

A PROCESS OF DEFINITION

Studies of teacher professional identity development in communities of practice at a KIPP school

by

Tanya Renee Rose

B.A., DePaul University, 1996

M.A., Stanford University, 2003

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Education

2013

*This thesis entitled:
A process of definition:
Studies of teacher professional identity development in communities of practice at a KIPP school
written by Tanya Renee Rose
has been approved for the School of Education*

Dr. Dan Liston

Dr. Susan Jurow

Date _____

*The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.*

IRB protocol # 1008.6

Abstract

Rose, Tanya Renee (Ph.D., Education)

A process of definition:

Studies of teacher professional identity development in communities of practice at a KIPP school

Thesis directed by Professor Dan Liston and Associate Professor Susan Jurow

Teacher professional identity plays a key role in teacher effectiveness and retention and has a direct impact on classroom practice. While there are many factors that contribute to the development of that identity, much of the focus in the literature has been on the individual. Social practice and interaction, however, play equally important roles in a teacher's identity formation and growth. The purpose of this study is to more deeply explore the intersection of the individual teacher's experiences and history and the individual's participation in communities of practice in that identity development and the impact of that overlap in her understanding of her role as a teacher.

Grounded in research on communities of practice and drawing on the theory of habitus, this study took place in a specific context - a Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) school - and included three case studies of teachers there. It focused on the early influences and histories of the individuals, their professional experiences, and their participation in communities of practice while at the KIPP school. Research data were collected through individual interviews, classroom and professional development and meeting observations and artifact collection. The subjects' learning trajectories provided insight into the ways in which habitus and personal history merge with professional interaction and development to form an understanding of their roles as educators.

To Stephen and Annika, for things a long time in coming and worth all the wait.

Acknowledgements

This work has been my own process of becoming. It has spanned the course of many years, many changes in my life, and many, many important and beloved people. Thank you to my mom, Marlene Laib, and my dad, Gary Rose, who always believed in what I was doing, even if they weren't always sure exactly what that was. I am also grateful for the unwavering support of the rest of my family – Tia, Tara, Matt, Kirsta, Lisa, Margery, Michael, Bailey, Doug, and Eliza – who helped to keep me going.

Thank you to my committee, Jennie Whitcomb, Ben Kirshner, and Bob Craig; this work would truly have not been possible without your continued guidance and advice. To Dan Liston and Susan Jurow, my co-chairs, I want to extend deep gratitude for your perseverance, support, and friendship. It was with your guiding hands that I was able to see this to the end.

And then there are my friends. I am lucky to say that there have been more than I can fit in these pages but will to my best to acknowledge as many as possible. Thank you to: M.G. Saldivar, Sara Rabin, Holly Yettick, Julie Graves, Heather MacGillivray, Mary Hofstedt, Stacy Shriver, Katie Byrnes, Amy Saks, Julie Schneider, Jessica Teets, Florence Feiereisen, Mark Lewis, Patrick DeWalt, and everyone else along the way. I've been rich in life for the addition of all these amazing people.

Finally, thanks to my husband, Stephen Whiteman, and my daughter, Annika. Bumps in the road may have slowed us on the path but they made the journey even richer in the end.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|--------|
| Title page | i |
| Signature page | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| Acknowledgements | iv |
| Table of contents | v |
| List of tables | ix |
| List of figures | x |
| Chapter 1: Rationale | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Coming to and Learning about KIPP | 3 |
| Teachers, Communities of Practice, and Identity | 5 |
| The Context – KIPP Schools | 6 |
| Criticism and Support of KIPP Schools | 8 |
| Research Questions | 13 |
| Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review | 14 |
| Introduction | 14 |
| A Social Practice Perspective on Teacher Professional Identity Development | 15 |
| Examining Identity Development Through Social Practice | 16 |
| The Role of Habitus in Identity Development | 19 |
| Identity Development in Social Practice | 22 |
| Defining components of communities of practice | 25 |
| Cycles of participation and reification and “spaces of authoring” in communities of practice | 28 |
| Learning trajectories in communities of practice | 31 |
| Authoring Identities in and across Communities of Practice | 35 |
| Identity and experiences of power in communities of practice | 37 |
| Limitations of the Communities of Practice Lens in Understanding Identity Development | 39 |
| Literature Review – Seeding the “Conversation” of Identity Development | 40 |
| Role of Communities of Practice in Professional Identity Development | 41 |
| Communities of practice and teacher learning | 41 |
| Communities of practice and professional development | 44 |
| Communities of Practice as Spaces for Authoring Identity | 47 |
| The role of participatory tools | 47 |
| The role of participant roles and footing | 48 |
| The role of agency | 50 |
| The role of negotiation | 52 |
| The role of reificatory tools | 55 |
| Conclusion | 58 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 3: Methods | 60 |
| Introduction | 60 |
| Research Methodology | 61 |
| Research Setting | 62 |
| Participants | 63 |
| Methods of Data Collection | 67 |
| Individual Interviews | 67 |
| Observations | 69 |
| Classroom and school observations | 70 |
| Observation of departmental/faculty/professional development meetings | 70 |
| Artifact Collection | 72 |
| Statement of philosophy of education/teaching | 73 |
| Data Collection Concerns | 75 |
| HRC Considerations | 75 |
| Audio-Taping | 75 |
| Field Notes | 75 |
| Data Storage and Security | 77 |
| Validity Checks and Triangulation of Data | 77 |
| Member Checks | 78 |
| Researcher's Role | 79 |
| Data Analysis | 80 |
| Summary | 83 |
| Foreword to the Case Studies | 84 |
| Chapter 4: The Insider: Intentionally Crafting an Insider Trajectory | 89 |
| Introduction | 91 |
| Early Influences and Professional Experiences | 93 |
| Coming to and Working at KIPP | 99 |
| Participating at KIPP | 100 |
| "KIPP network" participation | 101 |
| School-wide participation | 104 |
| Departmental and grade-level participation | 105 |
| Conclusion | 108 |
| Chapter 5: The Seasoned Rookie: Brokering Practices across a Boundary Trajectory | 109 |
| Introduction | 110 |
| Early Influences and Professional Experiences | 112 |
| Coming to and Working at KIPP | 116 |
| Participating at KIPP | 118 |
| "KIPP network" participation | 119 |
| School-wide participation | 120 |
| Departmental and grade-level participation | 121 |
| Conclusion | 123 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 6: The Skeptic: Selectively Participating along a Peripheral Trajectory | 124 |
| Introduction | 126 |
| Early Influences and Professional Experiences | 127 |
| Coming to and Working at KIPP | 134 |
| Participating at KIPP | 135 |
| “KIPP network” participation | 135 |
| School-wide participation | 136 |
| Departmental and grade-level participation | 138 |
| Conclusion | 139 |
| Chapter 7: Summary and Analysis of Case Studies | 140 |
| Introduction | 140 |
| Discussion of Case Studies | 140 |
| Carolyn’s Trajectory of Learning and Authorship of Identity | 141 |
| Tim’s Trajectory of Learning and Authorship of Identity | 149 |
| Elizabeth’s Trajectory Learning and Authorship of Identity | 155 |
| Cross-Case Analysis | 159 |
| Lessons Learned | 164 |
| Significance | 166 |
| Limitations of the Study | 169 |
| Future Research Directions | 171 |
| References | 173 |
| Appendices | |
| Appendix A: The Five Pillars of KIPP | 180 |
| Appendix B: KIPP Commitment to Excellence sample contracts | 181 |
| Appendix C: Individual Teacher Interview Protocol | 182 |
| Appendix D: Individual Administrator Interview Protocol | 184 |
| Appendix E: Teacher Pathways and Leap Overview | 185 |
| Appendix F: Coding Table | 187 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Subject characteristics according to criteria | 66 |
| Table 2: Focus of observations | 72 |
| Table 3: Overview of data collection methods | 74 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1: Diagram of influence of Carolyn's participation history | 144 |
| Figure 2: Diagram of influence of Tim's participation history | 151 |
| Figure 3: Diagram of influence of Elizabeth's participation history | 158 |

Chapter 1: Rationale

Introduction

Over the past sixteen years, Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) schools have come to the forefront in the press as addressing the needs of underserved student populations. Much of the attention has been paid to the students who attend the schools, discussing the type of education KIPP employs and the success that it encourages in its students, primarily low-income Hispanic and African-American youth. This study, however, focuses on the teachers at a Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) school and examines their professional identity development. KIPP has built its schools upon a deliberate and clear framework that emphasizes uniformity and consistency across its sites nationwide, engendering a unique setting in which to examine the development of its teachers' professional identity. Using Etienne Wenger's (1998) concepts of *communities and constellations of practice*, this investigation explores the context provided through the KIPP model and the significance of *habitus, participant roles, and spaces of authoring*¹ within and at the intersection with communities of practice in teacher identity development.

The study was born from a combination of my own struggles with professional identity as a teacher and a curiosity about the environments in which teacher professional identity develops. What are the factors that encourage its growth and what elements can be detrimental? How do different teaching contexts and situations change the ways in which that identity develops? It was these questions among others that led generally to this study of teacher professional identity development as well as specifically to studying it in the context of KIPP schools.

¹ Italicized terms will be explained and discussed in the next section. Their introduction here is simply to establish the direction of the study.

My first year as a teacher I was twenty-two, fresh out of college, and feeling adrift – an experience not unlike that of many new teachers. I had entered a profession that was often based upon solo performance in front of a captive audience. In college, I had taken classes that had taught me how to write a lesson plan, ones focused on strategies for classroom management and others that trained me to use various types of assessment but none had offered substantive information how to BE a teacher. That was up to me.

Through my teacher-training program in college, I learned about educational theory and policy; I observed other teachers at work; and I studied the history of schools and education in the United States. As a result, I formed my own positions about what I thought teaching and learning should look like in an ideal classroom, school, and even country. I envisioned myself becoming just like my favorite high school teacher, only better. I would employ the progressive techniques I had learned: cooperative learning, creative expression, and other similar classroom tactics.

But it wasn't just what I had learned in school that I brought to the professional identity I had conceived of for myself. I found that I drew from my own experiences as a student, as a girl growing up in a working class, suburban family, as a college educated daughter of high school educated parents and as a woman who had traveled both domestically and internationally. As I talked to other teachers at faculty meetings and during lunches and planning periods, I soon found myself drawing on their advice, stories, and practices.

Over the years and as I continued to evolve and develop as an educator, it became clear that my patchwork identity was not unique in its construction. How I came to understand myself as a teacher was based only in a small part on what happened in my classroom after I closed the proverbial door. Rather, that understanding had come through the various individuals with which

I had interacted and communities in which I had taken part. My development was dependent upon not only a basic understanding of the tenets of teaching and learning but through participating in and belonging to groups that shared my views of, or at least my goals in teaching, that worked towards common goals in learning and that provided a basis for a familiar or at least comfortable framework in my practice.

Coming to and Learning about KIPP

I first heard about KIPP a few years after the first schools were opened. Even at that time, though, I knew little more about them than that they were (a) a system of charter schools and (b) they focused on underserved student populations. At this point, they had proven above average success with their target student population. However, my first exposures were less positive and more critical. Because my own educational interests have placed me in communities of more “liberal” educators – educators and academics who are interested in work in multicultural and “progressive” education and whose ideals align more with theorists and scholars such as John Dewey, Paolo Freire and Ted Sizer rather than with (early) Diane Ravitch, Chester Finn or E.D. Hirsch – my first understanding of KIPP was fairly negative.

Then, during a graduate school class on teacher professional development, a discussion about charter schools – one that included KIPP schools – spurred my interest. The conversation turned at one point to the ways that individuals are able to adapt their own personal histories to the techniques and theory they learn through teacher training programs (both college based and alternative) as well as to further adjust to the demands of the schools in which they work and the students that they teach.

As I gained greater understanding not only of educational practices and theory in general but of KIPP schools as well, I wondered about the almost single-minded criticisms of the schools

coming from my colleagues. How was it possible that KIPP continued to be so successful with its students, students who had been struggling or failing at other public schools? Further, as my interests in teacher education and development grew, I became more curious about that specific population in KIPP schools – the teachers.

There is an adage I had heard countless times throughout my own educational and professional career, “You teach what you know.” I knew from my own early experiences as a teacher that that was true to a great extent. More times than not I had fallen back to pedagogical methods that were familiar to me through my own experiences as a student. At KIPP, though the teacher population was slightly more diverse than at other public schools (Mathews, 2009), it remained primarily white, female and middle-class (Garrad and Barth, 2009). They were often deliberate in their choice of teaching at a KIPP school, a place whose student population was very different than their own schooling experiences in race, culture and socioeconomic background.

Further, KIPP developed an atmosphere that relied both upon more “traditional” approaches to education (such as discipline and hierarchical power structures – see Appendix A: The Five Pillars of KIPP) as well as more “progressive” methods (such as breaking away from the traditional literary canon and, in schools serving primarily Hispanic and Latino populations, weaving Spanish and English together to deliver the curriculum). In order to create that atmosphere, there was a reliance upon the individuals within each school, individuals who come together as communities of practice through the mission and methods at their KIPP school. Further, teachers, students, and parents alike are asked to sign “Commitment to Excellent” pledges (see Appendix B) that outline the expectations that the school puts forth for each individual. The purpose of these pledges further illuminates KIPP’s effort to create a community,

“KIPP is a partnership among parents, students, and teachers that puts learning first. All three parties sign a learning pledge called the "Commitment to Excellence," which ensures that each will do whatever it takes to help the student learn.” (www.kipp.org)

Teachers, Communities of Practice, and Identity

“Depending on grade level, subject area, prior education, and type of student served, teachers vary in their understanding of the goals of teaching, the purposes of education, the structure of the curriculum, the role of testing, and just about anything that has to do with teaching” (Wineberg & Grossman, 2000, p. 947). This range of goals, purposes, structures and roles makes it all the more important to study and uncover the commonalities that do exist in developing identities and creating the communities that support those identities.

In the context of this study, communities of practice serve as a context to which teachers bring their past experiences and beliefs and interact with other more experienced individuals within a common practice. Within the communities of practice, those beliefs interact with other individuals’ beliefs, as well as with developed community practices, such as discourse and professional development activities. This interaction produces a dynamic relationship between the individual and the community, resulting in shifts and changes in both the original individual beliefs and community practices. As a result, the community of practice shifts, as does the individual’s identity vis-a-vis his understandings of his role in that community and the roles of his beliefs in the context of that community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Participation in various communities of practice offers more possibilities for interaction and learning. It is through these possibilities that individuals develop and grow their identities (Eckert, 2006; Lave, 1996)

“People develop as participants in cultural communities. Their development can be understood only in the light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their community” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 3). The formation and development of communities of practice also involves the negotiation of identities of individuals within that community. Because identity is both self-defined and shaped by social constructions of roles, the relations between communities of practice and identity are interlinked. The concept of identity serves as a pivot point between the social and the individual; as a result, each can be talked about in terms of each other (Wenger, 1998, p. 145).

In the somewhat individual and, at times, isolated practice of teaching, communities of practice help to provide a network of other individuals who share beliefs and practices in the “pursuit of a shared enterprise.” “We all have our own theories and ways of understanding the world, and our communities of practice are places where we develop, negotiate and share them.” (Wenger, 1998, p. 48) Rather than simply co-existing alongside one another in a profession, as part of a community of practice, teachers co-practice. They are able to engage in their practice with others with whom they can share their methods, ideas and beliefs and through whom they can develop and grow those methods, ideas and beliefs. As such, it is in these communities of practice that individuals are also able to develop, negotiate and share their identities and roles in specific contexts.

The Context – KIPP Schools

Lortie (1975) demonstrates the role of the school in shaping the teacher. He states that “[t]he school as an organization shapes and changes the teacher, framing teacher socialization more in terms of structural accommodation than individual identity” (in Proweller & Mitchener, 2004, pp. 1044-1045). Though the general understanding of teacher development has expanded

since Lortie's publication, the school context has maintained a position of influence in teacher identity development.

In 1994, two former Teach for America (TFA) teachers, Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin, opened the first KIPP school in inner-city Houston. They based the school curriculum and philosophy on their TFA training, described through the five pillars of the model: high expectations for behavior and academic performance, with a college-prep emphasis; choice by families and faculty to join; extended school time, including longer days and Saturday classes; substantial autonomy for principals in school operations, instruction, and hiring; and a focus on strong results on standardized tests and other measures (KIPP website; Robelen, 2006).

After opening several more schools across the country, the KIPP Foundation was established in 2000. Through a grant from Gap, Inc. founders Doris and Donald Fisher, the KIPP Foundation developed a program through which it was able to recruit and train teachers to open KIPP schools in needy districts. Each school is an entity unto itself in many ways – each school must find its own school site and building as well as funding. In addition, the principal at each school is responsible for hiring the faculty and staff at that school; it is entirely a localized decision. The KIPP Foundation offers support in negotiating contracts as well as offering continuing training for the teachers and other faculty and staff at the individual schools. (KIPP website; Mathews, 2009; Tough, 2006).

KIPP schools tend to employ fairly “conservative” methods in its approach to teaching and learning for the students it serves; it is sometimes described as “traditional and teacher-centric” (Ellison, 2012). There is a focus on behavioral uniformity and classroom discipline. As Ellison (2012) explains:

A dominant instructional strategy is SLANT [which stands for Sit up straight, Look and listen, Ask and answer questions, Nod to show understanding and Track the speaker] . . . and constitutes the backbone of student learning centered around direct instructional practices, timed drills, continuous assessment, and the extensive use of mnemonic devices and inspirational chants. (p. 553)

In addition, the math and science curriculum for the 5th grade (the entry grade for the middle schools) is scripted and focuses on building basic skills and ensuring that all students leave the 5th grade at the same (or similar) levels. Built on its five pillars, KIPP's approach is sometimes a direct contradiction to more "progressive" approaches to teaching.

At the same time, these schools attract teachers that, for the most part, have taught in alternative settings. Many of them are Teach for America graduates (Garrad and Barth, 2009). Some have been trained through schools of education, learning approaches focused on and built around multicultural education. The teachers at the KIPP school in which this study was based often quoted or referenced John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and Lisa Delpit among other "progressive" educators. Despite the long work hours and after hours "on-call" shifts (among other responsibilities KIPP teachers face that teachers at other public schools do not), most of these teachers intentionally seek out positions at KIPP schools.

Criticism and Support of KIPP Schools

As an educator with progressive tendencies, I find KIPP to be an interesting case. Almost since its inception, KIPP has fallen prey to attacks and criticisms from more liberal individuals in the education community while becoming the darling of the many conservatives. At the same time, KIPP has expanded over its fifteen years of existence to include 125 schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia (www.kipp.org). Further, the model KIPP has been adopted and

served as the basis for the practices of several other charter schools across the country, including the Achievement First/Amistad and Uncommon Ground schools (Tough, 2006). KIPP offers a unique approach because of its local aspect within a larger national context – the local school frames the development of teachers’ identities but is impacted by the national framework, which is defined by specific norms and practices

Like charter schools in general, KIPP has encountered both proponents and critics among academics, educators, policy makers and the public in general. It has been at or near the heart of many debates, including discussions about charter schools, the achievement gap, and student success. Much of the conversation surrounding KIPP is focused on the students in the schools, including their success rates, the demographics of the schools’ populations, and the effectiveness of the instruction at KIPP.

Nearly since its inception, KIPP has received praise for its work with underserved and underprepared student populations. These accolades tend to focus on student progress and improved student outcomes (SRI International, 2008; EPI, 2005), including test scores gains (Woodworth et al, 2008), matriculation rates, and comparisons to national norms (Center for Research in Educational Policy, 2004). The most recent study conducted by Mathematica (2013) describes the positive outcomes achieved at KIPP schools:

A large majority of the individual KIPP schools . . . show positive impacts on student achievement as measured by scores on state-mandated assessments. KIPP produces similar positive impacts on the norm-referenced test, which includes items assessing higher-order thinking. Estimated impacts on measures of student attitudes and behavior are less frequently positive, but [there is] evidence that KIPP leads students to spend

significantly more time on homework, and that KIPP increases levels of student and parent satisfaction with school. (p, iii)

However, while the exposure that KIPP receives is generally positive, there has also been criticism that these schools skew the data by picking the “cream of the crop” to attend their schools and as a result of attrition that potentially eliminates lower-performing students from the population (Henig, 2008; Holovach, Dorko & Robelen, 2007; Rothstein, 2004). Further, though, the critique of many of the more positive studies is that they are often comparing apples and oranges. That is, when looking at student achievement at KIPP schools in comparison to other public schools, for example, it is significant that students at KIPP schools spend not an insubstantial amount more time at school than their public school counterparts. In his “opposing view”, Welner (2013) argues that KIPP provides approximately 45% more school time than in conventional public schools. Moreover, KIPP just has more money – “as much as \$5,760 more per pupil than local school districts.” These differences, he argues, play a part in the gains that these reports are showing.

The criticism of KIPP also takes a more substantial form. Some scholars have noted that the climate and focus at KIPP schools reproduce an inequitable social order through curriculum and pedagogy built around strict discipline, teacher-centered classrooms, and an environment that promotes individual promotion and “capitalistic ideology” (Lack, 2008; Goldenberg, 2012). In addition, these students tend to have more involved parents who take the initiative to seek out opportunities for their children. What’s more, it is often the more motivated students that succeed in these schools, pushing out those who may need more attention or assistance to achieve higher levels of success. (Wells et al, 1999; Lack, 2008).

Through this attention, both positive and otherwise, KIPP has established itself in the larger educational community. At the least, its continued growth and reported success has had a notable impact in the national landscape of schools. For all intents and purposes, the “No Excuses” charter school model originated with KIPP. This template is grounded in the principles behind KIPP’s five pillars (discussed earlier) and focused on school success for low-income students. Further, it serves as foundation for many other charter groups, including Achievement First, YESPrep, and Aspire schools.

In addition, its increasing visibility has made KIPP a major player in discussions about the achievement gap and changing college demographics and completion rates (Education News, 2011; Rotherham, 2011; Riddell, 2013). Focused on getting the students it serves to college, KIPP schools have emphasized the skills they felt most important to that trajectory, namely academic and social skills specific to that level of achievement.

While none of this is to imply that KIPP is the only or primary influence in these discussions, it is nonetheless an important part of them – both as an actor and as an object of the discourse. As such, individuals on both sides of the divide have formed opinions about KIPP’s schools, students, parents and even the teachers. I myself, even throughout this study, made assumptions about the individuals I observed in the schools, largely as a result of my own academic and professional positioning.

However, one important purpose of this study was to more fully understand the roles that both the KIPP institution and the individual teacher played in that teacher’s development of professional identity. It was important to see them independent of one another, rather than blurring the lines in such a way that they became indiscernible. Through a careful analysis of both the intersection of the individual teachers and the KIPP communities in which they

participate as well as the ways in which each of those components operated independently, I hoped to better understand the trajectories of identity development in this specific context.

Research Questions

While much of the attention that KIPP schools receive focuses on its students, an implicit dialogue exists about its teachers. Along with a higher salary than conventional public schools, teachers face higher expectations such as greater availability to students (teachers are supplied with cell phones so that students and parents can reach them until as late as 10:00 pm), longer days and weeks (including class on some Saturdays), and expanded responsibilities (recruiting students and visiting parents in their homes).

This study is not intended to shine a spotlight on the instructional practices in place in KIPP schools nor is it an examination of the students who attend those schools. Rather, this inquiry is focused on the teachers at a KIPP school. I was interested in how individuals at KIPP schools are supported to form and develop their identities as teachers. In an effort to unravel this identity formation, I was interested in looking at what preparation and philosophies of teaching and learning they were bringing with them to KIPP, what professional training and support they received while there, the types of participation in which they engaged, and how they (the teachers), in turn, used these elements in the development and support of their professional identity.

Though there have been a number of studies that discuss and explore teacher professional identity development, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning teacher professional identity. This study looks to explore teacher professional identity and the factors that come into play in its development. A teacher's professional identity is fostered and grown through a

combination of various factors all coming into play in the different *communities of practice* that exist, including those in the classroom, the school and the larger educational community as well as the teacher's personal history and experiences. In attempting to better understand how teachers develop these identities, it is vital to consider the mediating factors that come into play and the ways in which they affect and impact one another within communities of practice. The study is guided by three primary research questions intended to examine the intersection between personal history and dispositions and participation in teachers' professional communities of practice as a place in which teachers' professional identities are grown and developed.

- 1) In what types of communities of practice do teachers at a KIPP school participate?
- 2) How do the available forms of engagement in these communities shape participants' identity trajectories and opportunities for learning?
- 3) How do the teachers author their professional identities in and across these communities of practice?

Through case studies, this inquiry explores these questions through the experiences of three teachers in a KIPP school, documenting their interactions with and reactions to other individuals in their institution as well as investigating the influences and predispositions they bring with them to their profession. By peering into the personal journeys of these individuals, these cases help to develop a lens through which to begin to better understand the ways in which teachers' identities are authored and reauthored, both through individual experience and through social interaction.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

The art of becoming a teacher is a complex process of socialization into a community of practice.

Proweller and Mitchener, 2004, p. 1044

Introduction

In this study of teacher professional identity development, communities of practice provide a lens through which to better understand the constant “process of becoming” (Wenger, 1998). Participation in these communities provides teachers with access to other teachers with various kinds of expertise as well as to the history of the community. This access allows not only for a context for participants’ learning but also for a potential for an expanded perspective on the practice of teaching and the profession as a whole. The interactions that occur as a matter of course in this participation and the meanings that the teachers derive from it contribute to the “process” that Proweller and Mitchener describe above. The questions that guide this investigation of the role of communities of practice in the development of teacher identity are:

- 1) In what types of communities of practice do teachers at a KIPP school participate?
- 2) How do the available forms of engagement in these communities shape participants’ identity trajectories and opportunities for learning?
- 3) How do the teachers author their professional identities in and across these communities of practice?

In this chapter, I first detail the conceptual framework that guided this study, focusing on how people learn as participants in communities of practice and how they engage in the authorship of their identities through and across these communities. I will begin with a general discussion of the study of identity and professional identity through a sociocultural lens in an effort to establish

my perspective on identity. I will then move to an examination of habitus, a feature important to this study in that it highlights the individual's role in identity as well as setting a foundation for better understanding their participation in communities of practice. From habitus, I will present communities of practice, exploring the important features and characteristics necessary for this study. As part of my examination of communities of practice, I will also introduce figured worlds and the space of authoring. These features enhance the discussion and add an important dimension to the role that these communities play in identity formation.

Finally, I will discuss the existing literature on the roles that communities of practice play and the tools used in identity development as a way not only to locate my study in relation to this body of work but also to further develop features of my conceptual framework. Through the examination of previous studies and developing an understanding not only of what discussions exist but also of the parts of the discussion that are missing from this body of literature, I will borrow important features from these authors, using them as instruments of analysis and examination in my study.

A Social Practice Perspective on Teacher Professional Identity Development

Professional identity . . . often takes on the form of a Gestalt: an unconscious body of needs, images, feelings, values, role models, previous experiences and behavioral tendencies, which together create a sense of identity. This Gestalt influences the outer levels of beliefs, competencies and behavior. (Korthagen, 2004, p. 83)

The practice of teaching is complex, affecting and affected by a multitude of factors including the students in the classroom, the learning culture at the school and even the larger educational climate. As Proweller and Mitchener (2004) state:

[T]eaching is a 'project' informed by the choices that teachers make in how they respond to the lives of those they are teaching and the contexts in which they practice.

The choices they make presage their own identities as teachers, an array of identity options for their students, and images of a moral and just society for the future. (p. 1057)

In an effort to better understand the process of becoming a teacher, it is helpful to examine not only the ways in which teachers are “responding”, but also to learn more about those things to which they are responding. Teacher professional identity is embedded not only in personal self-identity but also in teachers’ practices in the classroom, their interactions within the school, and their roles in the larger landscape of education (Mead, 1934; Gee, 1991; Cooper and Olsen, 1996). To study teacher professional identity development is not only to look at the individual but to also look beyond the teacher as an separate individual and to look at her in conjunction with the surrounding contexts.

Examining Identity Development Through Social Practice

In the history of psychology, Erik Erikson’s views have had a large impact on the study of identity. In his work, he saw and defined identity as rooted in and understood through the self. He presented the development of identity, particularly adolescent identity, through the use of stages, each possessing unique characteristics and markers. Although these psychosocial stages of identity development are a significant contribution to the examination of adolescent identity, his work does not provide the framework appropriate for a discussion of teacher professional identity. Rather, this study of teacher professional identity relies upon a sociocultural/social practice theory based understanding of identity. This approach emphasizes the role of the individual’s participation in practice and interaction and activity with others in the development of identity (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Taking a social practice based view of identity is important to this study for several reasons.

First, the focus here is the development of a teacher professional identity rather than a strictly personal identity. While it is true that the professional and personal identities cannot be completely separated from one another (Mead, 1932; Gee, 1991), looking at teacher identity through a sociocultural lens is particularly relevant due to the interactive and “transactional” nature of the profession itself. It is unrealistic to base any conversation of teacher identity on an isolated, abstracted notion of self.

Next, teacher identity will be presented as being embedded in the “larger historical and cultural story of education” (Cooper & Olsen, 1996, p. 81). This view of identity is significant here due to the nature of the school in which the focus teachers practice. In the larger story of education in the United States, Knowledge is Power Program, or KIPP, has played a notable part in the recent past. The teachers’ choices to teach at a KIPP school in and of itself plays an important role in understanding their approach to teaching and learning, but also puts them in a unique social context within which to develop their professional identities. Exploring the impact of not only their professional lives but also their social practice within this setting provides an important pathway to understanding their teacher identity development.

Finally, the fluidity and dynamic nature of identity viewed through a social practice lens emphasizes the importance and significance of constantly learning and growing as a teacher. Identity development is a process, one that will be an important key to the case studies presented here. Looking along a trajectory of experiences and learning, it will be possible to better locate and examine the influences on learning and, as a result, the development of identity.

In addition to these three elemental features, social practice theory emphasizes that agency and identity are socially negotiated through participation in a social setting, including the power dynamics inherent in each context. That is, it is the engagement in and interaction with

others that provide the contexts for navigating not only one's role but also one's contribution to that role. Further, meaning and learning are achieved through engagement with others through practice in "the socially and culturally constructed world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 57). This approach to identity includes the notion of identity as an understanding of oneself in relation to the roles an individual takes that matters to him (Holland & Lachiotte, p. 103). Important to this view of identity is an understanding of the effect of past experiences and personal beliefs as well as the ways in which community and society view the roles of the individual (Beijaard et al, 2004; Day, 2006; Olsen, 2008; Wenger, 1998). This creates a sense of self that is dynamic, changing to adapt to the shifts in the individual's role and her perception in society.

In contrast to Erikson's (1980) positioning of identity as something with an aim for stability and consistency, the sociocultural view of identity is of something that is not fixed (Beijaard et al, 2004; Settlage et al, 2009). Rather, it is constantly shifting, being defined and redefined in relation to changes in the context and in the negotiation of the environment (Beijaard et al, 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999). "Identity development is not the disclosure of a way of being that becomes stabilized once it surfaces. Instead, identities develop in concert within interactions with other individuals" (Settlage et al., 2009, p. 105).

In light of this lens for identity in general, teacher professional identity becomes a fluid, organic state that "provides a shared set of attributes, values, and so on so that enable the differentiation of [the teacher profession] from another" (Sachs, 2001, p. 153). For teachers, identity is "negotiated, open shifting, ambiguous, the result of culturally available meanings and the open-ended power-laden enactment of those meanings in everyday situations" (Sachs, 2001, p. 154). Teacher identity development is "circular even as it is also forward-moving: a teacher is always collapsing the past, present, and future into a complex *mélange* of professional beliefs,

goals, memories, and predictions while enacting practice.” (Olsen, 2008, p. 24) As such, it is important to understand teacher identity as the nexus of the teacher’s past, present and future experiences (Smith, 2006)

The Role of Habitus in Identity Development

Insight into a social practice approach to identity includes discussions of “habitus,” a concept based on a system of predisposed and developed attitudes and perceptions of and about the surrounding world. It is “the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them” (Wacquant, 2005, p. 316). It provides a lens through which the individual sees the world, affecting her interaction and participation in it and, as such, supplying access to better understanding the dynamics of the individual as part of a social group.

Bourdieu is credited with establishing the modern understanding of the concept of habitus. In his writings, he breaks the barrier between two seemingly competing notions of identity - one that is established and understood in an individual’s mind and another that is accessed through history, experience, and social interaction and participation. His definition describes habitus as obtained unconsciously, as being transferable to different contexts, and as enduring, all while guiding the conduct of ordinary recurrent activities:

The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presences of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms . . .

Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning. (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 54-55)

In this use of this term, the development and use of habitus is dependent upon the field, “a network, structure or set of relationships” that may be anything from social to intellectual, educational to cultural (Navarro, 2006, p. 18). As individuals participate in these fields, they “express and reproduce their dispositions and . . . compete for the distributions of different kinds of capital” (Gaventa, 2003, p. 6). Depending on the context of the field, the individual will experience power differently and, as a result, experience the distribution of capital – including social and cultural capital – variably. As the field changes, however, so does habitus. The variation in experiences of power directly impacts the influence of the habitus. It is in this way that habitus becomes an important feature to this discussion of identity.

Because habitus is the raw data from which individuals can draw to access a new experience or unfamiliar territory, the ways and contexts in which it is acquired become relevant and important to an understanding of identity development. As the individual enters into different contexts and participates in new fields, she references, however unconsciously, her habitus. This directly impacts the ways in which she interacts with others, perceives situations and interprets new information. This mutual exchange between the individual and society, the mutual influence of individual habitus and social practice, make a discussion of habitus integral to a study of

identity. There are, however, limitations to the relationship between habitus and the investigation of identity development through a social practice lens.

First, Bourdieu's concept of habitus posits a set of characteristics and dispositions that, while transferable, are characterized as established and enduring rather than fluid and dynamic. While this feature is useful in providing an understanding of an individual's foundational identity, it becomes more limited in a study of the dynamic and ever-shifting process of identity development from a social practice view. Second, habitus is limited to isolated and exclusive categories of an individual rather than describing an integrated, multidimensional whole. For example, researchers using Bourdieu's notion of habitus might describe the perspectives individuals develop as arising from discrete roles that they play, such as being a Latina woman or poor man, rather than fully taking into account the various dimensions of an individual's perspective developed through multiple roles that they hold or other factors that might come into play in the development of this habitus (such as community context, for example). Though the descriptions and characterizations of these discrete categories can be helpful in providing information about an individual, it is the movement among them that provides the most meaningful and comprehensive examination of identity. Finally, and closely related to this last point, is the lack of context that habitus provides. It provides important and relevant information about the ways in which we develop identity in a social context, but that information is often vague. Though it offers the basic building blocks for an individual's perspective of and attitudes about his role in social interaction, this foundation cannot be fully realized until it is enacted in context.

These gaps in contextual support, the "compartmentalization" of perspective, and the fixed quality of Bourdieu's explanation of habitus are bridged through the introduction of

communities of practice in the examination of professional identity development. Helping to describe and explain the evolution and development of professional identity, communities of practice limit the scope of habitus, providing a specific frame in which to examine and understand the ways individuals act, talk and participate.

In order to gain a fuller picture of professional identity development, it is important to study habitus – a concept focused on the individual and the characteristics, dispositions and suppositions that he brings to his practice – in relation to and in conjunction with the communities of practice in which s/he participates. Habitus further contributes to the understanding of identity development in that it stresses the ways that individuals operate within a group and in relation to other individuals and looks at the complementary relationship between the individual and the historical and social community. But the limitations of habitus require an extension beyond individual dispositions, allowing for an exploration of identity that envelops both the individual and the various contexts and situations in which she is involved. It is through the inclusion of communities of practice that I will expand my investigatory lens.

Identity Development in Social Practice

The study of identity and identity development in social practice was extended beyond Erikson and Bourdieu to include the learning that occurs within communities. The term “communities of practice” was first used and defined through the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). The primary focus of their discussion was the ways in which individuals learned through participation in different communities (Alcoholics Anonymous and professional tailors being two examples of these communities). Through their examination, they helped to explain the ways in which individuals of varying experience and association with a particular community were able to gain entry and develop a deeper sense of attachment and belonging to that

community. “Newcomers” often observed the practice of the “old-timers” in an attempt to learn and understand the specific skills, habits or rules necessary for full membership in the community of practice, which they generally defined as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities” (p. 98). They “participated” in the periphery through this observation and engaged in practice once they had developed enough of an understanding of the necessary skills.

Wenger (1998) later elaborated upon this argument to focus on and further define communities of practice in relation to the professional world, exploring these communities of practice in more detail than was offered in his earlier work with Lave. He describes communities of practice as developing over time and consisting of three necessary components: mutual engagement in a shared practice, a shared repertoire, and joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998). He offered these defining characteristics in an effort to set communities of practice apart from other “communities”, establishing communities of practice as settings in which individuals participate collectively, regardless of physical proximity or even differences outside of the practice at hand.

Horn (2007) expands upon this distinction between community and communities of practice, particularly in the context of teachers and teaching. She explains that, “In the teacher community literature, community is a term typically reserved for rarified places in which teachers collaborate productively toward a common goal – be it the bolstering of conventional practice . . . or learning from practice . . . “. Communities of practice, however, provide a “more inclusive notion of community” (p. 40). That is, communities of practice can include what have been called “pseudocommunities” (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2000, p. 13), or “contexts in which teachers do not strive together toward a common vision of teaching but, for example only ‘behave as if they agree’.” Rather than necessarily embarking on the same path

toward a shared goal, members of the community of practice develop a shared repertoire to “mutually engage in the group’s joint enterprise.” (Horn, 2007, p. 40)

This point, however, does not diminish the importance of participation in communities other than those that fit within the definition of communities of practice (which will be detailed in the next section). Wenger (1998) also points to the significance of “constellations of practice,” or the communities outside a specific community of practice that influences or otherwise has bearing on an individual’s participation in that COP. He describes this dimension of practice:

The term constellation refers to a grouping of stellar objects that are seen as a configuration even though they may not be particularly close to one another, of the same kind, or of the same size. A constellation is a particular way of seeing them as related, one that depends on the perspective one adopts. In the same way, there are many different reasons that some communities of practice may be seen as forming a constellation, by the people involved or by an observer. These include:

- 1) sharing historical roots
- 2) having related enterprises
- 3) serving a cause or belonging to an institution
- 4) facing similar conditions
- 5) having members in common
- 6) sharing artifacts
- 7) having geographical relations of proximity or interaction
- 8) having overlapping styles or discourses
- 9) competing for the same resources (Wenger, 1998, p. 127)

These constellations “embody and sustain our professional competence” (p.257) and define the profession as a whole. Constellations may be practice specific (admissions and administration, for example, may be constellations of practice for teachers) or more individually constituted, both of which will be discussed further through the case studies.

Related to constellations of practice, and important to this discussion of communities of practice and identity development, is Nespor’s (2002) description of networks. He explains that “as sense of ‘network’ is the relatively stabilized trace left by a ‘series of transformations’ (p. 368). Further, a network “treats actors as dialectically constituted by social relations and . . . network relations as the contingently stabilized connections produced by the movement of people and things” (p. 368). This is all to say that as individuals move from one community to another and, as a result, “transform” as a member of those communities, the history of those moves forms networks of connections that frame and influence the development of the next move.

Both constellations of practice and networks serve in tandem with habitus to offer a richer and more substantial exploration of an individual’s development of identity. Just as habitus establishes an evolving baseline for the individual for participation and interpretation, constellations of practice and networks also provide a sense of context. All three concepts stress different forms of connection and connectivity and, in so doing, emphasize the interactive element of identity essential to this discussion.

Defining components of communities of practice. The delineation between communities of practice and community is one that is necessary to explore in order to more fully understand the importance of communities of practice in identity development. This section elaborates upon the aforementioned defining components of communities of practice - mutual

engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise – in an effort to provide a basis for the relevance and significance of communities of practice in studying teacher identity development.

Mutual engagement constitutes a fundamental aspect of communities of practice. Membership in a community of practice requires a mutual engagement that is unique to each community. For teachers, for example, this type of engagement may not only entail being in the classroom and attending faculty meetings, but also include being a part of lunchroom conversations and hallway exchanges. An important aspect of this characteristic of communities of practice is that is complementary; mutual engagement entails not only what we do and know but also what we don't do and don't know. It is this partiality of competence that makes mutual engagement vital and distinct among communities. Through shared practice, the "partial" aspect is made whole through engaging with and alongside other members of the community of practice. It is in this way that mutual engagement requires "being included in what matters" and each community presents different opportunities for that inclusion (Wenger, 1998, p. 74-75).

A shared repertoire helps to provide coherence in a community through "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice" (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). A shared repertoire provides a medium through which individuals not only enact their membership in the community of practice but also are able to express and negotiate their identities as members.

KIPP philosophies and its organizational framework may offer one way to better understand shared repertoires and the distinction that Horn (2006) makes between teacher community and communities of practice using this characteristic of communities of practice. KIPP schools are characterized by a clear and distinct practice, which includes KIPP

terminology, classroom procedures, practices, and slogans. At the same time, the teachers who work at KIPP schools may be attracted to the philosophy and mission the organization embodies but may have different approaches to and perceptions of teaching and learning than those offered through the KIPP framework. As these individuals become part of this KIPP community, they learn the terminology and slogans and about KIPP classroom procedures and general practices. The ways in which they adopt and adapt the KIPP “package” may lend insight into their development within this community of practice. Through the adoption of a KIPP repertoire, they are able to develop connections to and affiliation with (and, if they so choose, to distance themselves from) other members of the community.

The importance of joint enterprise comes not only in the mutuality it entails but also in the negotiation of that joint enterprise that is necessary within a community of practice. Because membership in these communities is both homogenous and diverse (a community of teachers [homogenous regarding their profession] may include men and women, young and old, black and white individuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences [diverse in terms of these characteristics]), the negotiation of a joint enterprise must be a collective effort, lending cohesion to a community of practice and creating “among participants relations of mutual accountability that becomes an integral part of the practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 78).

In addition to these three qualities, communities of practice share a common cultural and historical heritage, made up of shared meanings and goals that are built over time and passed to new community members. Barab, King and Gray (2004) offer a definition of the “ideal community of practice” as “a persistent sustained social network of individuals, who share and develop an overlapping knowledge base, set of beliefs, values, history, and experiences focused on common practice and/or mutual enterprise” (p. 55). That is not to say that the individuals are

bringing common backgrounds or experiences to the communities of practice in which they are participating; rather, once they are “members” of any given community of practice, they become a part of the heritage that has been built therein. Consequently, the shared meanings and goals that constitute the community’s heritage are constantly negotiated within it and, in the process, members inherit and build upon the community’s heritage (Barab & Duffy, 2000).

Engagement in communities of practice is also explained through other important elements. These elements emphasize the multidimensionality of communities of practice, establishing not only the ways in which the individuals participate within them but also how they impact their constituent members. Among these elements are participation and reification and the learning trajectories developed in and through participation in communities of practice. Each of these ideas is discussed in turn to further clarify its importance.

Cycles of participation and reification and “spaces of authoring” in communities of practice. Communities of practice are established through cycles of participation and reification. Each feeds and supports the other, each playing an integral role in the development of the other. “Participation and reification cannot be considered in isolation: they come as a pair” (Wenger, 1998, p. 62). According to Wenger (1998), participation is an active process referring not only to taking part in a process or practice, but also to the social interactions that “reflect that process” (p. 54). This participation often leads to reification, or giving meanings realities of their own. “[I]n participation we recognize ourselves in each other, in reification we project ourselves onto the world, and not having to recognize ourselves in those projections, we attribute to our meanings an independent existence” (Wenger, 1998, p. 58). Our participation is enriched by reification, however, and instances of reification cannot exist without our participation.

As an example of this process, teachers step into a reified role upon first entering a teaching job. They adopt a label that has predetermined expectations, rules and behaviors. It is only through their participation in the communities of practice in which that role exists that they may personalize it. Through participation, they are able to contribute their own modifications, influenced by their own past experiences and previous participation in communities of practice, as well as determine what pre-existing elements are effective and appropriate for them in their practice. As Wenger (1998) explains this process, “Becoming a [teacher] . . . is both taking on the label ‘[teacher]’ and giving this label specific meaning through engagement in practice.” (p. 150) This idea of “give and take” is further elaborated through discussions of “spaces of authoring” and the theoretical framework from which it is drawn, figured worlds.

A concept closely related to that of communities of practice through its focus on the relationship of society and the group and the individual and the social influences on identity is that of figured worlds. Introduced by Holland and Eisenhart (1992), the concept of “figured worlds” is one that offers significant insight into a socially situated understanding of identity. “People ‘figure’ who they are through the activities and in relation to the social types that populate these figured words and in social relationships with the people who perform these worlds” (Urrieta, 2007a, p. 108). More simply, people understand themselves through interaction and negotiation, similar to the ways in which identity is developed in a community of practice.

In their description as well as in various studies and discussions of figured worlds (Holland et al, 1998; Holland & Lave, 2001; Jurow, 2005; Ma & Singer-Gabella, 2011), individuals determine and assign significance to individuals, artifacts and actions that are distinct and particular to those within the figured world. As a result, an individual’s identity is dependent upon the expectations and acknowledgment of those participating in their “world.” Participants

share common understandings of meanings and expected outcomes and these shared understandings play into the ways in which individuals view themselves and one another.

The connection between figured worlds and communities of practice becomes clear in looking more closely at the relationship between identity and participation. Holland et al (1998) describes that:

Identity forms in these figured worlds through the day-today activities undertaken in their name. Neophytes are recruited into and gain perspective on such practices and come to identify themselves as actions of more or less influence, more or less privilege, and more or less power in these worlds . . . Figured worlds provide the contexts of meaning and action in which social position and social relationship are named and conducted. They also provide the loci in which people fashion [a] sense of self – that is, develop identity. (p. 60)

In this context, identity is built within what is called the “space of authoring.” In this space, there is a dialogic relationship between the social positioning of individuals and the ways in which those individuals respond. That is, an understanding and development of identity occurs through a “call and response” – an individual’s role is outlined or framed by society and others within society and the individual, observing and engaging this societal “frame”, answers with her own interpretations and executions of her role. Because a portion of this space is societally framed and determined, engagement in this space necessarily entails the development of an identity.

The importance of the individual’s place in responding to that frame through her “answer,” though, determines the shape of the identity that results. “Authorship is not a choice; however, the form of the answer is not predetermined” (Urrieta, 2007a, p.111). This give and

take, this volleying exchange that constitutes authoring an identity, is assisted by the use of several tools, including material artifacts, agency, and negotiation. These tools provide the means for participating productively in the “call and answer” dialogue that is essential to identity development in the space of authoring.

The space of authoring itself is found in the communities of practice. It occurs in the cycle of participation and reification that is at the heart of the evolution of the communities themselves. Through participation, individuals must negotiate meaning in ways similar to the call and response described occurring in the space of authoring in figured worlds.

This space is one in which teachers move constantly. Individuals enter the profession with their own perceptions and understandings of teaching and learning and, at least initially, present themselves in ways fitting those perceptions. As a participant in a community of practice in her school, she will then not only project that image but will then encounter the projections of other members. She will also face the ways in which surrounding communities perceive and define her role. She must then respond to those images, both complementary and conflicting, and, as a result, adjust her own perceptions about her role, creating a different projection of “self as teacher”. This cycle proceeds as the individual continues to participate in her community of practice. It is this cycle of positioning and repositioning, participation and reification, call and answer that is at the heart of the examinations that occur in this study.

Learning trajectories in communities of practice. Within and associated with communities of practice, there are several ways in which individuals participate that may be described through the types of trajectories into, through and out of the communities. Trajectories demonstrate the flow of identity found through participation and membership in communities of practice. They show not only where a member is, but also where she is headed and from where

she has come. Wenger (1998) notes that “as trajectories, our identities incorporate the past and future in the very process of negotiating the present” (p. 155) Each trajectory— inbound, outbound, boundary, insider, peripheral – not only shapes the ways in which we participate in or across communities of practice, but also influences how we associate ourselves with a community of practice. In other words, the trajectory provides a lens for understanding and engaging with the community of practice. Further, the temporal nature of trajectories- incorporating past, present and future- enables individuals to gain a clear sense of what is important and what is not.

Understanding learning trajectories is an essential step in growing a sense of the development of identity because it not only presents a grasp of the past and the present but also of the potential future(s) that exists. “Identity is a composite definition of the self, and includes an interpersonal aspect (e.g. our roles and relationships. . .), an aspect of possibility or potential (that is, who we might become), and a values aspect (that. . . provides a stable basis for choices and decisions)” (Christiansen, 1999, p. 550). Because identity is not just who we are but *who we might become*, it is as important to look at where an individual seems to be heading as it is to understand where she has been and where she is now. This trajectory can be altered and changed by the level and quality of participation in communities of practice. That influence can impact the ways in which the individual comes to understand her role in the community and her enactment of that role.

Each trajectory provides different insight into not only how individuals participate in communities of practice, but also how professional identities are formed and developed. The trajectory an individual follows is influenced by the quality of her participation and the impact that participation has in “translating” her habitus into the present practice. Does, for example,

her participation help her to understand how or encourage her to “become” an expert in that community of practice?

Wenger (1998) describes five trajectories of learning – inbound, insider, outbound, boundary and peripheral. Individuals on an inbound trajectory enter a community of practice as a “newcomer” and, through learning and participation, are offered the opportunity to become full members of that community. The “inbound” aspect here is the movement within the community from “newcomer” to “oldtimer” or “expert” (Lave, 1996). Once a seasoned member of a community, however, the learning does not end. The individual continues to develop, even after they have acquired a more expert role in the community. New experiences, new members and new ideas continue to impact the cycle of participation and reification as well as the development of all members of the community. A boundary trajectory is one that skirts several communities and uses tools and experiences from one to more fully participate and navigate another. The boundaries between communities are “brokered”, or connected, through “translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives” (Wenger, 1998).

A peripheral trajectory describes participation and learning that occurs on the “edges” of a community. A trajectory of this type can lead in several directions for the individual on it. It can eventually become inbound, leading to full participation and membership within a community. This trajectory can also move away from community membership entirely; this movement exiting a community is called an outbound trajectory. In this case, though learning within the membership may be valuable for a time, the individual ultimately leaves the community, often employing the practices and forms of engagement developed during that participation in another community with which they become involved. A third possibility for an individual on a peripheral trajectory is one in which he continues along a limited amount

participatory role in the community, neither moving towards full membership – as in an inbound trajectory – nor moving away from membership and participation entirely – as in an outbound trajectory.

One example can be seen through the trajectories of some Teach for America (TFA) participants. Many individuals who enter TFA are only involved in teaching (and that organization) for the two years for which they are committed. They develop bring with them their knowledge and enthusiasm and participate in the classroom and TFA meetings. But it seems they enter often with the knowledge that they will move to other professions and careers and so neither choose nor desire to fully develop as members of the communities of practice in which they participate. This does not mean, however, that their identities are not affected or influenced by that participation. It does, however, mean that they do not fully root the development of their professional identities in their participation in the TFA or teaching communities of practice. Their participation remains peripheral and, eventually for some, their trajectories turn from peripheral to outbound. (Foote, 2009)

In teaching, in general, and within the teaching community at KIPP, more specifically, examples of these identity trajectories span a varied and diverse range. There are teachers coming from TFA, committed to TFA's mission and, by extension, to KIPP's, and who are resolute in their roles as teachers at these schools. These teachers appear to form identities along clear inbound and insider trajectories. It seems they are invested in their participation and membership in the communities of practice that are present within the school and through their involvement with KIPP and a KIPP school to use the skills they gained through TFA and to develop them further through KIPP.

On the other hand, there are also individuals who form outbound trajectories; they develop beyond or simply leave these communities. Some are initially attracted by the idea of working at KIPP but later find that either the mission or the logistics of KIPP does not work for them. Others are looking for a teaching job that offers the experience of working with underserved students but who do not envision teaching as their profession as much as a step in the progression of their career. For these individuals, their engagement as teachers at KIPP serves as an event along their identity trajectory. Though they may chose to leave KIPP, or teaching altogether, the learning that occurs in each community of practice in which they participate continues to influence their participation in subsequent communities. This learning continues to inform their identity development, though in a different capacity than had they remained in the classroom and engaged in the communities of practice within the school.

Authoring Identities in and across Communities of Practice

As discussed in the previous sections, communities of practice potentially play several roles in the “process of definition” that is the development of identity. They provide a “grounded locus for habitus,” giving context and reference for attitudes and perceptions developed through history and experience. As such, they provide a launch pad for developing skills in practice and for the interpretation, sorting, and translation of those skills, interests, and knowledge in the context of that practice. Communities of practice also offer “possibilities and potentialities” for identities not only through exposure to experts but also through the communities’ temporality. It is in these ways that participation in and across communities of practice provides the means and ways to engage with and shape professional identities. The trajectory of learning that is the key component in this “process of definition” delineates the path of identity development, a path that is ongoing and dynamic.

It is a process among other individuals (and their own processes of definition) and so requires negotiations and concessions. Though there is an emphasis on shared and joint aspects of communities of practice, the tensions that arise are also of notable significance in the development of both the COP itself and of the individual identities within the community of practice. Both the tensions and the resolution of those tensions are an area of note in any discussion of the role and significance of communities of practice, particularly in this discussion centered on their role in the development of professional identity. “[T]ensions – those that require a socially contextualized intellectual resolution rather than simply one of relational accommodation – are potentially productive in creating environments conducive to the formation of a satisfying teacher identity” (Smagorinsky et al, 2004, pp. 22-23). Through the recognition of the tension and working through its resolution, individuals and systems are able to progress and develop.

Manifestations of these tensions in teacher professional identity development can play out in several ways. For example, an individual’s perceptions of what being a teacher means and the perceptions of teachers of the surrounding community or society can sometimes fail to align. Further, a teacher’s beliefs about teaching and learning may come into conflict with those of the school or district in which they teach. In both situations, the individual’s efforts to work through the existing tensions present an opportunity for growth and development.

In communities of practice, these tensions are confronted through mutuality and negotiability and negotiation of meaning (Wenger, 1998). Mutuality does not mean agreement but, rather, that “participants shape each other’s experiences of meaning. In doing so, they can recognize something of themselves in each other . . . [and] by recognizing the mutuality of one’s participation, we can become part of each other” (Wenger, 1998, p. 56). In other words, we

participate as individuals in a community, bringing individual characteristics to a community with a variety of personalities. As we navigate our individual participation, we make use of skills, concepts and perspectives that we learn through the collective. Thus, while we contribute to the shape and definition of the collective, we are, in turn, shaped and defined by it; “[i]t is as misleading to view identities as abstractly collective as it is to view them as narrowly individual” (Wenger, 1998, p. 146).

As described earlier, negotiability allows some degree of control to the individual through the navigation of meaning within the community of practice of which she is a part. When confronted with practices or other norms within the community of practice, the individual can direct the meaning of those practice and norms. These new, negotiated meanings can lead to a joint enterprise within the community through the adoption of those meanings.

Identity and experiences of power in communities of practice. As presented through the discussion of habitus earlier in this chapter, experiences of power is an important component in understanding the development of the individual. In different contexts, an individual encounters a range of power relations, relations that have varying impacts on habitus. Depending upon the situation, an individual may develop an array of perceptions and attitudes, effecting her behavior and interaction (Navarro, 2006). The importance of these experiences and manifestations of power are also significant in communities of practice.

Within and across communities of practice, identity formation and development are dependent upon dynamics of “power” between the individual and the group. These power dynamics affect the ways in which identity – both of the group and individual – forms and develops. Here, power relations not only provide agency in this identity development but also to some extent constrain certain aspects of that development; membership in a community of

practice is both enabling and limiting and can be both a resource and a cost in what Holland et al. refer to as the authorship of identity.

Power, through agency, can be gained through identification and negotiability with and in communities and an individual's ownership of meaning through negotiation and participation as well as through access. "Identification provides material to define our identities [while] negotiability enables us to use this material to assert our identities as productive of meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 208).

This process of development and negotiation can be further investigated by studying the ways in which participants engage in practice and interact with other individuals. By exploring participation frameworks and participant roles in communities of practice, it is possible to more fully appreciate and understand the significance of social interaction to individual professional identity development. An interaction framework focuses on the roles that various individuals take in relation to one another. Within this framework, individuals take on participant roles, which change from interaction to interaction and within single exchanges. These roles can be affected by various factors including the position that each individual holds, the relationships among the individuals, and even the personal characteristics of each participant (shyness, strong leadership abilities, even technical skills). Participant roles are often demonstrated by the taking of turns in talking, the degree of leadership taken by an individual in discussion, or the nonverbal cues exchanged between or among individuals. The term used to describe all of these activities or, more simply put, the ways that participants are involved in interactions is called "footing" (Goffman, 1981). Changes in footing can be indicative of how a participant is changing her engagement with the topic at hand as well as indicate her position regarding other participants (Clayman, 1992; Goffman, 1974; Pomerantz, 1984; Schiffrin, 1990).

In communities of practice, tracking an individual's footing as evidenced in conversations can give valuable insight into not only the ways that they position themselves but also some aspects of their learning trajectory. "Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. This means, among other things, that it is mediated by the differences of perspective among the co-participants" (Hanks, 1998, p. 15). Further, learning takes place through changing participation in communities of practice. As participants' roles change, their learning is affected through these changes in how they are participating in interactions. An example of this relationship between participant role and learning is the transition that an individual might naturally make from novice to expert, from peripheral to fuller participation in a community.

Limitations of the Communities of Practice Lens in Understanding Identity Development

Although exploring the development of teacher professional identity through the lens of communities of practice offers valuable insight into important influential factors (as discussed earlier in this chapter), there are also limitations to this approach. Lave (1996) outlines one of the primary constraints when she explains, "There are enormous differences in what and how learners come to shape (or be shaped into) their identities with respect to different practices . . . Researchers would have to explore each practice to understand what is being learned, and how" (p. 161-162). In short, context matters. "It is not just that each person learns in a context, rather, each person is a reciprocal and mutually constitutive part of the context" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004b, p. 168). Not only do individuals each bring unique dispositions to their practice, but also the practice itself changes in relation to the relationships of the individuals participating in it.

This study contributes to the limited body of literature of the role of communities of practice in teacher identity development (discussed in the next section) through an exploration of the types of learning that occur in communities of practice within a school and the impact that participation in those communities have upon the development of three teachers' professional identity. In taking into account that impact, I also aim to understand the role of the individual in the authorship of that identity and the ways in which participation in communities of practice enable that authorship and limit it.

Literature Review – Seeding the “Conversation” of Identity Development

The existing literature on teacher identity development, communities of practice, and professional development provides a baseline of knowledge that is useful in embarking upon this study. It delineates concepts, such as agency, mediation and negotiation, and participant footing, that are useful in studying the movement within and across communities of practice as well as exploring the individual's role in authorship and development of identity. Through my own examination of teacher identity development, I look to build upon that body of knowledge, expanding upon some of the ideas that authors have presented and extending the roles those ideas play. More specifically, in exploring not only the roles of both the individual and communities of practice in teacher identity development but also how those roles work together, I am interested in the ways that these ideas can connect the two.

While the first part of this chapter explored the theory behind my study, I now look to the existing literature for the tools that will enable me to effectively apply the theoretical lens I have established. These tools are both performative and analytic, serving both to enable and examine practice and behavior. Through my analysis in the case studies and in the summary and analysis chapter, I will use these tools both as a window into the focus teachers' behaviors and practice

(for example, how each individual enacted agency) and to further explore and explain those behaviors and practice (for example, what the enactment of that agency shows about the teacher's identity development and role in the authorship of that identity).

In this section, I will provide a brief review of the relevant literature. In the first part of the section, I will focus on the literature on communities of practice and identity development to provide an understanding of how previous studies have conceived of the role of communities of practice in teacher learning and teacher development. In so doing, I will situate my study in the existing body of literature. In the latter portion of this section, I will explore the literature that addresses communities as spaces of authoring. More specifically, I will look to studies about and using participatory tools, such as participant roles and footing, agency, and negotiation and improvisation, as well as those about and using reificatory tools, including artifacts and language.

Role of Communities of Practice in Professional Identity Development

Though there is limited research that focuses specifically on the role of communities of practice in the professional identity development of teachers, studies are available that inform my discussion. This literature examines the influences of the communities on teacher learning, the various contributions they make to professional development and the relationship between the communities and teacher learning, or professional learning in general. Taken together, these studies inform an approach to discerning the ways in which communities of practice shape teachers' trajectories of learning and professional identity development.

Communities of practice and teacher learning. In their case study of secondary schoolteachers, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004a) write about influences on workplace learning. Influenced by Bourdieu's theory of habitus and Lave and Wenger's (1991) discussion

of communities of practice, they emphasize that the individual is inextricably linked to social structures. Their analysis sets forth the range in the conceptualization of communities of practice and the value that exists in both a narrow definition, following the description set forth by Wenger, and a more general understanding of these communities. They assert that it is important to examine the impact of both clearly delineated communities of practice, such as departments, and those that are less specifically framed.

At the more defined level, as in more cohesive and collaborative departments, it is useful to follow a model that very closely reflects communities of practice as they are illustrated through Wenger's exemplars. Specifically, the examination is focused on the immediate workings of the department and the individuals therein. In so doing, "a valuable intermediate level of analysis [is provided] between the broader occupational and organisational context and the dispositions" (p. 30).

From a wider level of interpretation, the net is cast more broadly to go beyond "close-knit groups", such as departments, to include social groups within which individuals participate. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004a) explain that "schoolteachers can be seen to belong to several overlapping communities of practice – the teaching profession, the school where they work, the community of fellow specialists in a particular subject, etc." and that, though these specific groups do not follow the exact parameters of Lave and Wenger's descriptions of communities of practice, they nonetheless offer meaning and insight (p. 29).

Overall, the model of analysis that Hodkinson and Hodkinson offer allows for a broad swathe in understanding the potential impact that communities of practice have on a teacher's identity development. Rather than feeling obliged to examine only those communities directly

related to the teacher's practice within which he participates, they present a wider lens through which to consider the influence of participation in communities of practice.

Also considering the impact of participation in communities of practice, Niesz (2010) explores the role of participation in different professional communities of practice in the "production of meaning, identity and agency among the teachers and school district administrators involved" (p. 37). She finds that "[u]ltimately, it was the differences between these two communities - differences in their practice, differences in the identities afforded and constructed through practice - and the bridges built between them that seemed to hold the most promise for generating change" (p. 38). Similar to the themes explored in Hodkinson and Hodkinson's study (2004a), Niesz emphasizes that it is not simply the multi-membership in a range of professional communities of practice that is important to the development of identity but the meaning making that occurs in finding connections among those communities.

In this study, that emphasis on meaning making and the movement across and within communities of practice is an important component to more fully understanding the roles of both the community and the individual in the authorship of professional identity. Each of the three teachers featured in the cases of this study simultaneously participate in several communities of practice. These communities range from tight and cohesive, closely matching Wenger's definition of communities of practices, to those more broadly and loosely fitting the community of practice designation. It is not only their participation in each of these communities that is relevant to my analysis, but also the ways that they are able to make connections between and negotiate meaning across them.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) provide a framework for teacher knowledge and learning and the development of that learning in communities. They present three types of

teacher knowledge: knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-of-practice. The first is the learning that individuals foster in their training and schooling. It includes formal theory and knowledge that teachers carry into the classroom. The second is knowledge that is “embedded in practice and in teachers’ reflections on practice” (p.250). The third type of knowledge, however, is one that Cochran-Smith and Lytle write of as being less categorizable than the first two. It is the learning that individuals acquire through methods of inquiry and participation in their local professional communities. Further, this type of learning connects the teacher’s local context to the larger social, cultural, and political issues in which that learning takes place.

Little (2002) takes the discussion of the role of communities of practice in teacher development and learning one step further. She recognizes previous research and the emphasis it has placed on the beneficial role of “vigorous collegial communities” but stresses that there is little to no examination of the ways in which these communities provide the various resources (intellectual, social, and otherwise) that benefit the teachers who participate therein. Through a multi-level case study design, she attempts to investigate the mechanisms of these communities. She attempts to “unpack the meaning and consequences of professional community at the level of practice” (p. 937) by explaining the organizing problems – representation of practice, orientation to practice, and norms of interaction – as providing a “frame for describing and analyzing the learning resources . . . in everyday collaborative work among teachers” (p. 936). It is this frame that she presents as building upon and deepening previous research in an effort to further clarify the resources afforded through communities of practice.

Communities of practice and professional development. An equally significant focus in this small body of literature addresses the ways that professional development is discussed in

the context of communities of practice. These studies offer discussions of the specific professional learning that occurs and that is found to be significant and important in communities of practice and, as a result, provide a lens into the types of professional learning that is seen to happen in and around these communities.

In one study, Goodson and Cole (1994) illustrate the connection between teacher professional identity and community. They note that the “process of redefining what it means to be a teacher and their developing sense of . . . professional identity were contextually dependent on their developing notions of professional community” (p. 102). That is, teachers’ understandings of themselves within a particular school context are inextricably linked to their understanding of the communities of practice of which they are part. Individuals enter into communities of practice with certain beliefs and enter into an established system of discourse and practices. As they participate in professional development, for example, they are developing aspects of their identity as well as affecting the identity of the group and other individuals in the group (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

In her study of one group of schools, Klein (2007) explores the professional development strategies used to build communities of practice. Interested in understanding the ways that teachers learn, she examined the importance of communities of practice in supporting teacher change and the need to support and encourage the growth of those communities. “Communities of practice and cultures of teacher learning may develop on their own, but need structures to support them and to help them grow; what matters is how the strategies combine to help create a culture of teacher learning” (Klein, 2007, p. 195). More specifically, an important point is that communities of practice do not spontaneously develop and are not always easy to access. The

more teachers are offered structures of support at a school, not only is the development of communities of practice more effective but the accessibility is increased as well (Klein, 2007).

The similarities between KIPP schools and Big Pictures Schools (the focus of Klein's study) offer some insight into the ease with which the focus teachers seem to have entered membership in the school's communities of practice. Through its "KIPP-wide" framework, structures that are universal across its schools, KIPP seems to generally echo some of the mechanisms of support that Klein discusses in her study.

Batthey and Franke (2008) weave together discussions of identity, professional development and communities of practice. Though their study of teachers' translations of the methods and techniques learned through professional development into their classroom practice, the authors highlighted the ways in which the teachers' participation in their communities of practice and their roles in and across those communities served to help teachers make sense of the relationship between their professional development and practice. It is that relationship that leads to further community and identity development:

It is the differences and diversity of teachers in the workgroup that pushes the possibilities of transformation and the development of common goals allows for a community to emerge. Developing a new identity is not just about gathering new ideas; it is also about developing new frameworks for understanding those ideas and reinterpreting past experiences (Batthey & Franke, 2008, p. 145)

Their study offers an important perspective in considering not only the role of communities of practice in teacher identity but also the diversity of individuals within those communities and how they participate. As discussed earlier, teacher identity is not static; rather, it exists along a trajectory incorporating not only present experiences and interactions but also

those from the past and affecting those yet to come. The focus teachers in my study bring three different histories to their participation, contributing not only their ideas and experiences but also the ways in which those ideas and experiences impact the ways in which interact with other members and interpret meaning.

Communities of Practice as Spaces for Authoring Identity

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the role of communities of practice in the development of identity is enhanced by a discussion of figured worlds and, more specifically, “spaces of authoring” in these worlds. Within these spaces, individuals are socially identified by others and must accept, reject or negotiate those identifications (Holland et al, 1998; Urrieta, 2007a). It is within these spaces that identity development takes place.

In this study, communities of practice serve as those spaces, providing a context within which to understand the role that individuals play in the development and construction of their own professional identities. To better understand communities of practice as spaces for authoring identity, it is as important to have tools for that exploration. Among them are participatory (or relational) tools, including participant roles and footing, agency, and improvisation, and reificatory tools, such as artifacts and other material tools. By delving into the ways in which these elements have been studied in the past, I will not only be situating my own study within this body of literature, but will also be able to further contextualize and develop the theories and concepts presented earlier in this chapter through my conceptual framework. In so doing, I will simultaneously inform my own examination while expanding upon the existing scholarship.

The role of participatory tools. Inherent in the influence of communities of practice is the participation of their members. In this study, the tools afforded and constrained by this participation are one focus in the pursuit to understanding identity development. Individuals are

able to position themselves in the community through the ways in which they participate, establishing an understanding of their roles therein.

Nasir and Cook (2009) discuss the participatory tools as being relational and ideational. The relational characterization of participatory tools demonstrates their use as a means of interaction. “As individuals connected to others in the practice, it strengthened their sense of connection to the practice itself, because they came to define themselves as a member of a community that participated in [that practice]” (p. 48). The ideational aspect of participatory tools, on the other hand, supplies “ideas about oneself and one’s relationship to and place in the practice and the world, as well as ideas about what is valued and what is good” (p. 44). This includes identification with the norms and regulations of being a member of a certain profession, how an individual fit in that community (often through the specific ways in which he participated or roles that he took) and both the physical and emotional involvement in the profession (p. 50).

In this study, the participatory tools take on both relational and ideational roles. Participant roles and footing, agency, and negotiation that individuals establish through those roles serve as relational tools. As the teachers stake their positions in interactions with other members of the communities in which they participate, they also build their own sense of connection and belonging. Ideational tools are availed through the exercise of agency and improvisation. These tools allow for identification with the norms and regulations of being a teacher, an understanding of where each individual fits and the ways in which he is involved in the profession (Nasir & Cook, 2009).

The role of participant roles and footing. Whenever individuals interact, they assume certain positions in relation to one another. In taking these positions, they are establishing “footing” in the interaction (Goffman, 1979). While many discussions of footing have focused

on the verbal interactions of participants through the study of various aspects of language (Wortham, 1996; Jakobsen, 1971; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), the studies of nonverbal interaction and the resultant footing is more relevant to this examination of teacher professional identity. Because I focused on observations and field notes rather than videotaping my subjects, my data offer more information regarding my subjects' footing and its resultant effect on position and perception of roles in the community of practice through behavior and other nonverbal reactions to other participants. Though this presents a limitation in my discussion of participant role and footing because I do not have a transcript of what was said, the interpretation of the nonverbal interaction does provide important information about how each teacher positioned herself in communities and in regards to other individuals.

Footing is important not only in understanding the context of the situation, but also for establishing an exploration of the role of power in individual roles and positioning in interactions (Goffman, 1979). Kendon (1991) extends Goffman's work (1971; 1979) through what he calls "frames of attunement." Rather than focusing on talk, he is concerned with the spatial arrangement of interactions and how, in face-to-face meetings, participants orient themselves in relation to others in the space. This orientation offers clues into the ways in which individuals are positioning themselves not only in a group but with individuals in the groups as well.

In his study of the organization of talk radio openings, Hutchby (1999) describes the ways in which the "institutionality" of talk radio is understood not only through talk but also through a version of Kendon's (1991) frames of attunement. While there is an emphasis on what is said and how it is said, Hutchby (1999) also stresses the importance of what is not said. He discusses the ways that speakers on talk radio position themselves in relation to one another

through pauses and turn taking and how those aspects are equally significant in understanding positions of power and authority within the context of talk radio.

The focus on non-verbal communication and positioning is significant in this study, particularly due to the nature of the data, which consists mainly of observational notes and individual interviews. While transcripts are not available, and so a study of precisely what is said is not possible, this analysis focuses on the nature of the interaction and, as in Hutchby's study, the role of different forms of interaction, such as turn-taking and how individuals position themselves in regards to authority. This is particularly true in the observations of departmental and school-wide meetings in which individual teachers are discussing topics on which they may have differing views and degrees of experience. Teachers emerged as leaders both passively, through the ways in which other participants positioned the individual through asking questions or requesting advice, and actively, as the individual asserted her own expertise. In both cases, however, it is important to consider the whole picture of interaction and nature of participation.

The role of agency. As a participatory tool, agency is both a means of identity development as well as an "end" in that development. That is, it both acts as an instrument through which individuals enact features of the roles they play and a product of the cycle of identity development. Jawitz (2009) used a case study approach to examine the roles of individual agency and professional communities of practice in the development of academic identities. He determined a "complex relationship between identity construction and participation within the particular configuration of teaching, professional and research communities of practice that defined the academic field in the department." Through his study, Jawitz argues that while participation in communities of practice plays a substantial role in the development of identity, individual agency is equally as vital. This importance is emphasized through the

presence of multiple identity trajectories despite participation in overlapping communities of practice. It is not only membership in these various communities of practice that impact identity formation but also the individual's specific navigation of the communities. Further, the various identity trajectories that occur demonstrate the influence not only of individuals' current participation in communities of practice but also their previous memberships as well.

The interplay of participation in communities of practice and individual agency that Jawitz explains here is of particular importance to this study. It is important not only to consider the impact of previous and concurrent participation in communities of practice but also to understand the ways in which individuals must navigate and translate the significance of those experiences. In the case studies, it becomes clear that the success in that translation is dependent not only on how the individuals has and presently participates in various communities of practice but the degree to which each teacher can recognize patterns and connections and realize those connections in their own practice.

Agency is also an important consideration in Johnson et al's (2011) study of three women of color as they navigate their own identities within the primarily male and white world of science. In an effort to better understand and, ultimately, better mitigate the struggles that women of color face as they take on academic and professional careers in science, these authors studied the ways in which these three women in the study asserted agency in an effort to establish their identity in a context that had a well-established structure. Important among their conclusions was that first, identity is not firmly achieved; rather, identity is an ongoing process that requires renegotiations and adjustments at each new stage. Next, agency entails the negotiation of power as well as the intentional selection of more personally acceptable identities over ascribed

identities. Finally, for some, it is important to balance several identities in an effort to find the ways in which the intersections of those identities best serve one another.

Tan and Barton (2006) elaborate on agency as an inextricable tool in the development of identity in the context of communities of practice and figured worlds. Specifically, they emphasize that it is the refusal of “stereotypical, prescribed identities” that is vital to authoring “an authentic and positive identity” (p. 6). In their study, they look at how two minority girls in a “high poverty urban middle school . . . exhibit agency by purposefully authoring identities-in-practice . . . “ (p.1). Through an exploration of the ways in which these girls asserted their agency through participation and continued interest in science, this study emphasizes not only the importance of their individual roles but the significance of their development of identities-in-practice.

The role of negotiation. Following the theme of understanding identity development as a conversation, negotiation allows for not only fluidity in the conversation but also provides variation and development of that conversation. Wenger (1998) uses the expression “negotiation of meaning” to explain this instrument of participation. He explains negotiation of meaning as how we experience the world and our engagement in it as meaningful. Inherent in this negotiation is the process of participation and reification discussed earlier in this chapter. As we engage in communities of practice and are met with situations and ideas that require an adjustment of our own understandings, we employ negotiation of meaning as an adaptive technique that creates a bridge between the individual and the community. We then establish new or modified norms and frameworks through reification. As we continue to grow and develop our own understandings of our role in that community, we continue to negotiate meanings. (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998)

Closely related to the concept of negotiation of meaning and useful in exploring the role that it plays in identity, Holland et al (1998) discuss what they call improvisation. In their discussion, they present a vivid description of improvisation of this type of social navigation in the story of “The Woman Who Climbed the Wall.” A woman of a low social class in her society approaches the house of a family she perceives to be of a higher social class than she. She needs to access the second floor balcony but, because, due to custom, she cannot enter the house on the first floor, she must find another way. Her response is to scale the wall. In the case, she has been confronted with a situation in which conflicting needs and expectations arise. As a result, she must find a way to respond that responds to both her need to access the balcony and the social expectation that she respect the social standing of the family who reside in the house.

Though an extreme example, Holland’s discussion paints a picture of the navigation of societal expectation that is involved in crafting and enacting one’s identity. When met with the possibility of contradiction between her standing in society and what is expected of her in that position, this woman finds a way to honor both her own needs as well as the parameters established by the social structure.

Improvisation, however, need not be so “extreme.” Urrieta (2007b) offers another explanation of improvisation in the context of identity:

Identity, mediated by cultural artifacts and discourses, is thus a site for self-making. From this perspective, improvisation, where a person strategically uses the cultural resources at hand to devise a new action or response to a specific situation, is an important part of the process of identity production. Improvisation can lead to the creation of an altered sense of self, or a new way of ‘figuring’ who one is. (p. 121)

In his study of Chicana/o activist educators, he explores the role of improvisation the ways in which Mexican American scholars authored their identities as activists within their figured worlds. He emphasizes that improvisation, in the larger picture of figured worlds, is important to the development of both conceptual and procedural identity because “identity production is not just about performing a new understanding of oneself, but also of believing that one is who one thinks one is” (p. 136).

Pennington’s study (2007) of the intersection of literacy policy and literacy teachers further emphasizes the role of improvisation in developing an understanding of identity. Most importantly, in the face of the collision of two figured worlds, or when conflicts between two opposing communities seem insurmountable, the exercise of agency and improvisation can provide a new space within which to develop and grow. In her study, Pennington emphasizes that the mismatches between literacy policy and literacy practice need not result in the subjugation of one over the other. Rather, through improvisation, the fundamental qualities of both can be respected in a new space that allows for the development of a new means of identification in practice.

Another study of two students from different academic disciplines in a reading education course maps the role of improvisation in navigating the tensions that can arise surrounding expectations and experience in the classroom (Rush and Fecho, 2008). Though the “educational backgrounds and identities of these students presented lack of fit with each other and, for some, the inquiry-based nature of the course pedagogy” (p. 123), they were able to negotiate the conflicts that arose through either adopting a new point of view to accommodate previous perspectives or adapting to the new environment.

Finally, improvisation comes into play in the ways that students learn and absorb (not the right word) new information. Luttrell and Packer (2001) present a study of students who find their way through the seeming contradictions between their experiences at home with reading and writing and the choices made there and the school-based assignments they are called upon to perform in those areas. Through improvising, these students are enacting their agency to “reiterate and recreate the world in which they live” (Holland et al, 1998, p. 42).

In the development of professional identity in a social context, the negotiation of meaning play a crucial role, not only in the process itself but also in a study of that evolution. Looking at the interactions in which the improvisation occurs as well as the ways in which the individuals are or aren't able to successfully navigate the situation, provides a window into more fully understanding the trajectory of learning and professional identity growth.

The role of reificatory tools. Playing an equally important role in the evolution of communities of practice and the potential development of their members is reification. As discussed earlier, reification occurs in tandem with participation, establishing a record for the contributions that individuals have made to the development of the community and providing evidence of the history of the community itself. These reified objects may be physical artifacts, such as handouts in a classroom, or less tangible evidence, such as language markers or expressions.

These reifications become tools in the ways that they may be used in effecting and influencing a teacher's trajectory of learning within that community. The significance of these items is not in their presence alone but also in how the individuals learned to expertly use them (Nasir and Cook, 2009). In the “process of definition” that is identity development, these tools provide reference points and definition of and stability to identities (Leander, 2002). That is, in

order to develop an identity, there must be some basis from which an understanding of that identity is rooted. In the “conversation” of identity development, artifacts – both material, such as curriculum, and ideational, such as cultural markers (Cole, 1996; Nasir, 2004) - inform the discussion. Similar to the ways in which habitus supports the individual’s participation in communities of practice and contributes to her identity trajectory, artifacts provide historical and cultural markers that document past influence but then spur future development.

Leander (2002) illustrates the role of identity artifacts such as cultural markers (clothing and language, for example) in defining an identity. The subject of his study, Latanya, is described as being “ghetto” as a result of an established sense of that identity and the intersection of the defining artifacts and Latanya’s “identity-in-action.” In the context of the teachers at the focus of this study, each encounters artifacts that provide evidence of what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a KIPP teacher. This evidence, in combination with their participation in communities of practice, plays an important role in the development of professional identity.

Further exploring the role of material artifacts in the authorship of identity, Nasir and Cook’s (2009) study of high school athletes looks into the ways in which individuals develop identity in practice. They discuss the ways in which these individuals are offered and take up identities through their involvement in teaching and learning activities, specifically, their involvement in track and field. The athletes’ participation and the sense of identity that they formed through it were described as being connected not only to a material involvement with the track and field activities themselves, but also the sense of being a part of something larger.

The significance of material tools lies not only in that they are markers of the ways in which a community develops and grows over time, but also that they present a historical record

of that development. Even the less tangible of reificatory tools, accessed through discourse and language, afford individuals direct access to the historical development of the community in which they are participating. They remain benchmarks of a sort that provide a roadmap of the development of community as a whole and a framework for the development of the individual within that community.

Nasir (2004) emphasizes the importance of cultural artifacts and their roles in negotiating identity. Within her study of “resistance” student behavior in an urban Muslim school, she highlights the complexity of the development of that identity label:

Understanding the construction of identities . . . as part of cultural activity requires analyses that take into account the nature of these cultural settings, including the norms and institutional beliefs, distribution of roles, nature of participation, the artifacts that structure activities, and the imagined trajectories embedded in those activities. (p. 155)

Different identities and identity trajectories are offered through the ways that artifacts are used and framed in the setting.

What is important to remember is that artifacts in and of themselves do not effect identity; rather, these tools offer possibilities of identities. It is in the way that individuals and communities interact with and use those artifacts that is significant to identity production and support (Nasir, 2004). Drawing on individual agency and negotiation of meaning, artifacts are interpreted in the social context (in the case of this study, in the school and classroom) and used according to the roles individuals and communities have determined for them.

Language and discourse are also significant artifacts in the negotiation and development of identity. In her study of a teacher candidate, Haniford (2010) highlights the role of discourse

in the construction of a professional identity. Individuals must “choose among competing discourses in order to construct identities that will be recognised within and across these multiple contexts, while also helping organise and manage the experience of [being a] teacher” (Haniford, 2010, p. 988). It is through the negotiation and internalization of these discourses that lead to identity development. She goes on to explain that:

These discursive practices vary according to specific contexts and the position an individual inhabits within that social space. Because individuals participate in various “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998), different identities are enacted through learning the actions and discourses signifying membership in different settings.” (p. 988)

That is, not only does language and discourse allow access to participation in communities of practice, but an individual’s use of language and engagement with discourse can directly signify the individual’s standing in the community. In so doing, it provides a sense of the individual’s place in relation to others, a comparison significant in the sociocultural examination of identity development.

Conclusion

According to Wenger (1998), identity development is a “process of becoming.” But this process is embedded within social interaction and, particularly in the case of professional identity development, participation in communities of practice. It is in these communities of practice that individuals are able to adapt and modify previously developed attitudes and dispositions, described through habitus, into contextualized practice. While previous studies have brought communities of practice into examinations of teachers and classroom, this study is unique in that it examines the specific roles that communities of practice play in the development of the teachers’ professional identities. As discussed in this chapter, I draw on social practice

definitions of identity and understandings of the relationship between habitus and communities of practice, as well as the defining features themselves of communities of practice. This study focuses on the different communities of practice in which individual teachers participate, the influence those communities have upon the individuals' identity development, and the role that the individual takes in authorship of that identity (within those communities).

In an effort to address the three research questions presented at the end of the first chapter, I found it necessary not only to explore the theoretical roots of this study through the discussion of social practice theory, communities of practice and habitus and situating professional identity development within those theories and concepts, but also to establish the means through which to engage with those ideas. Specifically, in the literature review section of this chapter, I defined the tools that I will use to bridge my discussion from the abstract to the concrete. While the conceptual framework is rich with the thinking behind the study, providing the intellectual fodder for this exploration of professional identity development, the literature review anchors my study through establishing instruments of practice and analysis.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore teachers' professional identity development as it is effected by both personal history and communities of practice. Specifically, the focus of the investigation was on the roles both of the individual and her history and experiences as well as of the communities of practice in which she participated. Framed by the concept of communities of practice and informed by theories and concepts such as habitus, spaces of authoring and figured worlds, and teacher professional development and support, the inquiry pursued a better understanding of the tools used to foster professional identity. Further, it looked at the roles that these tools as well as the communities of practice themselves played in the identity development of the focus teachers. My examination was based upon the research questions introduced in the first chapter and revisited in the second:

- 1) In what types of communities of practice do teachers at a KIPP school participate?
- 2) How do the available forms of engagement in these communities shape participants' identity trajectories and opportunities for learning?
- 3) How do the teachers author their professional identities in and across these communities of practice?

This chapter outlines the research methods I used for this study. First, I describe the research setting and the individuals who participated. Next, I explain the methods of data collection and connect them to the framework outlined in the previous chapter. This explanation includes a description of my primary methods of data collection, including: 1) individual interviews, 2) participant observation, and 3) artifact collection. These methods used and supported the framework presented in the previous chapter while exploring the research questions highlighted

above. I conclude with a discussion of the methods for data analysis as well as of the limitations of the study and methods.

Research Methodology

The primary methodological approach to this study was the use of qualitative case studies of individual teachers at the school. “Case studies . . . seek to answer focused questions by producing in-depth description and interpretation over a relatively short period of time . . . “ (Hays, 2004, p. 218). In light of the research questions and conceptual framing of this study, these case studies illuminate the individual experiences of teachers and how they act and interact within the activity of their daily practice. The studies both serve as individual sources of data and weave together to contribute to a larger, more complex body of information. Case studies help to demonstrate the individuality of professional identity development while producing a range in the analysis. That is, by looking in-depth at several teachers in the school, I will have the chance to look at both the individual development and the individuals’ interactions with each other and within the community. Further, the approach taken in this study follows an interpretive approach to research (Erickson, 1986), looking to explore the “invisibility of everyday life” in an effort to “make the familiar strange and interesting again” (p. 121). This approach emphasizes the importance of studying the subjects and subject matter in context, of taking into account meanings-in-action (p. 129) and appreciating the organic nature of interactions and interpretations by and among the subjects.

The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between individual history and professional involvement in teacher professional identity. Specifically, the emphasis was on the intersection between a teacher’s individual dispositions and her interactions within and across the

communities of practice (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) that exist within the school and the impact that intersection has upon the development of teacher professional identity. The use of three case studies here contributed to an understanding of the larger KIPP community.

Research Setting

The primary setting for this study was a KIPP middle school in the western United States. This school is one in a network of 125 schools in the national KIPP network. While all KIPP schools across the country operate, to some degree, as independent schools, they are all bound by their identity as a KIPP school and as part of the national KIPP network. As such, they all share key qualities found in other KIPP schools, such as its philosophy and framework, including the five pillars discussed in the first chapter. In each school and classroom are found nearly identical features and behaviors, such as commonly used chants and pedagogical techniques, as well as school and classroom decorations that feature the KIPP motto (“Work hard. Be nice.”) and other “KIPPisms”.

The school in which this study took place serves over 350 students in grades 5-8 and employs approximately 24 teachers. 95% of students at this school are eligible free or reduced lunch and 94% of the population is Hispanic/Latino (www.reportcard.kipp.org). Though this particular site was partially chosen for its proximal location and convenience, it provides a fair representation of other KIPP schools as far as the student population that it targets and serves. According to the KIPP website, “Eighty percent of [the students who attend KIPP schools] are low-income [eligible for free or reduced lunch], and 90 percent are African American or Latino.” In addition, 88% of KIPP schools are middle schools, beginning in the fifth grade and serving students through the eighth grade.

The teacher population also seemed to be fairly representative of the general KIPP teacher demographic, though I was not able to get clearer and more specific information about the teachers at the school beyond a number of full-time faculty – 24. Beyond that number, I was able to observe that there were eight men and sixteen women. Through conversation with many of the teachers, I discovered that at least five teachers had participated in Teach for America and that everyone but three teachers held a teaching license. According to 2008-2009 data, KIPP employed nearly 1200² teachers nationally. Of this population, 39% were African American or Hispanic, 51% were white and 9% were Asian. Further, 28% of the teachers at the time were Teach for America alumni. (Garra and Barth, 2009)

Participants

During my consideration of how to select teachers for the case studies in this paper, I wanted to be sure to cover a range of experiences as well as different levels of professional participation and engagement. Because I have previously been involved at this school as a result of a small study I did there during my graduate coursework (as mentioned in the first chapter and as will be discussed later in this chapter), I had the opportunity to gain internal access at the school as well as to become more familiar with the teachers themselves over time.

When I began this study, I sat in on classes and professional development meetings and interviewed several teachers. While I was granted permission to observe all the teachers at the school at a basic level³, the eight teachers whom I interviewed all volunteered to give me extra time for a 30-60 minute interview. Within this self-selected group, I then employed purposive sampling to arrive at the three teachers who eventually became the foci of my case studies.

² This number is currently over 2700. However, current teacher demographics information was not readily available.

³ Participation at a basic level simply means being observed in the context of departmental, faculty and professional development meetings but not being observed individually or participating in interviews. Each individual will have the option of non-participation in the study as well.

In purposive sampling, the subjects of a study are chosen according to the research aims of the study itself. Specifically, the researcher constructs cases that inform her investigative purpose (Patton, 1990). Following this course of subject selection, the case subjects in this study were chosen in an effort to represent the heterogeneity of the teacher population at the school and to embody the range of potential participation in various COPs. More specifically, I aimed to choose subjects who represented varying levels of experience (both as teachers in general and as teachers with KIPP), years at the school and background preparation (traditional or alternative). In light of this attempt at variation, I established “ideal” criteria for the teacher I chose as subjects of the case studies (see Table 1 following descriptions):

1) *Range of experience with KIPP and/or TFA*: Because KIPP (and its “mother” institution, TFA) created a unique context for this study, one that was significant to the information I gathered to answer my research questions, I wanted to be sure to have one teacher who had a history with either KIPP or TFA, or both, in order to explore how that history influenced her participation and identity development at the school. It was also important to have at least one teacher with no previous experience with KIPP (and, ideally, little knowledge of or exposure to the workings of the KIPP framework). In having at least one case study teacher who was seeing, learning about, and participating in the KIPP framework for the first time during my study, I would have representation on both ends of the experience scale at KIPP.

2) *Range of teaching experience*: There are many levels I attempted to cover in selecting case study teachers who represented a range of teaching experience. First, there was the range in number of years teaching. I had a sample in this study that ranged from two to thirteen years of teaching experience. A range of types of teaching experience was also

important in that it informed different perspectives on teaching and learning. The three teachers here spanned private and public schools, juvenile detention centers and even private tutoring.

3) *Range of professional experience*: Beyond teaching, it was also important to select individuals who were diverse in their professional experiences in general. Here, one teacher has only ever had teaching positions (and so no other professional experiences) while a second also did social work and the third spent the first part of his life as a Marine.

4) *Range of personal experience and history*: Finally, because habitus plays an important role in this study and an understanding of the development of professional identity, I was deliberate in choosing teachers who had varied personal histories. I selected a father from a poor, rural farm family, and two single women, one from a middle class family (and whose mother was a teacher) and another whose father was an engineer who chose to work in the public sector.

Table 1: Subject characteristics according to criteria

| | Personal experience | Professional experience | Teaching history | Experience with KIPP and/or TFA |
|------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Carolyn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attended middle-class white schools mother was teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> majored in ethnic studies attended teacher training program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student taught in primarily Hispanic school before TFA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFA graduate sat in on KIPP school during TFA experience sought out KIPP school for job |
| Tim | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attended rural schools parents were farmers father of large family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ex-Marine college degree in theology and philosophy no formal teacher training worked as athletic coach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> taught in private religious school for 13 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not know what KIPP was until orientation to job |
| Elizabeth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> father was engineer who worked in public domain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attended teacher training program was social worker for some time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> taught in variety of settings, including juvenile detention center and urban public school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> friends recommended KIPP as good match professionally |

This type of purposive selection allowed for a study of the range of individuals represented at the school, providing information that is more broadly descriptive rather than data that focuses on a single group of individuals within the population (Maxwell, 2005). Because this study was interested in how teachers developed their professional identities, it seemed important to focus on a sample that was composed of individuals who were bringing different levels of prior preparation and experience to the table. Though a very small study, composed of only three case studies, aiming for that range provided me with a scope that not only allowed for initial

insight into the queries in this study, but set the stage a broad course of future research. As with any small study, there is often a choice between depth and breadth of information, often one being at some expense to the other. In my study, I chose breadth at the expense, at times, of depth of information. The primary reason for this was that I wanted to get a sampling of experiences, always with an eye towards expanding upon the groundwork set in these three cases.

Methods of Data Collection

This study used qualitative methods to collect data regarding the different components of the communities of practice present in the school. In an effort to examine both the individual construction and evolution of teacher professional identity and the workings of the school system as a whole, case studies were developed. In the research for and development of those case studies, several methods were employed in an effort to increase the validity of the data through triangulation, including interviews, observation, and artifact collection.

Individual interviews

Because case studies are essentially about “human affairs,” personal interviews are a vital source of information for their construction (Hays, 2004; Yin, 1994). Further, interviews serve as a tool to explore teachers’ beliefs and their subsequent influence in their participation in communities of practice. An understanding of individual assumptions and perceptions cannot be gathered solely through observation of practice or action; rather, the stories that individuals offer help to illustrate their beliefs (Nespor, 1985). Interviews offer the opportunity for individuals to tell their stories in a fairly structured venue. Guided by lead- off questions that were intended to pinpoint responses that explored prior experiences and general beliefs about teaching and

learning, the interviews in this study offered space for the subjects to speak about their own perspectives (Carspecken, 1996).

Semi-structured individual interviews took place with each of the focus teachers once or twice (depending on each teacher's time and availability constraints) over the course of the school year. Here, semi-structured refers to the use of an interview protocol that serves as a guide rather than restricting the course of the interview to the questions contained therein. These interviews were conducted in the tradition of Robert Burgess' (1986) "conversations with a purpose." The aim was to create a conversational atmosphere that was more comfortable for the subject and opened up more opportunities for gathering information from the interviewee. In allowing the subject some participation in the direction of the conversation, there was the chance for the interview to head into directions that might not otherwise have been considered in a more prescriptive course of questioning. Protocols (see Appendix C) included questions that probed previous preparation and experience (career histories), motivations/reasons for teaching at KIPP, experience of self as instructor (both generally and of this specific student population) and perceptions of professional development and support at KIPP.

I developed these protocols in response to the research questions and theoretical framework. Because the study was concerned with not only the present professional development and support offered and the communities of practice in which teachers function, but also with how those factors interact with individuals' previous experiences and preparation, it was important to ask questions that delved into both arenas. Creating and following a protocol allowed for consistency across these interviews, maintaining a thread of similarity that contributed to a more effective analysis of the transcripts. At the same time, however, by maintaining flexibility through the use of semi-structured interviews, I had the chance to explore

questions and issues as they arose with each individual (Carspecken, 1996). I was able to go “off script” when an interviewees response gave light to information worth pursuing further. Much of this information was specific to the individual but also helped to inform larger questions that arose in the study.

Interviews for this study also involved administrators at the school. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain a different perspective on professional development within KIPP – its development, purposes and specific methods – as well as to further inform the ways in which the communities of practice at the school functioned (see Appendix D for protocol). Further, because the administrators at the school were also former teachers there, they offered a unique perspective on the development of professional identity and how it was influenced by participation in the school’s communities. By interviewing the leaders in the schools, I had the opportunity to collect data regarding the different divisions of labor in the schools as well as understanding the development of communities and rules governing the community. The information gathered through these interviews ultimately served informational purposes, providing more explicit frames to the communities that existed. Further, because the administrators I interviewed were both former instructors at the school, they were able to give a distinct perspective as past participants in some of the communities who had since moved into different roles in the school.

Observations

Individual interaction cannot be fully understood without observation (Hays, 2004). The use of communities of practice as a lens for this study necessitated the observation of interactions in the school. That is, it was important not only to gain an understanding of the various components at play, such as the use of discourse and participation in the community, but it was

also vital to witness the ways in which these components interacted. In addition, based on the social practice lens this study takes as well as the discussions of teacher identity and the factors influencing its development presented in the previous chapter, it was not enough simply to gather data from the individuals themselves. Rather, it was necessary as well to study those individuals in context. Both classroom observations (5 in total) and faculty and professional development meeting observations (8 in total) provided opportunities to observe the teachers in the context of their communities. The foci of the various observations (see Table 1- page 66) varied but were shaped by the framework established earlier. Points of particular interest were interactions between and among individuals; language use during group activities, individual presentations or instruction and conversations about or pertaining to practice; and the roles and responsibilities that individuals take on in each situation.

Classroom and school observations. In an effort to explore how and the extent to which the professional development and support teachers received affected their daily practice, I conducted observations in the classroom (5) as well as throughout the school⁴, looking at the interactions and relationships that were formed and occurred outside of the classroom. These observations provided the opportunity to see how each individual teacher interacted with and enacted her identity as a teacher within the school community. This was particularly true in the classroom, where the teacher's identity was most prominently in action without the "influence" of other teachers present.

Observation of departmental/faculty/professional development meetings.

Observations included professional development within the school and faculty meetings. Though

⁴ These "school" observations were often informal. I would observe behaviors as I walked from class to class or was casually chatting with teachers, students, or staff. I would then jot down my observations when I was in front of my computer or notepad. As a result, I do not have an exact number of these observations.

these observation sites overlapped, at times, with those that took place for the individual case studies, it was important to note that the lens was be different in each case. For these observations, the focus was on the organizational elements contained therein as well as the interactions among the individuals participating (see Table 1).

The school's website offers the following explanation of the professional development offered:

Teachers begin their commitment with 2-3 weeks of training designed specifically for teachers new to our schools. Teachers will be exposed to seminars and workshops on standards, foundations of teaching, and classroom management and culture. During this training, experienced teachers will also receive a critical orientation to the rigor and expectations of being a teacher in a KIPP school. Both new and experienced teachers will participate in discussions and activities focused on the challenges and benefits of teaching in a diverse and rigorous educational setting. . . Throughout the school year, participants will also be given access to additional professional development activities that are focused on specific classroom or instructional topics. (www.kspace.org)

During observations of these meetings, the focus was how the individuals work within one or several communities of practice. Watching the focus teachers in professional settings with their fellow teachers and administrators offered insight into an aspect of their development that was not observable in their individual classrooms. More specifically, rather than watching them perform alone in their practice, these meeting gave the opportunity to watch them within their communities of practice with other members of those communities.

Table 2: Focus of Observations

| CONTEXT OF OBSERVATION AND EXTENT/TIMEFRAME | FOCUS OF OBSERVATIONS | GUIDING CONCEPTS |
|---|--|--|
| Classroom (5 classroom observations of 45-60 minutes each over the course of one academic year) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -instructional techniques and strategies used to deliver lessons -language used in classroom -physical presentation of classroom (arrangement of desks, decorations on walls, etc.) as reflection of adherence with/alignment to KIPP framework and philosophy -classroom management strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) -Constellations of Practice (Wenger, 1998) |
| Faculty/Departmental/ Professional Development Meetings (conducted over the course of one academic year – three professional development meetings, two faculty meetings and three departmental meetings) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -interactions among teachers -interactions between teachers and administrators -language used by teachers -language used by administrators -roles taken/performed by individuals -focus of meetings (instructional strategy, classroom management, etc) -coaching/mentoring sessions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) -Participant Roles (Goffman, 1974) |

Artifact Collection

The collection of artifacts, particularly in the context of practice such as classroom instruction or professional development, helps to augment the examination of the teachers' development through individual practice and interactions within communities of practice. In the cycle of participation and reification of communities of practice, artifacts establish not only benchmarks and references for members, but also provide an historical record of the evolution of the community. For the purposes of this study, artifacts can be described as "objects that participants use in the everyday activity of the contexts under examination" (Hatch, 2002, p.

117) and “material manifestations of cultural beliefs and behaviors” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). These artifacts included lessons, quizzes/tests, and other handouts in the classroom and have the potential to support previous observations or to disconfirm data from other data collection sources. They included documents from professional development meetings and faculty meetings. They helped to provide documentation of what was occurring at these sessions and, in so doing, to help with triangulation during data analysis.

Statement of philosophy of education/teaching. The statement of philosophy of teaching is one that is familiar to anyone in the teaching profession. It is often a necessary component of job and school applications and is a regular assignment in teacher education courses. The relevance of these statements, however, is sometimes forgotten. They play a vital role in developing a “personal pedagogy and a useful teacher identity” (Alsup, 2006, p. 167). They help teachers to establish where they stand in the educational climate, asking for explanations of their beliefs about teaching practices, teacher roles, and understandings of teaching and learning as a whole. Because they are less focused on their specific classroom behavior and habits and more concerned with the teachers’ overarching philosophy, the philosophy of teaching helps to explore the individual’s own teaching context.

During the first few weeks of the study, I asked teachers to submit the philosophy of teaching written as a part of their original application to the school. This document was intended explore each individual’s beliefs about education, understandings of the roles of students and teachers and his/her perception of learning in the classroom. The goal of this statement was to provide a general baseline understanding of their individual beliefs about education, teaching and learning.

Table 3: Overview of data collection methods

| METHOD/ TIMEFRAME | INFORMATION OFFERED | RESEARCH QUESTION(S) ADDRESSED |
|---|---|---|
| Philosophy of Teaching statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of the year (1/teacher) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional beliefs personal approach to teaching and learning philosophy of teaching and learning description of goals in teaching and learning in the classroom changes and influences in philosophy | 1, 2, 3 |
| Individual interviews (Teachers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August-January (1-2/teacher) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional trajectory previous education and preparation past experiences and influences perceptions of role and profession | 2, 3 |
| Individual Interviews (Administrators) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August-November (1/administrator) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expectations of teachers hiring practices structure of school | 1, 2 |
| Observations (professional development meetings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of the year (8) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> methods of professional support and development building of community of practice interactions within and among faculty and administration | 1, 2 |
| Classroom observations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of the year (1-2/teacher) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adherence to KIPP model approaches to teaching and learning interactions with students | 2, 3 |
| Informal observations (lunchtime, free periods, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of the year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relationships and interactions outside more formal professional settings | 1, 2, 3 |
| Artifact collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of the year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> materials distributed at professional development sessions and faculty meetings activities, quizzes and other handouts in the classroom KIPP literature | 2, 3 |

Data Collection Concerns

Over the course of data collection, it was important to keep several factors regarding confidentiality and validity in mind. This section will discuss the measures and precautions that were taken regarding HRC considerations, audio-taping, field notes, data storage and security, validity checks, triangulation, member checks, my own role as the researcher and data analysis.

HRC Considerations

All data collected were stored in a secure location. Pseudonyms have been used in an effort to preserve the anonymity of the participants and the school. In compliance with HRC requirements for working with human subjects, I obtained written consent from all participants, including making clear the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. Further, any audio-taping occurred only at the explicit approval of the participant and any recording was stopped at any time per the subject's request.

Audio-Taping

Individual interviews were audio-taped in order to enable me to capture and examine the information contained therein. It afforded me the opportunity to revisit aspects of the interviews in precise detail, thus producing more accurate representations of the details provided. In addition, by taping the interviews, I had the ability to be fully attentive to my subjects rather than having to divide my attention between the interviewee and my notes.

Field Notes

Field notes provided the most substantial amount of the data for this study. The notes themselves were taken in dedicated notebooks. They began as shorthand notes, sometimes called inscription or scratch notes (Clifford, 1990; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Sanjek, 1990), which

covered information such as schedules of meetings, physical placement of furniture and individuals and the conversations that took place. These first notes included times stamps, in an effort to establish chronology of events, as well as sketches of room set-ups and distribution of the people present during the observation. Further, I provided a column on the page for my own reactions, making sure they were separate from the data sources themselves.

As soon as possible after the observation, these notes were expanded through further detail (LeCompte & Preissle, 1996). I immediately sat down to flesh out what had occurred, writing down as much detail as possible in order to most fully capture the observation. I added these details in the notes themselves as well as on “sticky notes” that were used when there was not enough space in the notebook.

Criteria for field notes were based upon the questions guided by the framework set forth in the previous chapter. Notes focused on the interactions between and among individuals as they related to their roles and responsibilities as well as how they were enacted within different communities of practice. Further, field notes focused on the ways in which different tools, such as instructional strategies and classroom management methods, were discussed, utilized, and executed. In addition, a focus of the field notes was the language used as well as the posturing and behavior of the teachers. Some questions that guided these field notes included:

- *What types of language do teachers use with one another in different settings?*
- *What do the teachers’ interaction with one another, with administrators, and with students look like?*
- *What do they sound like?*

Data Storage and Security

In an effort to ensure the security of the data collected, hard copies of all materials collected were stored in a locking file box. Electronic copies of all transcriptions of interviews and field notes were stored on a dedicated flash drive. All case study subjects were assigned a subject number and pseudonym, a list of which was kept in a file separate from the rest of the data.

Validity Checks and Triangulation of the Data

Throughout the course of the study, several methods were used in an attempt to ensure the validity of the data collected. Validity checks are important, particularly in qualitative research, to “check-up” on the data collected. Because information gathered through means such as personal interviews or self-reporting is subjective, it was important to collect information from other sources that might serve to either confirm or disconfirm the data.

As an approach toward meaningful analysis, triangulation “provides more and better evidence from which researchers can construct meaningful propositions about the social world [and its value] lies in providing evidence such that the researcher can construct explanations of the social phenomena from which they arise” (Mathison, p. 15). This evidence and value was provided through three features of data that arise through analysis – convergence, inconsistency and contradiction. In effect, the data collected in this study through observations, interviews, and artifacts allowed for a certain level of repetition in the data that will serve to prevent inadequacies in the data collected and to provide several points from which to discover convergence, inconsistencies or contradictions in the data. These elements in turn served to strengthen the data that converged or that found agreement, and to highlight aspects of the data

that either required further exploration or proved to be irrelevant or did not substantially contribute to the study.

Member Checks

After organizing and clarifying field notes and notes on transcripts of interviews, I called upon the study participants to “check” the data; in other words, I looked to get their reactions to and feedback on my analysis, offering their own perspective and, perhaps, information that further informed the study. This effort to establish greater validity of the data requires the researcher to give the participants the opportunity to respond and react to summaries, notes, and even hypotheses that the researcher has drawn over the course of the study (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Member checks are particularly valuable in ensuring that any conclusions and hypotheses are faithful to the data collected according to subject feedback. Further, any commentary that subjects have to offer regarding the data collected has the potential to deepen the data’s value and meaning. (Carspecken, 1996)

The focus teachers as well as other faculty and administrators in this study were offered the chance to ask questions of and request to view aspects of the data collection and analysis throughout the course of the study. While all three focus teachers did, in fact, ask about and respond to my analysis, no other teachers in the school made similar requests. Despite the fact that I sent out several e-mails to the faculty body, informing them of the progress at several points in my analysis, the teachers, in general, did not pursue more detailed information about the study. Because, however, the focus teachers did respond, I felt that their reactions and comments were, at the very least, able to offer enough insight so as to validate the information I was conveying.

Researcher's Role

It was important to consider my own role at the school, both as researcher and in other positions, during the course of this study and the potential impact upon the validity of the data collection and analysis. As a former teacher, I bring my own identity and background as a teacher to the research I do. This subjectivity is inevitable (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). However, it was important to be aware of and consider the roles of the “I”s in my research, and to draw upon each when appropriate (Maxwell, 2005). More specifically, my first introduction to the school took place in 2007 for a class project; I conducted a small study that asked questions similar to those pursued in this discussion. I was initially in the school for four months, during which time I became acquainted with the teachers, administration and staff through interviews, informal discussions and classroom and faculty meeting observations.

About a year later in the spring of 2008, I began volunteering at the school, helping teachers to build and record their classroom libraries in a new computer system⁵. As a researcher, I believe that it is important to in some way develop a reciprocal relationship with subjects in an effort to avoid making them feel taken advantage of, or “used”, during the course of research. Volunteering at the school was my attempt to maintain this balance, giving the school much needed help in cataloging their books. This role meant that I was at the school once or twice a week, often sitting in the back of various classrooms while class was being held. As such, I was offered a unique opportunity to observe and listen without the onus of the researcher label. The informality of my presence gave me the chance to get insight into what happens during free periods, interactions with students and parents and in small groups between classes.

⁵ The English teachers, as well as some other teachers in the school, had a few bookcases of books in their own classrooms – their own libraries. In an effort to centralize the contents of the libraries across the school, there was a movement to log them all in a single database. This task, however, required entering each book by hand – a job I undertook as a volunteer.

My experience as a volunteer helped to shape the ways in which I might approach my subjects and the study as a whole. Further, it helped me to establish myself within the culture of the school as someone other than an academic researcher. This expanded role has helped to put teachers and administrators at greater ease in my presence and more open to my being in their classrooms and in meetings.

This expanded role contained certain risks along with rewards. I was often asked to participate during faculty meetings and to give my insight into topics discussed there. While I appreciated the ways in which I had been welcomed into the school, I was wary of the influences – both positive and negative – that they might have had upon my research. I aimed to be vigilant in maintaining my focus in this study and not letting my relationships within the school blur a more objective view of what I observed.

In an effort to be constantly aware of my role, I made use of a field diary through the research process. Field diaries are described as “any writing that a researcher does in relationship to the research other than actual field notes, transcription, or coding” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 12). These diaries offered the opportunity for me to explore my personal reactions to things I was observing or hearing, making note of the bias that I brought to the situation. In analysis, these diaries were useful in pointing to different paths of examination within the data. At the same time, they provided an outlet for any interpretation or reaction outside of the data itself.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data collected in the course of this study drew both on the literature and on insights and strategies from grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which indicates that theories derived from research are grounded, or derived, from the data. While grounded theory is primarily inductive in its approach, effective constant comparison requires both inductive and

deductive research⁶ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hatch, 2002; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993; Olsen, 2008). This comparison was performed by closely examining the data in an effort to discern the validity of its emerging meanings (Hatch, 2002), Brad Olsen (2008) explains the process:

Inductively, the researcher begins with empirical specifics and moves outward towards larger patterns and themes. Deductively, the researcher first learns the existing research landscape and considers, rejects, confirms, and adjusts it in relation to new data in order to extend the research conversation. (p. 141)

This approach required an intimate knowledge of the data through constantly working with and within it. Further, it called for a developed familiarity with existing research and an informed understanding of its themes and theories.

I initially developed codes that were created from the theories and ideas presented in the conceptual framework and literature review (see Appendix E). The initial “pass” through the data with this coding scheme allowed me to find larger threads and themes that could then be pursued in subsequent, and deeper, analysis. Though preliminary codes and coding were informed by the research, subsequent coding of the data was primarily inductive, using the themes derived from the data itself. As suggested by Erickson (1986), this study followed an interpretive approach, emphasizing a progressive problem solving approach. This approach required the researcher to maintain contact with both the data and the theory.

⁶ Deductive research relies upon theory, looking “to find data to match the theory,” while inductive research “starts with examination of a phenomenon and then . . . develops a theory to explain what was studied” (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p. 42).

It was in this initial pass that I first noticed the discussion of different “levels” of communities in which the teachers were involved. In talking about both professional experiences at KIPP and relationships with other teachers, each teacher mentioned their grade-level (or departmental) interactions, the school-wide meetings and relationships developed there, and the KIPP Summit as a place that offered them opportunities or exposed them to understanding other teachers at KIPP. It was from the revelation of this thread that I then developed the levels discussed in the cases and in the summary chapter.

I was also attuned to the ways that certain ideas were expressed by the subjects. For example, it is difficult to ask directly about habitus, but it is possible to ask the subject to discuss their own histories. From those discussions, I found that the subjects were then talking about present professional relationships and interactions in comparison or in relation to people, events, or other past experiences that had come up as part of their histories. This use of dialogic opposition helped me to better understand and discuss the ways in which each individual was operationalizing his/her own habitus.

From that understanding, it was important to understand where each subject fit in regards to Wenger’s discussions of identity, trajectories of learning, and participation and membership in communities of practice. For this aspect of the analysis, I was interested in the data from the observations most. I wanted to discern not just if and when each teacher interacted with others in their communities, but also how those interactions occurred. Using Wenger’s (1998) and Lave and Wenger’s (1996) discussions of the different types of participation and trajectories of learning as references, I was able to discern where, at the time of the observations and interviews, each subject fit. This understanding emerged through the aforementioned analysis of observations as well as through the ways that each subject talked about their own participation.

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology of the study. A variety of methods - including interviews, observations and artifact collection - was be used in an effort to be comprehensive in the data collection phases. These methods was guided by the research questions and theoretical framework laid out in the preceding chapters. Because the study is focused on the development of teacher identity, the data collection and analysis was guided not only by the theories laid out in the previous chapter but also by the context in which they were manifested.

Foreword to the Case Studies

In the next three chapters, I present case studies of three individual teachers at a KIPP school. The aim is to explore the teachers' professional identity development through developing an understanding of their personal histories, educational training, and professional practice and participation. The focus teachers in these cases represent a range of professional trajectories and participation at KIPP. Carolyn is a former Teach for America participant who moved directly into a job at KIPP and who has since taken very active leadership roles at the school. Tim, one of the oldest teachers at the school, brings a very different set of experiences to his position. A former Marine, he draws from that and other personal and professional experiences to develop a teaching style that reflects his history as well as his current participation in KIPP communities. Finally, Elizabeth has followed a trajectory led by an interest to help often overlooked and underserved students but that has been informed by a degree of non-participation in a range of communities of practice.

Rooted in Lave and Wenger's (1996) theory of peripheral participation and Wenger's (1998) extended explorations of communities of practice, these cases set the stage for and begin an effort to address the research questions around which this study is focused:

- 1) In what types of communities of practice do teachers at a KIPP school participate?
- 2) How do the available forms of engagement in these communities shape participants' identity trajectories and opportunities for learning?
- 3) How do the teachers author their professional identities in and across these communities of practice?

These cases provide the picture of each teacher's path to and within teaching at this KIPP school and directly address the first research question in the process. Through the use of thick description (Geertz, 1973), I began not only to describe the practices and participation of the teachers, but hoped to provide a clearer portrait of each teacher. In so doing, I attempted to begin to explore all of the research questions. However, a fuller analysis of the second and third research questions takes place in Chapter 7, the summary and analysis chapter.

Each case study focuses on the teacher's participation in various types of communities and constellations of practice at KIPP: the national KIPP organization, the school (including not only faculty but staff and administration as well) community, and the departmental and grade-level communities. These groupings emerged over the course of analysis as the common communities of practice and the constellations that influence and support those communities in which each teacher participated. Further, each of these categories affected the learning trajectories of the individuals and, thus, their professional identity development (Lave and Wenger, 1996; Wenger, 1998; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004a).

Though this categorization and delineation was originally modeled after Hodkinson and Hodkinson's (2011) research on teacher learning, it became clear through closer inspection of the data that each of these categories in which communities of practice seemed to exist offered different opportunities for participation to the teachers therein. This point is significant in that these opportunities also seemed to influence the degree to which and the manner in which the teachers participated and, as a result, enhanced my examination of their participation in communities of practice.

The discussion of KIPP earlier in this paper highlights several features important to this description of the KIPP organization and its related framework as a constellation of practice. The

national organization, however, is unique in its function as a constellation in that it is foundational in its support. That is, rather than providing tangential support, such as the example of the admissions department that has a more indirect relationship to the development of the instructional staff given in the description of constellations in chapter 2, it scaffolds the day to day practices of the teachers. Further, because individual teachers directly participate in the national KIPP community at least once a year at the Summit, there are very direct ties and connections between the influence of the larger KIPP organization and the teachers' participation in the more local (school level and grade/departmental level) communities.

Currently, there are 109 KIPP schools serving over 33,000 students across the country. Built upon a specific model, these schools look the same and take the same steps and measures to follow the same ideology. They are unified and guided by the framework that has emerged as a part of the KIPP model. As a framing organization for its schools, KIPP sets forward very specific theories about and methods for teaching and learning that are woven into its training and that trickles down into the practice of its teachers. As a structure for its schools, KIPP's framework is unique in that it provided an umbrella across its schools nationwide rather than being localized to one school.

Coming together as a school afforded the opportunity to have synchronous discussions about larger, school-wide concerns that were not as effectively addressed in smaller departmental or grade-level meetings. It was in this community of practice that personal variation and adaptation of what was offered through the larger KIPP framework was clearest. Here, teachers, administrators, and staff came together in discussion and practice to build and develop context specific enactment of the ideals set forth by the national KIPP organization.

Departmental and grade-level communities of practice were significantly smaller but much more concentrated in the focus of their discussions and development. Discussion of these communities and constellations of practice provided a more focused glimpse into the roles that each teacher played in their specific professional communities. Grade-level meetings served to discuss the needs of students and to come together about KIPP culture while departmental meetings were opportunities to discuss curriculum and curricular alignment.

These cases also describe the opportunities for learning through each teacher's "available forms of engagement." It is in this part of each study that most directly engages the definition of learning as participation (Lave and Wenger, 1996; Sfard, 1998; Wenger, 1998; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003) as opposed to an understanding of learning as acquisition. This approach looks not only at participation as being a part of a community of practice but as "becoming" in the community. This means that learning takes place not only as a part of the social interaction and exchange that occurs through membership in a community of practice, but also as a trajectory that is influenced and altered by that participation.

Though I begin some analysis related to the third research question in each of these cases, much of that analysis will take place in Chapter 7. In that chapter, as well as through some exploration in the next three case study chapters, I address the question of the individual's role in authoring their own identity through an exploration of the ways that the teachers navigated their participation in the communities of practice and how the negotiation of meaning in which they took part affected their authorships of identity. Through developing an understanding of the ways in which these communities of practice served to interpret and (potentially) transform the teachers' beliefs and perceptions, it becomes possible to gain insight into the roles and routes that individuals take in forging their own identities while taking part in the collective identity of the

group. It is in this section that the importance of habitus comes to light through the discussion of the ways in which an individual's dispositions towards learning has a direct impact upon the process of learning. "Different learners perceive the same opportunities differently, and react towards them differently, because of these differing dispositions, as well as their differing positions in relation to those opportunities" (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003, pp. 4-5).

Because individuals' participation in a community of practice is symbiotic through the cycle of participation and reification that is important to the development of both the individual and community, this section includes discussions of teachers' learning trajectories leading to and during their time at KIPP.

I divided the analysis between the case studies and the summary and analysis chapters for two reasons. First, I felt it important to focus on painting the picture of the teachers and their development and participation at KIPP as fully as possible in the case studies. In order to do that, I looked to pay full attention to my description in these cases. Second, I found it most effective to contain the fuller analysis of the information presented in the case studies in a single chapter. That is, I devoted the final chapter to the deeper examination of the cases both on the individual and cross-study levels. This approach allowed me to move fluidly from the individual case analysis to the cross-study comparison.

Chapter 4: The insider:

Intentionally crafting an insider trajectory

Carolyn has had a typically busy day. Arriving at school before 7:00 this morning, she greeted the students as they walked to get their breakfasts. She then spent some time in her classroom, filling out the students' 'paychecks' and putting some finishing touches on the lesson plans for the day. She has to take advantage of any free time she can to stay on top of all the work associated with her job. Once she finishes her paperwork, she begins to get ready for her first class of the day. She organizes her room, lines up chairs with the tables, writes the day's agenda on the board and puts her desk in order. Left with a few minutes to spare, she sits down to read some homework assignments and readies the various handouts she will need for the next class. As the bell rings to signal the end of the period and the beginning of the day, she looks around the room to make sure everything is in its place.

As students begin to enter the classroom, Carolyn stands at the door to greet them with a smile and words of encouragement. "Way to get here on time, Carlos." "You look very nice today, Jimmy." "Good job getting here on time, Janice." They respond in kind, saying hello, some commenting on Carolyn's dress or simply smiling at her as they walk in the door. They walk to their desks clutching their books for the class, sit down in their chairs and put their books on the table in front of them. Some of the earlier students begin to read from a book they have with them or talk to their neighbors while they wait for all of their classmates to arrive.

"Good morning, team and family," Carolyn says once everyone is seated. "Good morning, Ms. James," the class responds as a whole. This cue that class has begun seems to focus the students immediately as they turn to face Carolyn at the front of the classroom and end any conversations they may have been having with their friends. She immediately goes over the

agenda for the day, which is written on the whiteboard under the heading appropriate for their class period. “Today we’ll finish up writing your persuasive paragraphs and review the important points that we have been studying this week. I’ll give you a chance to read your paragraphs to your teammates and then we’ll put them in your portfolios. Remember to fill in your exit tickets before you leave – that’s how you get out the door!”

From this summary of how class will proceed, Carolyn launches into the day’s lesson. “Okay, who can tell me what we are trying to accomplish in a persuasive paragraph or essay?” Though there is hesitation from some students, most raise their hands immediately, some very energetically. “Okay, Jamie, what do you think?” “To be persuasive?” Jamie responds. “That’s right but remember that we don’t want to use the same word that something is called to describe it. How else can we explain it?” “To try to convince someone that you’re right or to buy something?” answers another student after being called upon. “Good,” Carolyn says as she snaps her fingers. The students follow suit and soon everyone is snapping their approval of the student’s answer.

“Now, everyone take out the paragraphs you started yesterday and we’ll finish those today,” Carolyn instructs the class. The students move to retrieve their notebooks and begin to talk to one another as they are completing this task. The noise level in the classroom begins to rise quickly as the students joke and chat with each other. Suddenly, Carolyn firmly says, “Slant! 5, 4, 3, 2, 1!” As soon as the first word leaves her mouth the students’ behavior changes. They square themselves at their tables and quickly stop talking. As she counts down, all the students turn their heads so that each person is looking at her. At this point, no one is talking and all eyes are on Carolyn.

“Great job, team and family. Now that we’re all together again, let’s continue our work and get to writing.” The students pick up their pencils and write silently, working to finish their paragraphs.

Introduction

In conversations with Carolyn, she described herself as knowing very early in her academic career that she wanted to be a teacher. Raised by a teacher, she had insight into the profession that helped to shape the ways that she perceived what it meant to teach and the role she wanted to play as a teacher. She was officially prepared for the profession in college, attending a teacher preparation program there, and then going through that program’s student teaching and certification. Since then, her focus had been clear as she sought out opportunities that addressed at-risk student populations, first through her participation in Teach for America and then in a teaching position with KIPP. Throughout these experiences, her mission remained constant: to fight the “education gap”⁷ by serving the needs of low-income students.

In this section, I explore Carolyn’s professional trajectory to examine the communities of practice with which she has been involved and the impact that participation had upon the ways that she viewed and approached her role as an instructor. Looking at her early professional influences and experiences not only helps to set the stage for her professional journey but also gives insight into the role of personal history in the development of her trajectory of learning. Her early experiences offer insight into the perceptions of and attitudes about teaching and learning that impacted her participation in the communities of practice at KIPP, revealing the

⁷ The phrase “education gap” was one that Carolyn used freely in our discussions. Though I did ask her what she meant by it – and was offered a definition that was very close to what is generally called the “achievement gap” – I missed the opportunity to fully pursue the significance of her use of this particular phrase. As a result, I offer what I was able to cull from the data I did collect but feel that my analysis may be lacking a component in this missed research opportunity.

habitus that she brought to her participation and her involvement in the profession. Through a discussion of her experiences and path to becoming and being a teacher, her “process of definition” is mapped and illustrated.

Through the exploration of Carolyn’s professional trajectory of learning, what I characterize as an insider trajectory, I sought to understand how she developed as a teacher. Important to this exploration were the roles the communities of practice in which she participated played and the tools that contributed to her authorship of that identity. To that end, this chapter is primarily framed by the first and second research questions. To address the research question, *In what types of communities of practice do teachers at a KIPP school participate?*, I examine the various communities in which Carolyn participated at the school as well as what that participation looked like. This exploration provides insight into the types of learning offered through her participation as well as the ways in which that learning influenced her development of identity. I also begin my investigation of the second research question, *How do the available forms of engagement in these communities shape participants’ identity trajectories and opportunities for learning?*, by discussing the participant roles that Carolyn takes in relation to other members of the communities and the content of those communities. This discussion will be taken up in more detail in the final chapter of this study.

In that final chapter, I will also more fully consider the third research question, *How do the teachers author their professional identities in and across these communities of practice?* While that conversation is initiated in this case study, in that chapter I will more fully examine how Carolyn grew, negotiated and navigated her professional identity; explore the tools that Carolyn used as she authored her identity through participation in communities of practice at this

school; and describe Carolyn's experiences of power, both through her participant roles as well as through the ways that she exercised agency and improvised in her interactions.

Early Influences and Professional Experiences

As discussed in chapter 2, professional identities can best be understood as the learning trajectories of the individual, changing and shifting as she negotiates new or different information and experiences. In light of this description of identity, it is important to include not only the present negotiations of learning but also those from the past. This section explores Carolyn's trajectory before coming to KIPP as well as developing an understanding of how her habitus formed and influenced her choices and actions. Those experiences and influences shaped not only the ways that Carolyn participated in various communities of practice at KIPP, but also affected her professional identity and learning trajectory. This section includes a discussion of several sources of influence for Carolyn, including her mother, her academic and teaching preparation in college, and her Teach for America experience. As integral components of her habitus, these influences shaped Carolyn's perceptions of teaching, participation in communities of practice while at KIPP, and the ways that she used the learning opportunities afforded her through that participation.

The daughter of a teacher, Carolyn, like her mother, chose a career in the classroom. Growing up watching and learning from what her mother did as a teacher, she developed an understanding of the work that went into building a successful classroom and what students needed from their teachers. But that was where her mother's influence as an educator ended. Her mother spent her entire professional career teaching in suburban schools that primarily served white students. The schools in which she taught were generally successful schools with students

that came from, for the most part, middle class households and all of the learning benefits that being part of that socioeconomic class offered (see, for example, Lareau, 2003; Rothstein, 2004).

Scholars have discussed the advantage that children of middle class families and their children have over their lower-SES peers. From language and vocabulary development (Labov, 1970; Delpit, 2012) to time management and social skills (Lareau, 2003), children of middle class – and particularly white – families come to school with a set of skills that set them up for success. As a result, teachers of those students are able to focus on building academic skills and content knowledge rather than having to establish and build basic social, organizational and study skills necessary as a foundation for success in school. This was not the teaching environment in which Carolyn wanted to work or the student population she wanted to teach. She described this decision as being influenced by a drive to, as she often said, “make a difference,” a difference that she felt could be best achieved in working with students who did not have the advantages that she knew and saw growing up.

During her early college career, and before entering a teacher education program, Carolyn majored in gender and ethnic studies. From this academic foundation, rooted in the study of inequity and social justice, she built an interest in and pursuit of equality and serving the disadvantaged. It was during this time that she began to study and become interested in examining practices of privilege and oppression and, ultimately, the education gap. She had grown up in a middle-class family, attending schools that served students who, for the most part, were like her – white and middle-class. Her mother had taught in those very schools. She had seen and experienced both the privilege and the oppression that she was now studying. Further, after years of watching and learning about what it meant to teach from her mother’s experiences,

she knew she wanted to be a teacher and, in that role, to tackle these issues head-on. She carried these interests into her teacher preparation studies.

As she studied to be a teacher, she became determined to address the needs of students on the “losing side” of the education gap. Her student teaching experience placed her in what she described as a “good” school, one that was primarily white and high achieving. It was here that she was confronted with the stark contrast in unequal forms of access to educational opportunity. While she went to student teach at this successful school, she realized that the neighboring schools, which served almost solely Hispanic students, were struggling. This experience brought “the gap” starkly to her attention and made her resolute in her determination to teach in low-income, underserved schools.

After graduation, Carolyn applied to Teach for America. She said that she knew if she went straight into teaching in or near her home city she would face a lot of pressure (mentioning in particular the pressure she would get from her mother) to teach in a “good” school. Knowing her own motivations for becoming a teacher, she thought that she would have struggled in a position teaching middle-class students and, ultimately, left teaching. Teach for America was a way to get support for her goals as a teacher and to “go somewhere else, to get that experience” with the intention of returning to her home community to continue the work she would begin during her time with TFA.

Finding its origins in Wendy Kopp’s Princeton University undergraduate senior thesis (1989), Teach for America (TFA) has grown into a nationwide highly competitive teacher corps program (Wilgoren, 2000). After undergoing a strenuous selection process, individuals are placed in some of the neediest and most demanding classrooms in the country for a two-year teaching commitment. They undergo a summer-long training program and are offered

development and support while in the schools (www.teachforamerica.org). TFA's primary focus is to "break the cycle of educational inequity" across the country by placing some of the "best and brightest" college graduates in some of the poorest performing schools serving the most at-risk student populations (www.teachforamerica.org).

Carolyn was accepted into this program and placed in a school in rural Eastern North Carolina. A pretty, petite blond woman with delicate, Raphaelite features, her appearance belied her rugged determination. However, it was also something of a materialization of her middle-class upbringing and the background that she was moving away from. The contrast between her own educational and sociocultural upbringing and that of the students she served – the very contrast that she looked to remedy through her presence in the classroom – came into sharp focus as she walked into the school and classroom where she would teach for her two years with Teach for America. At this school, she further grappled with the harsh realities of what she calls the "education gap":

[T]he population was 80% Black and there was a small population of Hispanic students. And the education gap there was incredible. [I]t was haunting. . . And I was nowhere near ready to teach in that population. And so it was challenging because too I had had experience in middle class schools and just the functioning level was totally different. And I was used to that expectation and when I got there I just had such an incredible culture shock and just shock at the dysfunction of the school and that this was going on.

(T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009)

Dramatically different than what she had experienced during her time spent student and substitute teaching in middle-class, primarily white schools, Carolyn was faced with students

who were several grade levels behind, a dearth of resources, and a lack of school organization and support, what she described as a “dysfunctional” situation:

I didn’t know what to do when I had books that were on a 4th grade level and I had students that were reading at a pre-primer level, so it was like before kindergarten when they didn’t know any sounds and I had no idea what to do with that. There was just such a range of levels but very far behind and so I wasn’t prepared for that and I think it’s just that initial shock, “Oh my gosh, how have they gone through all these classes, how are they in 4th grade?” (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009)

She quickly realized that as energizing and interesting as she had found her teacher preparation while she was in school, any doubts she had had about the sufficiency of her preparation to address the needs of these students were quickly substantiated. She had been, as she described it, “prepared to teach students in a middle-class school” (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009). All of the discussion and theory about serving at-risk students seemed to have been little more than an academic exercise when it came down to working with kids who not only lacked grade-level academic skills but also had not developed necessary foundational understandings such as “putting books back in the bookshelf with the spine facing out and [knowing] why it’s important to do it that way” (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009). Further, the TFA summer training she received felt like a crash course that provided more specific ideas about addressing the situations with which she might be confronted but did not significantly contribute to a feeling of preparation for what she was about to experience in the classroom.

During this time, Carolyn needed, and received, “a lot of support” through a reliable and strong network in her Teach for America group as well as in the local KIPP school. Despite the academic and pedagogical preparation she had received in her college-based teacher education

program, she described herself as woefully unprepared for the classroom realities she faced. She was “nowhere ready to teach in that population” (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009). The functioning level was totally different than what she had experienced in the middle class classrooms where she had student taught. She was shocked at what she called the “dysfunction of the schools,” but learned so much not only from that experience but through the training and professional development that TFA provided during the school year.

Every week, she met with other TFA teachers for professional development. Almost immediately, however, she found the professional development that TFA offered, though valuable in many ways, limited in its usefulness. Though it was focused on the general student population served by the program, she found that the translation from removed discussion of techniques and approaches to teaching to actual classroom practice did not always happen fluidly or well. She sought, and quickly found, another source of professional development in a nearby school; this school was a KIPP school. She was drawn to the school for several reasons. First, it was very close and so easily accessible. Next, it served a very similar population of students, with similar social and academic limitations. Finally, because (as she quickly discovered) KIPP was based in many of the fundamental pedagogical approaches as TFA, it offered an opportunity to observe directly the use of those techniques in an effective environment. She described the experience of watching those KIPP teachers and classrooms in action:

What would happen is you would see your classroom and you would see how things weren't happening in your own classroom and your school and then you would go visit and it's the same population and to see how your kids could be doing, what the same kids are doing next door, but know that that school structure has to be the school structure.

And so I used to go over and learn and observe the teachers at the KIPP school there . . . “

(T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009)

Because she was placed in a very rural community with, as she describes it, “not much else to do”, the weekly professional development sessions and the visits to the KIPP school provided her with connections with other teachers and made teaching the central focus of much of what she (and her colleagues) did. She had found a program in Teach for America that put her directly in the middle of the educational needs that she wanted to address. She also found a school, through the local KIPP school, where she could observe practices and methods that helped her to develop herself to more effectively address what she viewed as the needs of the students she was trying to serve in the North Carolina school. She realized that she had been prepared through her college-based teacher education program to serve middle-class schools and middle-class student populations but that she was now finally receiving the training and support to serve the student population that she was most interested in teaching.

Coming to and Working at KIPP

60 percent of KIPP school leaders and 33 percent of KIPP teachers are Teach for America alumnae (<http://www.city-journal.org/2009/bc0313cs.html>). Because KIPP schools are the brain-child of two TFA alumni – David Levin and Mike Feinberg – and have kept many of the same or similar philosophies and approaches to teaching underserved and at-risk student populations, it is no surprise that individuals who have gone through the Teach for America training and teaching experience find in KIPP schools familiar processes, techniques and student populations. In this sense, Carolyn was a “typical” KIPP instructor. A young teacher at the beginning of her career, she came from a Teach for America teaching experience in a primarily

minority (in this case, African-American) school and went straight to KIPP, drawn to its similarities to TFA, both in student population and teaching style.

From the time she started at KIPP, Carolyn jumped into its culture, taking leadership roles and embracing “KIPPology” (as she has referred to the KIPP school philosophy and methodology). She had already embraced what she saw as an effective approach to the classroom through her observations and experience in North Carolina and was entering an environment that seemed familiar and aligned with her own interests and teaching aims.

Carolyn noted herself that coming to work as a teacher at KIPP had allowed her to continue the work she started in Eastern North Carolina (and that she had begun to work towards through her studies and teacher training):

[W]e have systems of how you organize, how you do things, and those are taught very well, and then you go to the next grade and it doesn't have to be re-taught. . . The heading [of papers written in English class] is the same for everyone whereas in other schools it could be different everywhere. . . I think the students that we get need that consistency as much as any other student but more so. . . [T]he students that I had in North Carolina . . . would come to the classroom and . . . get fragments and pieces of information from teachers but they weren't . . . making connections, and there weren't clear connections to the teachers. . . I think that is something we need to improve here at KIPP but definitely it's so much more than it was at my old school. (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009)

Participating at KIPP

Carolyn's participation in the various activities and settings at KIPP was affected not only by her own attitudes toward and perceptions and expectations of teaching and learning but

also by those of her co-participants. "Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. This means, among other things, that it is mediated by the differences of perspective among the co-participants (Hanks, p. 15)." Carolyn's learning trajectory, and thus her professional identity development, was affected by her participation and her interaction with other individuals in those communities also impacted that learning. Further, the influence of her participation as part of KIPP communities and constellations of practice can be examined through the ways in which she positioned herself in relation to other members. By taking certain participatory roles, it is possible to get a sense how she positioned herself as a member in the community.

“KIPP network” participation. Carolyn first encountered the KIPP community during her days in Teach for America and with her introduction to the neighborhood KIPP school in which she observed. She credited that exposure with opening her eyes to what she needed to do in her own classroom at the time. The model and framework that was provided through KIPP proved effective and fit the challenges that she was facing with her own students. Further, the learning offered through her observations at the KIPP school provided a level of support and structure that she did not have in the school in which she taught during her time in TFA or in her own college-based teacher training background. The KIPP framework showed her that, in her words, “if you’re given the right support, the right structure, you can teach any student” (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009). She carried this belief through her two years with Teach for America and into her subsequent teaching position at KIPP.

Early on, Carolyn found a real connection to the larger KIPP community. She discovered a network that not only pursued similar educational goals but that provided a solid repertoire of teaching skills in which she believed:

The mentality is so much of my philosophy of teaching. It's amazing. I think when I first saw the KIPP school [in NC] . . . I think it was just like 'Wow!' . . . This is incredible . . . it's happening in the same community that I'm struggling in . . . and it all had to do with the culture, the atmosphere. . . " (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009)

During her time in North Carolina, she had found a source of useful information and modeling of effective practices in KIPP. Though TFA was helping to provide her with connections to other teachers in the program, her visits to and observations of the KIPP school not only augmented her learning but filled in holes that she felt were left in both her previous teacher education and her TFA training. Frustrated by the discipline problems and the resultant missing learning experienced by her students, Carolyn sought another avenue to address her feeling of being unable to tackle the lack of order and discipline she experienced in her own classroom. Her visits to the KIPP school provided Carolyn with her first access to the KIPP framework and network. As a newcomer, her participation in the KIPP community was peripheral. She described initially sitting in the back of the classroom, observing the experienced KIPP teachers in practice, in an effort to learn about "how things were done" (T-01, personal interview, August 23, 2009). At first she just took notes and asked the teacher questions, trying to understand what worked with the KIPP teacher's students and what didn't.

As she attended more classes at the KIPP school, she began to engage in the classroom in which she had previously only been an observer. Though her contributions were often limited to helping a lone student here and there or assisting the teacher in some way, she found that she gained hands-on experience with what she had been observing. For example, after learning how they were used, she began participating in the chants in the classroom. Along the way, she also brought some of what she learned into her own TFA classroom, where she dealt with severe

discipline issues. Ultimately, she described the bridge she developed between her observations and interactions at the nearby KIPP school and her own classroom as being important to her own development as a teacher.

After becoming a teacher at KIPP, she found comfort in the structure and guidance that are provided through KIPP policies. She knew that there was consistency, at least to some extent, in what happened in classrooms, because of the specific guidelines that must be followed and specifications that each classroom must meet. Her classroom was covered with the slogans that are familiar in the school: “Work hard. Be nice.” “Climb the mountain to college.” She had her tables in the familiar pods that are seen in many classrooms. The posters on the walls were the same as or similar to what other teachers had hung on their walls. Further, the functioning of the classroom itself was encased in what Carolyn describes as “KIPPology” – terms, chants and actions that the students encounter school-wide, in every classroom they enter.

This community served to both enable and constrain Carolyn’s identity development. On the one hand, it was the KIPP structure and focus that first attracted her to the school and to her position. It offered a framework similar to that within which she had worked during her time with Teach for America and one that she had found effective and attractive in her observations of the neighboring KIPP school. The KIPP framework offered a nested seat for her practice; that is, its ideology and structure supported her own ideals and provided scaffolding for a practice that afforded her the opportunity to meet her own teaching and learning goals – goals that aligned with those explicit in the KIPP philosophy.

On the other hand, the size and scale of this community lent itself to a lopsided direction of influence in the participation and reification cycle. Although Carolyn found guidance and

influence in the reified structures of this community, it was those very structures that also limited the influence that she had through her participation therein.

School-wide participation. At the school level, Carolyn found learning opportunities and collaboration that she believed were lacking at the grade and departmental levels. This community of practice offered another dimension to Carolyn's learning. The school-wide community proffered interaction and collaboration with other former Teach for America participants that directly influenced her daily practice.

Further, with the implementation of the Teacher Pathways program and the Teacher Competency Model school-wide⁸, she found a unifying structure within the school beyond the KIPP framework, which provided a general set of guidelines for improving herself as a teacher. These additional school-wide constellations of practice served to deepen and enrich Carolyn's learning. Carolyn took to this development program, quickly advancing through the "ranks" and finding a niche in her own professional ambitions. Her advancement from novice teacher to associate after her first term teaching at KIPP mirrored the ways in which she participated in other ways in the community.

School-wide professional development meetings along with the beginning of the year orientation for new students and teachers provided Carolyn the opportunity to collaborate

⁸ At this school, the administration had just implemented a new teacher development model through a program called Teacher Pathways. This program offered specific guidelines and steps to professional growth as a teacher. The Teacher Pathways program and Teacher competency models were new incentives for teacher development and growth. The stated goal and purpose of the Pathways program is, "to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence [to] perform successfully in all indicators of the Teacher Competency Model and executing with consistency all [school] cultural expectations." (Appendix F)

Based around a tiered model of skill development in the classroom, teachers were expected to perform at a certain level in order to achieve the corresponding title. With each title came greater rewards and responsibility as well as an assumption of greater teacher mastery. Among the rewards were greater flexibility with scheduling and increased compensation for specific professional duties. The increased responsibility was primarily in the form of mentorship; as a teacher became more expert, she became responsible for more mentees.

directly with other faculty, particularly reconnecting with the other TFA alums on the faculty. She used these meetings to step into leadership roles, often participating in several activities and groups that directly affected the development and delivery of policy and procedure in the school.

Departmental and grade-level participation. Once a week, Carolyn met with the other grade-level teachers as well as with the other teachers in her department. Each of these meetings included four to five teachers, although there were occasionally one or two additional individuals who attend. These “extra” attendees were sometimes the part-time teachers in the school or a member of the administration and were often drawn to attend these meetings through necessity (discussion of the localized adoption of a new school policy or to talk about a specific student or group of students, for example).

During one grade-level meeting, the five fifth-grade teachers were in attendance; the agenda for this meeting included reviewing the “student retention” list as well as discussing an upcoming fifth-grade trip to Washington DC and going through a version of the fifth-grade curriculum. Of the five teachers in attendance, the most “veteran” teacher of the group had been at KIPP for five years while the others had been there for three or fewer years (at this point, Carolyn had only been at the school for two years). There was, however, no clear “chair” or leader and each teacher took charge of a different component of the meeting.

Carolyn began by going through the student retention list. This list included students who are in some way in jeopardy of failing one or more classes due to a variety of reasons, including language barriers and behavioral issues. The purpose, Carolyn explained, was to check on the progress (or lack thereof) of these students and, if necessary, to propose a course of action. As she read through the list of names, she offered her own assessment of each student’s situation and solicits the like from her fellow teachers. There was a range of engagement from the teachers

here spanning from mechanically involved in the conversation to lively participation. Carolyn's input was consistently substantive as she brought in examples from previous experiences and offered her own insight in any necessary recommendations.

Her "take charge" participation did not change significantly as the agenda moved to a discussion of the DC trip, which was meant to motivate and inspire the fifth-graders into maintaining their academic momentum and hard work. While facets of this discussion came across as procedural, Carolyn enthusiastically offered her services as the teachers discussed which ones of them would teach various monuments during their trip. As the conversation moved on to a fifth-grade curriculum, Carolyn again was a willing contributor, offering "whatever support [she] can give" in her otherwise overbooked schedule to make sure that, as a whole, the fifth-grade teachers can achieve some sort of horizontal alignment.

She moved from this meeting straight to a departmental level meeting during which new pedagogical protocols are to be reviewed. This meeting was led by a teacher – a former TFA participant and KIPP veteran of five years - who also played an administrative role at the school as a professional development coach and assistant principal. Carolyn became a more peripheral participant during this meeting, primarily observing and listening, with the exception of the section of the agenda for which she is responsible for presenting. Much less vocal during this meeting, Carolyn nonetheless remained attentive and engaged, taking notes and offering relevant comments when solicited.

In discussing the differences in participation in these two meetings, Carolyn explained that the two groups offer different things through the members and, as a result, she found that she engaged differently. At the grade-level, there was no clear "leader". She described the intensity of the KIPP framework and the amount of work required at this school as being the main reason

for the high rate of turnover in the faculty. As a result, she noted, the faculty tended not only to be quite young on average but also to be fairly new to teaching or to KIPP (or both). This situation led to a group of teachers that was fairly homogenous experientially. While departments were assigned chairs, the lead was not always clear at her meetings with her fifth grade colleagues and seniority or experience does not hold much value in establishing that leadership. Consequently, Carolyn felt compelled to assert her own experience and knowledge in her grade-level meetings to a much greater extent than in her departmental meeting, where there was not only a chair but also individuals who not only had experiences similar to hers (such as Teach for America) but had more years of experience in those contexts.

At the departmental level, the lack of a wide range of experience directly impacted the development of the community of practice as well as the ways in which the individual members participated. In fact, the meetings that took place tended to be less than dynamic, going over policy and other procedural concerns and not much else. It is in this context that Carolyn found her development most limited and constrained.

What this level of community did offer, however, was a chance for individuals to discuss their concerns about students and approaches to those who may require extra attention. While there were, in many respects, standardized classroom methods that all teachers used in their classrooms, there existed only general suggestions as to the ways to address the needs of students who were struggling academically, socially or in other ways.

The “trickle-down” from the larger KIPP structure seemed to limit the learning that occurred at this level. The language in these meetings was similar across the board (and stayed close to the KIPP language and structures). The lack of close collaboration may also be attributed to the individual qualities the teachers brought to the communities. Carolyn preferred to work

independently on developing the content of her classes. The lack of an assertive chair in either of these levels of Carolyn's communities contributed to the lack of collaboration in development beyond procedural.

Conclusion

Through this case study, I have presented a professional trajectory that appears to be arrow straight. From her reactions to her mother's influence, to the path she chose through her teacher training and on to her intentional choices to serve in Teach for America and then to work at KIPP, Carolyn's development as a teacher was framed by a clear and deliberate vision of what she held as her mission and the purpose of her role as a teacher. This clear inbound trajectory shaped and was shaped by her participation in the communities at KIPP. Further, the ways in which she defined her role as an instructor cuts a clear path for the development of her professional identity.

Chapter 5: The seasoned rookie:

Brokering practices across a boundary trajectory

As the students move through the halls towards class, they greet Tim with high fives, tales of their progress (or lack thereof) in other classes and silly jokes. Tim offers his palm, listens with interest and laughs at punch lines. It's a beautiful day outside and so Tim has decided that class today will be outside. Tim tells the students to get dressed and meet him outside. And as they exit the building, it becomes clear that class has begun.

Stepping outside the door, Tim adopts a drill sergeant's voice, "Company, line up!" The students fall into line without hesitation, knowing where to go and how to get there quickly and quietly. Roll is called and students "sound off" as their names are called saying, "Present!" after they are announced; it is over quickly and efficiently, as with much of the beginning of the class. After roll is taken, the students are told to and subsequently march to the tennis courts, where class will be held for the day. This march tends to be more of a stroll but the students are well behaved and get to the courts in an orderly manner.

Once at the courts, calisthenics begin. The coach blows his omnipresent whistle to count out each repetition as he himself does stretching, sit-ups and jumping jacks with the students. All the students participate, some even encouraging the less fit to "keep going," reminding them that there are "just a few more." A few students grunt and groan but continue with the exercises until Tim calls them to huddle up so that he can explain the events of the day.

They will be playing kickball, an announcement that causes several students to cheer and others to moan. Tim explains that they will begin with a skills test and then play a short game of kickball before the end of class. The students line up for the skills test, which involves them kicking the ball in an effort to make it past a certain designated point on the court. Tim serves as

the “pitcher,” rolling the ball to the students one by one. As they kick he either calls out “pass,” at which point the students join him in the outfield, or “end of line,” where the students will try again. For those students for whom it takes several tries, Tim cheers them on, joined by the students who have already passed their skills. To help them make the kick, Tim rolls the ball slowly and carefully. Finally, all of the students pass the skills tests and the game itself begins.

Again, Tim acts as pitcher and, this time, umpire. He cheers on both sides as they play, coaching them to “throw it to first” or to “tag them out!” One student, a fairly strong kicker, kicks the ball so hard that it makes it over the fence into a construction site just on the other side. The student runs to the fence as a construction worker picks up the ball, has a brief exchange with the student through the fence and then throws it over. The game resumes as before.

After class, the kicker runs up to Tim saying, “Coach, you won’t believe what that guy said to me when I went to get the ball.” Tim asks him to tell him and the student replies, “He told me to stay in school, keep learning, so I don’t end up like him!” Tim smiles at the student and says, “What do you think about that?” “He’s right,” the student answers. “Yup, yup. Keep working hard and you won’t have that kind of hard work,” Tim says, patting the student on the back before dismissing the class and heading into the next period. For the rest of the day, Tim recounted the incident to his other classes, emphasizing what he had told that student – reminding them why they were at KIPP. “You’re not here just to go to school. You’re here to change your lives. You’re here to go to college, to make sure you’re not shoveling dirt like that guy at the construction site.”

Introduction

Tim’s genial, easy-going nature belied the complexity of his journey to teaching and of his process of becoming a teacher. Tim’s entry into the teaching professional was non-traditional

from the start. Though he always knew he wanted to coach, teaching was something that “just happened”. Trained in philosophy and religion in college, Tim never underwent teacher training and, at the time of this study, in his 13th year of teaching and first year at KIPP – and, more generally, at a public school - was becoming certified through an alternative program. He had relied on his own experience coaching and teaching in private schools and his time in the Marines. In addition, his own personal life experiences as a poor rural child and young adult and father of a large family (with seven children) contributed to his deeper understanding of his role and, subsequently, his identity as a teacher.

In this chapter, I discuss Tim’s development of teacher identity through participation in communities of practice at the KIPP school at which he teaches. Framed by Wenger’s notion of communities of practice and informed by Bourdieu’s habitus, I will explore the role of these communities in Tim’s navigation of his professional identity as he negotiates meaning, coordinates understanding and makes connections across boundaries in his trajectory of learning. First, I will explore Tim’s early experiences, including his childhood and young adult years, in an effort to understand the development of the habitus that shapes his teaching practice. Next, I will delve into Tim’s time at KIPP and his participation in its routine social practices. This participation is mitigated by and shapes his assumptions about teaching and learning.

These first sections establish not only the communities in which he has participated both before and during his times at KIPP but also the shape his participation at KIPP has taken. From this understanding, I explore those influences in an effort to investigate the ways in which Tim’s participation has shaped his learning trajectory, what Wenger calls a boundary trajectory, and the role that he has played in authoring his own identity across community boundaries. The negotiation of meanings that takes place through this role as broker has resulted in a complex

hybrid identity, one that incorporates his various experiences as a father, a coach and a Marine with his present role as a teacher. .

Early influences and professional experiences

In conversations with Tim about what was important to him in teaching and how he related to his position as a teacher, he placed an emphasis on how his previous experiences shaped his role. It became clear in our discussions that his childhood and young adult experiences continued to reverberate as strongly as his professional experiences in how he developed as a teacher. The importance and intensity of these experiences can be partially explained through Bourdieu's theory of habitus, which emphasizes the impact and significance of these influences as a "starting place" from which habits and dispositions that affect practice develop. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Tim's range of experiences, both professional and person, made a deep imprint in the ways that he became and continued to evolve as a teacher.

When asked about his earliest influences as well as his impressions of the students he taught, Tim related stories of his life as a child from a poor rural family and the ways in which that background colored his perceptions and points of view, both personally and professionally. He knew from an early age the importance that education held in advancing in life and becoming successful. His background also taught him about the necessity of hard work in school and to take every advantage of what that education has to offer. Tim described that, as a child, he knew what it meant to have little. The town in which he grew up was a farming town, populated by people who constantly struggled to makes ends meet. Very few of these people, his own parents included, had gone to high school, much less to college. Nevertheless, his parents pushed him and his brothers to work hard in their studies, telling them that this was their route to success.

Though Tim offered very little description of his relationship with his parents or of them as individuals, he emphasized that they pushed the importance of education and of hard work.

As a result of this upbringing and the insight he developed during it, he gained an appreciation of the advantages being educated. He related to the kids in his classes at KIPP, comparing his own upbringing to that of the children he educated:

I'm just the rural version of the poor urban kid. I was the poor rural kid that grew up around the farm and didn't have a lot and I got to college and I finished college in four year and I did it on Pell grants and things like that and then paid everything off on my own . . . I fit really well with the ideology of KIPP. (T-03, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

He not only knew what it meant to not have very much but he was also aware of the importance of working hard to support himself. When he went to college, he brought this work ethic with him. He watched some of his peers struggle academically as they seemed to take for granted what he saw as an opportunity, and so continued to work hard himself to finish in four years with minimal debt and good grades. He saw college as a vehicle for more choices, something that he mentioned – often verbatim – many times during his interview. He stressed not only the increased life choices that a college education offered but also his belief that to come from where he came (and, similarly, from where his students came), a college degree meant much more.

“Going to college, coming from where I came from, I could make a bigger impact in my community. It's different than if I hadn't grown up poor. Growing up without money, college changes things in much bigger ways” (T-03, personal interview, August 24, 2009). Because of his own experiences as a young person, he was in a position in which he could personally relate

to his own students. This background instilled a certain awareness of and urgency to Tim's desire to serve his students.

When he did finish college, with a dual degree in religion and coaching, he joined the Marine Corps. Though he didn't talk much about his initial decision to join the military, he did explain that it was a sort of family "tradition" (both his father and uncle had been in the military). Further, he emphasized the impact that his membership in that community had upon him as an individual. As a Marine, Tim established a sense of the world around him that included discipline and order.

I'm very Marine Corps, I have a no nonsense approach to discipline. You come in, this is the way it is . . . And you don't do anything that doesn't go towards that mission. Now when you get above that level it's more strategic but it's all aimed at that task-focused unit. You could be by yourself, or a team or a platoon of forty-two, everybody has the same mission. (T-03, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

This experience was one that fit into his schema of hard work as an important factor in success. Further, by joining the military, he was following in the footsteps of his family members who had served. He spoke of his service with pride and made its influence clear. His time in the Corps pervaded everything he discussed, his family, his health and, most of all in our conversations, his profession. He credited the discipline and ethics he developed as a Marine with contributing to his building a strong and caring family life, bringing order to his large family and perspective to his everyday life. He described how, had it not been for the level of fitness he achieved as a Marine, he might have died from a heart attack that took over a week to diagnose and resulted in a quadruple bypass (all while his wife was caring for infant twins). And he explained that being a Marine helped him to develop as a coach and teacher.

After his discharge, Tim wanted to coach and found himself a job at a small, private Christian school near where he lived. Here he was a referee, coach, substitute teacher and athletic director, wearing many hats in an effort to make ends meet for his own family and to be involved in school athletics. After spending thirteen years with the school, Tim found that he was stretching himself too thin over his many roles and not seeing the appreciation and support that he felt he deserved for the commitment he had given. He started applying for other jobs, both coaching and teaching (despite the fact that he neither had a degree in education nor a teaching certification) and was offered a job at a KIPP school.

Along the way, Tim became a father; over a span of fifteen years, he and his wife had seven children. As with his childhood, academic history and time in the Marines, his role as a father was something that he not only talked about often in our interviews, but also a position that helped him undertake and shape his role as a teacher. In so many words, he equated the two: “Teaching *is* parenting. . . they [the administration] rely on your skills as parents.” (T-03, personal interview, August, 24, 2009) Further, he used his own children as references – just as he felt that his own childhood helped him to better understand his students, he used his experiences with his sons’ and daughters’ learning and school interactions as tools of entry with the students that he teaches.

At one point, he talked about the different strengths his own children possessed. One daughter was gifted academically, excelling at most subjects with only average effort. At the same time, his younger son was an average to below average student but was musically inclined, able to pick up an instrument and learn it quickly. He described the same variety in his students’ abilities and the fact that it was necessary to learn about and encourage each student in his strengths and pursuits.

This history provided a picture of Tim's personal and professional experiences leading up to KIPP and gave insight into the development of his habitus. Following Bourdieu's definition of habitus, Tim's positioning of himself as a "poor, rural kid", a father, a Marine and a coach all impact his "thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions" surrounding teaching and learning in specific ways and, in turn, affect his participation in the social situations connected to teaching and learning. He continued to look to his experiences in other communities to inform his actions and positions in the KIPP community. He brought his understanding of what it meant to be a poor kid to his teaching to better connect with the circumstances of his students. He was able to relate to the varied needs of his students through his experiences with his own children. His Marine-developed discipline and work ethic influenced his own pedagogical approaches. And the encouragement and perseverance he practiced as a coach also impacted the ways in which he approached his position as a teacher.

Coming to and Working at KIPP

Tim didn't apply to the job at KIPP because he knew about the organization or the school itself or because he thought of it as being different than other schools. At the time, he was serving as a substitute teacher, the only job he could get at a time when he "took work where he could get it." (T-03, personal interview, August, 24, 2009) Along the way (and along with several other applications), Tim filled out an application for the KIPP school, "I knew about KIPP because I knew [the other P.E. teacher] but not really anything about it beyond that. . . . Anyhow, I must have filled out an application or sent them my resume and . . . one day I had an e-mail asking if I'd like to interview for a full-time position" (T-03, personal interview, August, 24, 2009). Two interviews later he was offered the job and, the following Monday, he showed up for his teacher orientation and first professional development meetings.

Though he went into the job knowing next to nothing about KIPP, he has since been what he described as “KIPPnotized”. As he explained, he felt right at home with the environment that the school provided for its teachers and students:

KIPP is the Marine Corps of public education . . . [I]n the Marine Corps you don’t do anything without purpose. There’s no wasted training, time, energy. Here, they’re constantly putting college before the kids, they talk about their mission regularly, and then all their training is very intentional. You do this, you do this, you do this, this is why we’re doing it, and sometimes it looks a little challenging, like when you compare it to other schools, they just blow them away. They just kind of roll up their sleeves, work harder. (T-03, personal interview, August, 24, 2009)

He not only found parallels in this KIPP school to his time spent in the military, but was just as explicit when asked how he fit into the vision of KIPP. His response echoed a common refrain from our interviews in that he said that he was just the “poor, rural version of the poor, urban kid” and, in that way, is not much different than the students at the school.

These similarities lent an ease to the position for Tim. He commented several times about what a good fit the job was for him and who he was:

This is the easiest job I’ve ever had. The hardest part is the commute and the hours. . . I do have to learn all the lingo and they’re very specific about the lesson plans . . . but I could have just walked in there on day one and I would have had no trouble teaching kids. All the little details take some time to work out but it’s really a good fit for me. It’s not stressful at all. (T-03, personal interview, August, 24, 2009)

It was the parallels he found between himself and his students that contributed to this feeling of ease. Those parallels also shaped the lens through which he saw KIPP and the other teachers –

particularly those who were TFA alumni. He saw a school and individuals who fit into and embodied his own image of hard work and focus. Just as he saw KIPP as “the Marine Corps of public education”, he found kindred spirits in the TFA teachers at the school:

I think if I had known about TFA when I got out of the Marines, that’s something I probably would have done. Because Marines generally are, they don’t join the service for the college money. They are the gung-ho, highliest (sic) motivated, that’s just the way that service is, it breeds that kind of person. My dad was a Marine in World War II and my uncle too. . . a lot of family history and we’re kind of oriented to that. (T-03, personal interview, August, 24, 2009)

It was this spirit of service in the military that similarly appeals to him in KIPP and TFA. He continually emphasized the importance of hard work and commitment to success and found organizations and frameworks that matched that ethos in the military and, subsequently, in KIPP.

Participating at KIPP

Tim’s participation in the various communities available to him through his position at KIPP was guided by the skills he had developed through his own life experiences. Further, his interactions and involvement were influenced by his enthusiasm toward and connect he felt to the KIPP approach to teaching and the other teachers – particularly the Teach for America alumni – at the school. Even aside from these factors, however, his was a mode of participation that differed from both Elizabeth’s and Carolyn’s in some real ways.

First, Tim brought a quiet confidence to his role. As an older member of the faculty and one of the few teachers with a family, he had developed a sense of self that came with the responsibility he had borne for his wife and children. Further, this teaching position was not his first (though it is his first public school experience) and this profession itself was not his first.

Because he had held other professional roles, most notably his career as a Marine, his participation at this school was seen through eyes that were both novice and expert. He had already fostered a professional identity in a different profession and brought that lens with him to this job. However, being new to not only this school but to this teaching sector (a public charter school and, more importantly, KIPP), he appreciated his neophyte status as an opportunity to learn and grow further, both personally and professionally.

“KIPP network” participation. When I first met Tim, it was on his very first day at KIPP. He had just gotten the call telling him he was hired the previous Friday and now, on Monday, he was in the middle of being “KIPPnotized”. When I spoke with him in an interview a few months later, he had attended the KIPP Summit, an annual national meeting that brings together KIPP teachers and administrators from across the country for “an entire week of learning and community-building.” Though the Summit was not required of teachers, first year teachers were particularly encouraged to attend and most do. Tim was no exception.

When he got to the national meeting, what he observed and experienced “was very exciting” (Mini-interview). He saw other KIPP teachers, many of them much younger than his forty-two years, standing around in small groups “speaking in their own language.” Many of them were Teach for America alumnae and had been exposed to the use of chants and other jargon that was part and parcel of KIPP. This was Tim’s first real exposure to “all these young TFAers” and his reaction was positive and enthusiastic. “ I like[d] being around all these young people, these TFAers. I noticed it right away. I call them crusaders. They’re all about equality and everyone gets a chance. . . “ (T-03, personal interview, September 14, 2009)

He also found in KIPP a community in which he felt he fit well. He was able to adapt to the structure easily, finding the focus on discipline and the emphasis on hard work ethics that

were deeply seated in his own life experiences. The framework felt comfortable to him and it was with relative ease that he adopted and adapted it.

School-wide participation. The school-wide community was where Tim felt a true sense of collaboration with his fellow teachers. He emphasized his enthusiasm for the ways in which he was able to both learn from and work with the “crusaders” (TFAers). Whereas the KIPP network, as a community, offered a framework and guidelines for his practice, his participation at the school-wide level provided a vehicle for more direct contact with the KIPP framework as it applies to his own practice. This was where he interacted with other teachers within that framework and was better able to parse out its significance and relevance to his own experiences and perceptions. Even from the beginning, in his first encounters with the school, Tim quickly learned the language and culture of the school as he watches his fellow teachers use it in practice sessions and other team-building exercises. When it was his turn to perform, he found ways to not only use what he has seen and heard but to make it his own, bringing his own experiences to his interpretation.

Though he had already taught for thirteen years, Tim’s participation in the professional development days before the start of the school year was more observational than interactional. This level of participation was not due to a lack of confidence or even professional knowledge; rather, he found himself in the midst of a community that required specific skills that he did not have (specifically, the KIPP language and culture) and he looked to those around him to provide the necessary tools for his success in this environment. In activities, though engaged and enthusiastic, he deferred to other teachers in an effort to more fully understand the ways in which he could appropriately operate as a KIPP teacher.

In one exercise, the teachers were divided randomly, mixing individuals by both disciplines and grade-levels. Each group was then each given a scenario – some of these scenarios were disciplinary, others were more closely related to KIPP classroom protocol, while still others dealt with parents and recruitment – and, as a team, the teachers were asked to explain what would be the most appropriate response. Over the course of the exercise, each team was presented with three or four scenarios. For the first round, Tim sat mostly silent, smiling, and offering a comment or minor suggestion here or there. In the subsequent rounds, however, his participation became more active. Many of his suggestions or comments began with a statement such as, “With my own kids, I . . . “ or “As a Marine, we . . . “ The other teachers welcomed his comments and several times used what he said as a direct response to the scenario with which they had been challenged. (T. Rose, field notes, August 24, 2009)

By the end of the day, Tim was talkative both during and between activities (rather than simply being socially chatty during breaks and quietly observant during group work and other exercises). He began to take more initiative in his groups as he became more familiar with being a KIPPster. His use of terminology was deliberate but more comfortable and there was a smooth integration of his standings as a father and ex-Marine and his new role as a KIPP teacher.

Departmental and grade-level participation. The departmental and grade-level communities reflected a kind of participation that looked strikingly different than that of the other two teachers in this study. There were two main reasons for this difference. First, Tim’s department was only two people and, second, Tim had known and been friends with the other teacher in his department for several years (they got to know each other in Tim’s refereeing days). Departmental meetings were more like a friendly get-together between two buddies than a more formal discussion of policies and regulations. Although they did discuss curriculum and

meeting the needs of their students, there were equal parts in their discussion that addressed their plans for the weekend, the state of their families, and the outcomes of the “in-season” sport. This was a different type of community of practice, and one that potentially had a different impact than others discussed in this study.

As older (in their forties) male faculty members, these teachers formed a community that offered a distinct opportunity for the participants. They are able to simultaneously foster their own professional pursuits while also developing a rich personal history together. This dimension created something of an exclusive community but one with value nonetheless. In fact, the unusual nature of this community (in relation to others described in this paper) fit well within Tim’s trajectory of learning in that its own blurred boundary between the personal and professional complements the brokering role that Tim plays in negotiating his participation in other communities of practice.

Grade-level meetings were few and far between for Tim. He explained that it was not due to his subject but rather due to the fact that he did not see the students every day (they were only in his class twice a week) and that he taught all grade levels. He was called upon for any specific questions about students but otherwise did not regularly attend any grade-level meeting. I asked him if that made him feel disconnected from those teachers. His response, in what became a typically upbeat and positive tone for Tim, was that, no, he did not feel disconnected. Rather, he was lucky because he got to work with almost every teacher in the school at some point. He had the lucky position to see most of the students and most of the teachers during the year and though he did not meet with them on a regular basis, it actually helped him to feel more connected and woven into the fabric of the school as a whole.

Conclusion

Tim's history and experiences provided him with the foundation and "jumping off" point that enabled him to move easily and freely among the various communities of which he is a part. At KIPP, he brought this seasoned eye to each community but approached his participation as a novice. As a result, he was able to be receptive to the new skills and knowledge that more expert members of those communities had to offer while possessing the interpretive skills (as a broker) important to finding his own path. Further, the established framework at KIPP proved a fixed point of reference for him through its products of reification, such as its protocols and cultural practices. In light of his experiences in the military and the similar fixed framework there, Tim was able to move along his boundary trajectory with familiar points of identification.

Chapter 6: The skeptic:

Selectively participating along a peripheral trajectory

It's the second day of the start-of-the-year teacher orientation and professional development. After a day of going through the basic routines and procedures necessary to run a successful KIPP classroom, today is the day the group will delve into more of the details and to work through any challenges or problems that the returning teachers would like addressed. This morning the teachers slowly filter into the room, many walking together in pairs or small groups, taking their seats after retrieving a cup of coffee or bagel from the breakfast table.

Elizabeth walks in alone, smiles at a couple other teachers as she passes, and silently fills her travel mug with coffee. After looking around the room as she sips from her cup, she finally takes a seat in the corner of the U-shaped arrangement of tables. Sitting down, she retrieves her notebook and handouts from the day before, pausing only to say a brief hello to a few of the teachers seated nearby.

The principal walks to the front of the room and says, "Good morning, team and family!", a greeting that had been established the day before as being a community "KIPPism," or common saying, that the teachers should become accustomed to using. This declaration gets the teachers' attention and those who have been milling about quickly find a seat as the room fills with their response, "Good morning, Mr. Samson!" Many of these salutations are bright and ringing, echoing the smiles on the teachers' faces as they look at Mr. Samson and one another. Elizabeth voices her response quietly, almost as a mumble, as she continues to half-look at her notebook. She then looks up and begins to tap her pen on the table absentmindedly as the conversation for the day begins.

The first point of order this morning is discipline and the reward and punishment structure in place at the school (and modeled after the structure seen at all KIPP schools). More specifically, the topic of discussion is the KIPP paycheck system, a system that keeps track of the merits and demerits of each student and reward and punishes them accordingly. There have been slight changes to this system since the previous year and the goal today is to clarify the system itself (for all teachers) and the make plain the ways in which it has changed (for the returning teachers who may have gotten used to the previous system).

Once the mechanics of the system have been described, the discussion turns to the structures of punishment. After a student has accrued a certain number of demerits, he is required to “write rules;” that is, he has to write out the rules he has broken or failed to follow a prescribed number of times. In addition, he runs the risk of being place in “base camp,” which carries its own penalties, including being last to enter and leave a classroom and not begin allowed to talk to anyone in the halls or cafeteria.

This year there are some changes. Students on base camp will no longer be required to wear their shirts inside out. Many teachers had raised the objection that it was sending the wrong message during the punishment, creating more embarrassment than a potential for learning a lesson of work and character ethics. As a result, it would be much more difficult to tell which students were on base camp and which were not but that it would be up to the teachers to do what they can to maintain the limitations placed on those students. After explaining this alteration in the system, Mr. Samson asks if there are any questions or concerns. It is at this point that Elizabeth raises her hand.

“Why not embarrass them a little? Don’t you think it might make them think twice about being back on base camp?” she asks. To this, some teachers nod but many adopt slightly puzzled

if not disapproving looks on their faces. “And why not make it their responsibility to remain accountable to their punishment? Aren’t we trying to teach them to take responsibility for their own actions?” She asks these questions with a bit of irritation but more with a tone of slight impatience. Neither of these tones seem to go unnoticed in the room.

“You make a good point and we can continue to talk about it as the year progresses,” is Mr. Samson’s reply. Elizabeth simply nods and looks back to her notebook, tapping her pen absentmindedly again as the conversation moves on to the next topic.

Introduction

Throughout Elizabeth’s professional life, she has followed a peripheral learning trajectory, selectively participating in surrounding practices, adopting aspects of those practices that best fit her own professional personality and perceptions while adapting or superficially engaging in components that did not match her approach. In this chapter, I will discuss Elizabeth’s journey in her professional identity development as a teacher and the role that her participation in various communities of practice during her time as a teacher in a KIPP school has come to play in that journey. First, I will explore Elizabeth’s early influences and professional experiences. This exploration provides a baseline not only for Elizabeth’s attitudes about and perceptions of her teaching and learning but also for the ways in which she participates in her profession and interacts with her colleagues and students.

Through this lens, I will then discuss the communities of practice in which Elizabeth participates as well as the participant role that she takes in those communities. Her peripheral participation is not only built upon her habitus but also through co-participation, or her interaction with other members in the society. The ways in which these individuals respond to and interact with one another have a direct impact on the types of participation that occurs as

well as, for the purposes of this study, the trajectory of learning of any given member (here, of course, Elizabeth's trajectory is the focus).

Finally in this chapter, I will begin to explore Elizabeth's authorship of her teacher professional identity. By developing a better understanding in the second section of this chapter of the ways in which Elizabeth participates in various communities of practice, I will have a more finely tuned lens through which to understand this authorship. Further, building from aspects of Lave and Wenger's works on communities of practice, such as the role of peripheral and non-participation in identity formation, the influence of her membership and participation on that identity development can be more fully discussed.

Early Influences and Professional Experiences

My dad always said that a person spends so many hours a week at their job that it'd be tough to justify NOT helping people with all that time. He said he felt sorry for rich people who spent 45 hours a week making money and then had to go volunteer somewhere to make themselves feel like good community members. He'd just rather do his share during the day, get paid for it (even if it's not that much), and then go home and live his life. So I guess I follow suit. (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

Through this description of her father's influence, Elizabeth offered some insight into one of the reasons she ultimately chose to become a teacher. She found a profession in which she could contribute to society by being a "good community member". This motivation became particularly evident in her description of the purpose and aims of teaching, "I come to see it more and more as filling gaps left by parents, both in literacy and character development. . . [I]ts primary aim is to develop an educated citizenry" (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009). As

a teacher, she saw her role through her father's eyes, as a position that can serve to better society, as a chance to "do her share".

She classified her teacher preparation program as a "standard program" that offered what one might expect from a teacher education school, listing among the offerings: classes in methodology and teaching and learning theory, lessons on course planning and classroom management and the "requisite stint in student teaching". These reflections on the program were ones that reveal her disappointment with the preparation. She noted classes that failed to get her ready for what she would face, professors with whom she disagreed and who, she stated, often viewed her as outspoken (though without the positive connotations), and a student teaching experience (in particular, a cooperating teacher) that left her high and dry and no better prepared to be a teacher in her own classroom than the coursework she had endured for several years.

From the beginning, Elizabeth had fairly clear ideas about what it looked like to achieve the goals that she had as a teacher. She attended a teacher preparation school at the flagship school of a major state university, a school that she describes as having "pretty liberal" ideas about educating at-risk and underserved students – her target student population. It was clear, however, that she did not share the philosophies of her teachers there. In fact, she claimed that she was "not very popular with [her] professors" as a result of the ideological clashes that sometimes occurred. As she explained, she had a "gut instinct for what these kids need as far as structure goes . . . so all the liberal ideas for letting kids develop their own projects and stuff like that did not work [for her]". (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

Her student teaching experiences proved to be a mixed bag in her learning trajectory. Over the course of 18 weeks, she spent time in two classrooms with two very different teachers. First, she worked in a high school classroom with a cooperating teacher that was, in Elizabeth's

words, “just not a good teacher”. Elizabeth didn’t find anything about the experience encouraging or to her liking. She didn’t like teaching high school students – she found them unengaged and uninspired. In addition, the fact that her cooperating teacher left her on her own, not only to teach the class but to develop an entirely new unit, did not do much to bolster either her confidence in teaching high school or her enthusiasm about working at that level.

Her next student teaching experience was in a middle school classroom with a teacher who proved to be much more of a mentor. It was during this time that she encountered a clear focus on classroom management and organization. Though only in this classroom for nine weeks, she knew that this approach to teaching was more in tune with her “gut instinct” than her previous student teaching experience and more than any classes she had taken while in college.

Elizabeth’s first job out of college was at a middle school serving a significant immigrant population. She came to the school at a very lucky time in the sense that they had just adopted and were actively using a well-developed curriculum. As a result, her team could focus on classroom management, something that she already felt was a strength but also something that she wanted to grow and build with more experienced teachers.

My mentor and teaching team at the first school I taught (I was there 2 years) [were some of the strongest influences on me as a teacher]. In a very low-performing school, in the midst of many lackluster teachers, they maintained uncompromisingly high behavioral and academic expectations. They were my first examples of “whatever it takes” (although they used the phrase “the buck stops here”) . . . They laid the smack down on those kids. (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

At this school, she and her team were the “go-to’s” for any discipline problems. Rather than sending students to the principal, teachers would often send their “troubled” students to Elizabeth

or one of her colleagues. She explained that “teachers would say, ‘Go to Ms. Witt’s room. I can’t deal with you right now.’ So kids would come to my door and I’d tell them to come in. It wasn’t uncommon that I’d have my students and then other teachers’ students lined up along the back wall. They were sent to my room because I knew how to deal with them. . . I was tough on kids but I was there for them as well.” (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

The experience at this school not only helped her to cultivate her classroom management skills but also made her more aware of what students she wanted to serve.

The [student] population I work with started out as an accident – I applied for my first teaching job sort of last minute (July), so took one of two offers I received simply because it was closer to my apartment. But while I was there, I realized working with “tough” kids didn’t bother me – in fact, it had a considerable number of perks compared to teaching in a middle or upper class environment. It’s easy to see a lot of academic growth. Plus, kids in middle or upper class situations tend to be successful regardless of who their teachers are – they have enough other tools for success without me. (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

She was able not only to make a difference but also to see that change. Because these students were often starting from a place in their learning that was below grade level or “behind” in comparison to their peers at other schools, Elizabeth was able to measure and observe the development and growth that was happening in her classroom. Further, she felt more responsible for that success than she imagined she would in a school that served primarily middle and upper class students. These “tough” kids were coming to school from families in which they might be the first to complete high school and from environments that were more focused on putting food on the table than building academic and social skills. As a result, the work done in the schools

and classrooms that served these students (including Elizabeth's) included not only providing them with academic content but also helping them to develop basic study and social skills necessary for academic success.

After two years at this school, Elizabeth began to have second thoughts about being a teacher. She decided to go to graduate school to pursue a degree in seminary with an aim of entering the ministry. While in grad school, she continued to work with what she called at-risk populations. These were low-SES children and adults, often immigrants and sometimes very transient. During this time, she taught job skills to adults at a center that focused on finding them employment. She then taught writing skills at a juvenile detention center. Both experiences made her realize that she could make a difference teaching and that that was the profession in which she would stay.

"I'm not at big song and dance person . . . [I wouldn't be chosen] as an example for visitors to the school But [the administrators] know I'm good at what I do and that I'd do anything to help these kids" (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009). Though this particular quotation comes in reference to her time at KIPP, it is indicative of her attitude about and approach to her profession. Elizabeth has always had a clear picture of what she things she need to do to help her students. As a result, she has entered professional situations with a filter – her habitus. Once in those situations, be they her teacher training, the classroom or professional development, she decides what is useful to her and what is not. This approach has impacted the ways in which she has participated in those communities and how other member have interacted with her.

These experiences, influences, and social situations were important to explore in this discussion because they help us to develop an understanding of the habitus that Elizabeth

embodied in her professional journey. As Bourdieu explains it, habitus is the basis for our perceptions, attitudes and dispositions. In this case, Elizabeth's habitus has developed through the influences of her family (and her father in particular) as well as her professional encounters, situations, and experiences. In my analysis, Elizabeth positioned herself as an educator focused on structure and discipline that is personally invested in developing an educated citizenry.

Beginning with her father's influence, Elizabeth's perception of her career as a marriage of vocation and contribution to society echoed through her choices of positions and student populations as well as her choice for graduate study. "My dad worked for the Department of Natural resources as a civil engineer. He could have made more money working in the private sector, but thought it was important that when you spend 45 hours a week of your life somewhere, it out to be doing good for people" (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009). Her description of the purpose and aims of teaching – to "create an educated citizenry" - aligned with her father's approach. She was invested in making sure her students are productive and informed members of their communities. As a result, she focused on making sure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to society; it is in this way that she herself contributes to the good of the people.

However, this attitude also seemed to lead to a deficit paradigm⁹ in her positioning of her students. In the ways that she described herself in reference to her students, she puts herself in the role of a necessary tool for success in society. After her first job, she realized that working with "tough" kids didn't bother her:

⁹ The deficit paradigm is used in education to explain the position that assumes that poor or sub-par classroom performance or behavior in a student is to be blamed on elements that are lacking in their families, culture, or communities and those elements must be addressed or "fixed" (Heath, 1983; Weiner, 2006) . Rather than drawing on a student's strengths and looking to the school and classroom as places of educational empowerment, a teaching position seated in a deficit paradigm hones in on the student's "problems" and how they can be repaired.

[I]n fact, it had a considerable number of perks compared to teaching in a middle or upper class environment. It's easy to see a lot of academic growth. Plus, kids in middle or upper class situations tend to be successful regardless of who their teachers are – they have enough other tools for success without me. (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

She went on to explain that she realized that she was “going to have attitudes problems from kids wherever [she] goes [and] it's easier if [those problems] are justified in some way.” In other words, from her perspective, kids that are coming from more difficult home and community circumstances (such as income level) have much more of a “reason” to act out than those who are provided for and are coming from “easier” circumstances (T-02, personal interview, August, 24, 2009).

This deficit position was further explained through her pragmatic stance on her own view of her role as a teacher. At one point, she admitted, “ [At KIPP,] I have kids with I.Q.s of below 60 – I don't think they're going to college. I'm not TFA – I'm unwilling to work “as long as it takes [to get them to college]” (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009). She explained that she wanted to be realistic both about from where her students are coming educationally and where they are going. Some kids, as she said, just aren't cut out for college and that's okay.

She did balance this position, however, through her expression of empathy for some of her students, particularly those who often find themselves on “base camp” for reasons such as disorganization. She herself operated in a fairly cluttered world and so saw herself in those students who get in trouble because they've misplaced their homework sheet or can't find a book. Though through KIPP standards they are penalized for that behavior, she understood their position and tried to cut them some slack due to that connection.

This deficit position extended beyond her view of her students to how Elizabeth viewed the involvement and commitment of the students' parents. During our interview, I asked Elizabeth a hypothetical question. If she were to leave KIPP, would she seek out a teaching job that put her with a similar student population. She adamantly replied that she would not. "I'm not making a real difference. It's not like the parents are going to any more involved at a different school" (T-02, personal interview, August, 24, 2009).

Coming to and Working at KIPP

It was Elizabeth's friends and colleagues that suggested she apply for the job at KIPP originally. They perceived an alignment not only between KIPP and Elizabeth's interest in working with at-risk youth, but also between the discipline-centered KIPP framework and Elizabeth's focus on classroom management. She agreed that the principles about which she read in the KIPP literature were very appealing to her. She was also ready for a change from her job. At that point, she was teaching reading and writing in a juvenile detention center and knew that she would need to go back to school to see any advancement in that position; she was not interested in taking that step. In the end, for Elizabeth, the ultimate decision was one of a practical nature – money. She had a lot of student debt and if she chose to work at a different school that was similar in structure to KIPP (but not KIPP) then she would still have those debts. She ultimately chose KIPP because they paid more for the work. "If I'm going to be working 65 hours a week, I'd rather it just be one job!" (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009).

Participating at KIPP

Elizabeth's participation was selective and came in a form that varied from that which we saw in Carolyn and Tim. Elizabeth engaged in KIPP practices in her own classroom but interacted within the framework in a manner specific to her own peripheral trajectory. Her

trajectory was one that kept her in the outskirts of participation, rather than making any “inbound” (or “outbound”, for that matter) movement. She continued to participate, observing the practices and culture at KIPP and using what she found more useful and relevant while maintaining a classroom that met the minimum requirements of what a KIPP classroom was supposed to look like. In this way, she kept her head down, so to speak, and continued to do her job as she saw it should be without calling too much unwanted attention to herself.

“KIPP network” participation. Elizabeth’s initial reaction to KIPP culture and the other KIPP teachers she encountered at her first KIPP Summit was less than enthusiastic or even positive. “It was like a cult! All of these people standing around, speaking the same language, using words that were a little strange to me. And then there were the chants and routines. It was all a little weird and a little much for me.” (T-02, personal interview, August, 24, 2009)

In general, though, Elizabeth found some value in aspects of KIPP ideology. She talked about her views in a discussion we had about the KIPP motto, “Work hard. Be nice.” These words can be found in all KIPP literature, on posters in every KIPP classroom and school, on KIPP stationary, and even on every KIPP student (printed on the t-shirts they wear as uniforms). Elizabeth explained what she thought of this slogan:

It’s a good framework. Most KIPPisms are broad and pretty widely applicable. I don’t have a problem with that. Any conversation you’d naturally have with a kid would fall into one of those categories [Work hard. Be nice.] It simplifies habitual disciplinary problems; I can ask a kid, ‘Are you having a problem working hard? Are you having a problem being nice?’ . . . If you’re going to be successful, you can’t be lazy or a jerk. (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009)

This attitude is clear in the way she practiced in her KIPP classroom and the way she interacted within the KIPP community as a whole. She was generally eager to engage in a discussion around certain philosophies. She related to the principle of what was behind statements such as this motto and was able to connect to others who shared the ethic she attaches through her interpretation. For example, at the KIPP Summit, despite the cult-like qualities she found in some aspects, she found the sessions that dealt with the enactment of practical application of KIPPology (including the discussion surrounding the previously discussed motto) the most valuable and engaging parts of the event. At those times, she was able to find a connection to the same individuals from whom she felt disconnected as they spoke their TFA and KIPP lingo.

School-wide participation. Full faculty and all-school meetings such as professional development and trainings were met with a certain amount of resistance from Elizabeth. Though the content was sometimes important to her and even something that she was excited to learn, she would “rather just be given a handout than have to work in a group with three other people who don’t know what they’re doing” (T-02, personal interview, August 24, 2009). The nature of the faculty and staff at the school was generally inclined towards group work. That is, teachers and administration alike tended to structure these learning sessions in such a way that teachers were either grouped together or the faculty as a whole worked and talked together during training and development sessions. Many of these meetings included practice of some sort, whether it was teachers taking turns with practice lessons or simply employing some of the strategies they had just learned in smaller exercises. As a result, there was a lot of discussion and peer feedback involved.

At one meeting, teachers were asked to role-play. One teacher was to act as the student while the other remained a teacher. The purpose of this particular exercise was to practice and

better understand KIPP protocols for a variety of situations that might arise with students in the classroom or elsewhere in the school. Because there were more teacher pairs than time for executing this exercise one-by-one in front of the classroom, the group was asked to role-play on their own while the group leaders (including the principal and dean of students) walked around to give feedback. (T. Rose, field notes, August 24, 2009)

As I worked my way around the room, I noticed that many teachers were immersing themselves in the exercise. They adopted the demeanor of their students and the exchanges became as authentic as they could have been, given the circumstances. When I reached Elizabeth and her partner, there was a different dynamic altogether. They were not role-playing at all. They had read through the scenario and then proceeded to discuss what they were *supposed* to do and what they *would* do that might deviated from standard KIPP protocol.

I didn't observe the entire exchange but reached them as they were transitioning from the discussion of what was appropriate according to KIPP procedures to what they thought they would do. Elizabeth opened up the discussion:

E: I understand that that's why we have paychecks but isn't it important to consider the circumstances? No every situation is the same and maybe, sometimes, it should slide.

Partner: But if you make exceptions, you set a bad precedent. Once the paycheck system becomes weakened, it becomes less effective and it can be a slippery slope from there.

E: Why would it be less effective for me to pay attention to the students themselves? Isn't eh point here that students aren't just boxes to check off? Isn't that kind of what we're doing when we just fill in the blanks on disciplinary worksheets?

(T. Rose, field notes, August 24, 2009)

Their conversation ended before the leaders made it around to them and their recap of the exchange was altered to fit the expectations of the exercise. In the end, Elizabeth's partner stuck by the KIPP system but didn't push the point against Elizabeth's resistance.

Departmental and grade-level participation. Similar to her participation role at the school level, Elizabeth's involvement in departmental and grade-level communities of practice was often limited, restricted to exchanges of information regarding students or brief consultation on school and KIPP policy matters. For the most part, she would rather work on her own.

During one visit to the school (and on a day when I was scheduled to be in Elizabeth's classroom for observation), I was invited to sit in on a meeting of Elizabeth's department. When I showed up, I noticed that she was not seated at the table. I decided to wait; perhaps she had been delayed and would show up later. This meeting was similar to one I had attended in another department – it was a discussion of a section of Learning by Design (LbD), a curriculum the school had adopted and that had been the topic of a recent professional development session. The other teachers spent most of the meeting reviewing what they had discussed at that session and looking at the handouts and book as they went along.

After the meeting, I asked one teacher about Elizabeth's absence. Her response was fairly casual and unperturbed, "Yeah, we didn't really expect her to be here. We weren't talking about anything new or time sensitive. She's probably in her classroom working on lessons or grading." Later in the day after having observed her class, I asked her about the meeting. "Oh, they told me what they were going to talk about. I've made it pretty clear that I'm not interested in going over and over things like that. We learned about it (the section in LbD) and discussed it at the PD session – why would I want to beat a dead horse?" When I asked her what she had done, it was nearly exactly what the other teacher had described. She had reviewed the LbD material and then

finished up some grading that she needed to finish. She felt that her time was best spent doing what she needed to do rather than sitting around with other teachers talking about the new curriculum (as opposed to, as she specified in this and subsequent conversations, people who are more expert in their understanding of the LbD material and thus would more significantly advance her knowledge and understanding of the material). (T. Rose, field notes, September 14, 2009)

Conclusion

Elizabeth's identity development both over time and during her tenure at KIPP occurred along a learning trajectory that encompassed cycles of participation and non-participation in various communities of practice. The influence her father had over her perception of her professional role permeated the ways in which she not only positioned herself in the classroom but also how and to what extent she participated in the larger communities of which she was a part, whether that is a classroom, a school, or even a larger educational community. She was firm in her convictions, often to the point of rejecting any ideas or concepts that seemed to conflict or deviate from those convictions. At the same time, however, she was able to work within the KIPP framework and alongside those aspects with which she does not engage.

Chapter 7: Summary and Analysis of Case Studies

Introduction

Developing a professional identity as a teacher is important not only to an understanding of the individual's role in the classroom but also to her effectiveness in that role. This study was inspired by a conversation about how the structured framework that exists in KIPP schools intersects with the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers who work therein to effect their development of their identities as teachers. In the course of that discussion, the topic of communities of practice arose as something that potentially influenced how teachers came to understand their roles in schools and classrooms but that are not often studied in the context of schools due to the individual nature of the profession. This investigation is a product of the queries resultant from that conversation.

In this chapter, I will begin with a discussion of the individual case studies, more deeply probing each teacher's experiences and participation and the influence that each had upon their learning trajectories and development of professional identities. I will then explore common themes through a cross-case analysis, looking at the similarities and differences among the cases. Next, I will offer the significance of this study, followed by its limitations. Finally, I will offer future directions for study.

Discussion of Case Studies

These three teachers were chosen as the cases for this study, in part, due to the range of and differences among their personal histories and professional experiences. However, in a closer examination, it became just as important to discuss the similarities among the cases as it was to look at the differences that they presented. In this section, I will offer analysis of each case, exploring specific ways that each teacher authored her (and his) professional identities. In

the discussion of each case, I draw upon components of Wenger's (1998) discussion of communities of practices (and related communities) as well as the tools of authorship presented in chapter 2.

As discussed in the conceptual framework, authorship of an identity is a dialogue between the roles that individuals are "assigned" and the ways in which they respond to those "assignments" – it is a negotiation of positionality (Urrieta, 2006; Holland, 2001). Though not unique or exclusive to the individual focus teachers, a further understanding of the most prevalent Wengerian characteristics of their participation aids in the investigation of their roles in authorship of identity. In tandem with the trajectories of learning that frame the development of identity, these characteristics – alignment, multi-membership and non-participation – provide entry into a deeper analysis of individual authorship and what is happening in the "space of authoring" (Holland, 2001).

Carolyn's Trajectory of Learning and Authorship of Identity

Carolyn came to teaching with attitudes and perceptions about teaching and learning and the needs of students (including the student population that she most wanted to serve) that she had developed through her educational and teaching experiences. However, it was not until she was in the midst of her teaching experiences that she began to more specifically understand and to refine her understanding of how she might best fill the role of instructor. This section explores the ways in which Carolyn's participation in communities of practice affected the development of her professional teacher identity. Specifically, I look at the tools she employed as she navigated her membership in these communities and the ways in which those tools were woven through the "space of authoring" (Holland et al, 1998) within which Carolyn's identity is shaped. These tools include the participant role that Carolyn took and the ways in which she positioned

herself within the communities, Carolyn's enactment of agency, and the ways in which she improvised.

In word and deed, Carolyn positioned herself as an agent of change. Whether in conversation during an interview or through a written description, Carolyn explained her role as a teacher in a very specific manner – and nearly always used the same words and phrases. Her role was clearly delineated as being to fight the “education gap”, helping students who are often on the “losing” end of it. Through her use of language, it is possible to get a better understanding of the ways in which she not only positioned herself, but also the ways in which she saw her students (and herself as a teacher of those students).

Carolyn used very specific (and consistent) descriptions of her reactions to the classrooms in which she taught, the students in those classrooms, and her view of what her role in those situations was. First, she started from a particular point of view, developed initially through her reaction to her own experiences growing up, but extended through her gender and ethnic studies background. She emerged from these early academic studies with (and took with her to her university-based teacher training) a clear focus on the achievement gap that existed between white middle-class students and the students she labeled “at-risk”. A somewhat clearer picture of what she meant by this label emerged through conversation with her and observations of her interactions with other teachers.

There did not seem to be a very specific demographic that Carolyn considered at-risk beyond minority and low-SES. This grouping of students became apparent as she discussed her own teaching history. For example, in her description of her experiences in North Carolina, she often not only drew few distinctions between the students in her TFA classroom and those in the KIPP classroom she observed, but several times described them as “the same students.” Though

the individuals in the classrooms were coming from the same communities surrounding the schools, the student populations were more than likely very different.

What became significant about the ways in which Carolyn talked about her students was that race played both a major and nearly non-existent part in her discourse. While she often talked about her experiences with white students as having certain advantages, the races of both her students in North Carolina and those in her classroom at KIPP remained simply “minority”. That is, in revisiting our interviews, it became clear that there was little explicit differentiation among the black and Hispanic students with whom she had had contact in her career. Instead, she positioned herself as a teacher as well as in the larger landscape of teaching and learning through the polarization of white and minority as well as of middle-class and low-SES. These distinctions marked general differences in the ways that the student populations were served but did not fully take into account the more specific needs of any of the individuals to whom these labels were applied.

Her descriptions of herself as a teacher and her role in the larger educational landscape often seemed to be echoes of her educational and professional backgrounds. Though she was clear in the expressions of her goals as a teacher, she often seemed to lack critical insight beyond the immediate theoretical community in which she was involved. This adherence to the norm made her an effective participant, it seemed to limit her range of growth and development.

Moreover, her understanding of herself as a teacher and her professional development was embedded in the school. For example, in her philosophy of education, she described herself as “a hard-working teacher . . . [who] would like to work in a supportive environment where the entire school is committed to do whatever it takes to ensure that students are reaching their academic goals” (Philosophy of Education document). When Carolyn discussed her impact in

the classroom or the influence she had as a teacher, her response was often directly connected to the work as it meshed with KIPP. For the most part, this can be explained by the fact that most of Carolyn's experience as a teacher and development in that role has either been through her experience in Teach for America, in which many of KIPP's principles and framework are rooted, and during her time at KIPP.

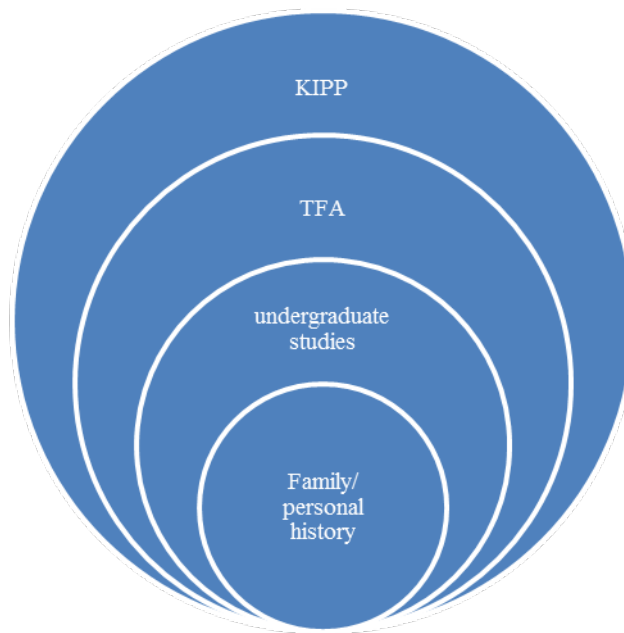


Figure 1: Diagram of influence of Carolyn's participation history

This embeddness (shown in Figure 1) does not necessarily imply a narrow view of education. Rather, it seems that in Carolyn's case her participation in various communities and constellations of practice and the related influences provided very specific scaffolding for her understandings and perceptions of her role as a teacher both in her classroom and in the larger educational landscape. These understanding grew within one, becoming more of an expansion of a previous perception rather than a new or divergent development from that understanding. Though, as stated earlier, this trajectory is not necessarily "narrow," it is limiting. Because

Carolyn's growth seems to be contained, it has different limits and bounds to its range.

Moreover, it seems to have fairly delineated bounds. Specifically, Carolyn fits herself within the framework in which she participates without, it appears, much development of the ideas and practices in those frameworks. As a result, there is a lack of innovation that would present an opportunity for unique growth, different than the growth that we see in Carolyn's case which, as noted, is a contained growth.

This "contained" characteristic of Carolyn's development resonates with Wenger's discussion of alignment in communities of practice:

[Alignment] . . . is a form of identification because it shapes the way we experience our own power and thus contributes to defining our identity. . . [A]ligning our efforts with the styles and discourses of certain institutions, movements, or systems of thought can be a very profound aspect of how we define ourselves. . . Because alignment affords the ability to invest our energy in terms of broadly defined enterprises, it can make us "larger" by placing our actions in larger context. (1996, p. 196)

In Carolyn's case, the communities are not only a place that support her identity development but are a site for her to affirm and grow her beliefs about teaching and learning.

Further, since Carolyn began teaching at KIPP, she positioned herself more and more centrally in the school communities of practice and associated groups in which she participated. On the departmental and disciplinary levels, she took the lead in meetings, often directing the discussion and setting the agenda. On the school level, she took leadership roles that placed her as an expert, leading faculty development sessions and taking the helm at student orientation.

She was able to jump into these expert roles and to have others accept her in those positions due to the unique dynamics and functioning of KIPP. On the one hand, because of the

demands that the KIPP structure places on its teachers, the turnover rate is fairly high. This means that the “experts” in these communities may have a different level of expertise than in other communities of practice that do not experience the same rate of turnover. Further, the teachers not only move quickly into expert leadership positions within the faculty, but this movement also affords opportunities to move into school leadership positions rather quickly. The principal and the teacher evaluator both moved into their positions from teaching roles at KIPP and after a fairly short stint in those faculty jobs (3-5 years). This movement affects the learning that takes place and the way that change and development is shaped and transformed within the communities of practice as well as within the school as a whole.

Due to this fact, this school has developed a support system that is structured specifically for the “newness” of its faculty and one that allows for the novice experts to become its leaders. It puts an emphasis on all faculty taking leadership roles on a rotating basis, both in day-to-day practice and in professional development settings. Further, the Teacher Pathways program is structured in such a way that a beginning teacher at the school can become an Associate Teacher or Senior Teacher in as little as nine weeks, and all move onto one of these other paths in 18 weeks. This affects the dynamics and the types of learning that occur in the communities of practice, which, in turn, affect the development of the individuals within those communities.

All of this came into play in Carolyn’s emerging learning trajectory. The alignment between her interests and beliefs and her teaching positions, along with her rapid progression to leadership roles at KIPP, seemed to have outlined a clear insider/inbound trajectory. Along this trajectory, Carolyn not only engaged and fostered her sense of agency as a tool for growth but also employed improvisation. Though her trajectory has been fairly unwavering in its direction, and she seemed to encounter very few direct conflicts between her own professional positioning

and that of her surrounding communities and community members, the potential for contradiction or incongruity still existed. The ways in which she improvised were subtler and required a different sense of position and understanding of her role than others who may have encountered starker contradictions.

At first glance, Carolyn chose to pursue a professional environment that was closely tailored to her prior learning and belief structure. However, she, in some ways, presented an interesting examination of the ways in which someone like her, who seemed to so closely match the KIPP mission and fit so well into its framework, must also navigate contradiction and negotiate meaning.

For someone like Carolyn, the rapidity with which she was able to move through the ranks, so to speak, impacted her identity development, both positively and not. On the one hand, she was able to see direct and rapid results from her participation in the various communities of practice. The cycles of participation and reification seemed to be very quick moving and it was not uncommon for one of her suggestions to become integrated into departmental and school policy. One example of this influence became evident in watching the evolution of her participation in professional development. My first observation of her reflected a confident teacher but also one who carefully measured her input. She would make recommendations, it seemed only when she was sure that they would be accepted.

For example, during one of the first interactions, I witnessed between her and other teachers, she made what seemed to be a minor suggestion that the teachers and students all sit together on the floor during an all-school meeting. That suggestion was met with enthusiasm and enacted at the next meeting – during which she led the morale building exercise for the teachers

and students. After that, she was not only more vocal, but more commanding in her participation, taking a more clear-cut leadership position in many exchanges.

On the other hand, as she became more “expert” in the communities, she had fewer more experienced experts to whom to look for continued development. This limited her developmental resources. There were bounds on how far she could go. This containment of her development seems also to be, in part, a result of the professional path she has chosen. Having so intentionally become a teacher in systems that are not only specific in their methods but also that develop skills so tightly within their frameworks (as appears to be the case both with Teach for America and KIPP), she has put herself in something of a developmental bottleneck. The minimal depth of expertise at the school in combination with the specific skills that are prescribed by being a member of that community of practice, narrows the chance to expand her repertoire without either bringing in other influences (as will be discussed in the other case studies) or reaching beyond the bounds of her present communities of practice for professional enrichment.

Further, Carolyn’s development was limited to the expertise that was available to her. This fact becomes even more significant in relation to her identity development when examined in light of the aforementioned close “proximity” of her range of participation in communities and constellations of practice. Because she seemed to place so much stock in the frameworks in which she operated (particularly those offered through TFA and KIPP) and did not seem to stray much beyond those frameworks in terms of knowledge and expertise, she continued to operate within what appeared to be a contained system of development, making her an efficient and, by her definition, effective teacher in that specific context but potentially limited her capacity beyond TFA and KIPP classrooms and schools.

Tim's Trajectory of Learning and Authorship of Identity

An important feature to Tim's, as well as the other focus teachers', learning trajectory and professional identity development was participation in multiple communities and constellations of practice. This feature, called multi-membership, allows for richer understandings of practice as well as access to a more complex understanding of the workings of a profession. Wenger (1998) explains:

Because our identities are not something we turn on and off, our various forms of participation are not merely sequences in time . . . Our various forms of participation delineate pieces of a puzzle we put together rather than sharp boundaries between disconnected parts of ourselves. An identity is thus more than just a single trajectory; instead, it should be viewed as a nexus of multi-membership. As such a nexus, identity is not a unity but neither is it fragmented . . . This notion of nexus adds multiplicity to the notion of trajectory. A nexus does not merge the specific trajectories we form in our various communities of practice into one; but neither does it decompose our identity into distinct trajectories in each community. In a nexus, multiple trajectories become part of each other, whether they clash or reinforce each other. They are, at the same time, one and multiple. (p. 159)

This explanation of the nexus of multi-membership provides a more refined lens for viewing Tim's trajectory of learning and how he navigated the development of his professional identity as a teacher. It was clear through his participation in the various communities and constellations of practice as well as through his practice itself that he, as Wenger describes, operates in a space that highlights the "multiplicity" of his trajectory. As represented in Figure 2, his various spheres of participation over his personal and professional lives have afforded a variety of

sources for interpretation and understanding of new experiences and roles. They not only offer the skills and knowledge from the singular experience, but also create other “pockets of exposure.” That is, the influence that two previous roles have had upon one another potentially creates a hybrid understanding of his role that then influences a third.

For example, Tim’s experience as a Marine shaped his role as a father. In turn, his understanding of himself as a father (in light of how he had come to perceive himself as a Marine) then impacted his interpretation of his role as an instructor. Through his movement within and among these communities of practice, he takes on specific participant roles, demonstrates agency at varying levels, and improvises as a method for connecting his participation.

Nespor’s (2002) discussion of networks adds another level to this understanding of Tim’s development of identity. Similar to these reified “markers of membership,” Nespor’s description of networks as the stabilized traces left by a course of “transformations” (p. 368) helps to explain the ways in which individuals are active in making connections among their experiences. He cites Callon and Law (1997), “Entities – human, non-human, and textual – aren’t solid. They aren’t discrete, or clearly separated from their context. They don’t have well-established boundaries. They aren’t as the jargon puts it, distinct subjects and objects. Instead they are sets of relations . . . “ (p. 170). These markers, these entities, change and are redefined as they are “connected or enrolled in different, sometimes competing networks” (Nespor, 2002, p. 370). A part of understanding identity is the ways in which the individual redefines them.

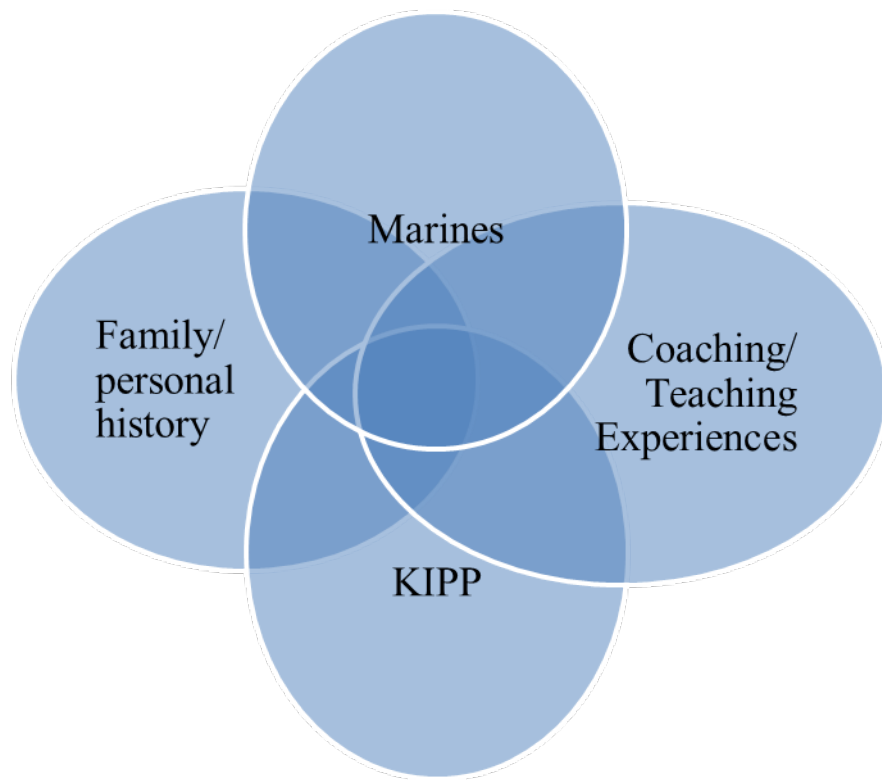


Figure 2: Diagram of influence of Tim's participation history

Tim's varied participation over time afforded him the opportunity to be exposed to and to develop a variety of practices, procedures, discourses, and roles. While each participation experience may retain unique and separate significance to Tim, his discussions of those experiences often highlight the connections and overlap between and among them. He brings elements of those other communities and constellations of practice in which he has participated – the Marines and fatherhood, for example – into his current practice as a teacher. These elements are often one and the same as those that create the boundaries between communities – while boundaries are “reified with explicit markers of membership, such as titles, dress, tattoos,

degrees, or initiation rites. . . (p. 104), these “products of reification can cross boundaries and enter different practices.” (p. 105).

The very same elements that delineate differences between and among various communities can also serve to connect them. For example, Tim strongly identifies as a Marine. Nearly every story he tells or explanation he gives begins with or includes something about being a Marine. He has internalized various “products of reification” from his participation in that particular community, such as discipline and work ethic. In his position at KIPP, it is these same elements that provide a bridge between the two communities for Tim. He is able to find components of commonality that facilitate and even enable his participation as a member of his new community at KIPP. It is in this way that Tim’s role as a broker in the authorship of his identity as a teacher is most pronounced.

Brokering provides a participative connection – not because reification is not involved, but because what brokers press into service to connect practices is their experience of multi-membership and the possibilities for negotiation inherent in participation. . . [They] are able to make new connections across communities of practice, enable coordination and . . . open new possibilities of meaning. (Wenger, 1998, p. 109)

By bringing the reified elements from one practice to another *through his participation*, he creates connections between and among the various communities of practices and, thus, is able to find a seat in this nexus of multi-membership. The opening vignette in which I described his interaction with his students during one of his classes provided insight into the ways that Tim brokered his participation across boundaries. He translated and wove the specific language and ethics of one community – the Marines – into that of another community – KIPP – that had its own specialized language and communication system.

It is important to examine not only the ways in which Tim participated in these communities and how that participation affected his own authorship of his identity, but it is also important to look at the ways in which he participates in the profession as a whole. Among the three case study teachers, Tim was the only teacher who is not certified as a teacher. In fact, though in the process of obtaining his teaching license at the time of this case study, he took only the minimum education classes required. Further, his motives for obtaining that licensure lie in job security and advancement. This does not mean that he is not invested in his job; rather, it seems to imply a different approach to the position than that of the other teachers discussed in this study. Whereas both Elizabeth and Caroline have trajectories that, in some shape or form, always included teaching or preparing to teach, Tim's professional trajectory was quite different. Even upon entering the teaching profession, he explains not that he always wanted to teach but that he always wanted to coach and that teaching was part of being able to be active in school athletics.

This professional characteristic is significant in a further understanding of his role in the authorship of Tim's teacher professional identity. He placed a different emphasis on the title, enabling his movement in, through, and across community boundaries as he explores his present role through the lens of and with the tools through his past and concurrent positions. He does not solely define himself as a teacher – in the same breath (and often even before), he is a Marine, a father and a coach. The seeming inter-changeability of these roles enables the development of a fluid, hybrid identity that spans the boundaries of each community.

Further, he invests not only a different amount of energy but a different kind of energy overall in the role. As a broker, he must “manage carefully the coexistence of membership and non-membership, yielding enough distance to bring a different perspective, but also enough

legitimacy to be listened to” (Wenger, 1998, p. 110). This seems to lead to a greater receptivity to the elements that each community in which he participates has to offer. His participation and his trajectory of learning seem to be less restricted or defined by reified definitions or characteristics of his role. Rather, he has carved a place as a teacher that allows for certain reified traits that he brings from his other communities.

While this characteristic of not “defining” himself as a teacher does not inhibit his enthusiasm or dedication to this role, it does allow for a slightly removed perspective of not only his role but the role of teaching and learning in general. For example, when specifically asked to discuss his own perspective on the purposes of teaching and learning, he replied that it is important to “get the job done.” His attraction to KIPP was that is was, like the Marines, “no nonsense”. There were no frills (such as extracurricular activities or electives) – in fact, PE is the closest thing to an elective but is actually a required part of the curriculum - and the students are expected to perform. As with other discussions, this answer moved into his experience in the Marines. In particular, he discussed what the Marines call the “pros and cons” book:

Every quarter in the Marine Corps, they give you pros and cons, it’s called proficiency and conduct. You are graded. Just like here, you’re graded. . . That’s the real world. If you’re out there in a public school and your rating’s this and the government’s allocating taxpayer money, you should perform! You should teach your kids. You have to perform or you fall away.

Additionally, just as he was able to weave the military with the educational as he did with his Marines experience and his current role as a teacher, Tim was able to connect and translate the personal into the professional. One clear example of this was the ways that he related to other teachers. First, his relationship with his fellow PE instructor is both friendly and professionally

efficient. He was able to forge a path that enables him to discuss both the recent baseball game and the latest school policy. In part, Tim's approach to his role as teacher allowed him to sit comfortably at that nexus, operating effectively at the intersection of multiple communities. He was open to learning in many forms, even the casual conversation in which he engages with his colleagues. The KIPP framework, or at least the ways in which Tim has embraced it, also facilitates the translation of the personal to the professional.

In KIPP, "team and family" was the way that teachers, administrators, staffers and students alike address one another. Both labels resonate with Tim, speaking to his excitement for coaching and his deep investment in family. This phrase was also a portal of sorts from the active and busy family life that Tim described having at home and the professional role he held at the school. He was able to reference his understanding of his roles in his family to improvise in his teaching roles.

Elizabeth's Trajectory of Learning and Authorship of Identity

Lave and Wenger (1996) often reserve the definition of peripheral participation as a description of newcomers to a community of practice, offering a portal to membership and a position from which individuals new to a community can accustom themselves to the culture and practices therein. For individuals who remain on the periphery, either through choice or necessity, a peripheral trajectory of learning such as the one seen through Elizabeth is one that combines a mix of participation and non-participation in the development of identity in relation to that community.

In the following section, I will discuss the importance of non-participation and peripheral participation in communities of practice and the roles can play in the development of identity. As presented in chapter 2, much attention is paid to the "cycle" of participation and reification in

discussions of communities of practice and the ways in which the affect individual as well as group development. In Elizabeth's case, however, it is the role of non-participation that comes to the forefront. Wenger does stress that non-participation is often as vital as its counterpart in helping individuals to sort out and define their own positions in relation to the community of practice. Elizabeth describes several periods throughout her own "process of definition" during which she used this aspect of "negative identification" to navigate her path.

I use the expression "negative identification" in a very deliberate and specific way. In his discussion of identity and communities of practice, Wenger (1998) explains that:

We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in. Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also what we are not. (164).

This explanation presents us with a view of identity as both the "positive" spaces, those practices in which we engage and "what we are", as well as the "negative" spaces, that in which we do not engage and "what we are not." In so doing, it provides us with a fuller and more balanced understanding of how one might be able to grow and develop even in situations in which one is not in agreement or within which one does not fully participate.

This notion is also touched upon in Lave's (1991) work on situated learning, an idea that is closely related to her work with Wenger on communities of practice. She describes peripheral participation as being instrumental in an individual's navigation of how he "fits" within a particular community. Though observation "from the outside", the individual is able to see what works and what does not work within his own understanding of the practice. As a result, he is shaping his own interpretation of what it means to participate in that practice himself (Lave, 1991).

In Elizabeth's case, the blend of positive and negative spaces presents a clear picture of the role she has carved for herself. Her engagement in these spaces is evident through both her language and her practice. She uses both descriptions of what she is and what she is not to position herself within her communities of practice. While she is "not a song and dance person," she is a teacher who self-identifies as being strong in classroom management and discipline. In this way, she is able to carve her niche at KIPP, defining her specific role as a teacher at that school and within that framework. It is through this self-identification that she is actively involved in authoring her identity, if only tangentially: "One can design roles, but one cannot design the identities that will be constructed through these roles" (Wenger, 1998, p. 229). This was indeed the role that Elizabeth took in her ownership of authorship. She asserted her own definitions and parameters of teaching and learning, projecting a role within which she practices, pulling in her own experiences and perceptions. The relationship between the definition of role and development of identity were intertwined – as her identity developed, it affected her sense of role which, in turn, influenced the continued development of identity.

Equally as important in Elizabeth's development of identity is the ways in which she engages certain tools, such as agency, improvisation and the participant roles that she takes in the various communities of practice. These tools offer a clearer understanding of the ways that she positions herself in these communities, both as a result of her own perceptions and attitudes about teaching and learning and in relation to the assumptions made about her role by other community members and the larger society in general.

Elizabeth's primary mode of participation, many times reserved and often distant, did not imply that she did not make connections to and among her different spheres of engagement. Rather, by keeping them at arm's length, she created a space that more clearly delineated the

differences among her experiences but recognized the links between and among them (see Figure 3).

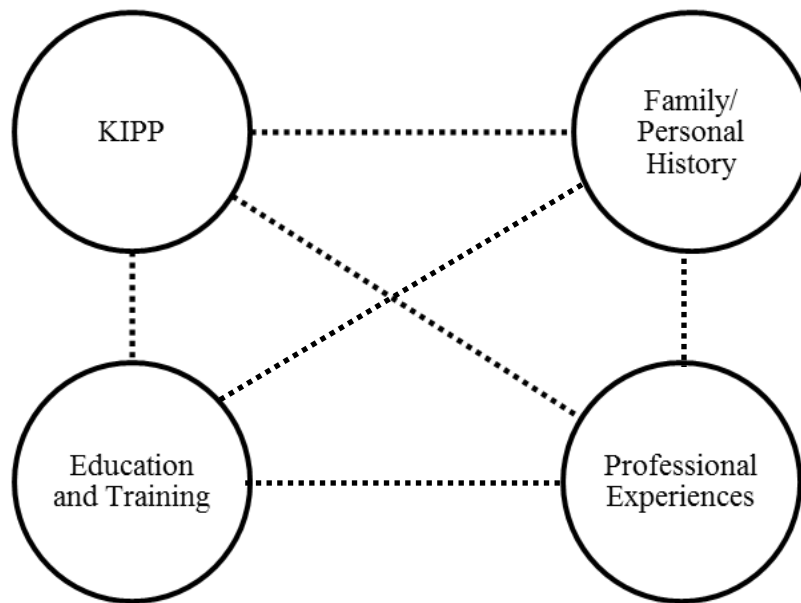


Figure 3: Diagram of influence of Elizabeth's participation history

As a result, we see something more akin to Nespor's (2002) description of networks, a trajectory that was built from the traces of evolution and development rather than from and among the overlapping features of communities. Similar to the previous discussion of her non-participation, Elizabeth's assertion of agency was often seen through her lack of assertion. In developing an understanding of professional identity, agency did not need to occur during interaction. Rather, the sense of "meta-agency," or agency over agency, played an equally important role in the "conversation" of identity development.

Cross-Case Analysis

Having explored the individual case studies in the first section of this chapter, this section looks at themes across the cases in an attempt to more directly respond to the three research questions around which this study is based. For the first two questions:

- 1) *In what types of communities of practice do teachers at a KIPP school participate?*
- 2) *How do the available forms of engagement in these communities shape participants' identity trajectories and opportunities for learning?*

I explore the ways that the three focus teachers participated in communities of practice and the roles these communities played in their professional identity development. For the third research question, *How do the teachers author their professional identities in and across these communities of practice?*, I tie together the analysis of the individual cases to explore the threads that run throughout them.

This investigation into the types of communities of practice is informed by Holland and Eisenhart's (1996) work on figured worlds. Because all communities of practice share three important characteristics – shared repertoire, joint enterprise and mutual engagement – an understanding of the distinctions among various communities must go deeper to the more specific functions and purposes of those groups. Though the communities of practice at KIPP can be generally broken down into three groups – the larger KIPP network, school-wide communities and grade and departmental level communities – it is important to look more closely at the distinctions among these communities both within and across case studies. These distinctions help to establish an appreciation of their significance in the development of the teachers' professional identities.

First, the KIPP network offers a community that exists more as ideology than other communities in this study. As such, its influence was more general in its shape. This influence was made clear through the varied effects it presented in the case study teachers. It is at this level that KIPP schools differ from many traditional public schools. While most schools have the potential for this larger, extracurricular, national community of practice exists, it seems that they remain fairly localized in the development of professional communities. This difference exists primarily as a result of the intentional (and fairly uniform) framework that KIPP has established in its schools across the country. In so doing, it has laid the groundwork for the establishment of communities of practice by tapping into the Teach for America history and practice after which it is modeled and, as a result, setting in motion a cycle of participation and reification that supports this development of communities of practice.

The reifications – reflected through components of the schools such as slogans, chants, and disciplinary structures – provide a route of entry for newcomers into the community. As with other communities of practice, the history that each teacher brings to the community also affects her participation. Carolyn came to her position at KIPP after not only teaching for Teach for America but also after having developed an understanding of the workings of a KIPP school she often visited. Her participation in the KIPP network reflected that familiarity. In fact, her previous participation in TFA and the community of practice of which she was a member therein allowed her informed access to the community of the KIPP network.

Tim and Elizabeth, by contrast, did not have previous experiences that allowed them initial participation beyond observation and other peripheral activities. The components that were immediately familiar to Carolyn, such as chants and songs, were new to Tim and Elizabeth. Further, each of these two new-to-KIPP/TFA teachers described initial reactions to their

newcomer participation that set the theme for their participation in other communities during their tenure as teachers at the KIPP school.

Elizabeth kept herself at an arm's length, feeling as though some of the practices were not only unfamiliar but also a little "cultish." They didn't completely fit with her own image of herself as a teacher and of teaching in general. Tim, however, received the new stimulus with enthusiasm and curiosity, eager to learn more and to become engaged himself in the practices that he witnessed. He connected with the ways in which the network provided a "team and family" and expressed the ways in which it was relevant to his through discussion of his own history and experiences.

The school-wide community at this school offered something of a middle ground between the general and wide-reaching information and the practice and student specific technique and pedagogy offered at the more "local" community levels (those at the department and grade levels). This community of practice brought the larger KIPP ideology to the school level, bringing it together with the faculty and staff and their general practices and acting as a bridge between the more expansive KIPP network community and the more specialized communities formed at the departmental and grade levels.

In this community, there were more opportunities for the teachers to participate in key roles, such as group leader or session instructor, and to see a more direct impact and influence as a result of that participation. Further, it was at this level that there was a balance of expertise. That is, the teachers who had TFA backgrounds could help to connect the ideas that dominated the environment at the Summit with the immediate school culture and needs. The non-TFA teachers also had important roles, as well. They brought their own classroom experiences and academic preparation to the table, contributing on the same level as their TFA counterparts.

At the most “local” level, the departmental and grade level communities of practice were more directly connected to classroom practice, offering day-to-day operational information and discussion. It was at this level that I was able to get a more intimate view of each teacher’s participation. Within these communities, the specific practices of each individual were not only relevant but integral to the discussion and functioning of the group.

Also important in understanding the ways in which the teachers author their professional identities is their learning trajectories. As mentioned in the previous section, learning trajectories are, in part, shaped by the individual’s participation in communities of practice. However, these trajectories are significant in this study in that they affect the teacher’s perspectives on their participation and impact their identity (Wenger, 1998). The three teachers who were featured in these case studies represent three distinct trajectories of learning within their communities of practice. Though the evidence presented puts these teachers on certain trajectories at the time of this study, it is important to note the temporal nature of learning trajectories. They are not by any means fixed courses and simultaneously affect and are affected by the communities of practice in which they participate (Wenger, 1998). In this study, though, the development and evolution of the predominant trajectories of each teacher was the focus in an effort to more clearly understand the relational impact of the communities in which the individuals participated.

Carolyn, in part as a result of her professional experiences, presents an example of an individual on an inbound trajectory. Important to this trajectory was a consistent accumulation and development of skills and knowledge that furthered Carolyn’s movement towards expertise. Her membership in the various communities afforded her this accumulation and development, as did the nature of her participation. Tim’s range of experience and personal and professional history supported his role as broker in his boundary trajectory. However, it is also his movement

between and within the communities of practice of which he was a member that shaped and further developed his trajectory. Moving along a primarily peripheral learning trajectory, Elizabeth developed within and across the communities of practice according to the opportunities they presented in relation to her own beliefs about teaching and learning.

Further, in this discussion of teachers' authorship of their professional identities in relation to the communities of practice – as well as the corresponding constellations and networks - in which they participate, it is important to explore the tools that are used and the ways teachers use them in the different types of communities. These tools – agency, participant roles and improvisation – are instrumental to a clearer understanding of the relationship between communities of practice and the roles that the teachers play in the development of professional identity.

There seems to be an inverse relationship between the size and scope of the community of practice the influence in authorship that the teachers seem to have. The larger the community of practice, as found in the KIPP network, the larger the range of expertise. At the network level, the teachers have access to experts with knowledge and experience much greater than theirs.

At the same time, however, their agency is more limited the larger the community of practice. Once the individual gets to the more local level of communities - the departmental and grade level - the range of expertise (as observed in this study) was much more limited due to a high rate of turnover and the limited experience of newcomers. As a result, individuals can move to more expert roles more quickly.

However, being an expert in these communities looks very different than in the network and even school-wide communities and thus the potential for development is much more limited. Further, because the members of the more local communities potentially have more impact on

the shape of those communities as a result of the intimacy and smaller size of the group, the potential for improvisation decreases.

At KIPP, the symbiotic “process of becoming” is made clear through the changes that can be seen in both the cultural practices within the school as well as in the individual teachers’ practices themselves. On the one hand, teachers are framed by the culture of rules, norms and expectations that have been established at KIPP. The reified aspects of this culture lend direction to the ways in which teachers engage in their practice. However, through their practice and participation in the KIPP culture, they lend their own dispositions, attitudes and beliefs to the existing body of practice. In so doing, they are able to effect some change to the system, just as the KIPP culture was able to influence change in the teachers.

Lessons Learned

One conclusion to be drawn is that it is not the KIPP framework that potentially constrains the development of its teachers. Though participation in the communities of participation and related constellations (Wenger, 1998) at KIPP and the associated networks (Nespor, 2002) influence their trajectories, it is their histories of participation that seem to have the greater impact. One of the more surprising outcomes of this study was that, though she often seemed disengaged, Elizabeth seemed to have developed herself fairly clear sense of herself as a teacher in this environment. It is easy to assume that Carolyn, whose trajectory seems to indicate that she was in fact made for the KIPP environment, would be the teacher who with the most defined “presentation,” Elizabeth, in fact, came across as having found a path that she was able to make her own. In exercising her agency in a way that maintained her own sense of teaching and learning, Elizabeth’s use of improvisation made use of the KIPP framework without compromising her own ideals.

Tim, as well, was able to foster a layered sense of who he was as a teacher. His range of participation – in the Marines, with his family, as a coach – bolstered a richer sense of where he stood in the school landscape and what his role was in the classroom. Carolyn, on the other hand, had such a tightly knit cluster of associations through her participation in various communities of practice and their constellations that her developing sense of identity seemed to stick closely to a “party line,” from the ideas developed as an undergraduate in gender and ethnic studies to those garnered as a TFA teacher to her practices as a teacher at KIPP.

The further implications for these impressions bear some importance. Carolyn’s insider trajectory, in this particular setting, could put some serious constraints on her own development as a teacher. Because her identity development seems to be so intimately tied to her participation in the KIPP communities and constellations of practice, the limits that were discussed previously extend not only to her participant roles but also to her identity as a teacher. One question that remains for me is whether or not she will be able to expand her own understanding of her role as an educator in an environment that itself is limited in the range of experiences and knowledge.

Tim’s and Elizabeth’s trajectories are equally important in understanding their development of professional selves. As the figures provided early in this chapter aim to represent, Tim and Elizabeth have a greater potential for expansions of influence than Carolyn. Because Carolyn’s experiences are all, in many ways, contained within the next, there are clear boundaries to her trajectory of learning. Tim and Elizabeth, however, though in different ways, present trajectories that have the potential to continue to grow and open not only through varied participation but also through the quality and manner of engagement. Tim’s trajectory of transcended boundaries layers his experiences, no matter how seemingly different, into a current role that is enriched by those preceding. Elizabeth, on the other hand, moves along a trajectory

that is built upon discernment and selected value of ideas but that makes connections among those ideas that continue to scaffold a complex sense of identity.

Significance

Communities of practice have most often been studied as tools for professional development and identity in settings that are generally team or group oriented, such as in business or trade-based professions. The study of their influence in schools and with teachers, however, has been extremely limited. It was this gap in the literature that was a motivation for this study of teacher professional identity and the role that communities of practice play in its development. Teaching is often a solitary profession; once the proverbial door to the classroom closes, the teacher is alone in her practice. This characteristic sets this profession apart from the others with which the studies of communities of practice is often studied. However, in its solitude, teachers develop their practice through exposure to the knowledge and expertise of other teachers. It is for this reason that participation in communities of practice becomes an important pathway through which to better understand the development of teacher professional identity.

I was drawn to studying teachers at this school for several reasons. First, much of the press that KIPP has received over the years has focused on its students and their rate of success. However, it seemed important to me to also better understand what was happening with the teachers at KIPP schools. In particular, I was interested in not only why they chose to teach there but also what role they played in the reported success of the students.

Next, in general, these schools have attracted praise from the more conservative members of the educational community while the educational “left” has found much to criticize. Despite this fact, the teachers who were teaching in the schools identified themselves as progressive

educators, aligning their own interests and attitudes about teaching and learning more with the “left” than with more conservative views. I was intrigued by this dynamic and wanted to find a road to studying it. Teacher professional identity and its development in the context of communities of practice provided that access, giving a lens into the ways in which these teachers navigated their understandings not only of themselves but of their surrounding communities.

But the most significant reason for basing this study at a KIPP school was the communities of practice themselves. These communities were, in many ways, “ready-made.” The KIPP framework and the ways in which its schools were structured to provide support and development for teachers within that framework lent itself to community templates, so to speak. Different than in other schools in which I have observed or participated myself, this school had a clear and definite mission, theoretical framework, and instructional and pedagogical trajectory that fostered a more unified congregation into communities of practice. Teacher participation and membership in these communities seemed to occur fairly easily, perhaps because the individuals drawn to working at the school - either as a result of knowing KIPP and its mission or through other similar avenues - were already drawn together through common educational ideals.

This study presents a number of implications for the study of teacher education, preparation and development. Teacher identity – also discussed as teachers’ learning trajectories in this study – is multifaceted. It is not only the individual’s history, the tools and techniques learned through teacher preparation, participation or membership in communities of practice, or any single component thereof, that is most significant in discerning and understanding that trajectory. It is the combination and interaction of all of these factors that is important.

One implication lies in the larger class of schools that KIPP and its framework represent and the implications therein. In addition to KIPP’s continually growing presence in the

educational landscape, the “No Excuses” model that it originated has taken hold in the national school environment. Several charter systems employ this model at its base. These schools have clear and firm frameworks that have potential and real influence on the development of the teachers who work within them. Because of their proliferation and their very real presence in the educational landscape, it is important for emerging teachers to be equipped with tools that enable the appropriate use of agency and improvisation. It is in this way that they will be able to navigate these systems, should they teach within them, in a way that promotes their growth rather than constrains it.

Another implication is the potential that participation in communities and constellations of practice present for teacher growth and development. In this examination, I explored the links among the individual teacher’s dispositions and attitudes, their participation in communities of practice and their professional identity development. While teaching is often thought of in some respects as a solitary profession, it is vital that researchers and practitioners alike remember the essential communal features of teaching. As a profession in which interaction with and participation in a group is essential for growth, the role of communities of practice is one of singular importance. These communities allow for the range of individuals that enter the profession while offering cohesion among them necessary to form a strong unit of practice together.

Finally, it is important for schools such as KIPP and other schools that establish a clear and delineated (and even as much as prescribed) framework within which teachers must operate to understand not only the possible affordances allowed through that structure but also the constraints that it may place on teacher identity development. Though these types of frameworks offer guidance and form to the individuals within them, they can also restrict the direction and

type of growth that occurs. With this in mind, these settings have the potential to create valuable vehicles for teacher identity formation and development that fosters continuous growth.

The implications of this study extend, as well, to teacher preparation. Though this discussion merely opens the field for further exploration of the role of communities of practice and, more specifically, school frameworks (like those presented at KIPP) in the learning trajectories of the participant teachers, it does provide evidence that there is some impact. Yet, despite the long-time presence of educational approaches like Montessori and Waldorf, and the seemingly enduring (and proliferating) influence of KIPP (and No Excuses schools in general, to name only one such framework), these educational models are often given only minimal attention in teacher preparation. Perhaps it is time to more fully expose potential teachers to these models, offering classes focused on them or, even better, practicum centered on them, that provide a fuller and very real sense of the educational landscape. In so doing, we, as teacher educators, are providing a more complete palate of options and possible specialization that could enable a richer and more expanded development of professional identity in preservice and early career teachers.

Limitations of the Study

In addition to the insight offered in this study regarding the types of communities of practice offered to teachers and the influence those communities have upon teachers' authorship of their professional identities, there are also limitations to the study. First, though an effort was made to choose teachers for the case studies that presented a range of experiences and histories, the study remains limited to teachers in a specific charter school group (KIPP). As such, the findings are to some extent specific to that group. Another limitation was my inability to attend a KIPP Summit due to financial and scheduling restraints. Because I was not able to observe first

hand not only the event itself but the case teachers' behaviors and participation in the Summit, I had to rely on the teachers' descriptions of their experiences and on the descriptions provided by other faculty and staff.

In retrospect, an important addition to my data collection would have been videotaping the classes and meetings I observed. Though I was diligent in my recording of what I was able to see, that scope was limited and it is clear that much more and much more precise information could have been obtained through videotaped sessions that I could then review at various points of my data analysis.

However, one of the biggest limitations in this study came from my own inexperience as a researcher and the relationships I had developed not only with the teachers but also with the school. Having spent some time in the setting, talking to the teachers, participating in some activities, helping them with some volunteer work, I lost a certain amount of scholarly objectivity. This loss clearly affected my effectiveness as a researcher on several levels. First, in retrospect, there are many follow-up questions that were not asked and, thus, the data with which I ended up was not as rich as it could have been. There remain gaps in the case studies and, as a result, in my analysis, that may have been filled with some of those questions. Next, as I spent more time in the school and became more settled in the environment, I began to make assumptions that affected the ways that I wrote and thought about the material that I analyzed. One example that became very clear through its absence was the lack of any real discussion of race, either in my interviews or in my own initial analysis. There became such an implicit assumption that it played a role that I neglected both to push my subjects, or myself for that matter, on the issue.

Despite these limitations, however, the work done through this study opens some important conversations. Through these cases, I was able to touch upon and present valuable information that contributes to a larger discussion about teacher professional identity, participation and practice, and the influence of school frameworks and environments. This study helps to pave the way for further discussions and opens the door to more investigation into meaningful teacher development.

Future Research Directions

Through this study's exploration of teacher identity development, I have attempted to provide one approach to understanding and expanding teacher support systems. However, as with any research on such an expansive topic as the one I tackled here, I have only been able to offer one vantage point, and only a small portion of that. There remains many related research paths to be explored in order to construct as full a picture as possible.

As I stated earlier in this study, I chose breadth over depth with an eye toward future, more expansive exploration of the questions asked herein. One immediate direction for this research that becomes apparent through the data that I was able to collect is a closer examination of the connection between the identity that is enacted in the classroom and that which is seen in action during participation in various communities in the KIPP school. Because, as stated earlier in this paper, teacher professional identity is connected to teacher effectiveness and retention, it is important to develop a better understanding of the ways that teachers at KIPP are able to translate the identity they are developing in their professional communities to their daily practice.

In an interview with Richard Barth (Garraod and Barth, 2009), the KIPP CEO stated that the annual teacher turnover rate across KIPP schools tends to be about 33%. This is a statistic that has been much maligned in the media. But, he explains, in "more detailed data from . . .

teachers that left KIPP classrooms in 2007-08 . . . [we] found that about a third of them had either transferred to another KIPP school or moved into leadership or administrative roles at KIPP.” This information provides an interesting opportunity for an expansion of the research presented in this study. Does the intentional nature of the communities of practice at KIPP play into this “transitional attrition” of teachers at KIPP?

In order to gain a different perspective, another possible direction for research would be a comparative study with another more “traditional” public school. An examination of the communities of practice there in relation to the learning trajectories of the teachers within the school (and the level of participation and membership within those communities) would be a useful tool in gaining a better understanding of the relative impact that these communities of practice have upon the development of teachers’ identities across school settings. As the landscape of public K-12 education continues to shift, it is important to understand the ways in which the professional contexts that are being created impact the ways in which teachers are understanding their roles and coming to foster their identities as instructors.

References

- Alsup, J. (2006). *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*. Mahwah, N. J.: Lawrence-Erlbaum Associates.
- Barab, S. and Duffy, T. (2000). From Practice Fields to Communities of Practice. In D. H. Jonassen and S. M. Land (Eds.). *Theoretical Foundations of Learning Environments*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 25-56.
- Barab, S. King, R. & Gray, J. (Eds.) (2004) *Designing for virtual communities in the service of learning*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Battey, D. & Franke, M. L. (2008). Transforming identities: Understanding teachers across professional development and classroom practice. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(3), 127-149.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., and Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20 (4), 107-128.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bradley, F. and Mansfield, J. (1997). Philosophy of teaching: developing a statement that thrives in the classroom. *The Clearing House*, 70 (3), 125-128.
- Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2005). [Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach](#). *Discourse Studies*, 7(4-5), 585-614.
- Burgess, R. (Ed.) (1986). *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*. London: Routledge.
- Carnoy, M., Jacobesen, R., Mishel, L., and Rothstein, R. (2005). *The Charter School Dust-Up: Examining the Evidence on Enrollment and Achievement*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research; A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Erikson, F. (1986). Qualitative Methods in Research in Teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd ed). New York: Collier MacMillan.
- Garrad, A. (Interviewer) & Barth, R. (Interviewee) (2009). *Philanthropy News Digest* (Interview transcript). Retrieved from The Foundation Center website: <http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/newsmakers/nwsmkr.jhtml?id=263400002>.
- Gaventa, J. (2003). *Power after Lukes: a review of the literature*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

- Gee, J. P. (1991). Socio-Cultural Approaches to Literacy (Literacies). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 12, 31-48.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in Public: Micro-Studies of the Public Order*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- (1979). *Gender Advertisements*. New York, NY: Harper and Row Press.
- (1981). *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goodson, I. F., & Cole, A. L. (1994). Exploring the teacher's professional knowledge: constructing identity and community. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 21(1), 85-105.
- Grossman, P., Wineberg, S. and Woolworth, S. (2001). Toward a Theory of Teacher Community. *Teachers College Record*, 103 (6), 942-1012.
- Haberman, M. (2005). *Star Teachers: The Ideology and Best Practice of Effective Teachers of Diverse Children and Youth in Poverty*. Haberman Educational Foundation.
- Hanks, W. F. (1998). Foreward. In J. Lave. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Hays, P. A. (2004). Case Study Research. In K. deMarrais and S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*. Mahwah, N. J.: Lawrence-Erlbaum Associates, pp. 218-254.
- Henig, J. (2008). What do we know about the outcomes of KIPP schools? Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved March, 12, 2011 from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/outcomes-of-kipp-schools>.
- Hodkinson, P. M. & Hodkinson, H. D. (2004a). The significance of individuals' dispositions in workplace learning: a case study of two teachers, *Journal of Education and Work*, 17(2), 167-182.

- (2004b). Rethinking the concept of community of practice in relation to schoolteachers' workplace learning, *International journal of training and development*, 8 (1), 21-31.
- (2003). Individuals, Communities of Practice and the Policy Context: school teachers' learning in their workplace. *Studies in Continuing Education*. 25 (1), 3-22.
- Holland, D. & Eisenhart, M. (1992). *Educated in Romance*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Holland, D. and Lachicotte, W. (2007) Vygotsky, Mead, and New Sociocultural Studies of Identity. In H. Daniels, M. Cole, and J. V. Wertsch (Eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 101-135.
- Holland, D. & Lave, J. (Eds.) (2001). *History in Person*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- Holovach, R., Dorko, K., and Robelen, E. W. (2007). KIPP Student-Attrition Patterns Eyed. *Education Week*, 26 (41), 1-17.
- Horn, I.S. (2006). Lessons learned from detracked mathematics departments. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1), 72-81.
- (2007). Fast kids, slow kids, lazy kids: Framing the mismatch problem in math teachers' conversations, *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 16 (1), 37-79.
- Hutchby, I. (1999). Frame Attunement and Footing in the Organisation of Talk Radio Openings. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3 (1), 41-64.
- Jakobson, R. (1971). Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disorders. In R. Jakobson and M. Halle, (Eds.), *Fundamentals of Language*. Paris: Mouton.
- Jawitz, J. (2009) Academic identities and communities of practice in a professional discipline. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14 (3), 241-251.
- Jurow, A.S. (2005) Shifting engagements in figured worlds: middle school mathematics students' participation in an architectural design project. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 14(1), 35-67.
- Kendon, A. (1991). Some considerations for a theory of language origins. *Man*, 26, 602-619.
- Klein, E. J. (2007). Rethinking professional development: building a culture of teacher learning. *The New Educator*, 3 (3), 179-197.
- Korthagen, F. A. J. (2004). In search of the essence of a good teacher: towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20 (1), 77-97.

- Labov, W. (1970). The logic of non-standard English. In A. Cashdan and E. Grugeon (Eds.) *Language in Education*. London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul.
- Laksov, K. B., Mann, S. and Dahlgren, L. O. (2008). Developing a community of practice around teaching: a case study. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 27 (2), 121-132.
- Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press.
- Lave, J. (1996). Teaching, as Learning, in Practice. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 3 (3), 149-163.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leander, K. M. (2002). [Locating Latanya: The situated production of identity artifacts in classroom interaction](#). *Research in the Teaching of English*, 37, 198-250.
- LeCompte, M. D. and Preissle, J. (Eds.) (1993). *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*, 2nd Edition. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, Inc.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Luttrell, W. & Packer, C. (2008). High school students' literacy practices and identities, and the figured world of school. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24 (3), 235-247.
- Ma, J.Y., & Singer-Gabella, M., (2011). Learning to teach in the figured world of reform mathematics. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62, 8-22.
- Mathews, J. (2005). Assessing the KIPP Schools – A New Perspective. Washington Post, March 29. Retrieved on February 22, 2007 from www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/sp-dyn/A9576-2005Mar29.
- (2009). *Work Hard. Be Nice: How Two Inspired Teachers Created the Most Promising Schools in America*. New York, NY: Algonquin Books.
- Mathison, S. (1988). Why Triangulate? *Educational Researcher*, 13-17.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach (2nd edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nasir, N. (2004). "Halal-ing" the Child: Reframing Identities of Resistance in an Urban Muslim School. *Harvard Educational Review*, 74 (2), 153-174.
- Nasir, N. S. & Cook, J. (2009). Becoming a Hurdler: How Learning Settings Afford Identities. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 40 (1), 41-61.
- Navarro, Z. (2006) In Search of Cultural Intepretation of Power. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6), 11-22.
- Nespor, J. (1985). *The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching: Final report of the teacher beliefs study*. Austin, TX: R&D Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas at Austin.
- (2002). Networks and Contexts of Reform. *Journal of Educational Change*, 3 (3-4), 365-382.
- Niesz, T. (2010). Chasms and bridges: Generativity in the space between educators' communities of practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(1), 37-44.
- Olsen, B. (2008). *Teaching What They Learn, Learning What They Live: How Teachers' Personal Histories Shape Their Professional Development*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Pennington, J.L. (2007). Re-Viewing NCLB through the figured worlds of policy and teaching: Creating a space for teacher agency and improvisation. *Language Arts*, 84 (5), 465-474.
- Penuel, W., & Wertsch, J. (1995). Vygotsky and identity formation: A sociocultural approach. *Educational Psychologist*, 30, 83-92.
- Pomerantz, A. (1984). Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: Some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Proweller, A. & Mitchener, C.P. (2004). Building Teacher Identity with Urban Youth: Voice of Beginning Middle School Science Teachers in an Alternative Certification Program. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 41(10), 1044-1062.
- Robelen, E. W. (2006). KIPP Schools Shift Strategy for Scaling Up. *Education Week*, April 12. Retrieved on February 22, 2007 from www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/4/12/31kipp.h25.html?levelID=1000&rale2.
- Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Rush, L., & Fecho, B. (2008). When figured worlds collide: Improvisation in an inquiry classroom. *Teaching Education*, 19 (2), 123-136.
- Ryan, G.W. & Bernard, H.R. (2003). Techniques to Identify Themes. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 85-109.
- Sachs, J. (2001). Teacher professional identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16 (2), 149-161.
- Sanjek, R. (Ed.) (1990). *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Schiffrin, D. (1990). The principle of intersubjectivity in conversation and communication. *Semiotica*, 80, 121- 51.
- Settlage, J., Southerland, S.A., Smith, L. & Ceglie, R. (2009). Constructing a doubt-free teaching self: Self-efficacy, teacher identity, and science instruction within diverse settings. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 46 (1), 102-125.
- Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher*, 27(2), 4-13.
- Smagorinsky, P., Cook, L. S., Moore, C., Jackson, A. Y., and Fry, P. G. (2004). Tensions in learning to teach: Accommodation and the development of a teaching identity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55 (1), 8-24.
- Tan, E. & Calabrese Barton, A. (2006). *Understanding How Girls' Identities Shape Their Science Practices: The Stories of Amelia and Ginny*. A paper presented at the National Association for Research in Science Teaching. San Francisco, CA.
- Tough, P. (2006). What It Takes To Make a Student. *New York Times Magazine*; Nov 26, 44-72.
- Urrieta, L. (2007). Identity Production in Figured Worlds: How some Mexican Americans become Chicana/o Activist Educators. *The Urban Review*, 39 (2), 117-144.
- Wacquant, L. (2005). *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilgoren, J. (2000). Wendy Kopp, Leader of Teach for America. *New York Times*, November 12.

- Wilson, S.M. & Berne, J. (1999). Teacher learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge: An examination of research on contemporary professional development. In A. Iran-Nejad & P. David Pearson (Eds.). *Review of Research in Education* (24). (pp. 173-209).
- Woodworth, K.R., David, J.L., Guha, R., Wang, H., & Lopez-Torkos, A. (2008). *San Francisco Bay Area KIPP schools: A study of early implementation and achievement*. Final report. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- Wortham, S. (1996). Deictic mapping. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25, 331-348.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix A: The Five Pillars of KIPP Schools

Five Pillars

KIPP schools share a core set of operating principles known as the Five Pillars:

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

KIPP schools have clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on the students' backgrounds. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior.

CHOICE & COMMITMENT

Students, their parents, and the faculty of each KIPP school choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend a KIPP school. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success.

MORE TIME

KIPP schools know that there are no shortcuts when it comes to success in academics and life. With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular experiences.

POWER TO LEAD

The principals of KIPP schools are effective academic and organizational leaders who understand that great schools require great school leaders. They have control over their school budget and personnel. They are free to swiftly move dollars or make staffing changes, allowing them maximum effectiveness in helping students learn.

FOCUS ON RESULTS

KIPP schools relentlessly focus on high student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures. Just as there are no shortcuts, there are no excuses. Students are expected to achieve a level of academic performance that will enable them to succeed at the nation's best high schools and colleges.

Appendix B: KIPP Commitment to Excellence sample contracts**KIPP Commitment to Excellence (Sample)***Work hard. Be nice.***Teachers' Commitment**

We fully commit to KIPP in the following ways:

- We will arrive at KIPP every day by 7:15 am (Monday-Friday).
- We will remain at KIPP until 5:00 pm (Monday - Thursday) and 4:00 pm on Friday.
- We will come to KIPP on appropriate Saturdays at 9:15 am and remain until 1:05 pm.
- We will teach at KIPP during the summer.
- We will always teach in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for our students to learn.
- We will always make ourselves available to students and parents, and address any concerns they might have.
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.
- Failure to adhere to these commitments can lead to our removal from KIPP.

Signed:

Parents'/Guardians' Commitment

We fully commit to KIPP in the following ways:

- We will make sure our child arrives at KIPP by 7:25 am (Monday-Friday) or boards a KIPP bus at the scheduled time.
- We will make arrangements so our child can remain at KIPP until 5:00 pm (Monday - Thursday) and 4:00 pm on Friday.
- We will make arrangements for our child to come to KIPP on appropriate Saturdays at 9:15 am and remain until 1:05 pm.
- We will ensure that our child attends KIPP summer school.
- We will always help our child in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This also means that we will check our child's homework every night, let him/her call the teacher if there is a problem with the homework, and try to read with him/her every night.
- We will always make ourselves available to our children and the school, and address any concerns they might have. This also means that if our child is going to miss school, we will notify the teacher as soon as possible, and we will carefully read any and all papers that the school sends home to us.
- We will allow our child to go on KIPP field trips.
- We will make sure our child follows the KIPP dress code.
- We understand that our child must follow the KIPP rules so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. We, not the school, are responsible for the behavior and actions of our child.
- Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause my child to lose various KIPP privileges and can lead to my child returning to his/her home school.

Signed:

Student's Commitment

I fully commit to KIPP in the following ways:

- I will arrive at KIPP every day by 7:25 am (Monday-Friday) or board a KIPP bus at the correct time.
- I will remain at KIPP until 5:00 pm (Monday - Thursday) and 4:00 pm on Friday.
- I will come to KIPP on appropriate Saturdays at 9:15 am and remain until 1:05 pm.
- I will attend KIPP during summer school.
- I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for me and my fellow students to learn. This also means that I will complete all my homework every night, I will call my teachers if I have a problem with the homework or a problem with coming to school, and I will raise my hand and ask questions in class if I do not understand something.
- I will always make myself available to parents and teachers, and address any concerns they might have. If I make a mistake, this means I will tell the truth to my teachers and accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will always behave so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. This also means that I will always listen to all my KIPP teammates and give everyone my respect.
- I will follow the KIPP dress code.
- I am responsible for my own behavior, and I will follow the teachers' directions.
- Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause me to lose various KIPP privileges and can lead to returning to my home school.

Signed:

Appendix C: Individual Teacher Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I'll be asking you questions about your professional history, influences on your career development, your experiences – both here at KSPA and before you started teaching here - and your views on teaching and learning.

I'll be audio-taping this interview so I will be able to listen to it again once we are finished. This recording will be kept safely so that your anonymity is protected. I will also transcribe the interview and can provide you a copy if you are interested.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Prior Experiences/Preparation

- 1) Tell me about your path to KIPP. What teacher training did you receive? Did you teach before your experience here? If so, tell me about that/those experiences.
- 2) What/who made the most critical/influential impacts your teaching style? Your approach to teaching? Your views of the roles of teachers and students? How and in what ways?
- 3) What have been some important learning experiences during your career? What have they taught you?

Beliefs about teaching and learning

- 4) Describe the ideal classroom/lesson. What role do the students play? The teacher?
- 5) Are there specific beliefs or positions about education/learning that influence how you structure and run your classroom? If so, what are they and what are their influences?
- 6) What do you think is the most important thing(s) that happens in the classroom?
- 7) What do you think a student must do or value to be successful in school?

KIPP

- 8) How did you learn/hear about KIPP?
- 9) Why did you decide to apply to this school? Why/how did you decide to teach at this school?
- 10) What are your impressions of KIPP? How does it fit or not fit with your approaches to teaching and learning?

- 11) What are your roles (as a teacher and otherwise) at KIPP? What are your responsibilities in these roles?
- 12) How would you describe your fit with KIPP? [Probe – Are there aspects of KIPP that differ from your approach to teaching and learning? How do you work with that/reconcile those differences?]

Teacher communities

- 13) Tell me about your relationships with other teachers at KSPA.
- 14) Do those relationships influence your classroom practice? [Probe – What influence do they have?]

Appendix D: Individual Administrator Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. In this interview, I'm interested in learning about your strategies for and perspectives of teacher professional development and support, both generally and here at KIPP. This might include formal PD sessions and meetings as well as other factors in the school that you think might contribute to teachers' PD. I'm also interested in learning a little about your role in that professional development, both in its construction and its implementation.

I'll be audio-taping this interview so I will be able to listen to it again once we are finished. This recording will be kept safely so that your anonymity is protected. I will also transcribe the interview and can provide you a copy if you are interested.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Goals and Aims

- 1) As the leader of this school, what are your goals for the teachers? The students? The community?
- 2) Describe a successful classroom in your school. What is the role of the teacher? The students?

PD at KIPP

- 3) Tell me about how professional development is developed and executed at KSPA. Can you describe how a typical PD meeting typically runs?
- 4) What are the roles that different individuals play (such as you, other administrators, teachers, etc.)?
- 5) Are there features that make this PD unique to KIPP/KSPA? Is this PD something that is particular to your school or is it influenced by the national KIPP organization?
- 6) What are your goals for teacher professional development in this school?
- 7) Can you describe a positive and a less positive experience with PD at KSPA? What made them positive or less positive?

Other support at KIPP

- 8) In what ways (other than professional development) are teachers supported in your school?

Appendix E: Teacher Pathways

TEACHER PATHWAYS & LEAP OVERVIEW

TEACHER PATHWAYS

Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday from 4:00-5:00, teachers will follow one of three earned pathways towards professional growth and/or sustainability:

New Teacher Pathway:

Pathway Leaders: Principal, Assistant Principal and paid Mentor Teachers

New KIPP teachers will participate in a 9-18 week orientation program during which they will develop the knowledge and skills to meet KIPP cultural and instructional expectations. This pathway is required of all new KIPP teachers for a minimum of 9 weeks. After 9 weeks, individual teachers who demonstrate proficiency in defined criteria may transfer into the Associate Teacher Pathway or Senior Teacher Pathway; all other teachers will transfer into one of the two successive pathways after 18 weeks based on individual outcomes in the New Teacher Pathway program.

A team of school leaders and teachers will design the New Teacher Pathway curriculum.

Associate Teacher Pathway:

Pathway Leaders: Assistant Principal, Principal and paid mentor teachers

The Associate Teacher Pathway serves teachers who have taught at KSPA for at least 12 weeks and demonstrate areas for growth necessary to perform at defined standards of teaching proficiency. The Principal and School Learning Coordinator will place teachers in this pathway based on outcomes of teacher performance evaluations.

Senior Teacher Pathway:

Pathway Leaders: Principal and School Learning Coordinator

Teachers who meet defined criteria of proficiency in teaching and other cultural expectations of KSPA teachers may opt into one or a combination of the following Senior Teacher Pathway options:

I. Mentor Teacher Program

Mentor Teachers support the development of teachers in the New Teacher and/or Associate Teacher Pathways. Interested teachers must submit an application to the Principal to be considered for selection. All Mentors are selected based on demonstrated teaching proficiency and leadership. Mentor Teachers participate in a one-week training program during the first week of professional development in August.

2. Learning Enrichment & Athletics Program Coach or Instructor

Interested LEAP coaches and instructors must submit a class or sport proposal to the Athletics and Student Programs Director for approval. Positions are also available as academic intervention tutors for struggling students.

3. Action Research Project Collaborative

Teachers interested in advancing their professional growth and the improvement of the school through collaborative action research may participate in an Action Research Collaborative. Interested teachers must submit a research design proposal to the Principal for approval. Participating teachers of all approved projects will receive a stipend upon completion of the project and achievement of the project's measurable goals.

4. Early Leave for Graduate/Professional Education

Teachers interested in pursuing graduate or other professional education may leave KSPA at 4:00 to complete coursework. At this time, teachers must apply to graduate/professional programs independently and will be responsible for paying their own tuition and other related expenses.

5. Early Leave for Personal Interests

KSPA values a work-life balance. Teachers who have earned Senior Teacher may also choose to leave KSPA at 4:00 to pursue professional growth or personal interests outside of school.

LEARNING ENRICHMENT & ATHLETICS PROGRAM (LEAP)

Program Leader: Athletics & Student Programs Director

Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday from 4:00-5:00, students will participate in a one-hour enrichment program, extending student learning and development through the arts, technology, athletics, or academic intervention. The scheduled enrichment classes will be staffed by paid and volunteer instructors from the community and KSPA Senior Teachers who opt into the program.

Freshmen will be scheduled in art, music, technology, or reading/math academic intervention programs. Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors will elect to enroll in an art, music, technology, life fitness, team sport, or reading/math academic intervention programs.

Students participating in the academic intervention program will be identified in August using MAP data from the Spring of the previous year for grades 6-8 and Fall of the current year for grade 5.

All programs will follow a 12-week trimester rotation (fall, winter, spring) in which students will enroll in a new program every twelve weeks.

Any student on Detention or Work Hard Center (mandatory for incomplete or missing homework) will still participate in a LEAP class from 4:00-5:00 and will report to "Be Nice" or Work Hard" from 5:00pm-6:00pm. KSPA Senior teachers who opt into the "Work Hard" and "Be Nice" after school intervention will supervise for hourly extra pay following an established rotation schedule.

Appendix F: Coding Tree

1. Personal History
 - 1.1. Family
 - 1.2. Education
 - 1.2.1. K-12 education
 - 1.2.2. Teacher training
 - 1.2.2.1. College-based
 - 1.2.2.2. Other
 - 1.2.3. College
 - 1.3. Influences
 - 1.3.1 Family
 - 1.3.2. Professional experiences
 - 1.3.3. Other experiences
2. Professional experiences
 - 2.1. Teaching experience
 - 2.1.1. KIPP
 - 2.1.2. Non-KIPP
 - 2.2. Other professional experiences
 - 2.2.1. Education related
 - 2.2.2. Other
3. Practice and Participation at KIPP
 - 3.1. Roles
 - 3.1.1. Active
 - 3.1.1.1. Leader
 - 3.1.1.2. Non-leader
 - 3.1.2. Passive
 - 3.1.2.1. Participatory
 - 3.1.2.2. Non-participatory
 - 3.2. Tools of participation
 - 3.2.1. Agency
 - 3.2.2. Negotiation
 - 3.2.3. Artifact use
 - 3.2.4. Use of KIPP language/jargon
4. Relationships
 - 4.1. With students
 - 4.2. With other teachers
 - 4.3. With administration