely fashion and that he should call security if there is a discipline issue. Thomas perceives conflict rather than

coordination among these elements and so must choose to align himself with either his school or his program. He chooses his school and promises to “experiment” with the techniques offered by his program at a later date.

Rob’s situation engenders a considerable amount of conflict among competing communities. Rob’s communities compete for his time as well as his focus. Rob sees his busy schedule as a character flaw:

A lot of times one of my biggest weaknesses is a lot of times I do too much and then I burn out and I think, God that could have been a big one, what happened there? I don't know. Those are the things that I can't explain, but I try to stay even and steady and slow. It's not always that easy.

With his courses at Bachman, his teaching, and his Army commitments, Rob must make choices and prioritize. He often goes without sleep in order to fulfill all his obligations. He also becomes impatient with courses, meetings, or emails that waste his time. Efficiency becomes one of Rob’s hallmarks, and he continually strives to make his life more efficient. But even with his efforts to do everything efficiently, Rob must still make choices among competing obligations. He has to miss class to fulfill military commitments, and he does not have time to complete his portfolio by the due date as a result of teaching obligations. His involvement in numerous communities causes contention with the language arts department chair during the spring substitute experience. He explains, “I had agreed to do intramurals, so I was excited about intramurals. She was put off by the fact that I one day I prioritized that, and she stated that too.” In addition, Rob has to prioritize his coursework at Bachman, “I told her straight out that I was a student first, teacher second.” These choices of priority may have soured the language arts teacher to Rob and caused her to pass him over for the open teaching position.

On the first day of school for teachers in Ellis County, Rob is in New Hampshire with his battalion commander. He explains, “At this point, I’m military. I’m sweating next week [at Madison], but right now I’ve got quite a bit to do here.” During the course of my work with Rob, his priorities shift several times so that at one time or another, each of his three “lives” is prioritized.

Even his email preferences change. At the beginning of our work together, I communicate with Rob using his Army email address. Before one particular meeting, however, he does not get any of my email messages. We discover that he is checking his Bachman email account, and that I am sending emails to the Army account. Rob says, “Oh, I didn’t even think to check that one.” Luckily, he never got an Ellis County Public Schools account, or we would have really had trouble!

Another area in which Rob experiences contradiction of communities is when he does not perceive his Bachman classes as furthering his teaching career. He views many of his assignments as “a waste” and states that he is “going to take these folders from this class and throw them right in the trash when this class is over.” Rob is annoyed that his professors do not model the strategies and techniques that they teach. The contradiction between his Bachman classes and his teaching turns Rob off to much of his coursework during the fall semester.

Finally, Rob creates his own contradiction by using his business management lens to view the functioning of the MAT program at Bachman, the school district, Madison Middle School, and the educational enterprise in general. His experience and training at Verizon has taught him many principles of effective management, and Rob finds that each educational institution falls short. He recommends that a

Management 101 course be required as part of the MAT program, and he criticizes the national standards which guide teacher preparation. Rob scoffs at the fact that the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) sets forth ten principles for new teachers. He says, “Coming from a business standpoint, if you need to have ten separate principles, then you have a problem. You need to get it into five. You need to make it into five.” While some of Rob’s criticisms may be well-founded, applying business principles to education does lead to dissatisfaction and frustration for Rob that other new teachers may not experience.

### *Community Identification*

In the difficult work of multimembership, individuals often choose a community with which to most closely identify themselves. “Identification is at the very core of the social nature of our identities and so we define even our individualism and our freedom in that context” (Wenger, 1998, p. 212). In Thomas’ case, it is clearly the English team at Parkview where he finds his vocational home. Thomas prioritizes his responsibilities to the English team and tends to go to Ms. Campbell or one of the other English teachers at Parkview for advice and guidance.

Rob, on the other hand, changes allegiances during the course of my observations. He is a “student first, teacher second” in one instance, and in another, he states, “At this point, I’m military.” Later, he views his Bachman courses “as nothing more than hopefully benefiting me in the classroom.” When I ask Rob where he feels most like an insider, with which group of people he feels he identifies the most, Rob has difficulty answering the question. He finally decides:

RB: But me, no, I like to be alone in my classroom.

KF: You like to be alone in your classroom?

RB: I'd rather be in my classroom teaching, and that's where I feel most comfortable.

As much as it is Thomas' strategy to identify with one community over another, it is Rob's strategy to identify with no particular community but allow himself to shift priorities as needed. The work of multimembership is complicated, and both of these strategies has merit, although Thomas' willingness to identify may facilitate his experience of interdependence with the members of his school community.

### Vocational Decision-Making

As members of multiple communities of practice, Thomas and Rob find ways of acting and interacting that make sense within each community. When they make career decisions, though, the ramifications affect their whole self, including the many communities in which they are members. During the period of observation, both Thomas and Rob make significant career decisions which steer their vocational trajectories in one direction or another.

Thomas' vocational decision revolves around whether or not teaching is the right career for him. He must make this decision over and over throughout the fall semester, at first in response to the many challenges he faces in the classroom, and later again when violence breaks out in the school.

At the beginning of the year, Thomas is a tenth grade English teacher. His classes are unruly, and Thomas doubts that even if he informed students that there was a fire that any of them would respond in any appropriate way. At the end of the first week of school, I call Thomas on the telephone:

KF: Was it about what you expected, or more of a challenge?

TA: It was more of a challenge. Especially classroom control. I have two classes that are very good, and my department leader is helping me with the third one.

KF: So, you're going back next week?

TA: I have told everyone quite bluntly, "I am staying."

When Dr. Ledford announces to the resident teachers that his goal for them is survival, Thomas states that he will not let Dr. Ledford down. Thomas suffers through a stressful first few weeks of school until his schedule change offers some relief.

In mid-October, Thomas' resolve is challenged once again. Violence breaks out just outside his classroom door, and some students are so badly injured that they are hospitalized. The experience shakes Thomas, and he engages in what he calls "soul-searching" to determine if he will remain in the classroom.

I was asking myself, I know I love literature, I came here to help. Am I going to let some thugs scare me away when no other teacher departed? I answered no. No. Will I leave? No, I'm not going to let anyone scare me away. I will not do it. I thought it was very important the fact that no teacher has left. And I think that's a very important signal. I do not know if any students have been transferred. Quite a few were expelled because of it. As far as I know, no one has been scared away. It was a new experience for me. (Sighs.) But I can't let fear make decisions for me. My wife was afraid for me. When I got home, she was crying. She was fearful for my safety.

I ask Thomas about the process he goes through to come to this decision, and he explains that he realizes that working in any school, violence is always a possibility.

"I had to decide, could I stand it? Physical safety. Could I defend a student?

[Inaudible]. Could I stand to see one of my students hurt? Personal connection."

Finally, Thomas decides that the possibility of future violence will not deter him. He chooses to live in the leap.

For Thomas, the fact that no other teacher leaves the school is significant. He even shares an example of a Sergeant who is employed by the school who keeps

returning. He has quit three times due to student disrespect, but he is continually drawn back. I ask what it is that keeps him coming back. Thomas replies, “I don’t know. Remember the man who walked in? He told me in this abyss, there will always be the student you do reach. I think I’ve got a few already.” Like the Sergeant, Thomas is hooked because he cares about student success, and he feels a strong sense of commitment, even in the face of adversity.

Thomas draws on his past when committing himself to being a teacher despite relentless disrespect or even violence. He recalls:

When I was in the NCO Academy, it was at Lackland Air Force Base. It was a six-week very intensive training before a Technical Sergeant can become a Master Sergeant. They had a poster on the wall I never forgot. It said, “People can be honest and fail. People can be brilliant and fail. But the one who succeeds every time is the one who perseveres no matter what. No matter what comes at him, he keeps on moving.” And that’s what George Washington did, that is what my grandfathers did when they spent 25 years working in the coal mines. It is perseverance that wins the day. Perseverance. All the other qualities and talents are all well and good, and helpful, but if don’t have perseverance, you will not matter.

After Thomas resolves to persevere, his confidence in front of the class increases, and he appears to be more comfortable with who he is as a teacher. He says, “I am more confident now. More confident standing in front of them, giving them instructions. I am still a bit nervous, but less so than before. I even joke with them on occasion, something I never did before.” After the soul-searching episode, Thomas is also more comfortable discussing his classroom struggles and challenges, even with another teacher in the room with us.

Several people in the school thank Thomas for staying. The woman who does the scheduling thanks Thomas for “hanging in,” and the security officer rewards Thomas by finally giving him an elevator key.

Rob's vocational decision making is even more complicated. At once, he must decide what to do with his military career and his teaching career. Following his decision-making process is difficult, because Rob vacillates among preferred options. In May of 2007, Rob tells me that the Army is offering him a direct commission, but he has decided not to accept it. Instead, he will request a transfer to Civil Service to be a military reporter for *Stars and Stripes* or another military publication. If he is not granted the transfer, he will separate in September.

The next month when we discuss the same issue, Rob informs me that he has decided to do another three year enlistment and that he will sign the papers in July. He says, "I decided just to keep everything the same and focus on my civilian life. I gotta admit for the first time, I'm doing it for the money."

By August, however, Rob has accepted a direct commission, resulting in the loss of his reenlistment bonus and other perks. Almost immediately, he regrets this decision, stating, "It's totally strapped me on money, my responsibilities have gone up, I'm older, it's not really, I don't know what I'm doing in the military." He says he already wants to resign his commission, but he thinks "one more deployment for me and then I'll call it a career."

Accepting the commission means a lengthy training process for Rob. He will begin in July after the 2007-08 school year and will train through December of 2008. Only after his training is complete will he receive \$10,000. After that, he will return to the classroom, unless, of course, he is deployed.

Rob also makes complex decisions related to his teaching career. In June when I speak with him, he says he is thinking of teaching in the city in the fall.

Megan, the MAT program director, thinks she will be able to find him a full-time teaching position at a high school in Ellis County, so Rob is hopeful about that as well. He is not certain whether he wants middle or high school; he perceives middle school as being more difficult, and he is at once up for the greater challenge and also interested in making his first year as easy as possible. He informs staff at Madison Middle School that he is interested in being a long-term substitute there.

In August, Rob says he is hesitant to begin teaching as a full-time teacher in the fall. He explains, “I am not 100% confident. With three classes, it’s going to be a lot.” But he plans out the first two months of school just in case he is offered a ninth grade English position. On the first day of school for teachers, Rob says that he knows there are openings in various school districts in the state, but he is only interested in Ellis County. He plans on completing his internship at Madison and is hoping for a long-term substitute position there or else a tutoring job to earn some income. But Rob is still unsure. He says, “If they tell me there’s an opening in a middle school down the street, I’ll take it.” Interestingly, Rob does not actually submit an application for a teaching position in Ellis County or any other local school system at this time. He does, however, submit an application for a long-term substitute position.

By September, Rob’s course is more secure. He will intern at Madison and either tutor or substitute a few days a week for income. In November, he will assume a permanent substitute position at Madison. Rob is not interested in becoming a full-time teacher until January. He once again considers teaching in the city or in other counties. As the end of the semester nears, Rob defines that he wants a teaching

position by January 28<sup>th</sup>, but he says, “This needs to be a good fit.” In December, when we have our final conversation, Rob is considering taking a position in a ninth grade inclusion English class in a nearby local school system. He requests a special educator as co-teacher and describes how he will go about making a decision regarding the offer:

I’ll interview with them, and what I’m going to do is tell their principal I want to come in and sit all day in that class, and I want those kids to tell me they want me to be their teacher. And if they do, then I’ll come. And if they don’t, oh well.

Both Thomas and Rob make important decisions that affect their vocational paths during the time in which we work together on this study. In order to make these decisions, both must consider what makes sense given their developing vocational identities, their imagined futures, and their sense of being called in one direction or another. The decision-making process is much more difficult for Rob. Because he does not align with any one community of practice, he continually reevaluates his decision from varying perspectives. When he identifies as a Bachman student, one particular path seems to make the most sense. When he is at Madison, another imagined future calls. Thomas’ decision-making, on the other hand, is more straightforward. Because his communities of practice coordinate better and because he is strongly aligned with his English team, Thomas can look to others in his school and reason, “I thought it was very important the fact that no teacher has left. And I think that’s a very important signal.”

## Reflective Expressions of Becoming

Thomas' and Rob's identification or lack of identification with their communities of practice affects their decision-making. Likewise, their impressions of their own past and their imagined future plays a role in determining who they become in the present. Both Thomas and Rob are extremely reflective, not only about the communities to which they belong, but also in relation to their conceptions of past and future as they relate to their current vocational development. They talk openly about what they are learning about themselves as people and as teachers, and pepper their explanations with understandings they have drawn from their own imaginings and memories.

### *Reflections on Becoming*

“Real isn't how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Velveteen Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn't happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept.” (M. Williams, 1983)

Thomas' plan going into the first day of school is to do as he is told and discover what works best for him through trial and error. Over time, he develops a set of goals for himself as a teacher. These goals guide his classroom actions and interactions with students. First, he simply wants to “get through” to students. He wants to get through to his more difficult students, and he wants to get through to his

successful students, making them realize that “they do not have a free ride just because they are doing well.” Thomas also wants to instill a sense of responsibility in his students. His goal is to make students aware that defying the crowd is a possibility. More than anything, however, Thomas wants to prepare his students for success in life. He wants to communicate to students, “I have your best interests at heart even when you don’t.”

Over the first semester, Thomas employs several strategies in order to approach the goals he has set out for himself and his students. He begins using a timer at the suggestion of a school administrator. The purpose of the timer is to keep the lesson moving and not “exhaust” the students with details. In addition, Thomas begins to make efforts to figure out how his students think. He reads their work and is able to determine who needs help in his classes. He also attempts to get inside the teenage mind, remembering back to his own years as a teenager. Thomas decides he has to “get tough” in order to make his students responsible for their own behavior. Finally, Thomas resolves to follow the curriculum, sticking to the required topics and hoping to “strike a chord” with students in an attempt to get through to them.

Thomas’ reflections on his teaching experience differ from many new teachers. When he is asked to reflect on his high points and low points as a teacher, he never talks about himself. He never mentions a lesson that went well, or a day he got a compliment; instead, he focuses everything on student performance. High points are always students who have made a positive change in their attitude, academics, or both. Low points are always students who are failing or who are disengaged. In this way, Thomas is primed for a relationship of interdependence with his students.

Of all the things Thomas learns during his first months of teaching, most revolve around understanding his students. He comes to understand more about the lives of urban youth and identifies the fact that many of them are afraid. He learns that some students may be experiencing difficult circumstances such as homelessness, abuse, or pregnancy. For many of his students, Thomas knows that their personal experiences may have soured them to school to the point where they view school as a social gathering and may deliberately disrupt class. Thomas begins to understand that these disruptions may be defense mechanisms that cover up the students' fear of failure.

Thomas is regularly surprised at what students do not know. He finds that his own vocabulary is often a barrier to student understanding, and he discovers that he must bring down his instruction and speech from a college level to a high school level. He also learns that he cannot effectively typecast students. He explains:

From time to time I get a difficult student that actually turns around and helps me and has even gives me some suggestions, so that's what I think surprises me the most. They're not consistent. Sometimes I get a good student who acts like a jerk and I get a bad student who is suddenly helpful.

More than anything else, however, Thomas learns to use the social energy of the classroom to fulfill academic objectives. He discovers that "students listen to each other sooner than they listen to a teacher," so Thomas begins incorporating paired and group work in his instruction.

Thomas also learns quite a bit about himself as a teacher. He quickly comes to the conclusion, "This is *my* classroom. I must regain control." He discovers the power to stand his ground when he is challenged by students, parents, or even coaches who are "curious" as to why their players have failed English. Sadly, Thomas also learns

that when he loosens up, students take advantage of him. Finally, Thomas resolves to “learn better techniques to get them engaged.”

When Thomas becomes discouraged, Ms. Campbell counsels him. He relates:

She told me a lot of these students were like this long before they met you, and they’re probably going to be like this the rest of their lives. She said I’m wrong to blame myself. She said you cannot make a student want to learn.

But Thomas ties his success as a teacher closely with his students’ success. He is determined to “get through” to students. And he does take it personally when students fail because he has not reached them. Thomas will persevere and keep trying to connect with all students and give them the knowledge, skills, and understanding to succeed in life.

Thomas makes considerable progress during the first semester of the school year. He becomes more confident in front of the class, and he is proud of the fact that he overcomes much of his shyness and is able to make eye contact with students as he teaches. He explains that his focus shifts within the first months of school:

As a new teacher, I was more concerned with making sure my lessons were planned out and I was teaching them correctly, but now I have to focus on the disciplinary area.

Finally, Thomas reports that his relationships with students have grown. He explains, “Time with me has formed a bond. I can’t say they disrespect me anymore.” Thomas describes his relationships with students as cordial.

The fact that Thomas cites time as an important factor in his process of becoming is not surprising. In her study of career changers, Allen found that total time in the teaching profession correlates significantly with identity. Teachers who had been in the classroom for the longest period of time were more likely to view

themselves as genuine teachers, be happy with the profession, and state that they would become a teacher if given the choice again (Allen, 2007).

Because Rob begins the year with several long-term substituting positions and many more hours of teacher preparation under his belt, his starting point is somewhat different from Thomas'. He begins the year with an attitude of authority. Contrasting with Thomas' "I can't argue. I don't know any better," Rob's voice is almost the opposite:

I am who I am in the classroom, and if they don't like it, they'll have to fire me because I can't be someone else.

Rob has a number of goals going into his internship experience. He wants to be more consistent as a teacher, finding a line that will allow him to be firm and help students develop self-control, but also be flexible and develop trusting relationships with students. Rob's goal is to engage students. He wants to make it "cool to be smart" and strives to either be a role model for students or to help them identify productive role models. Finally, Rob desires to bridge the gap between content and the real world. He attempts to relate each of his lessons to real life and to give students "life lessons," not simply language arts lessons.

Strategies that Rob uses include letting the students know that he remembers what it is like to be a kid. He tells them as they walk through the hallway after taking a trip outside, "You're kids, I used to want to jump up and touch the ceiling too, that's why I understand that. But, you can't if you want to do this again." Rob also makes an effort to stay "on" kids even when they are not in his classroom. He routinely stops students in the hallway to speak to them about their behavior, and he even approaches

students who are acting up in another teacher's classroom to help them maintain self-control.

Other strategies Rob finds that are helpful in reaching his students include using learning aids such as maps, posters, video and other visuals to present content in a visual form. Rob also discovers the power in sharing stories from his own life to help children connect with content. He says:

You need to talk about the real issues and the real things. I may go over the envelope at times where people are like, that's content that you shouldn't be discussing with your kids. I'm not sure where that line is right now.

Rob would also like to try to involve parents more in the future.

In his interactions with colleagues, Rob's strategy is to have face to face conversations to bring issues to a head rather than letting them fester or sending lengthy emails. Rob describes himself as a communicator who would rather speak to someone personally and air grievances if necessary than internalize frustrations. Rob does not exhibit a sense of interdependence with his school community beyond his co-teachers, but he is willing to have others depend on him for assistance.

Rob's high points of teaching include times when he is able to be fully himself with the students. He enjoys connecting with students on a personal level and showing mutual interest in one another. These high points indicate a sense of becoming as well as belonging in the classroom, hallmarks of identity development. Rob's low points typically involve outside forces that interfere with his classroom teaching: being held responsible for things out of his control such as student attendance, having to worry about money to pay for his coursework, and being aggravated by poorly run meetings and classes.

Rob learns a considerable amount about classroom interactions, himself as a teacher, and the politics of schooling during his fall teaching experience. Like Thomas, Rob refines his understanding of classroom management. He learns that discipline is necessary, that having “fun” with sixth graders is sometimes a slippery slope, and that excuses are a waste of time. Rob develops a philosophy that students who cause disruptions are taking away from the rest of the class. He determines not to “cater to the squeaky wheel” but rather to “put them in their place and get them out of the class if that’s the case because it’s not fair to the ones that are studying and want to learn.” Time will tell if Rob is able to find a way to connect with and involve even those “squeaky wheels.”

Rob also learns a considerable amount about people through his teaching experience. He finds that students do not always like the same things that he likes, and he begins to understand the politics and social dynamics of Madison Middle School. Along with that, Rob begins to understand the loose organizational structure of the school and resolves not to become as frustrated with what he sees as inefficiency. He also turns his eye inward and determines that he needs to work on his own organization and management, both in the classroom and in his personal life.

Finally, Rob learns about what works for him as a teacher. He realizes that there is no way to teach the same lesson to every student individually, and he understands the power of modeling for a class. He develops a fervent trust in his own authority. He is determined not to get “data crazy” like some people but rather to trust his instincts about what students are learning. Rob asserts, “I know when my kids are learning.”

Rob sees quite a bit of growth in himself since his first days of substituting. He has found great joy in teaching, even expressing that he feels that in teaching, he has just started to live his life. Teaching has allowed him to become more fully self-actualized, and he explains that his entire way of thinking has been altered:

I'm thinking like a teacher now, I can't drink a bottle of water without thinking about a lesson. It's so funny. They said that would happen to me in one of my classes, they were like there will come a time when no matter what you do, I can't even pick out a movie to watch without saying . . . I could show this in class, I could do this.

Rob is encouraged by his own progress as a teacher. He explains, "If there's anything that I'm happy about, it's the fact that I'm moving forward. I'm getting better." "Listen," Rob declares, "I'm a good teacher. I'm gonna be great." Rob clearly feels that he is well on his way to developing a strong vocational identity as a teacher.

### *Understanding through Memory*

Maxine Greene states that "persons are more likely to ask their own questions and seek their own transcendence when they feel themselves to be grounded in their personal histories, their lived lives" (1978, p. 2). Thomas and Rob both understand much of their current experiences as teachers through the lens of their own memories. In their new communities, certain memories from their pasts become significant, and Thomas and Rob draw connections between past events and current situations. At times, their interpretations of the past shed new light on their teaching, but sometimes their past understandings get in the way of their development as teachers.

Thomas and Rob both also attempt to integrate their past vocational experiences by sharing their memories with students and others in their teaching

communities. The response they receive assists them in either integrating or rejecting these experiences based on perceived relevance to their current situations.

Thomas' most significant memories that assist him in understanding himself as a teacher are drawn from his career in the Air Force. He likens his first days at Parkview to his experiences transferring to a new military base:

The Air Force taught me adaptability, moving me from one assignment to another. What I could do, what I could not do, what needs to be done, how it needs to be done, what are the rules here, how are they different from where you've been, things like that.

Thomas also reflects on his experiences at military technical schools. He recalls times when an instructor would have to take a student outside and "face him down one on one." Thomas found that these exchanges were usually effective since the airmen knew they could be processed out. Thomas believes the same thing could happen at Parkview since it is a selective magnet school.

When interviewing for the position at Parkview, Thomas mentions his experiences with assessments. As a CDC writer, Thomas has considerable experience designing assessments and providing assistance to airmen studying for the exams. He also cites his retirement speech as being an important memory that partially defines his rationale for becoming a teacher. Even though Thomas had not decided to become a public school teacher at that point, he gives a retirement address on the benefits of teaching. In it, he talks about not knowing how one's actions will affect others. He recalls his experiences as a CDC writer and supervisor, and offers his father as a moving example:

With my father in attendance, I pointed out that he, back in 1965, was a high school science teacher. A student wanted to know what he should do with his life. My father said, "You have the brains to work in a science lab, if you

apply yourself you could run the lab.” That student became the Associate Professor of Science at Mansfield College, Pennsylvania, and when it came time to name a science scholarship, he named it after my father.

His father’s experience as a teacher is a great inspiration to Thomas, and Thomas refers to making a difference without realizing it many times during his internship and first months at school.

After the first month of school, Thomas draws on an ever widening core of memories to make sense of his experience at Parkview. He recalls the time after Hurricane Katrina when he had to “make do” with the materials at hand, even using his personal digital camera to document the disaster. Thomas draws on this experience as he deals with the chaotic textbook situation at the school.

Dr. Ledford asks Thomas to think back on his basic training to remember the “you-know-what between the eyes” and the confidence needed to do what is necessary. Thomas, however, resists making this comparison. He explains, “I’ve spent 25 years trying to forget it!”

Thomas does, however, recall the perseverance necessary to pass the CDC exams. Though he tried and failed multiple times, Thomas finally “buckled down” and studied each test question over and over again for a year and a half until he finally passed. “Perseverance” becomes Thomas’ rallying cry as he strives to survive the first semester of teaching.

More than any other memory, however, Thomas equates his experience becoming a teacher with his experience transferring to Yokota Air Field in Japan. When Thomas was transferred there, he believed he would be second in command, but two weeks before he arrived, the NCO was dismissed. When Thomas arrived, he

found himself in command, entirely unprepared for the unexpected responsibility. He explains, “It happened the minute I stepped off the plane. I had four airmen with career-threatening problems, and I was able to save three of them.” The airmen are all now technical sergeants or higher. Thomas is taken with the similarities between this experience and his teaching. He explains that in neither situation was he prepared for the responsibility he had to handle all at once, and in both cases he was faced with struggling subordinates who depend on him for assistance. Thomas takes heart from the fact that not only did things settle down and did his nervousness vanish at Yakota, but the assignment eventually became his favorite. At Yakota, he was able to make lasting friendships and make a considerable difference in several people’s lives. That is his hope for teaching as well.

Rob also draws on his military experiences to make sense of what he encounters as a teacher. He refers to the Army training method as his guide for lesson planning and classroom improvement. Rob explains the Army training method as Task-Condition-Standard. First you must define the task to be accomplished, then you must understand the conditions under which it must be accomplished, and finally you set the standard for assessing whether it was done correctly. Rob uses this model in his lesson planning. The task is his objective, the condition is the learning activity, and the standard is the assessment. Rob explains, “It really simplifies things to make sure that you explain to people what they are going to do, you teach it to them, and then you assess them. I love how they keep it simple.” Rob also uses this model to understand the concepts driving the teacher as researcher philosophy. He explains,

“All it is is the Army training model, you know, plan your training, do your training, evaluate after action, and modify it to train next time better.”

Rob uses his memory of various Army instructors to help make sense of his own classroom behavior. He explains, “I float in very stern some days. Some days I’m looser. . . . I like to be able to have a little fun, but I like to be able to whip it back.” Rather than chalk this up to inconsistency, Rob makes sense of this practice by recalling an instructor at his service academy for NCOs who said, “I was nice for you guys. I’m going to flip it for the next. He did it to keep himself fresh. Flipped it.”

Finally, Rob draws on his wartime experience training soldiers as his motivation to teach. In high school, Rob was a near drop-out who owed 300 hours of time in order to graduate. He had completed the necessary work but simply owed the time. Rob felt that this was ridiculous, so he took the GED. In Iraq, Rob discovered that there were two soldiers who also needed to pass the GED. He worked with them, and in doing so, discovered a real love for teaching. This was not his first experience training; he did extensive training of adults at Verizon, but something about the soul-searching that takes place during wartime and the personal crisis he experienced upon his return stateside convinced Rob to abandon his other goals and make the leap to a career as a teacher.

Because Rob also has more than a decade of experience working at Verizon, he draws on those experiences as well as he negotiates his identity as a teacher. Rob believes that all educators need management skills, and he suggests that the MAT program integrate a Business Management 101 course into their program. Rob explains, “Management is no more than knowing people and knowing organizational

skills and decision making, and I mean, from what I'm seeing here, they would benefit greatly from a Management 101. It would be a lot better.”

Rob's experiences at Verizon are especially applicable in understanding his interactions with the sixth grade language arts team. During his spring substituting experience when the department chair tells Rob that he is falling short on his teaching responsibilities and that she will need to see how he does the following week, Rob immediately draws on his experience at Verizon to assert his status as more than a novice. He explains, “I told her, look, I was a Project Manager at Verizon you know; I'm not some kid off the street. You can't talk to me that way.” Rob further explained to her that while he knows Verizon is not a middle school, he has experience dealing with difficult situations and pulling through. Rob's sense of voice and authority stems partially from his career experiences and personal story.

During the fall, when Ken becomes department chair, Rob once again draws on his experience at Verizon to guide his interactions in team meetings. He recalls his own experience as project manager and makes an attempt to make the meetings run smoothly. He explains, “When I'm in language arts department meetings I try to keep it loose, and I just try to come back to what the issues are, keep it focused, you know? That's what I do from the position I'm in now.” Rob's attitude toward reports, data, and personal conflict are all informed by his experience at Verizon. He identifies himself as a communicator, best at facilitating personal disputes head on. He is not a “reports and data” person, and when it comes to this type of busywork, Rob proclaims, “There's only so much of this I can take. There was only so much I could

take at Verizon too.” That line has been drawn in a past career, and it influences Rob’s response to data collection at the classroom level.

With students, Rob finds his experience training technicians to be valuable. In many ways, it is directly applicable to the classroom:

I’ve trained technicians before, and I use building relationships and my personality to teach and manage, that’s how I teach. To do it my way takes a long time because I build a relationship up. I don’t come in with set stern routines, I’m flexible. I kind of feel like it’s a give and take, that’s how I work. But I’m with sixth graders now, so I’ve learned that sometimes you have to be less flexible and more directed, and that’s how I’ve been, but I still try to incorporate what I’ve learned before. People working with people.

Although children are different from adults, Rob uses his experience working interdependently with others and adapts his approach to meet the needs of his sixth graders.

A final area from which both Thomas and Rob draw is their own childhoods. Britzman (1991) suggests that teacher educators provide teacher candidates with experience with youth culture and knowledge about the structures that sustain this culture. Thomas and Rob, however, rely mainly on their memories for this information. For Thomas, this is a long stretch, but he does recall lacking a focus on the future when he was a teenager, and this helps him understand his students better. He also recalls neglecting to study for an open book test in high school because he assumed it would be easy. This memory allows Thomas to warn his students not to make the same mistake.

Rob, on the other hand, has vivid memories of his childhood, and he uses them not only to understand his students better but also to set goals for himself as a teacher. Rob recalls the things that made a difference in his life, the teacher who told

him he should be going to Harvard, the day trips his mother took him on, and the strong skills in reading and writing that he gained in middle school. Rob strives to be the teacher who provides encouragement to his students, opening their eyes to new possibilities and giving them the skills they need to succeed. Growing up in section eight housing himself, Rob emphasizes that students need “the will” to succeed rather than money. Museums are free, he reasons, and if students are not going, then there is a problem. Rob very firmly believes that literacy skills are the key to lifetime learning. He asserts:

If you can just read and write early, you can get your whole life back, and I can show them that, and I cannot only tell that to them, but I can say this is my life, and I did it. I practically blew off high school, but if you study sixth, seventh and eighth, you learn how to read and write. You'll be fine, you can learn anything.

Rob uses his own experience from which to draw his convictions about the importance of literacy. He is called toward teaching from his own past and from his imagined future for his students.

Finally, Rob uses his memories to understand his students. He remembers being in eighth grade when he still liked Star Wars but it wasn't cool to like Star Wars anymore. He says, “It was tough in eighth grade.” Rob also remembers hating anything that required him to wear a tie. But he admits that his hatred was borne of fear that he would not have the skill to actually tie the tie nor the social graces to navigate the formal situation. He uses this knowledge to frame student resistance in terms of fear and responds with needed instruction.

Finally, Rob recalls the intense social pressure of the pre-teen and teenage years. He vividly recalls fistfights and the loneliness he experienced as an outsider at

his high school. He is committed to helping students establish friendships with other students who are interested in similar topics and will help nurture each other's love of learning.

While all these experiences assist Thomas and Rob in understanding themselves as teachers, there are as many experiences that make the transition more difficult for them. Thomas is shocked at the students' "outright defiance." Neither his experience as a teenager nor his experience with airmen has prepared him for this type of student misbehavior. In addition, Thomas has no children of his own, and it has been many years since he was a high school student himself. He must learn how to interact with teenagers because he realizes it is much different than interacting with mature airmen.

Rob also has experiences that complicate his transition into teaching. He finds that management styles that colleagues used at Verizon do not necessarily work with sixth graders. And his experience with disciplining inferiors in the military is misleading because in school a teacher cannot expect everyone to "automatically respond." Rob says military experience almost makes discipline more difficult in a classroom setting because a teacher cannot send students back to their barracks or take away their pay.

Adjusting to teaching for a public school system is unlike taking on a new assignment at Verizon or in the Army. In both of those situations, Rob would pull the manuals from the shelves and read all the documentation until he felt comfortable with the position and its responsibilities. In school, however, those manuals do not exist, or, when they do, they are not necessarily followed to the letter. Rob explains:

RB: In a general sense that there are supposedly curriculum, pacing guides, there are supposedly guidelines by which we're supposed to, there is code of conducts. It not similar in that people follow them as they want to.

KF: Here?

DB: School systems in general. All of them. People pick and choose. In the Army, there's no picking and choosing, everything's cut and dry which, it makes it easier. The problem is, we're not in the Army.

Comparisons for the most part, however, simplify the transition for both

Thomas and Rob. Comparing and contrasting different vocational communities helps

Thomas and Rob uncover similarities and differences in their vocational situations.

For Thomas, his relationships with teachers at Parkview are similar to the relationships he developed with airmen during his military career. Both sets of relationships are collegial in nature, and Thomas is accustomed to working with colleagues from many different backgrounds. In addition, the concept of performance review is something with which Thomas is very familiar from his time in the Air Force. The difference, however, is that in the Air Force, he was reviewed by his immediate supervisor. Thomas explains that the equivalent would be Ms. Campbell reviewing him at the school level. Thomas describes the school hierarchy as being similar to the military chain of command but without the rigidity of the Air Force. The biggest difference for Thomas, however, is in the way airmen and teachers are reprimanded. He explains:

The biggest difference is, if you broke the rules in the Air Force, you were reprimanded, and so was your squadron. Here, if you break the rules seriously, you're simply fired. You're simply dismissed.

Thomas' perception of the dismissal process at Parkview develops from the many warnings of unsatisfactory evaluations given during English team meetings. I suspect

that Thomas may discover in time that it is actually much more difficult to fire a teacher than he currently believes.

Rob also makes comparisons among teaching and his experiences in the Army and at Verizon. He equates soldier morale with student motivation and explains that both stem from situations that are run well. He also explains his treatment as a long-term substitute in the spring with the way a new soldier was often treated during the Vietnam Conflict: “Don’t make friends with the new guy; he won’t be around long.”

Rob finds great differences between the Army’s way of doing things and the school’s. He believes the educational system could learn much from the Army’s delineation of roles and responsibilities. Rob explains that in the Army, job functions are defined and people do not step on each other’s toes like they do in the school. He feels that it is ridiculous that teachers must be concerned with things like arranging transportation to get a student home after they stay after school. In pointing out differences between school and the Army, Rob makes one of my favorite observations. He states, “You don’t take a kid out of grenade class to go do career development.” Rob explains that in the Army, if someone has put all their expertise into designing a class, then attending that class is a priority and excuses are not accepted. This is in sharp contrast to the situation Rob faces at Madison where students are pulled from his instruction daily to work with a reading interventionist.

Finally, the degree to which Rob and Thomas share their past career experiences with their students varies. Thomas’ students “glaze over” when he begins to tell them stories about his experiences in Japan. He says these experiences are

irrelevant to them and the students cannot relate. His students do want to know about his “funny accent,” however, and he tells them where he has lived his life.

Rob’s students, on the other hand, appear to be fascinated by Rob’s experiences in wartime Iraq. Rob brings his knowledge of sandstorms and the Fertile Crescent to class discussions and shares relevant experiences with his students as appropriate. He wishes he had time to share more and plans to do so when he has his own classroom:

Last year I put together a photo Power Point presentation, so I have the Power Point presentation. I would love to give it, I feel like it would be a good time to give it actually, but it’s not my class. I’ll do it when it’s my class. It’ll be a class regardless of the pacing guide, it’s something they should see and know about. To not know about a war going on right now, it’s amazing. It’s crazy. At sixth grade and above, a day should be, a day should be, our country is at war. A day should be taken to discuss it with kids.

Rob also enjoys giving a Veteran’s Day presentation to the eighth grade in which he dresses in uniform and shares with them information about the war.

Rob is not shy about mentioning the military as he teaches. He plans to use the Army field manual on active listening to teach his students necessary skills, and he refers to the Army when students complain that they do not want to work with certain members of the class. Rob says, “I’m from the Army, and I can’t – like, no way!” In the Army, you work with all different kinds of people, and you do so because your life and everyone else’s depends on it. Rob values teamwork in his class and insists that students work with one another.

In these many ways, Thomas and Rob draw on their interpretation of past events to make sense of and embellish their present understandings. Becoming a teacher is about more than what novices experience as they transition. It is also about

who they have been, and how they understand their memories. Interestingly, it is also about who they imagine themselves becoming.

### *Understanding through Imagination*

Who one becomes in the present is dependent on one's conception of possible futures. Both Rob and Thomas imagine futures for themselves as teachers. They also imagine futures for their students, and these possible futures give impetus to the work they do.

When Thomas thinks of his own future as a teacher, he expresses possible career paths he will take as well as possible persons he will become. Thomas says that if he gets certified, he will complete his three-year commitment to Union County Schools. Then he will either stay on as a teacher until he retires, or he and his wife will move to be closer to her family. The cost of living is lower in Louisiana, and they are in desperate need of teachers. Either way, Thomas envisions a long career as teacher for himself. This expectation provides impetus for Thomas to work diligently to master the craft of teaching.

Thomas also speaks of the type of teacher he expects to become. When I ask what kind of teacher he will be in five years, Thomas responds:

One who has made literature clear to my students. That's my primary call. I love literature. I want to bring it to the students. I want them to get used to reading and understanding. Too many of them see these thirty second commercials, they see bumper stickers. They see information that just zips by, and life just doesn't work that way. You don't learn critical thinking that way. I had one high school teacher tell me, "The one who knows *how* will always have a job. The one who knows *why* will always be his boss." Too many students think they can get by with simply knowing how.

There is much packed into this answer. Thomas wants to make literature clear to his students. This implies modeling explication of literature for students. Thomas wants to bring, or transmit this knowledge to the students. But he also wants them to read and understand on their own. He wants them to become critical thinkers. Finally, Thomas wants to instill in his students a rationale for learning. He wants them to understand why it is essential to think for oneself. In essence, Thomas wants to become a teacher who attends to student knowledge, skills, and essential understandings. In order to do this, he thinks he will need to be strict, but he hopes he will be able to use humor in his class as well.

Thomas understands student behavior in his classroom using imagination to get inside the minds of his students. He explains that students who behave in class are motivated to learn because they want to get ahead in life by going on to college. Students who misbehave, on the other hand, “think they don’t have a chance and coming to class at all is a waste of time.” Because these students believe that what they are learning is not going to do them any good, they refuse to apply themselves. With this understanding, Thomas has paved the way for a personal theory of discipline related to content relevance. I suspect that over time, if he continues to understand student behavior in these terms, he will begin to prioritize content that he believes he can make relevant to students. In addition, he may begin to engage students individually about their own long-term goals and dreams.

Rob is less able to talk about long-term plans for his own career. At one point in October, when I ask him to project a year ahead, he says, “You’re way beyond my life plans to let you know.” He is able to say that after he completes his officer

training, he wants to return to teaching. Rob's career is still in transition, however. He explains:

I still have post-it-notes everywhere. Everything's a mess. I don't have time. I don't even know what I am yet. I want it to be a day when I can say, "What are you?" "I'm a ninth grade English teacher. That's what I do. I know the ninth grade curriculum inside out."

At the same time, Rob does entertain thoughts of himself as a future administrator. He says that he already acts like an assistant principal even though he is only a substitute. The persona comes naturally for him, and he feels that his leadership capabilities could be effective in an administrator position.

Rob also bases his teaching practices on an imagined future for his students. He wants his students to understand that the reason for learning is that opportunities arise for those who are educated. He strongly believes that learning to read and write will create a host of future possibilities for students:

I feel that I can affect some change, and I can tell them the importance, and I can give them examples right from my own life. Not that my life is the way they need to go, but you need to read and write then you can do whatever you want. If you can read and write you can do anything, I believe and I attest to that. It's true. You can learn anything.

For Rob, teaching is less about content and more about developing as a person. He says, "I gotta be straight. Content is great, but where I'm headed for is building better kids is what I'm all about." He is confident that "the content will get there" because, first of all, Rob is enthusiastic about English literature, and secondly, Rob sees a relationship between self-actualization and taking one's studies seriously. He reasons, when you start learning, you become a better person, and vice versa.

Because Rob views himself as a teacher whose goal is to build better kids, he prioritizes his relationships with students. He strives to be the teacher who is not

necessarily fun, but the teacher whom students trust. He wants to be like the teacher who told him that he should be going to Harvard, the teacher who inspires students and makes them believe in their own potential. For that reason, he strives to develop a classroom learning community in which individuals support one another's growth.

Establishing relationships built on trust takes time, and it is developing new relationships of which Rob is most fearful as he transitions to a new teaching position. He wants the students to want him as their teacher so that they are not initially resentful and are open to the type of relationships Rob knows he must build in order to be the kind of teacher he hopes to be.

Rob truly believes in the power of the teacher as an individual. In his very being and his accumulation of memory, he believes his presence is good for students, even if he is not the best pedagogue in the school. Rob explains,

Now, if I have a bad experience and I'm not great, for real, it's still better that I am in that classroom. I'm a good guy, I'm teaching morals, as much discipline as I can. If I'm not a role model, it's positive, because of what I've seen. It would be great if I were a great teacher too. That would be fantastic, but I'm not a great teacher right now and I understand that. I want to be one.

Simply imagining what a great teacher is gives Rob the ability to begin to become that person in his everyday encounters with students.

From these examples, it is clear that not only are Rob and Thomas affected by the many communities of practice in which they are engaged as novice teachers, they are also impacted by their own interpretations of the past and projections of the future as they negotiate their own developing identity as teachers. Both experience coordination of multiple communities through border crossers, and both experience contradiction of communities. Rob especially sees certain community activities as

being a waste of time because he feels the information is irrelevant as he crosses community borders. Thomas experiences less contradiction of communities, yet even he feels that some information is less applicable in one community than in another. Thomas chooses to identify with his English team, while Rob resists aligning with any single community of practice. Both Rob and Thomas have a rough idea of who they would like to become as a teacher; this vision is guided by their past and present experiences while it serves to provide meaning to those very experiences. In addition, both men come to understand their present through their own pasts. Thomas relies on a memory of a poster on the wall as well as his past experiences transferring to a new base, while Rob calls up his childhood memories and certain elements of his experience both in the military and in the business world as he makes sense of his teaching experience. Unfortunately, some of these memories cause Rob dissatisfaction with his new profession, as he evaluates the efficiency of school from a business or military frame of reference. For both Rob and Thomas, the nexus of being is the place where experiences in multiple communities as well as understandings of past, present, and future combine to facilitate a sense of vocational identity.

## Chapter 7: Vocational Meta-Story and Synthesis

Rob and Thomas experience different program communities and school communities, and they have diverse memories and imaginings, but their experience in becoming a teacher holds similarities that make it possible to tell a meta-story about the career change process. The following is an allegory I crafted after engaging in hermeneutical discourse with the data surrounding Rob's and Thomas' lived experience of transition. Immediately following the story, I provide explication of the metaphorical meanings contained within the narrative and the origination of those meanings in the case studies.

### *The Teacher's Homecoming*

*Once upon a time there was a tribal elder who was lost. In order to find himself, he dug a hole as deep as his elbow and as wide as his chest. In the digging, he uncovered three rocks, and all pointed him toward the East. The elder felt a palatable tug in his feet in this direction as well, so he began to travel toward the sun's rising.*

*On his journey, however, the elder became tired and laid to rest. While sleeping, he was whisked away, transported to a strange new land.*

*When the elder awoke, he was in the midst of chaos. A village of people smaller than himself seemed to be in a great uproar. The elder attempted to find out what was happening, but to no avail. The villagers could neither see him nor hear his language. The elder marked the sun and planned to continue on his way, but he found that all paths out of the village were blocked. He stayed for days, attempting to keep the villagers safe from themselves and reciting the prayers and incantations that had always brought peace to his own tribespeople.*

*After what seemed like eternity, the elder was rescued by a woman his size dressed in leaves and rushes who carried him over a hut to a crystal lake. At the lake the woman gave the tribesman food and drink and asked him to peer into the water. There, he saw his own tribe as it had been when the great trees were saplings and the river was dry. He was shocked to find his own tribe had once been in chaos and had spoken the unintelligible language of the villagers. The woman of the rushes instructed the elder to disrobe and wash himself in the pool.*

*When he emerged from the water, the woman gave the elder a cloak and a new name. She also gave him a flask of water from the pool and a satchel of feathers. The man once again returned to the village.*

*This time, however, when the elder entered the village, the small villagers could see him. They could still not understand his language, but they were very interested in his flask and satchel. At first, the elder tried displaying the gift feathers in the dust as was the custom of his own tribe, but the villagers wailed, rolled their heads and waved their arms in protest. Instead, they insisted on tossing the feathers in the air, allowing the wind currents to carry the plumes, dancing, above the raging riotous village below.*

*When every last feather was tossed to the heavens, the elder despaired that he had wasted the gift with which he was entrusted by the woman of the rushes.*

*How surprised, then, was he when the feathers began to fall from the sky, and one by one, the villagers began making patterns with them in the dust. These patterns had no meaning for the elder himself, but he sensed a meaning evolving among the villagers.*

*As an experiment, the elder then offered the gradually calming villagers a drink from his flask. Most abhorred the taste of the crystal liquid; they preferred to squander the precious drink, holding the flask over one another and splashing the liquid on each other's upturned faces.*

*Ironically, the spray of water seemed to unite the villagers, and they began working together to clear a path through the woods on the west side of the village. After several hours of intense labor, the villagers revealed a pool of crystal water much like the one in which the elder had bathed earlier. The villagers immediately began frolicking and playing in the water, and when they finished, they found that while they still spoke their native tongue with one another, they could understand the elder's speech.*

*One villager began pointing furiously to the setting sun, and all the others positioned the elder so that he could see his reflection in the water with the sun at his back. The villagers began chanting a low cadence, and the elder peered into the pool.*

*There, he saw himself for the first time and knew he was home.*

### A Vocational Meta-Story

The story above serves as an allegory of induction to teaching for the older career changer. Much has been written about the Coming of Age experience that children undergo when they emerge from adolescence to adulthood ("Growing up modern: Coming of age", 1994). In some cultures, children are snatched away from their mothers abruptly and forced to endure considerable hardship and physical and

emotional challenge. This ordeal reveals the depth of the child's resources. Upon surviving their challenge, they are instructed in the ways of adult life, given special totems to carry with them, and often given new names. The coming of age experience fosters consciousness surrounding one's identity and place within the larger community.

I argue that as they become teachers, Rob and Thomas undergo a *Reverse Coming of Age*. As individuals, Rob and Thomas have already experienced and exited their pre-adult phase of life, but as teachers, they must re-learn how to communicate with adolescents who have not yet matured. Like T. S. Eliot's "midwinter spring" (Eliot, 1968, p. 50) theirs is a backward awakening, and in it, they must discover the personhood of the curious beings who await them in their classroom. They must recognize their students as humans, and they must trust the knowledge and ways of the next generation. As in the midwinter spring, the experience of a reverse coming of age can act as "pentecostal fire/ In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing/ The soul's sap quivers" (Eliot, 1968, p. 50). Like adolescents who search for meaning during their coming of age experience, career changers like Rob and Thomas must strive for an understanding of their own identity in a new contextual place on the educational landscape.

### *Becoming Lost*

Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations. (Thoreau, 1987, p. 420)

In the beginning of our story, the elder is lost. He digs a hole as deep as his elbow and as wide as his chest to find out which way to go. Rob clearly evidences a

period of being lost from himself just prior to making the commitment to become a teacher. He has just returned from a 14-month tour in Iraq where he has had much time to mull over his life and its worth. When he returns home, he is prepared to foot the bill for an elaborate wedding and enroll in an MBA program to become the big-wig business man that his fiancée has determined he should become. But in all of his willingness, she says they need to get to know each other again, and she hesitates on the wedding. Rob leaves, takes his money out of their house, and spirals into a downward depression that lasts over a year. He loses all motivation and drowns his emptiness with alcohol. This is akin to digging a hole and escaping into oneself.

Thomas, in a less dramatic way, also experiences a feeling of being lost. He finds himself retired from a career as a photographer in the Air Force, newly married, with no direction and no job. He feels a great responsibility to provide for his wife, but he seems to be hitting dead ends. The Air Force photography school does not need teachers, and local school systems do not have a need either. Luckily for Thomas, he has enrolled in the Troops to Teachers program, and before his hole is dug too deep, he receives a call from Troops to Teachers saying, “Union County needs English teachers.”

### *Three Voices Call*

Huebner writes, “Three voices call . . . The teacher is called by the students, by the content and its communities, and by the institution within which the teacher lives” (Huebner, 1999a, p. 411). In *The Teacher’s Homecoming*, the call to teach is represented by three stones that point East. The Eastwardly direction of the journey signifies a move toward the sun’s rising, or youth. The three stones are reminiscent of

Huebner's three voices; however, they represent the students, the content and its communities, and the self. At their calling, career changers typically have no institution through which to hear the call. In Rob's case, this call comes mainly from within.

Rob runs out of money for liquor, is granted early retirement from Verizon, and finds himself free of demands placed on himself by friend, family, or fiancée. He reflects on his own life and realizes that his skills in reading and writing that he gained in middle school have enabled him to be a lifelong learner. He credits one teacher with saving him by placing him in gifted classes and believing in him. Rob also recalls the rewarding work he has done in helping fellow soldiers pass their GEDs, like he once did as a young man. For Rob, the call to teach comes mostly from within himself, but he is also called by students who need saving, like he once needed saving, and also by the content, especially life-changing, inspirational literature that Rob would like to share with the next generation.

Thomas' call to teach comes literally as a call on the telephone. His future principal calls him, and Thomas responds. He feels confident in his abilities. He is convinced of the great power of teachers to unknowingly influence student lives, like his father before him. Thomas' friends, wife, and family have always told him he would make a good teacher because of his mind for trivia and his ability to make connections and inferences among ideas. Thomas has always seen himself as a writer since his high school history teacher helped him discover the writer within himself, so it makes sense for him to want to pass his love of writing on to the next generation. Thomas, too, is drawn from within, from a belief in his own suited abilities, from the

content, namely writing, and from the students, whom Thomas hopes to impact in unforeseen ways.

So both Rob and Thomas began their journeys Eastward, toward the youth of today's classrooms.

### *Chaos*

In the Coming of Age motif, adolescents experience a great awakening when they are exposed to the adult world for the first time. This experience is often at first one of utter confusion, and the child is frightened by what he sees but does not yet understand.

Rob and Thomas both experience this type of “backwards” awakening as they are exposed for the first time to a foreign world where pre-adults cavort and where Rob and Thomas are all but invisible. In our story, the elder enters the village and is shocked by the behavior he sees. He discovers that no one can see or hear him, so he spends the next few days trying to prevent the villagers from hurting themselves and reciting prayers and incantations which help bring peace to his own adult tribe but which are entirely meaningless to the villagers.

Greene describes a subjective experience of shock, which, as Kierkegaard explains, is “nothing else than a radical modification in the tension of our consciousness, founded in a different attention *a la vie*”(quoted in Greene, 1978, p. 173). Green explains, “These shocks, these shifts in attention, make it possible to see from different standpoints; they stimulate the wide-awakeness so essential to critical awareness” (1978, p. 173). Britzman also speaks of a “first culture shock” that occurs “with the realization of the overwhelming complexity of the teacher’s work and the

myriad ways this complexity is masked and misunderstood” (1991, p. 4). Entering the village engenders in the elder a sense of “place-alienation” (E. S. Casey, 1993, p. 307).

When Rob encounters his first classroom of students, it is in the city as he is beginning a long-term substitute experience. In the main office, he is told not to let any students leave the classroom for any reason, and he is escorted to his classroom by a student. When he enters, he is frozen in place. The classroom is in chaos. Everyone is out of their seats, and desks are being flung across the room. The students neither see nor hear him, and Rob eventually just sits and comments to a boy sitting nearby, “They don’t even know I’m here, do they?”

Thomas’ first weeks of school are equally stunning. Even with an experienced co-teacher in the room with him and at times, a third adult as well, students run amuck, and Thomas calls security multiple times. He feels invisible to the students and says that if he had announced that there was a fire in the room, no students would have responded in any appropriate way. He attempts to speak to them about their futures, but his words are all but unintelligible to the students, and they dismiss him with contempt.

### *The Woman of the Rushes*

In *The Teacher’s Homecoming*, an adult woman approaches the elder, dressed in leaves and rushes. She escorts him to a crystal pool where he is refreshed, is born anew with a new identity, and is given totems to take on his journey back to the village.

This woman is a much oversimplified representation of the experiences career changers encounter with their program and school communities of practice. The woman in the story gives the elder needed respite and useful tools, and she assists him in becoming someone the villagers can recognize. In an ideal world, all career changers would be assisted by teacher educators as helpful and accommodating as the woman of the rushes. We have seen in the cases of Rob and Thomas, however, that not all communities offer useful tools, and that some communities offer satchels filled with bricks that will not take to the air like the elder's magical feathers. Career changers can not be expected to conjure the woman of the rushes on their own; she must be an external force that offers support and mentoring in a period of chaos.

Rob and Thomas engage with various communities of practice in their journeys of becoming. Thomas' communities are coordinated, and as one, they serve as the woman of the rushes, rescuing him by offering a modified schedule and time to observe other teachers interacting successfully with students. Thomas does not perceive the coordination of his communities, however. He aligns himself with his school community, emulating English teachers there and taking quite seriously all the advice he receives. He does his best to implement the tools and strategies he is given and is thankful for the assistance of his department chair and others in helping him adjust his understanding of who he must be in the classroom.

Unfortunately, while this community is helpful, it is also a community based on fear. The teachers fear reprimand from various sources, and they find themselves making decisions that do not necessarily benefit their students, teaching what is

required rather than what they perceive the students need. Thomas is given tools, but it is unclear if he will be able to make the required curriculum “fly” with his students.

Thomas is also uncertain if the totems he receives from his resident teacher program are permitted in the context of his school. He believes every school is different, and he must figure out how to teach effectively given the ways of his school before he begins to experiment using the ways of his program. This breakdown is apparent in Thomas’ decision not to employ the classroom management techniques offered during his summer training but rather to call security instead. Thomas has been instructed to call security if his class is disruptive; and during the first weeks of school, he takes this to mean that calling security is the first step he should take in securing order.

Rob is also rescued from his chaotic long-term substitute experience, simply by virtue of the return of the classroom teacher. He returns to his courses at Bachman with his eyes opened and a great hunger for strategies that will help him cope with students in a classroom.

Rob experiences many different communities of practice during his tenure at Bachman. I am only able to observe him in two courses, and in these, he is frustrated by the lack of applicability of the tools he is offered. In other courses, however, Rob reports that he is given the preparation necessary to be a classroom leader.

Rob also engages with a community at Madison Middle School. During his spring long-term substituting experience there, he is clearly an outsider and must work diligently to connect with members of the team who he believes are reluctant to

embrace “the new guy.” He is rejected as a full-time member of the team by his department chair who feels he is not yet ready to be a teacher.

In the fall, Rob returns to Madison as an intern and then a long-term substitute. With a new team leader, Rob is welcomed by the team and inducted into the ways of the school. Carol serves as a constant mentor, engaging with Rob as a colleague and assisting him in discovering who he is in the classroom.

Rob and Thomas also benefit from participation in this study. Although I am not affiliated with either their program or school communities, both men indicate that my presence and constant questioning is helpful as they discern their fit in the classroom. I am part of Rob’s and Thomas’ experience of the woman of the rushes.

### *Returning to the Village*

After being instructed and assisted by the woman of the rushes, the elder once again returns to the village. This time, the villagers can see him and are quite interested in the totems he has brought with him. But the elder attempts to engage the villagers with the totems in the way in which he and others of his tribe engage. He attempts to show them how to arrange feathers in the dust to show meaning, and he models how to drink the sweet-tasting liquid from the flask. The villagers, however, want to engage with the totems in a novel way. They toss the feathers into the air and splash the liquid in each other’s faces.

Here, the story attempts to show the varied ways students respond to adult-generated curriculum. Complicated literary explications do not often have meaning for students. Instead, they must play with the words and ideas, tossing them around and allowing them to dance on the air currents of the village. Greene explains,

“Teachers, like their students, have to learn to love the questions, as they come to realize there can be no final agreements or answers, no final commensurability” (1988, p. 134). Palmer echoes, “Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves” (1998, p. 11). As the elder realizes the wisdom of allowing the students to play with the feathers, thus engaging the questions of the subject rather than the answers specified by the teacher’s guide, a transformative view of curriculum is taken up. Teaching becomes dialogical, “a place of departure” (Britzman, 1991, p. 216), where classroom content “connects with the inward, living core of our students’ lives” (P. J. Palmer, 1998, p. 32).

Likewise, career changers must respect the students’ reluctance to imbibe the water of the adult world. The water representing a coming of age is distasteful to them, but they do enjoy splashing in it, perhaps enjoying a bit of adulthood without assuming the full responsibilities of maturity.

Career changers must discover ways to interact with students who at times do not understand their language. They must recall the three areas which called them into teaching – student, content, and self – and determine ways to understand, connect with, and relate to students; understand self as teacher; and make content bridge the gap between themselves, their students and the larger world (both the pre-adult world and the world the students will experience after their Coming of Age).

Rob does much experimentation in these areas, making content accessible to students by engaging them with videos, visuals, and stories from his own experiences.

He acts out his words as he speaks, a game of charades that helps his students understand his language. For Rob, content is not an object contained within a curriculum guide. He makes it his own, even writing his own stories to teach. The display of feathers Rob models for students is not imitating; it is his own self-generated meaning, and Rob carefully chooses content with which he identifies so that he can model a process of meaning-making for his class. Rob's local school system curriculum is used as a resource, but the curriculum lived out in his classroom is based on situational praxis (Aoki, 2004).

Thomas is constrained by his curriculum guide, an object that instructs him what to teach and when to teach it. He engages students where he is able, attempting to “strike a chord” with them and encourage them to draw connections between the required content and their own lives. In many cases, however, Thomas' satchel holds bricks that simply do not fly when students toss them about. Thomas' hands are tied. He is given bricks, and he is held accountable for ensuring that his students can make the “correct” patterns in the dust. It is a challenging situation, but Thomas cares deeply about student success. Through our reflective conversations, Thomas is able to give new priority to certain elements of past experiences that highlight his propensity for perseverance. As a re-visioned, persevering educator with a deep concern for student success, there is hope that Thomas and his students may turn bricks to feathers that fly.

### *Arranging the Feathers and Uncovering the Crystal Pool*

After the villagers let the precious feathers fly and splash the sacred water on each other's faces, something amazing happens. They begin to make meaning. The

feathers fall to the ground, and one by one, the villagers arrange them in the dust. This arrangement has no meaning to the elder, but he can see that it does for the villagers. Likewise, after splashing in the water of transformation, the villagers work together to uncover their own crystal pool where they frolic and splash.

Students who are exposed to living content and allowed to make it their own will often find their own emerging meanings drawing them inward and giving them a taste for more of the same. Similarly, students who are allowed to dabble in adulthood before their full coming of age are likely to enjoy the responsibility and desire a deeper dive in the pool. Career changers must take care not to keep hold of the feathers themselves, only displaying accepted meanings in the dust. Instead, they can model the display but then must let the students enthrall in the dance of the feathers before making their own meanings.

Both Thomas and Rob teach in an era of assessment. Students are expected to learn the accepted meanings and be able to regurgitate them on a test. But Thomas and Rob differ in the importance they place on the knowledge valued by the assessment. While Thomas often despairs when his students cannot appropriate the meanings he communicates with them, Rob encourages students to discover what makes sense to them. Only after his students appear to be arranging the feathers in their own formation does Rob intervene, letting his students “in the loop,” telling them that he values their answers but that there is also this “right” answer that they are going to be tested on, and they need to know it in order to pass the test.

*Seeing Yourself for the First Time*

Now I become myself. It's taken  
Time, many years and places;  
I have been dissolved and shaken,  
Worn other people's faces . . .  
Now to stand still, to be here,  
Feel my own weight and density!  
. . . All fuses now, falls into place  
From wish to action, word to silence,  
My work, my love, my time, my face  
Gathered into one intense  
Gesture of growing like a plant . . .  
Made so and rooted so by love  
Now there is time and Time is young.  
O, in this single hour I live  
All of myself and do not move.  
I, the pursued, who madly ran,  
Stand still, stand still, and stop the sun! (Sarton, 2003, p. 79)

In *The Teacher's Homecoming*, the villagers position the elder facing the east and direct him to peer into the crystal pool. There, he sees himself for the first time and realizes that he is home. Teachers who engage in the *Reverse Coming of Age* not only realize their interdependence with their students and a way to make content relevant, they also become more fully themselves. This is the ultimate in vocational identity development, because the teacher finally realizes that his journey has brought him to a place where his soul is most fully itself, that he is most fully at home as a teacher.

Casey (1993) distinguishes between *homecoming* and *homesteading*. While both signify the end of one phase of a journey and the beginning of another, homecoming is a return to a place that was once home to an individual, and homesteading is the arrival at a place that will become a future home-place. Both contain elements of a first visit as well as a second visit. In a homecoming, a place is

visited for a second time, but it is experienced as if it were the first time due to the intervening experiences that have transformed the individual since his last visit. In homesteading, a place is visited for a first time, but in its familiarity, it feels as if it is known for a second time and that one is re-inhabiting it.

The elder in the story experiences both homecoming and homesteading. He comes home in time, if not in place. His reverse coming of age signifies a return to youth, although this return is not a regression. The homecoming is experienced as if it were a first visit due to life experiences and maturity. This is why the elder is shocked when he peers into the crystal pool and sees that his own tribe was once in chaos and spoke the unintelligible language of youth.

After the elder recognizes the village as a home-place where he metaphorically resided as a child, the elder is able to make a commitment to homesteading. As he finally experiences the village as home, he determines to settle down there, to engage in *dwelling-as-residing* (E. S. Casey, 1993). Casey explains that in homesteading, “one seeks to attain an ongoing co-habitancy with one’s new home-place and its denizens” (1993, p. 291). The elder knows the need for partnership with the villagers, as exemplified by his realization of their need to arrange the feathers on their own. Homesteading is possible for the military career changer once the interdependence between teacher and students is grasped and once he experiences a feeling of being at-home in the classroom.

When the elder sees himself clearly for the first time, he is an implaced individual, a *who* as well as a *where*. Because identity may be understood as a relation in social space, the career changer’s homecoming can simultaneously be a

coming home to himself as well as realization of his place on the educational landscape.

*Seeing Oneself through Shadows*

It is no mistake that the villagers position the elder with his back toward the sun before he is able to see himself for the first time. Students often have a piercing view that forces teachers to face shadows and darkness within themselves. Only through a careful consideration of those shadows can the career changer realize true self and become whole. And only in seeking to become whole can one assist students as they engage in their own transformation. This is true interdependence as manifested in the classroom.

When Rob and I first meet, he curiously refers to his 14-month deployment in Iraq as being “away.” If I did not know that he had served in wartime Iraq, I might have thought he had gone on an extended vacation. In addition, Rob also neglects to mention his military involvement at all when I first ask him to give me a history of his paid worklife. When Rob is asked to give a Veteran’s Day presentation for the eighth grade students at Madison, he is reluctant. He describes his plan to me:

RB: Basically I’m going to be strict and stern, I’ll be in uniform, and I’m going to be like, well, you want to talk about the war, well, I’m not talking with a bunch of babies. I’m going to give them a quick lesson on Iraq and what the real deal is. That’s what they’re going to get from me. So I have to prepare something for that for Friday and Monday. So, I’m not too happy about it.

KF: You’re not?

RB: No.

KF: Why?

RB: I don’t really like to talk about my experiences in Iraq. Not because of any PTSDs [post-traumatic stress disorders], just for that whole reason. For the same reason that everyone’s like, oh, I hated that movie *Jarhead* (Mendes, 2005). I hated my whole time, what can I say.

But after engaging with the eighth graders on the topic of Iraq for two days, Rob's stance changes. He describes the teaching experience as awesome, phenomenal, and fantastic. In all our conversations after that, Rob never again refers to his time in Iraq as being "away." He is forced to look at himself in a reflection pointed out by students, and in doing so, Rob becomes more whole. An experience that may have taken him away from everything, including his sense of self, is once again integrated, and Rob's identity is transformed.

### *The End?*

Even a successful realization of self through homecoming and a commitment to homestead is not a fulfilling ending to the vocational story. There is a sense of joy in becoming and belonging, but there are also tensions. Even in homecoming, one is still in limbo. There is recognition of a home-place but also a realization that no longer is the place the same nor the experiencing self the same. It is not the home that was and is not yet the home to be. Much of the journey is left, and vocational identity development has only begun. The end is the beginning.

Neither Rob nor Thomas has finished his journey of becoming. Thomas does not yet feel fully at home in his classroom, and he is still coming to understand who he is as a teacher. In addition, at the conclusion of this study, Thomas is just about to be given additional classes, a new village of students to engage.

Rob similarly is just about to leave his long-term substitute position at Madison to engage with new students in a new school as their full-time teacher. (For an update on Thomas and Rob nine months after the end of the data collection period,

see Appendix F.) Rob's greatest challenge is to find a way to continue to relate to his students without himself regressing in maturity; finding a community of educators with which Rob can be interdependent and align himself may assist him in this process. Rob is leaving Madison with a plan, however. In his next teaching position, he plans to begin by doing two things: showing his resume, and then telling his own story. In other words, Rob is going to lay himself bare, his whole self, flaws and all, before the students and begin to teach from a center of authenticity, helping the students to find themselves in the process. He explains:

RB: I was there. I have a GED.

KF: That's an asset really because you can identify with a lot of these kids.

RB: If I go into that class, my first two days is going to be my resume, my story. . .

KF: You're just going to lay it all out, tell them

RB: I'm going to do a Power Point. First I'm going to start with my resume because this is where the goal for you guys is to be. So let me show you what the goal is. And then it's going to be now let me tell you my story. How I got here, because it's not what you think. . . That's where you want to get, now here's how I got there. Skills. Picking up skills. It's not about the smartest, the best SATs, it's not even about graduating. You need to have those skills or forget about it. I've valued education, I've been going to school my whole life. . . .

KF: When you talk about your story, how do you see that being organized?

RB: . . . Always will start with middle school. Starts with Section 8 housing projects. So that's my experience, a good one, a happy time. Middle school because that's where I put together my strong skills. Then the fluctuation of crazy high school. What happened after high school, decisions I made because everything is, the point is everything I did was a decision that I made. And I didn't realize it back then. How important those decisions were. Some of them were good and some of them weren't. So it's going to happen. You're going to make bad ones, and you're going to make good ones. If the good ones are important enough, they'll supersede the bad ones in time, and you'll be alright. But you can't just make all bad ones. You can't be a non-participant. You have to take part in your life. Because you are the story. And that's my point. You will have a story as well at my age. What will it be? Yeah, like it or not, you will have one. Might be boring, might be boring and successful, might be exciting and non-successful, but you will have a story.

Through this analysis, several truths have emerged. Rob's and Thomas' journeys are different. Both men bring with them unique interpretations of memories as well as unique future imaginings, and both engage in community in different ways. The interaction of self, students, and content is the substance of classroom life, but a self does not become teacher in the classroom alone. Rob and Thomas develop in relation to communities of practice where they engage with other educators and discover their social place as they work toward common goals. They appropriate concepts, ideas, resources, and practical tools, and begin to see and speak like members of communities with which they align themselves. These communities never dictate who they will become as teachers, but they are partners in the negotiation of self that emerges in harmony with the individual's continually re-remembered past and re-imagined future. Becoming a teacher is a complex transformation, but it is one which allows career changers to live fully, in communion with the future, the students themselves.

### Emerging Understandings of Identity

In the meta-story, the elder realizes his identity when he allows the villagers to position him at the crystal pool, and he looks through the shadows to see himself for the first time. This realization of identity is experienced as a homecoming. It represents a coming home to oneself as well as an integration of one's past, including those memories that constitute the shadows of the psyche. It also represents a desire to establish co-habitancy with the villagers, a desire that is only possible when interdependence is realized.

This study has evoked an understanding of identity as consisting of two mutually constituted parts: self-actualization and interdependence. Although these parts can never be truly separated, each concept will be discussed individually below and then will be brought together in the more encompassing concepts of relational characterization and place.

### *Self-Actualization*

Self-actualization is the final stage on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1968). It is the point when a person realizes his need for cross-cultural or *being* values such as understanding, beauty, wholeness, universal justice, aliveness, uniqueness and meaningfulness in addition to the continual needs of knowledge and freedom (Farmer, 1984). It is defined as "the need to live up to one's potentials, to become what one has in him to become and to utilize one's energies to live life as fully as possible" (Henjum, 1983, p. 52). Self-actualization is intertwined with the concept of voice. Although the term self-actualization as Maslow originally defined it refers to humans who have most of their lower needs met, I disagree that all lower needs must be met before humans can self-actualize. Humanity offers examples of individuals who become self-actualized in dire situations such as the aftermath of disasters, concentration camps, or prisons when very few of their lower needs are actually being met. This provides hope that individuals can pursue self-actualization, even if the contexts in which life occurs are less than ideal.

I carefully employ the term *self-actualization* as an aspect of identity development rather than a less specific reference to *transformation* or *becoming* in order to make clear that the type of identity development required is one in which

individuals pursue cross-cultural, *being* values. An individual may *develop into*, *transform into*, or *become* a power-hungry bigot, but by definition, an individual may not *self-actualize* into such a person. Self-actualization, rather than being a self-serving end, actually promotes a need for open-mindedness and interdependence with others.

### *Interdependence*

Only through interactions (or imagined interactions) with others are personal transformative moments formed. It takes others to make us who we are. This is why identity development as I have conceptualized it is not just about individual selves coming into being; instead, it is about individual and interdependent becoming.

In the philosophical discussion of Chapter One, identity is described as being mutually constituted by self and community. One who is interested in the development of vocational identity will privilege community and connectedness as much as personal development. Self-serving identities that reject one's interdependence with others serve only to deform the individual, not to bring him more fully into being. For this reason, pathological identities that inhibit interdependence should be discouraged by those who wish to promote identity development.

Because an individual's identity is tied up with negotiations of truth in community, one may simultaneously nurture growth of self and realization of interdependence in community as valued ends. Community should be viewed as a support for becoming. Through involvement in learning communities, one has the potential to increase a sense of interdependence. Wenger (1998) defines learning

community as a place of identity that offers “a past and a future that can be experienced as a personal trajectory” (p. 215). Learning communities are strengthened when they incorporate members’ pasts into the collective community history, and when they offer opportunities to engage in practice in the context of a valued future.

### *Relational Characterization*

If self-actualization and interdependence truly exist in mutual constitution, there must be a better way of conceptualizing them than as two distinct parts of identity. Turning to narrative, we may profit greatly from an understanding of identity as *relational characterization*.

Characterization as a narrative element is knowledge about a particular character based on the information that the reader has learned or can infer from a text. An author’s description of the person, the person’s emotions, imaginings, and memories, the words the person speaks, and the actions the person takes are all elements of characterization. *Relational characterization* includes all of the above but also places a special emphasis on the character traits that are revealed by other characters’ descriptions of or thoughts about the person and from the ways the person relates to other characters in the story.

Relational characterization includes both aspects of identity. Through this type of characterization we learn the motivations, beliefs and attitudes of the character as well as the extent to which he acts in interdependence with others.

Story is integral to identity development, and thinking of one’s life as story may make the concept of identity development more accessible. Story is the most

direct method of experimenting with relational characterization. Through autobiographical work, one may reframe past experiences and narrate present experiences in such a way that one determines new continuities in one's life or new ways of relating to others. In this way, story may promote both self-actualization and interdependence (thereby promoting identity development).

There are many methods that employ narrative in an effort to allow experimentation with characterization. Besides the aforementioned autobiographical work, story emerges through the writing or telling of fiction (with or without self as main character), reflective pieces, and work with case studies.

Narratives provide additional support for identity development, as they naturally engage morals. Tappan and Brown (1991) describe a link between a conception of authorship and moral development. If one feels a sense of authorship, one is more likely to assume responsibility for one's actions. The telling of a story also promotes voice, as long as one's stories are truly heard and their implications are considered in community.

Autobiographical storytelling involves a re-seeing of our lives. It aids in the discovery of patterns and continuities that make us who we are. Cochran-Smith urges storytelling as a method for cross-cultural understanding. She suggests engaging with "our own histories as human beings and as educators; our own experiences as members of particular races, classes, and genders; and as children, parents, and teachers in the world" (1995, p. 500). Because storytelling also allows us to express tacit assumptions we make about others, it can help us uncover our own biases.

Florio-Ruane and DeTar (2001) also settle on narrative as a likely tool for enabling multicultural understanding.

Pagano (1991) proposes writing fiction rather than autobiography because it allows the author to experiment with characterization and new ways of understanding without implicating the self in the telling. This approach may be especially useful if one does not yet feel comfortable revealing shadow areas to one's community. One might, for example, write a story about a conflict between a student and a teacher. One may then share the story, subject it to literary analysis, and discuss it with relatives, friends, or colleagues. Philosophical underpinnings and tacit assumptions in the story may be exposed, and one may make conscious choices about whether or not these assumptions carry over into one's own educational relations. Imagination may be employed to develop alternate ways to characterize relationships in the narrative and in one's own life.

### *Identity as Place*

In Chapter Six, I describe a nexus of being as a place where the identities of Rob and Thomas emerge. This nexus of being is co-constituted by each individual's multimembership in various communities of practice as well as his memories, imaginings, and stories of becoming.

The word *nexus* is derived from the Latin *nectere* which means "to bind." It is a bond or link. *Nectere* also forms the root word for *connection* (Harper, 2001). The term *nexus of being* is derived from Wenger's *nexus of multimembership* (1998). While Wenger's term applies only to the links or connections among the various communities of practice in which a person may participate and the coordination or

contradiction among those communities, nexus of being includes not only those aspects of multimembership but also the connections among personal memories and imagined futures within a person's evolving story.

A nexus of being is best envisioned as a complex web in which communities, memories and imaginings are linked. A person's identity is a place on this web of interconnected aspects of being. In this way, identity may be understood as a place that shifts as one positions oneself in social space in relation to others. Identity, rather than being static, changes in response to social context, societal expectations, and personal motivations. Transformations of identity occur in times when we redefine our place in relation to others.

In addition, identity changes when we redefine our place in relation to our memories and imaginings. Individuals recall different aspects of their own pasts or reorganize their memories of past events based on the meanings they draw from their memories in relation to their present selves. In the same way, a person's relationship with an imagined future changes based on the individual's current situation. The career changer who exists in a leap is always positioned in relation to both past memories and imagined futures.

Promoting vocational identity development does not require severing strands in a great web of beliefs and memories, as suggested by McDiarmid (1990). Severing strands may in fact diminish the integrity of the nexus. As a person takes up a new place on the web of being, new strands of memory, imagination, and relation become integral to the structure. These vital strands may be reinforced through narrative work, and, as will be detailed below, imagination.

In the same way that narrative may be used to focus one's attention on one's place in the nexus of being, imaginative activities may be used to promote awareness of identity. One may imagine ideal relationships and ideal futures, reframe understandings of various situations from different ideological viewpoints, imagine role reversals, develop extended metaphors, and ponder vocational purpose.

Imagination is necessary to meet both of the desired ends of interdependence and self-actualization. Witherell explains, "To have any self-interest . . . one must assume the viewpoint or attitude of the other, a projection that is accomplished through sympathetic imagination" (1991, p. 89). "Our ideas of self and others are based on who we imagine ourselves or others to be, or who the other thinks we are" (Atkinson, 2004, p. 387). Imagining who we are in relation to others defines the ways we understand our own self-actualization and interdependence.

Whether as relational characterization or place in a nexus of being, identity is the expression of both becoming and belonging. It is the relation of ourselves to our pasts and our futures as they erupt in our continually evolving present, as well as our relation to the others who inhabit the world with us.

#### A Way of Seeing: Merging the Descriptive, Hermeneutical and Narrative

In conducting this study, I attempted to implace myself in the space between research traditions. At once, I sought to use traditional methods of descriptive case study while bringing forth layers of meaning through hermeneutical writing and narrative analysis. This approach is somewhat unusual in educational work, and it may be helpful to other researchers to read more about this place in which I have come to define my identity as researcher.

I began with a hermeneutical research journal. This journal helped to focus the process of co-researcher selection and allowed me to concentrate on preparing to enter conversations with potential co-researchers. Writing brought me back, time and again, to my commitment to transpose myself and to keep the phenomenon of vocational identity at the center of conversations. It also allowed me to grapple with my unreflexively held prejudices and beliefs and challenge myself on the philosophical grounds on which this research rests.

I continued writing throughout my data collection period, typically writing both before and after an observation. Most productive was the asking and answering of questions. I often began an entry with a question, and then I attempted to answer it. When I received transcripts of observation sessions, I read over my initial questions and comments and then returned to them with further philosophical questioning. A sample entry of my hermeneutical research journal, written after a vocational story conversation with Rob, may be found in Appendix G.

When it came time to write up a description of the cases, I turned to my hermeneutical research journal to determine the constructs around which I should organize my description. Although I began with an idea of the constructs I would use, taken from my literature review, these constructs shifted as a result of the nodes of meaning uncovered in my hermeneutical research journal. For example, at the beginning of the study, I intended to explicate the concept of *trajectory* for each observation. Instead, however, I discovered that *trajectory* was not meaningful in the context of a single observation. *Social structures* and *place*, however, emerged as being essential to the characterization of a community of practice.

In certain cases, the themes of place, social structure, conceptual tools, metaphors, practical tools, narratives, imagined futures, and community promotion of certain identities emerged from the literature and my conceptual understandings of community. In some cases, however, the themes emerged from philosophical inquiry with text through the hermeneutical research journal. Because this process was iterative, with one evoking the other, it is difficult to determine the exact origin of each of my themes.

The description found in Chapters Four, Five and Six provided answers to my two research subquestions and evoked understandings related to vocational identity development. My first subquestion was, “What happens when former military personnel engage with various communities of practice during their teacher preparation/induction to teaching?” This question was answered through a close analysis of each of four communities of practice as well as a careful look at how Rob and Thomas interacted within each community.

The second subquestion was, “How does a co-researcher’s participation in multiple learning communities interact with the person’s personal memories and imagined futures to create an individual trajectory of vocational identity development?” This question was explored through examination of the coordination and contradiction among various communities and through attention to Rob’s and Thomas’ personal understandings of past and present events as well as their projections for the future. This interpretation of the nexus of being gave a complex look at certain elements of the vocational story.

With both sub-questions answered, I thought that the overarching question would require only a summary of the discrete analysis. But the overarching question, “What is the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for military career changers as they become teachers?” was much more complex than either of my subquestions, and the whole picture amounted to more than the sum of its parts.

Luckily, I had been writing all along, raising interpretive questions of meaning in my hermeneutic research journal. Throughout the study, I had been asking myself if what I was studying was only a dance around a more central community of practice, one that made the biggest difference in the identity development of Rob and Thomas as teachers. I understood that the program and school communities functioned in a peripheral way compared to the negotiation of meaning and identity that was occurring in the classroom itself.

I had been able to observe Rob and Thomas in their classrooms informally, but I began to wonder if I needed to revise my study and begin conducting formal classroom observations. After much deliberation, I decided that since my purpose was to discover ways teacher educators and others could support vocational identity development, my emphasis on the program and school communities was appropriate, even if it was not the whole story of identity development. The study of how classroom interactions mediate the development of vocational identity for the teacher would need to be saved for a future study.

As I pondered my overarching question, I turned to narrative analysis and opened a possibility for a narrative rendering of the answer. I realized that in my internalization of the experiences of Rob and Thomas, of their stories, and of my own

experiences in becoming a teacher, I could indeed tell a meta-story that addressed, in archetypal language, the sociocultural process of identity development. This meta-story emerged from my hermeneutic research journal, from me as a storyteller who had lived experiences with Rob and Thomas, from portions of the literature review, from my own experience as a teacher and as a storied being, and from my own imagination. The philosophical grounding and definitional work I had done to explicate the phenomenon of identity development was also influential in the narrative rendering. Concepts such as time, memory, calling, voice, authority, and identity and the special textures given to each of these terms emerged through the story as well. As a result, a meta-story centered in classroom life was able to emerge from a study of primarily out-of-classroom spaces.

The hermeneutical research journal then allowed me to grapple with the ways in which the archetypal language of the meta-story called forth additional understandings of the experiences of Rob and Thomas. Finally, my writing allowed me to develop the conceptions of identity outlined above. While I did not write with the intent purpose to discover a way to conceptualize identity, my use of the term *relational characterization* emerged through the hermeneutic research journal as I inquired into the connections between narrative and identity.

In these many ways, the descriptive, hermeneutic, and narrative converged in my study to allow a deep look at vocational identity. I hope that that this method proves useful to others who may wish to join me in this place between traditions.

## Implications for Work with Military Career Changers

Although this study was more an exploration of vocational identity development in military career changers than any type of policy document, certain recommendations have emerged in my work with Thomas and Rob that may be of interest to teacher educators who work specifically with military career changers. The first three of these implications are related to program design for programs that cater to TTT participants. These are program flexibility, program alignment, and mentoring. The final four are content areas that are essential for military career changers to encounter in their teacher preparation and induction, including continuities and discontinuities, educational context, the novice role, and vision.

### *Program Flexibility*

When Thomas was struggling in the first month of his residency, his mentor met with his principal, the principal spoke with the English team, and Thomas was offered a modified schedule which reduced his load to only one small class of students each day. This modified schedule allowed Thomas ample time for planning, reflection, and for collaborative work and observation of his colleagues. Thomas' principal, his English department, and his entire Resident Teacher program collaborated to extend the support he needed. Similarly, when Rob desired to begin full-time teaching rather than complete a traditional internship, he was permitted to pursue that option.

Those separating from the military may actually begin their teacher preparation prior to their separation date, or, like Rob, they may be engaged in a

Reserve unit during their teacher preparation and induction. Instructors must take these added pressures seriously and make accommodations as needed.

For both Thomas and Rob, the flexibility of their programs was extremely important. Those who work with career changers from the military must consider the need for flexible program requirements to meet the needs of these diverse candidates.

### *Program Alignment*

Rob's and Thomas' experiences also point to the need for alignment of a teacher preparation program and the school in which the candidate first teaches. For Rob, coordination between his program and school communities was lacking. This caused much frustration for Rob, as he viewed much of his coursework as being irrelevant to his work at Madison. For Thomas, although his program and school communities were aligned to a great extent, he still perceived contradiction. This perception caused Thomas to view the recommendations of his school community and his teacher preparation community as being discordant.

Coordination of school and program communities is essential in supporting the transformation of new teachers. When programs do not align well with the schools and classrooms in which candidates are placed, candidates must do dual identity work. They must discover who they are as students as well as who they are as teachers simultaneously. If, however, schools and programs collaborate to support career changers' growth as a teachers, this unnecessary work can be avoided.

Programs might be designed according to a model of collaboration in which the program is directed by both school system and provider personnel. Program designers may also want to consider placing candidates in schools early in the

program so that the program can facilitate the candidate's meaningful development within the school community over time. Teacher preparation should not be an inoculation against the realities career changers will face when they are finally placed in a school; it should, rather, be a companion on the journey of becoming, continually helping candidates make sense of their school experiences.

This is not to say that teacher preparation should prepare candidates for schools as they currently exist and abandon any attempts at developing reform-minded educators. On the contrary, career changers who have received ongoing support in their development and who teach from a center of vocational conviction may in fact have a stronger desire to be a change agent. If the program has assisted the candidate in understanding any power dynamics at play and the place of teachers in the educational landscape, these very candidates will be equipped to work with school communities, teachers' unions, parent groups and others to ask necessary questions and mobilize individuals who care about engaging with those questions. Rob exemplifies such a vocational conviction, but because he is not given the sociocultural tools to understand the school community as an educational rather than a business institution, he withdraws to do what he wishes in his own classroom.

Teacher educators might open a discussion of the various communities in which career changers engage and their sense of identification or lack of identification with each community. They may also ask candidates to explore the contradictions that they perceive across communities and assist in clarifying any misunderstandings.

### *Mentoring*

The final recommendation for programs is to provide classroom mentoring for the military career changer. Both Rob and Thomas claim at the conclusion of the study that talking things through with me was helpful to them during an extremely difficult time of their lives. Although both had assigned mentors, it was still helpful to have me continually refocusing them on their own development in light of their past vocational experiences and their hopes for the future.

If becoming a teacher for the military career changer is truly a reverse coming of age, as suggested by the vocational meta-story, then teacher candidates need to be held in protective care by someone who has already experienced this transformation. A personal mentor can provide needed support in this rite of passage.

For Thomas and Rob, the dynamics of classroom interaction were exceedingly important to their vocational development. Thomas speaks of the most effective strategy for learning to teach being trial and error in the classroom, and Rob cites that he does not identify with any particular learning community, that he would rather be in his classroom teaching if he could be anywhere. In Allen's (2007) study, respondents overwhelmingly indicate that interaction with students is more important and influential in developing professional identity than any other type of interaction. Further study is needed to determine how the classroom operates as its own community of practice and the ways in which experiences in the classroom community coordinate or contradict experiences in program and school communities and mediate the development of vocational identity.

Although this concept requires further study, the idea of the primacy of interaction with students is especially important. It is not enough to assist candidates in learning how to teach from a once-weekly seminar course whose instructor has only briefly visited their classrooms. Mentors who have the time to spend in the classroom with the novice are essential in promoting growth and development for the career changer. These mentors can help candidates understand their interdependence with young people and assist them in becoming more fully themselves so that they can find voice and vocational purpose through their classroom work.

Rob found this support in Carol Mercer, his co-teacher. Although Carol already had a full-time job and mentoring was an added responsibility, her presence in the classroom allowed Rob to develop a sense of interdependence with another educator and helped him learn to relate to students. Thomas' mentor visited his classroom occasionally, but his real in-class support came from the teachers in whose classrooms he taught. Both Rob's and Thomas' mentors were affiliated with school rather than program communities. Again, coordination and alignment of program and school would be beneficial in maximizing the potential of these mentors to provide focused assistance.

Mentors and other teacher educators may best serve the career changer with whom they work if they are well-versed in the following four areas: understanding continuities and discontinuities (including the narrative work that facilitates this process), understanding educational contexts, navigating the novice role, and developing educational vision. Both Thomas and Rob required information in these four areas to successfully make the transition to teaching.

### *Understanding Continuities and Discontinuities*

At first glance, the institutions of the United States military and the American system of schooling seem to have many similarities. Both are large, bureaucratic institutions that operate according to certain standards. Schools appear to be regimented through the existing hierarchy, from superintendent down to classroom teacher, through the bell system and strict timetable which governs the school day, and through the detailed pacing and curriculum guides.

Military personnel transitioning to teaching may assume that there are more continuities between their past and current careers than there actually are. As Rob discovers, in schools, there are codes of conduct and guidelines, but people “follow them as they want to.” Rob explains, “In the Army there’s no picking and choosing, everything’s cut and dry which, it makes it easier. The problem is, we’re not in the Army.” These discontinuities must be addressed to prevent frustrations for military career changers transitioning into teaching.

In a similar way, it is tempting for one with a military background to view teachers as trained technicians who deliver content in a classroom setting. From this viewpoint, identity development is irrelevant and one teacher may easily replace another. As long as teachers are trained in the most effective methods of teaching, they should be successful in the classroom. This is not true, however, as evidenced by the failure of many “teacher-proof” curricula. The teacher’s identity is important.

Rob and Thomas both engage in a process of negotiation of self in community, especially with the students in their classrooms. As the co-researchers discover, students have a way of acting and interacting with teachers in ways that

give no credence to one's credentials, background, experiences, or title. These affective learners react to Rob and Thomas based on a perceived relationship, and it is due to student insistence that a relationship be cultivated that Rob and Thomas are forced to do the identity work that this study uncovers. Because teachers are required to relate to living children, a teacher must be more than a trained technician.

If military career changers know that becoming a teacher requires a personal transformation, a reverse coming of age, they may be more open to the support a teacher preparation program in close alignment with a school can offer. Mentors may be able to communicate with candidates that their job is to assist the career changer in a period of transformation or reframing. These mentors and other teacher educators may then turn to methods that allow candidates to characterize themselves and consider their place as teacher in relation to students, content, and the context of schooling. These methods include storytelling (Brody & Witherell, 1991; Carter, 1993) and other approaches that utilize narrative as a tool: autobiographical approaches (Britzman, 1991; Grumet, Winter 1979; Pinar, 2004; Pinar & Grumet, 1976); case study (Kleinfeld, 1992; Yin, 2003); and reflective practice (Valli, 1997, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

In addition, military career changers may benefit by directly discussing the vocational meta-story at the beginning of this chapter. To facilitate vocational identity work with career changers like Thomas and Rob, I offer a set of questions for discussion in Appendix H. These questions are organized around the elements of the vocational meta-story; they are what I consider to be essential questions for fostering vocational identity development in the career changer. I imagine a teacher educator or

mentor being able to use the vocational meta-story as a framework, with the discussion questions in Appendix H as a guide for conversation around each of the themes that emerge in the meta-story.

After conducting this study, I no longer view the role of teacher educator as severing strands of experience, memory or imagination in order to build up a new web of candidate beliefs. In severing the strands of the web of experience, teacher educators run the risk of cutting candidates off from the very self that is necessary for true vocation. Instead, those who assist military career changers would do well to provide support for viewing one's experiences as continuous with and relevant to one's teaching identity.

In none of their communities of practice are Thomas or Rob encouraged to use storytelling as a method for figuring out who they are or who they could be as educators. Perhaps this is due to the almost complete lack of imaginative activities in the communities. They are asked to engage in reflection in their program communities, but at Bachman, reflection has less to do with discovery of self and more to do with a metacognitive look at one's own learning process. Thomas' reflective journal is a weekly writing exercise in which he answers three questions: What is the most important thing that happened this week? What went well? What needs improvement? Through Thomas' reflective journal, he is able to tell stories, but with only check-marks from his mentor as a response, he is a storyteller deprived of an audience and of the hearing into being that would promote identity development.

Mentors might overtly discuss continuities and discontinuities candidates experience between their past career and their new career, like I did in my reflective

conversations with Rob and Thomas. Opportunities are needed for military career changers to share their own memories of schooling and of past career experiences and grapple with these memories to determine their relevance to their present transformation.

### *Understanding Educational Contexts*

Well into his first semester, Thomas expresses the belief that teachers can be fired on the spot for making a mistake. Rob is incredulous that classroom teachers and support personnel do not have clearly delineated roles so that they do not step on each other's toes. Both Rob and Thomas would have benefitted from more clearly articulated information about educational contexts and the mores in use in educational circles.

As suggested by Imig and Imig (2006b), teacher educators should be honest about the contexts in which novice teachers may find themselves working. Especially for military career changers who may expect to move from one bureaucratic government institution to another, teacher educators may need to focus class discussion on micropolitical skills that may help candidates navigate the murky social structures and job delineations that exist within schools. These micropolitical skills may also help reform-minded career changers develop community action plans that are likely to have meaning for those with power in their school communities. In some cases, mentors might assist with problem solving efforts. Military career changers may need focused support to help them determine the freedoms that teachers have within the confines of county and school mandates and ways to fulfill requirements while also meeting the needs of students.

### *Navigating the Novice Role*

Thomas revels in his novice role. While he gladly accepts additional support, Thomas does not realize the extent of the contributions he is able to offer to his school and program communities. He experiences only partial interdependence because he feels that his limited teaching experience is a liability. Rob, on the other hand, has a difficult time accepting his novice status and resists advice from those beyond his mentor teacher. Neither Thomas nor Rob easily navigate the complicated novice role that faces a military career changer in transition to teaching.

Teacher educators and mentors might work with candidates to unpack the emotions that come with being a novice after climbing the ranks in a military career. Career changers should be assisted in recognizing the importance of embracing the novice role and opening oneself to learning in interdependence with other educators, just as they should be encouraged to share their many insights and talents with their colleagues.

### *Developing Educational Vision*

In Rob's and Thomas' experiences in community, very little time or effort is devoted to nurturing the educational imagination. Thomas has a difficult time answering my question about the type of teacher he would like to be in five years, and when I ask Rob to speculate what he will be doing in a year, he states, "You're way beyond my life plans to let you know."

Military career changers need ample opportunity to imagine (or reimagine) themselves as teachers. Shulman and Shulman (2004) cite vision as the first feature necessary for teacher learning. Knowing who you want to become is perhaps as

important as knowing how to become that person. Career changers might be asked to imagine their life as a teacher a year down the road, or five years into the future. They might be asked how they envision themselves in relationship to students, administrators, policymakers, and others as they grow as teachers. They could also be involved in discussions of the ideal teacher and asked to recall inspirational teachers from their pasts.

Mentors can help candidates ground their vision in the context of schooling. Judith Shulman warns that if teacher educators encourage “an impossible ambitious vision, then the gap among the vision, understanding, and practice does not motivate adaptation” (2004, p. 404). Teacher educators might expose military career changers to ways of being as a teacher and ways of metaphorically thinking about teaching that are not necessarily afforded by the classroom community. These possibilities may help the career changer develop an imagined future for teaching that may assist in his development of vocational identity.

Military career changers have heard a vocational call and are seeking to find their own ways on a vocational journey. Teacher preparation has the potential to encourage the conversation and engagement that brings all members of the community more fully into being by offering flexible programs aligned with schools, mentoring, and focused attention on educational contexts, vision, the novice role, and the continuities and discontinuities between teaching and the military.

### Transferability

As described in Chapter Three, unique cases are atypical, but even in their atypicality, certain insights and universal qualities of human experience may be

evoked. The case study approach I have taken is intended to allow for reader generalizability so that readers may use my thick description to make a reasoned judgment regarding the transferability of meaning from one case to another.

In each case, certain constructs have been used to analyze communities of practice, including place, social structures, conceptual tools, metaphors, practical tools, narrative, imagined futures, and constraints and affordances of identity development. This method of analyzing communities of practice in itself may prove useful to those seeking a new lens for understanding communities. The study then takes analysis of separate communities and investigates how an individual negotiates a sense of identity that makes sense of not only his nexus of multimembership, but also his personal story, his memories, and his imagined future. Understanding the complexity of this process itself provides insight for those who are called to work with individuals in transition.

Finally, the meta-story presented at the beginning of this chapter offers a narrative that may be useful as an allegory for the experience of transitioning into teaching as an older career changer. The meta-story is my attempt to address the overarching research question at the center of this study: What is the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for military career changers as they become teachers? Rob and Thomas both experience a reverse coming of age in which they struggle to determine their place in relation with students, content, and other educators. Their program and school communities mediate their experiences of becoming, as do their memories and imagined futures.

My hope is that teacher educators and career changers will be able to use the vocational meta-story and the cases of Rob and Thomas to gain insight into the complicated process of becoming and belonging that vocational identity development entails. The specifics of each case, the explication of the vocational meta-story, and the specifics of my own understandings about identity, community, and the structures and supports necessary for military career changers are presented in sufficient detail that the reader may determine the extent to which my conclusions may be transferred to other settings and other individuals.

### Conclusion

To make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from (Eliot, 1968, p. 59).

In this study, I set out to explore the vocational identity development of two individuals in community as they made a career change into teaching. I have been fortunate to work with two incredible co-researchers who share some similarities. Both are white male career changers pursuing certification as secondary English teachers. In addition, over the course of the data collection period, both begin working in schools that have recently or are currently not making adequate yearly progress according to state standards. But here their similarities diverge. Rob and Thomas differ in some very important ways that allow for observation of a range of experiences related to becoming and belonging as teachers. The co-researchers have very different career histories as military men. One served for 24 years in the Air Force but never saw combat, while the other served in the National Guard and is currently active in the Army Reserves, with his last deployment to wartime Iraq. In

addition, these two men enrolled in very different programs with diverse philosophical orientations, affiliations and program designs. They are employed by different school systems as well, with one pursuing English education at the middle school level and one at the high school level.

With these many differences, it is fascinating that I am able to tell a single vocational meta-story. On the surface, Rob's and Thomas' personalities and experiences are vastly divergent, but the essence of their transition experiences is similar. Perhaps in *The Teacher's Homecoming* there is a kernel of the essence of what it is to come to experience *being* as military man turned teacher.

Living in these questions has provided an opening for thoughtful consideration of becoming and the development of a vocational spirit in military career changers. I hope my study serves as a call to educators to join together, "not to be cut off, / not through the slightest partition" (Rilke, 1995), and commence on a communal journey with the military career changers in our care. To where will we travel? Toward a center of being, in interdependence and deep with the winds of vocational homecoming.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Page 1 of 4  
Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **CONSENT FORM**

<b>Project Title</b>	Understanding Vocational Identity Development of Military Career Changers
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	<i>This is a research project being conducted by Ms. Kimberly Fleming under the direction of Dr. Joseph McCaleb at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are making a transition from the military to teaching. The purpose of this research project is to document the process of vocational identity development for troops who become teachers. Information from this research may be used to help others make successful transitions from the military to the classroom and to improve the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program and the teacher preparation programs that serve TTT candidates.</i>
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	<p><i>You will be asked to participate in three conversations related to your vocational history, once in Summer 2007, once in Fall 2007, and once in Winter 2008. Each of these conversations will last 90 minutes, and conversations will be audiotaped for the researcher's use.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, you will be observed three times in three different educational settings, for a total of nine observations. Observations will focus on your participation in these settings as it relates to the development of your vocational identity. You will be involved in the selection of settings that contribute to the development of your identity as a teacher. Settings may include a teacher preparation course, a teacher workgroup, a grade level team, a staff development course, or any other setting in which educators join together to pursue an educational goal. Observations will last for the duration of the meeting and will be audiotaped and/or videotaped for the researcher's use.</i></p> <p><i>After each observation, you will be asked to participate in a 20-minute debriefing with the researcher, for a total of nine observational debriefings. In the debriefing, you will be asked to offer your interpretation of observed events. Debriefings will be audiotaped for the researcher's use.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, you will be asked to provide the researcher with copies of artifacts (assignments, handouts, agendas, etc.) produced or obtained during your participation in observed sessions.</i></p>

<b>Project Title</b>	Understanding Vocational Identity Development of Military Career Changers
<b>What about confidentiality?</b>	<p><i>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used to refer to you, your school, and your teacher preparation program in any report or article written about this research project. Only the researcher will possess the key linking the pseudonyms with actual identities. Electronic data will be stored on the researcher's computer, protected with a password. Hard data will be stored in a file in the researcher's private home.</i></p> <p><i>This research project involves making audiotapes and videotapes of you for the researcher's use. In addition, a private transcriber will have access to audiotaped and videotaped data during the transcription process. All recordings will be marked using pseudonyms. In addition, the transcriber will sign a confidentiality clause in her employment contract. All recorded and transcribed data will be destroyed within three years of completion of the project.</i></p> <p>___ <i>I agree to be audiotaped/videotaped during my participation in this study. I understand that I may request that the recording device(s) be turned off at any time.</i></p> <p>___ <i>I do not agree to be audiotaped/videotaped during my participation in this study.</i></p> <p><i>Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.</i></p>
<b>What are the risks of this research?</b>	<p><i>There may be some risks from participating in this research study. This research requires you to engage in a deep level of reflection surrounding your worklife and vocational identity. It is possible that you may experience discomfort, anxiety, false hope, guilt, or self-doubt, and your participation may result in changes in priority or expectation that affect your career path in unforeseen ways. You may also be affected socially if insiders are able to identify you despite efforts to ensure your confidentiality. For this reason, you will be consulted regarding the inclusion of potentially damaging data in final research reports or publications.</i></p>

<p><b>Project Title</b></p>	<p>Understanding Vocational Identity Development of Military Career Changers</p>
<p><b>What are the benefits of this research?</b></p>	<p><i>The same focused reflection on worklife and vocational identity that has the potential to cause unpleasant feelings has a great potential to offer hope, increased awareness, moral stimulation, insight, a sense of liberation, or a certain thoughtfulness that may make your transition to teaching more fulfilling. You may experience new depths of self-awareness, possible changes in your worklife, and changed priorities. These changes may affect your career path in unforeseen ways.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, this research may help the researcher learn more about the process of vocational identity development for military career changers. We hope that, in the future, Troops to Teachers participants, state managers, and personnel who develop and implement teacher preparation and induction programs might benefit from this study through improved understanding of this process.</i></p>
<p><b>Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?</b></p>	<p><i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. Participation is not a requirement of the Troops to Teachers program or your teacher preparation program. It is not linked to grades, stipends, or bonuses in any way.</i></p>
<p><b>What if I have questions?</b></p>	<p><i>This research is being conducted by <b>Ms. Kimberly Fleming</b> under the direction of Dr. Joseph McCaleb, Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Ms. Kimberly Fleming at 410-371-5906 or <a href="mailto:kimfleming@comcast.net">kimfleming@comcast.net</a> or Dr. Joseph McCaleb at: 301-405-3133 or <a href="mailto:jlm@umd.edu">jlm@umd.edu</a>.</i></p> <p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i>  <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678 or Patricia Alt, Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at Towson University, (410) 704-2236.</b></p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB and Towson University IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>

<b>Project Title</b>	Understanding Vocational Identity Development of Military Career Changers	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</b>	<i>Your signature indicates that:          you are at least 18 years of age;          the research has been explained to you;          your questions have been fully answered; and          you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.</i>	
<b>Signature and Date</b>	<b>NAME OF SUBJECT</b>	
	<b>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT</b>	
	<b>DATE</b>	

## Appendix B: Research Questions

### Overarching Question

What is the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for military career changers as they become teachers?

### Sub-Questions

1. What happens when former military personnel engage with various communities of practice during their teacher preparation/induction to teaching?

- a. What types of personal narratives and other stories are told by co-researchers in the context of each community of practice, and what elements and motifs do these stories share? Do the stories or types of stories change over time?
- b. What metaphors are used by co-researchers within the context of each community of practice?
- c. What conceptual tools are used by the co-researchers within the context of each community of practice?
- d. What practical tools are used by the co-researchers within the context of each community of practice?
- e. What imagined futures are expressed by the co-researchers in the context of each community of practice?
- f. What are the constraints and affordances of vocational identity development in each community of practice?
  - (1) What social structures are prevalent in each community of practice?
  - (2) What narrative structures, metaphors, conceptual tools and practical tools are prevalent in each community of practice?
  - (3) In what manner do these structures, tools, and the place in which the community gathers call for the enactment of certain professional identities?
  - (4) In what ways are co-researchers attuned to these situational constraints and affordances?
- g. How do the co-researchers negotiate vocational identity within each community of practice?

2. How does a co-researcher's participation in multiple learning communities interact with the person's personal memories and imagined futures to create an individual trajectory of vocational identity development?

- a. How does a co-researcher revise his personal vocational memories and imagined future(s) during the course of teacher preparation and induction? In what ways are these narrative re-visionings related to co-researcher participation in communities of practice?

- b. How does a co-researcher revise his metaphorical thinking about teaching during the course of teacher preparation and induction? In what ways are these metaphorical revisionings related to co-researcher participation in communities of practice?
- c. How do co-researchers explain the relationship among their enacted identities in each community of practice and their global view of themselves as teachers?
- d. How does a co-researcher's nexus of multimembership facilitate or frustrate vocational identity development? In what ways are co-researchers attuned to these constraints and affordances?
- e. How do co-researchers explain the relationship among personal memories, imagined futures and their view of themselves as teachers?
- f. What narrative genres and elements can be used to describe the process of vocational identity development for military career changers?

Appendix C: Alignment of Research Questions with Data Collection Instruments

Overarching Question: What is the sociocultural process of vocational identity development for military career changers as they become teachers?

<b>Subquestions:</b>	Vocational Story Conversations	Observations in Community	Debriefings	Artifacts	Hermeneutical Research Journal
1. What happens when former military personnel engage with various communities of practice during their teacher preparation/induction to teaching?		X	X	X	X
1a. What types of personal narratives and other stories are told by co-researchers in the context of each community of practice, and what elements and motifs do these stories share? Do the stories or types of stories change over time?		X		X	X
1b. What metaphors are used by co-researchers within the context of each community of practice?		X		X	X
1c. What conceptual tools are used by the co-researchers within the context of each community of practice?		X	X	X	X
1d. What practical tools are used by the co-researchers within the context of each community of practice?		X	X	X	X
1e. What imagined futures are expressed by the co-researchers in the context of each community of practice?		X	X	X	X
1f. What are the constraints and affordances of vocational identity development in each community of practice? What social structures are prevalent in each community of practice? What narrative structures, metaphors, conceptual tools and practical tools are prevalent in each community of practice? In what manner do these structures, tools and the place in which the community gathers call for the enactment of certain professional identities? In what ways are co-researchers attuned to these situational constraints and affordances?		X	X	X	X
1g. How do the co-researchers negotiate vocational identity within each community of practice?		X	X	X	X

<b>Subquestions:</b>	Vocational Story Conversations	Observations in Community	Debriefings	Artifacts	Hermeneutical Research Journal
2. How does a co-researcher's participation in multiple learning communities interact with the person's personal memories and imagined futures to create an individual trajectory of vocational identity development?	X	X	X	X	X
2a. How does a co-researcher revise his personal vocational memories and imagined future(s) during the course of teacher preparation and induction? In what ways are these narrative re-visionings related to co-researcher participation in communities of practice?	X	X	X		X
2b. How does a co-researcher revise his metaphorical thinking about teaching during the course of teacher preparation and induction? In what ways are these metaphorical revisionings related to co-researcher participation in communities of practice?	X	X	X	X	X
2c. How do co-researchers explain the relationship among their enacted identities in each community of practice and their global view of themselves as teachers?	X		X		X
2d. How does a co-researcher's nexus of multimembership facilitate or frustrate vocational identity development? In what ways are co-researchers attuned to these constraints and affordances?	X	X	X	X	X
2e. How do co-researchers explain the relationship among personal memories, imagined futures and their view of themselves as teachers?	X				X
2f. What narrative genres and elements can be used to describe the process of vocational identity development for military career changers?	X				X

## Appendix D: Vocational Story Conversation

### Conversation Guide

*Note: The following represents one possible format for the vocational story conversation. At all times, the spirit of the conversation should dictate the direction of the discussion, with vocational story maintained as the phenomenon of interest.*

#### Vocational Story Conversation #1

##### Part I – Major Chapters

Organize your paid worklife into chapters. Describe the contents of each chapter.

##### Part II – Significant Scenes

Describe high points, low points, and turning points in your vocational life.

##### Part III – Next Chapter

Project what your next chapter will include.

#### Vocational Story Conversation #2

##### Part I – Revisions to Chapter Headings

##### Part II – Addition of Significant Scenes

Describe high points, low points, and turning points from your vocational past that are significant to you as you transition to teaching.

##### Part III – Elaboration of Current Chapter

Describe current chapter, including significant scenes.

##### Part IV – Teaching Metaphor

When I am teaching at my best, I am a/an \_\_\_\_\_. Explain.

#### Vocational Story Conversation #3

##### Part I – Revisions to Chapter Headings

##### Part II – Addition of Significant Scenes

Describe high points, low points, and turning points from your vocational past that are significant to you as you transition to teaching.

##### Part III – Elaboration of Current Chapter

Describe current chapter, including significant scenes.

##### Part IV – Projected Future

Project the chapters to come, including a brief description of their contents.

## Appendix E: Observational Debriefing

### Conversation Guide

Possible Topics of Conversation include the following:

Affective response to observed session  
Co-researcher engagement with community  
Alignment of personal goals with community goals  
Judgment of usefulness of conceptual and practical tools offered  
Thinking behind actions and interactions  
Meaning underlying actions, interactions, and various tools used

Sample questions:

How did tonight's session make you feel?  
How would you characterize the relationship of the seminar leader to the participants?  
To what extent did you feel engaged in the session?  
In what ways did you (or did you not) find the session meaningful?  
What did you find most intriguing or useful in this class session?  
What did you find confusing or puzzling?  
What was going through your mind when you said \_\_\_\_\_?  
What made you choose to \_\_\_\_\_?  
What did it mean when you said \_\_\_\_\_?  
How do you intend to use \_\_\_\_\_?

## Appendix F: Co-Researcher Update

Thomas

When Thomas returned after winter break, he continued to teach his eleventh grade classes and began to meet with small groups of tenth graders being prepared for the high school assessment. He used an alternate curriculum and felt successful in finding ways to keep the students engaged. As the school year ended, Thomas passed his Praxis pedagogy test, received a satisfactory evaluation from his administrator, completed his Resident Teacher Program, and received his standard professional teaching certificate from the state certification office.

Due to budget issues, Parkview was required to surplus 16 teachers at the end of the school year, and Thomas was on the list due to his novice status. Luckily, the principal was able to restore three positions before school began in August, and Thomas was able to return. At the start of the 2008-2009 school year, Thomas was teaching eleventh and twelfth grade English at Parkview Military Academy. He describes his year as starting off “much better.” He is currently getting used to teaching 170 students.

Rob

Immediately after winter break, Rob completed a one week long-term substitute experience while he contemplated taking the position as a permanent teacher. In Rob’s words, the students were “wild,” and Rob was relieved when an 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language arts and social studies co-teaching position opened up at Madison Middle School. A teacher had resigned due to discipline issues, and Rob was able to step in, “militaristic style.” Rob describes his teaching as being very successful. He began an Armed Forces Fitness Program as an afterschool activity and was asked to formalize it for a grant and for implementation at other schools.

Rob also completed his coursework at Bachman. His final portfolio review was a problem, and he had to miss his drill weekend in order to do some last-minute revisions, but Mr. Green was in charge of Rob’s final portfolio evaluation, and, according to Rob, “He loved it.” Rob’s mother came to see him graduate.

During the summer, Rob acted as director of an Ellis County teen camp and planned his lessons for the following year. He is currently continuing in the eighth grade language arts/social studies position at Madison. Rob describes himself as a highly successful teacher and admits that more than one of his colleagues has come to observe and learn from him. Rob remains involved in the Armed Forces Fitness Program and runs a Video Comic Club at Madison. He has decided to put off his officer training until after he has completed a full year of teaching, unless he resigns his commission first.

## Appendix G: Sample Hermeneutical Research Journal Entry

6/21/07

I always kick myself for turning off my tape recorder. It seems like the best things are said the minute the recorder is turned off (or maybe BECAUSE the recorder is turned off?). When we were “done” our conversation and packing up to go, Rob looked at me and said, “This time in the classroom -- I feel like I have just started to live my life.” I asked what time in the classroom he was referring to and he explained that he was talking about his long-term sub experience in Ellis County. Even though the department chair did not recommend him for a teaching position there in the fall, he said that he is just starting to feel like he has got it together. He is going to be on top of things and pay his bills and take care of what needs to be taken care of. I told him if it made him feel better, that I am not on top of things either. He said that didn’t help.

How much of this has to do with identity, and the fact that Rob has finally allowed himself to be what he wants to be? He was doing so much to please others, namely, his fiancée who ended up an ex-fiancée. He even began an MBA program when he didn’t have any desire to be an MBA. Is he finally living the life that is his life’s work? Is that why he was able to deal with the department chair’s criticisms so professionally and be honest with himself about where she was right and where she was wrong?

Rob and I had a good conversation. He has had a lot more ups and downs in his life than I have had. I think it has much to do with the fact that his relationships have fluctuated and mine have been stable. He seems so “together,” I have a difficult time imagining him being so depressed and drinking his life away. (What does it mean to be “together”? Together with whom or what?) I am puzzled at how Rob was able to pull himself out of such a deep depression. Was it really the fact that the money was gone and he had to pull himself up by the bootstraps? Or was there something more to it? Did he hit rock bottom? Where did he find hope?

It seems that this happened one other time in his life -- when his mother was going to remarry and he went to live with his grandmother. Those two times in life seem somehow connected -- perhaps through the GED. He was down and out, wasn’t going to graduate, wasn’t about to give in to the people at the school by turning in his work he had done. So, he went that night and passed the GED. Later when he was away (Iraq), he spent some time preparing kids for the GED. That seemed to spark his interest in teaching. (Perhaps there was an equally low time when he was in Iraq that we didn’t cover?) This last low point was turned around with his decision to teach.

Have all of Rob’s low points been turning points?

I am curious about why he refers to his deployment as his time “away.” He speaks of it as in “When I was away, and then I came back, I felt like I missed so much!” If I didn’t already know, I would have no idea he had been to war. How much is buried under these terms? What was he away from? Himself?

When Rob first explained his history of his paid worklife, he completely left out any reference to the military. Does he not consider it paid work? Or has he bracketed off his experiences in the Army away from his civilian experiences? What were his high points, low points, and turning points of military service?

There are also issues of outsider/insider to explore. Rob felt like an outsider when he was sent to a private high school. He also felt like an outsider at his Middle School where he substituted. He said it was like the Army – Don’t make friends with the new guy, he won’t be around long. It was an attitude of okay, if you’ve been to battle and survived, maybe we’ll take the time to get to know you. Where is Rob an insider? Maybe at Bachman? What are you “inside” when you are an “insider”? Is this related to community of practice?

## Appendix H: Discussion Guide to Accompany *The Teacher's Homecoming*

### Due East:

Who or what calls you to teach?

Who are the teacher models you emulate?

Why are these individuals your models?

What metaphor best describes the work of a master teacher?

Describe your imagined self at the pinnacle of your teaching career.

What do you fear as you enter the classroom?

### Looking Back:

What past experiences are significant to you as you become a teacher?

Have you ever experienced a career change or life change?

How is your experience with career or life change instructive to you?

To what extent can you be *yourself* as a teacher?

What portions of yourself do you exclude from classroom life?

What are the benefits of excluding these portions of self?

What are the benefits of integrating them?

### The Elders:

To what extent are the various communities of practice in which you participate coordinated with one another?

With which community do you most closely identify?

In what ways do you contribute to your various communities of practice?

To what extent do you experience interdependence with other community members?

How might your practice-based communities become learning communities?

How do teachers relate to one another? To students? To parents? To team leaders? To administrators? To supervisors? To policy makers?

How might these relations be transformed?

### The Villagers:

What do you know about youth culture?

What do you know about the specific students in your class?

How can you find out more about youth culture and your specific students?

What are your students' goals for themselves?

What are your students' fears?

In what ways is your subject relevant to the being of students?

How can you assist students in their own journeys of becoming or coming of age experiences?

How can you develop a sense of interdependence within your classroom community?

The Satchel of Feathers:

What draws you to your curricular field?

What are the big ideas of your subject?

How do you make meaning in your subject area?

How can you guide students in engaging with the subject in a similar way while preserving their own right to make meaning?

Crystal Waters:

What does it mean to *become* a teacher?

How do you know when you speak with your true voice as a teacher?

From where does authority emerge?

What is gained by embracing the shadows we cast?

In what way can these shadowy parts call forth our virtues and inspire hope?

What do teachers need to thrive in their vocation?

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