

2008

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<https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/education-facultypubs/80>

Published Citation

Smith, E., & Anagnostopoulos, D. (2008). Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Literature-Based Discussions in a Cross-Institutional Network, *English Education*, 41(1), 39-65.

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Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Literature-Based Discussions in a Cross-Institutional Network

Emily R. Smith and Dorothea Anagnostopoulos

This article examines how secondary English teachers who served as mentors¹ for preservice English teachers developed their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of literature discussions through participating in a cross-institutional teacher educator network. In particular, we document how the joint creation of dialogic space in the English Educators' Network provided a context within which the mentor teachers expanded their understandings of discussions from disparate kinds of classroom talk to a dialogic view of literature-based discussion involving the interaction of reader, text, and multiple worldviews. We explore two central dimensions of this work: (1) how shifts in university and school participants' discourse, affiliation, and participation supported and expanded mentors' thinking about discussions; and (2) the central role of boundary objects, shared texts, and conversational brokers in facilitating these shifts. We begin with a brief review of literature on PCK to highlight the need for more research on cross-institutional contexts as sites for mentor teacher learning.

Developing Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Pedagogical content knowledge is a core element of what scholars have identified as the knowledge base for teaching. Shulman (1986) defines PCK as the "blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (p. 8). It includes teachers' (1) overarching conceptions of the subject matter; (2) knowledge of instructional strategies for teaching the subject

matter; (3) knowledge of students' understandings and potential misunderstandings of the subject matter; and (4) knowledge of curriculum sequence, structure, and available materials (Grossman, 1990).

Much of the current research on PCK has focused on its development among preservice and novice teachers. Research into how in-service teachers develop PCK is much sparser. A few studies have directly examined how teachers develop PCK through interactions with their students (Rosebery & Puttick, 1998; Seymour & Lehrer, 2006). Most examine in-service teachers' development of PCK in professional communities. These studies point to the potential of engaging in joint examination of subject matter and instruction through analyses of student work samples or collaborative lesson and curriculum planning. Such activities provide teachers opportunities to deepen their knowledge of how students learn subject matter and the types of subject-specific representations and materials that facilitate this learning (Allen, 1998; Fickel, 2001; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Researchers argue that such activities facilitate teachers' development of PCK as they involve teachers in articulating their tacit knowledge, constructing canonical stories or case knowledge, and investigating the relationship between their conceptions of subject matter and their pedagogical strategies (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996; Rosebery & Puttick, 1998; Rosebery & Warren, 1998; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

To date, there has been little research on how teachers develop PCK through mentoring preservice teachers. The few studies that do exist focus on the learning that occurs as mentors interact with student teachers (e.g., Margerum-Leys, 2004). Carroll's (2001) work extends the focus to examine how mentor teachers learn in a collaborative study group; the mentors in the group Carroll studied developed knowledge for mentoring preservice teachers through jointly examining artifacts from their own and each other's mentoring. Central to this work was what Carroll refers to as re-voicing moves, where the mentor teachers restated, reconceptualized, recontextualized, recycled, and made warranted inferences about each other's assertions, analyses, and questions. Over the course of the year, these re-voicing moves enabled the mentor teachers to deepen their knowledge of mentoring and expand their mentoring repertoires. This article builds on and extends the literature on teacher learning in professional communities by focusing specifically on how the construction of a dialogic space in a cross-institutional teacher education network serves as a key site through which mentor teachers can enrich their understanding of leading literature-based discussions.

The English Educators' Network

We cofounded the English Educators' Network with several classroom teachers who mentored preservice teachers in Michigan State University's (MSU's) secondary English teacher preparation program. MSU's program culminates in a nine-month student teaching practicum, or internship, during which teaching interns spend most of their time learning to teach in their mentors' classrooms, returning to the university once a week to attend methods and professional roles courses. The Network emerged from our conversations with mentor teachers about assignments we required interns in our methods courses to enact in their field placements. Many mentors felt the assignments disrupted their curriculum and endorsed practices counter to their own. For our part, we viewed the mentors as limiting interns' learning-to-teach opportunities and promoting ineffective practices. Working initially with 10 mentors from several schools and districts, we convened the Network in 2001 in an effort to address these frustrations.

Between 2001 and 2005, the Network met monthly to read and discuss research and professional literature in English education, share and examine artifacts from our teaching and work with interns, and develop shared tools to use with interns in our respective classrooms. Meetings were open to all mentors and university instructors involved in the secondary English program and typically took place at a community organization that provided a free, neutral space outside the school and university contexts. Funding from a state grant supported our time in the Network and covered substitute pay for teachers to attend meetings. While participation at meetings varied from 7 to 30 attendees, 15 mentors and university instructors attended regularly and constituted the Network's core membership. This group determined the overall goals and yearly agendas, though the university participants typically established specific meeting agendas. During initial Network meetings, participants examined texts that shaped our work, including national, state, and local teaching and learning standards. From this, participants decided to concentrate on creating new tools to assist interns' development of two core practices in teaching English—leading literature-based discussions and teaching writing.

We focus, here, on the creation and use of a performance-based rubric aimed at helping interns build their discussion practices, herein called the Discussion Rubric, or Rubric. The Rubric classified various teaching practices along a performance continuum that moved from "Does Not Meet Expectations" to "Exceeds Expectations" in three areas of facilitating discussions: (1) planning, preparation, and implementation; (2) questions and

responses; and (3) participation patterns. The Rubric served as the focal point for the Network's creation of other discussion-focused tools, including guides for mentoring conversations and university assignments (see Basmadjian, this issue).

Constructing Dialogic Space With Boundary Objects and Brokers

Our work in and study of the Network was grounded in a sociocultural theory of learning that locates learning in interaction with the people and tools of a particular social setting (Vygotsky, 1986). As a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), the Network afforded opportunities for participants to engage collaboratively in legitimate practices of the teaching and mentoring community—discussing pedagogy, developing standards and assessment tools, and reflecting on practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Two key components of a community of practice, particularly a community that includes people from different institutions, are *boundary objects* and *brokers*, both of which played a key role in Network participants' learning and development.

As Anagnostopoulos, Smith, and Nystrand note (this issue), boundary objects facilitate communication among people, here university-based teacher educators and school-based mentor teachers, whose work is inter-related but occurs in separate and distinct settings.

Boundary objects serve as focal points through which people can organize their work within and across their respective settings.

Boundary objects serve as focal points through which people can organize their work within and across their respective settings (Bowker & Star, 1999; Cobb, McClain, Lamberg, & Dean, 2003; Kerosuo & Engeström, 2003; Star & Greisimer, 1989).

The Discussion Rubric we examine here represents a boundary object. Both university instructors and school-based mentor teachers used the Rubric to help the interns they worked with develop discussion practices. It thus coordinated the work of preparing novice teachers to teach discussion in both the university and secondary classrooms in which the interns learned to teach. In another study, we documented how participating in the creation of the Rubric and using it with interns in their respective classrooms enabled a mentor teacher and university instructor to expand their instructional repertoires and engage the interns in examining, developing, and enriching their discussion practices (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Basmadjian 2007). In this article, we examine how participating in constructing the Rubric in the Network deepened the mentor teachers' understanding of the pedagogical features and purposes of literature-based discussions.

In addition to boundary objects, conversational brokers are also important to the construction of dialogic space in cross-institutional teacher education networks. Drawing on the work of Wenger (1998), we define brokers as participants who move between communities of practice and facilitate the processes of translating practices, adopting new discourses, and trying on new identities within a group. Conversational brokers make connections across the practices that people bring with them from their different work settings. They facilitate their own and others' learning through carrying elements from one practice into new settings, thus opening up the possibilities for the creation of hybrid practices that can coordinate work across multiple settings. As we show, conversational brokers are critical to the construction of boundary objects in cross-institutional spaces such as the Network.

Importantly, Wenger (1998) notes that brokering requires "enough legitimacy to influence the development of a practice, mobilize attention, and address conflicting interests" (p. 109). Thus, brokering and the construction of boundary objects are bound up with the dynamics of association and disassociation (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Basmadjian 2007; Suchman, 2005). Participants in cross-institutional settings use (or refuse) objects to constitute identities and position themselves with or against other groups. As they construct boundary objects, they align their identities and establish relations of power, as well as coordinate work. To support the creation and use of boundary objects, conversational brokers must negotiate the dynamics of affiliation and disaffiliation in ways that facilitate participants' commitment to the development of new, hybrid practices.

Methods

Sociocultural theory and, in particular, the concepts of boundary objects and brokers help to illuminate the processes involved in creating dialogic spaces for teacher learning in cross-institutional teacher education networks. In this article, we focus on our interactions and conversations in the Network as we created the Discussion Rubric to understand how the processes involved in jointly creating this boundary object created a dialogic space in which mentor teachers could articulate, reflect on, and develop their conceptions of effective discussions of literature in secondary English classrooms.

Research on teacher learning in professional community emphasizes the salience of teacher interaction. Because the work in these groups occurs fundamentally through talk, researchers have identified several aspects

of talk in these groups that appear to contribute to teacher learning. As noted above, Carroll (2001) posits the importance of re-voicing moves. Other researchers have highlighted the construction of shared meanings (Rosebery & Warren, 1998), the number of topic changes (Featherstone, Pfeiffer, & Smith, 1993), the sharing of problems, the co-construction of stories of practice that become "canonical" within a group over time (Barnett, 1998; Rosebery & Warren, 1998; Wilson & Berne, 1999), and engaging rather than avoiding conflict (Achinstein, 2002; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001).

Here, we employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore teachers' talk in the Network. CDA is a branch of discourse analysis centrally concerned with understanding how people construct, reinforce, maintain, negotiate, and/or resist particular types of social relations and social identities through talk and texts (van Dijk, 1993). It is especially concerned with understanding how power gets distributed and redistributed as people construct social relations in both established and new institutional settings (Fairclough, 1995). CDA is relevant to understanding how teachers learn in cross-institutional teacher education networks like the English Educators' Network. Such networks exist at the intersection of the university and the school and are sites in which the institutional discourses of the school and the university interact with each other. As we document here, this interaction entails the combination and recombination of power relations, identities, and discourses. These combinations and re-combinations centrally mediate teacher learning in such sites.

Data Sources

This article draws on several data sources, including artifacts and field notes from Network meetings, audio/videotapes of our conversations and interactions during the meetings, audiotapes of participant focus groups, and writings by Network participants directly related to the creation of the Rubric. This includes 107 single-spaced pages of transcripts of audio/videotapes of two six-hour meetings in which participants drafted and revised the Rubric. Artifacts from the two meetings include professional standards on the teaching of English, research articles on discussion as a pedagogical practice, and videotapes of interns leading discussions and of mentors and interns using the draft Rubric to debrief the interns' discussions.

Data Analysis

Understanding the processes and factors involved in creating a dialogic space for teacher learning required us to examine the intricacies of talk and in-

teraction between educators equipped with differing knowledge, experiences, and discourse for talking about teaching. We thus studied both the linguistic and social features of our conversations (Geis, 1995; Motsch, 1980). Our data analysis employed a combination of grounded theory (Strauss, 1987) and critical discourse analysis. Analysis began with transcribing and cataloging audio and videotapes of Network meetings. We then indexed major occasions and transitions between them (Erickson & Shultz, 1981), chunking transcripts into episodes whose boundaries were marked by changes in goals, patterns of interactions, and tools. Initial runs through the data revealed themes and patterns related to the negotiation of discourse, participation, and pedagogy as we worked to create an assessment tool that reflected our diverse experiences, knowledge, and discourses.

We coded the transcripts drawing on Fairclough's (1992) work in CDA, using the following categories: interactional control, ethos, and modality. *Interactional control features*, which include turn taking, exchange structure, topic control, control of agendas, and formulation, have to do with establishing and organizing how people participate with the substance and focus of interaction. Interactional features mark power relations. For example, formulation, the statements and questions that summarize, characterize, elaborate or explicate a previous part of the conversation, enables a person to restate and reconfigure other people's propositions and to probe other participants for further information or ideas. *Modality* refers to the affinity with which a person invests in his or her talk. People express their commitment to or against the statements they make as a means not only to express their beliefs but also to create solidarity or division between themselves and others. Modality has three forms: Subjective modality is marked by the use of phrases such as "I think" and "I believe" and is one way in which people exert a sense of ownership over their responses and ideas. Objective modality is marked by the absence of phrases that identify the speaker. Objective modality can establish an individual as an expert, as it allows an individual to project his or her perspective as universally accepted. Finally, intersubjective modality is signaled by explicit references to another person's statement and serves to create solidarity and familiarity with that person (Anagnostopoulos, Basmadjian, & McCrory, 2005). Modality is important to teacher learning in cross-institutional networks because it marks both when and how participants take ownership of the work and, thus, the learning that occurs in such networks. *Ethos* refers to the wider processes in which people construct the place and time of an interaction and its sets of participants by drawing on particular discourses from other domains or settings. We focused our analysis on identifying when Network participants

used the institutional discourses of the university or the school. These discourses constitute social languages, or verbal-ideological systems that provide people "forms of conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and value" (Bakhtin,

We argue that the interaction and hybridization of institutional discourses facilitates teacher learning in cross-institutional teacher education networks.

1981, p. 300). The discourse of the school is characterized by an experiential, situated language centered on stories and accounts drawn from teachers' classrooms and interactions with their students. In contrast, the discourse of the university is characterized by an abstract vocabulary and the recontextualization of experience into principles or generalizations. We argue that the interaction

and hybridization of institutional discourses facilitates teacher learning in cross-institutional teacher education networks (see also Caughlan, Juzwik, & Adler, this issue).

After reducing the transcript data to key episodes in which shifts in these analytic features of discourse occurred, we examined the *texture* of the talk (Fairclough, 1995), studying forms of involvement (Tannen, 1989) and participation (turn taking, topic control, formulation); various levels of commitment to the conversation and task (subjective, objective, and intersubjective statements), including examining both verbal and nonverbal cues; and the various ways in which participants constructed their identity and the conversational space through the discourses they used (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1989).

As Network members, we were participant-observers. This provided us access to the conversations as they occurred and insider knowledge of their intentions and goals (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). It also posed challenges for building a comprehensive understanding of the Network. We addressed these challenges by triangulating multiple sources of data. This allowed us to cross-check interpretations and provided a rich array of information with which to substantiate our claims.

Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge through the Construction of Dialogic Space

In what follows, we trace the mentor teachers' development of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in leading discussions about literature. We do so by examining episodes from the creation of the Discussion Rubric in the Network. Table 1 identifies the episodes and describes the work involved in constructing the Rubric over the course of two Network meetings.

Table 1. Data Episodes for Creating the Discussion Rubric

Date	Episode	Task/Activity
February 7, 2002	1	Review of Agenda
February 7, 2002	2	Brainstorming purposes for literature discussions
February 7, 2002	3	Analysis and discussion of a transcript of an intern leading a discussion
February 7, 2002	4	Analysis and discussion of a videotape of intern leading a discussion
February 7, 2002	5	Discussion of problems interns face with discussions
February 7, 2002	6	Reading and discussion of scholarly articles on classroom discussions
February 7, 2002	7	Small groups work to draft and flesh out Rubric categories
February 7, 2002	8	Inside the "Participation Patterns" category small-group work
February 7, 2002	9	Small groups share their draft rubric criteria: "Planning and Preparation" category shared
February 7, 2002	10	"Questions and Responses" category shared
February 7, 2002	11	"Subject Matter Knowledge" category shared
February 7, 2002	12	"Participations Patterns" category shared
February 7, 2002	13	Participants try out draft Rubric categories using videotape of intern's discussion
February 7, 2002	14	Explanation of next steps: piloting rubric with interns
March 12, 2002	15	Mentors share experiences piloting Rubric
March 12, 2002	16	Viewing and discussion of videos of mentors and interns piloting Rubric
March 12, 2002	17	Viewing and discussion of videos of mentors and interns piloting Rubric
March 12, 2002	18	Revision of Rubric categories in small groups
March 12, 2002	19	Sharing revisions in whole group

In the section below, we examine, in depth, excerpts from several episodes. Our analyses illuminate how the use of shared tools, the creation of boundary objects, and the role of conversational brokers prompted key shifts in participants' discourse, participation, and ownership. These shifts enabled the mentor teachers to deepen their understanding of discussion.

Excerpts One and Two: Disparate Views of Discussion, Disparate Discourses

As Table 1 shows, we began the work of creating the Discussion Rubric by brainstorming purposes for holding literature discussions in the English classroom. This initial brainstorming reveals the diverse conceptions of literature discussions that participants brought to the Network. The excerpt also reveals the competition of social languages and processes of disaffiliation that marked the beginning of our work on the Rubric.

As Excerpt One begins, Kathryn, a university instructor, invites the mentor teachers to share their purposes for literature-based discussions. She

sets the stage for this brainstorming by referencing educational research and program standards related to discussion:

01² Kathryn: We are going to work on creating this rubric that we can use [with the interns] and they can use to look at their discussions. . . . From the program standards for preservice teachers, there were two that were particularly relevant to our task today, which is about discussion. . . . And you know, MSU's philosophy is that teaching is a constructivist sort of endeavor that students are engaged in; they are not just tacit recipients of information that we might disseminate to them. So, the first one is to engage students in different kinds of discussion depending on the purpose. . . . And then the second one is really more focused on the intern, that they are asking questions for specific purposes. . . . So, the [next] thing that we need to do . . . is talk about the different kinds of discussions that we have with our students and the different purposes [moves over to easel]. . . . I don't have a list in mind, so whatever we come up with.

From here, the mentors (identified in **bold** throughout the transcripts) offer several different purposes for literature-based discussion:

02 **Maxine**: Check to see what they understood, if they actually did read.

03 Kathryn: Okay. [writing] Sometimes students can tell you back the plotline or the story to give a clue about what was really going on, so I am going to nominate that one. What else?

04 **Bess**: Look for different perspectives.

05 Kathryn: OK, yeah. A lot of the interns have that as an objective in their lesson . . . [writing]

06 **Jill**: A lot of times we use it to, um, as a prewriting kind of activity so that everybody shares everybody else's ideas, so they have someone to bounce off from.

07 Kathryn: Yeah, we were mostly focusing on literature til you got to the writing.

08 **Anna**: It's good for prereading, too. Bring up an issue that's in a reading text and have 'em talk about it before they read.

09 Kathryn: Do even post-reading, too.

10 **Greg**: Sometimes discuss problems in the text. . . .

11 **Myrtis**: I think, too, relativity to life, life lessons.

12 **Kathryn**: OK. . . .

13 **Kay**: Sometimes a discussion's a basis for further assignments; you need to see where they're at to know where you are going to go.

14 **Kathryn**: OK, so, I am going to call that formative assessment, 'cause that's the word that we use on campus.[laughter]

15 **Kay**: That's what I was gonna say.

Throughout this episode, the mentors, promoted by Kathryn, associate a variety of different types of classroom talk with discussion, from checking for reading comprehension to generating ideas for a writing task. At this point, the mentors' understanding of discussion represents what Smagorinsky, Cook, and Jackson (2004) refer to as a "complex," or a set of loosely associated and disparate types of practices rather than a more specified, coherent concept. Importantly, the mentors do not yet connect literature discussions specifically to helping students engage in literary analysis or co-construct multiple interpretations of text, skills that are essential for deepening students' textual understandings (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991).

Closer analysis of the episode uncovers several features of our talk and interaction that *discourage* the mentors from developing these initial ideas about discussion. In Excerpt One, we see how the dominance of a university ethos, characterized by an authoritative (Bakhtin, 1981) research discourse, combined with university participants' control of the conversation, hinders the interaction of the school and university discourses. By sharing educational research about best practices (i.e., constructivism) and the program's teaching standards for leading literature discussion (turn 01) to begin the activity, Kathryn invokes the ethos of the university teacher educator who brings abstract knowledge about effective literature discussions. The absence of subjective phrases, such as "I think" or "I believe," in her talk posits her statements as universally accepted knowledge that is not up for discussion. This positions Kathryn as an expert, a position reinforced as she assumes a teacher-like role, controlling the talk by asking questions, summarizing and evaluating mentors' responses, and keeping a master list on the easel. Kathryn further exerts power and control through formulation. She summarizes and evaluates each of the mentors' responses ("OK," "Yeah"), restating and reconfiguring other people's propositions. In her final comment, Kathryn rephrases a mentor's response, transposing it into university discourse—"I am going to call that formative assessment, 'cause that's the word we use on campus" (turn 14). The laughter that follows re-

flects participants' awareness of our different discourses and positions within this conversation and the ways in which, in this excerpt, one discourse, that of the university, trumps the other, that of the school.

In Excerpt Two, we see how the disconnection between social languages and the disaffiliation between the university teacher educators and the mentor teachers inhibit participants' learning. Network participants examine the features of an effective discussion. As in Excerpt One, Excerpt Two begins with a university participant, Dorothea, directing the topic by presenting research and university-based knowledge about effective discussions:

16 Dorothea: . . . A lot of times we focus on the nature of (the) questions the teachers are asking, but some research has found that the more questions you ask, the less you get. . . . One of the articles that the interns read . . . is alternatives to questions. So, there's like four alternatives that this guy James Dillon lays out. And one is just, nonverbal cues One was, when you are thinking about asking a question, make it into a statement instead. Because statements have been found, actually, to produce a lot more response from the students . . .

Kathryn takes up Dorothea's topic and discourse by adding additional strategies for effective discussion from this particular research article:

17 Kathryn: Silence.

18 Dorothea: Silence, right, wait time. And what was the fourth one? Rephrasing students' statements?

19 Kathryn: Um hmm. It's a pretty short article We're reading articles [with the interns] and talking about [discussions] . . . so the interns are looking for help as they figure out how to do this.

After 10 turns of university participants talking about these specific course readings on discussion (not all shown here), a mentor teacher enters the conversation to ask a question about the interns' class schedule:

20 **Kay**: Is this their last [university] class on Friday?

Following this sharp change of topic, another mentor asks for some help with her intern's discussions:

21 **Bess**: I could use some help. My intern is doing Shakespeare

{with} ninth graders, so they've never read it before. So her entire discussion is "This is what he just said." . . . But I don't know how to get her out of the, duh, dah dah to, "Oh my gosh! She was 13 and this is what was going on!" . . .

22 Sue: One thing my intern did with Shakespeare . . . is that she had three of them be different characters and the rest of the class asked them questions: "Well, why did you kill your father?"

There are several features of our discourse community that inhibited the type of talk and interaction necessary to build on Bess's question about discussion and push participants' conceptualization of discussion further. As university and school-based educators, we brought different discourses for talking about discussion. While Dorothea evokes her university discourse, drawing on scholarship about discussion, the mentors evoke a discourse of practice, sharing specific stories and problems from their classrooms. While both discourses identify features of an effective discussion—using alternatives to questions versus moving beyond simple textual comprehension—there is no interaction between these different articulations of effective discussions. Throughout Excerpt Two, we are having two separate conversations. The conversation (of which we see a part here) is divided by several consecutive university turns followed by several consecutive mentor turns. No members of either group take up the topics offered by the other. Dorothea opens the episode by identifying several research-based discussion strategies, a topic that the mentor teachers do not take up. Instead, they share specific problems with discussions from their classrooms. At the same time, no efforts are made to generalize Bess's problem to the level of criteria we might look for in a good literature discussion. Dorothea and Bess have different purposes in talking about discussions: While Dorothea aims to identify generalizable strategies for facilitating discussion, Bess seeks a resolution to her specific problem with her intern's discussions. The pattern of turn taking—10 university turns followed by several mentor turns—highlights the lack of interaction across institutional boundaries.

The possibility for dialogic conversation is further hindered by Dorothea and Kathryn's use of objective modality to talk about discussions. Stating particular features of effective discussions as fact and what the university promotes discourages the mentors from responding to these ideas. There are no intersubjective statements across the university and school participations that connect one set of ideas with the others or show solidar-

As university and school-based educators, we brought different discourses for talking about discussion.

ity in our purpose here. What's more, without access to the knowledge in these articles, the mentors may be unable to contribute to the conversation. Finally, evidence of our disaffiliation across institutional boundaries is signaled by our use of pronouns. Dorothea and Kathryn refer to the "we" at the university who encourage particular views of discussion based on research. While this may be an attempt at establishing a group identity, the points made may not be shared or accessible to all participants. In contrast, Bess and Sue refer to their particular interns and classrooms. They locate themselves in the context of their classrooms and experiences ("I could use some help"), and not yet as members of the Network. We do not even get the sense that these two groups of people actually share the same teacher candidates. In our roles as university faculty and mentor teachers, we lacked shared identities as *Network* members; we had not yet found a way to take up each other's discourses and to create a joint conception of discussion. As a result, there is little movement in the mentors' PCK; their ideas about discussion remain rooted in the particulars of their specific classrooms.

Excerpt Three: Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge around a Shared Text

If Excerpts One and Two illustrate our struggle to construct the Network as a dialogic space, Excerpts Three and Four reveal how the interaction and intersection of social languages led to new ways of talking and thinking about discussions. Over the course of creating the Rubric, the mentor teachers began to engage in more focused thinking and conversation about the purposes and features of literature-based classroom discussions. Excerpt Three illustrates how joint analysis of a videotaped discussion spurred development in mentor teachers' PCK. In the excerpt, Network members discuss a video they just watched together of an intern leading a discussion in Tracy's classroom. Tracy was both the mentor teacher for this intern and a regular attendee at Network meetings. This video was originally made for an assignment in Dorothea's university methods class; here, Network participants used it to practice applying some of the classroom observational techniques they had just reviewed together. In this excerpt we see how the videotape functioned as a boundary object, serving as a focal point around which participants drew upon tools from a range of settings to take ownership of their learning.

Dorothea opened the conversation about the video with an attempt to show how a discussion video could be used with an intern to analyze issues of gender and participation patterns in a discussion:

23 Dorothea: OK, so I kept track of boys versus girls to see who participated more. And it was a little bit hard. . . . But I got 23 responses from boys and 14 from girls.

24 **Tracy:** I think it was mainly the same three boys.

25 Dorothea: Yeah, same three boys. But you know, when you initially look at the video, you don't even pick that out. And so sometimes that's really interesting for the interns, too, to just actually chart something as very basic as that, to see what kind of patterns, who gets to speak.

26 **Gloria:** This sounds like an extremely sexist thing to say, but I found . . . the female interns call on the boys more often; they look at the boys more often. And it's not because they're boy crazy or anything like that. And the male interns don't do it. . . . And I don't know if any of you others have noticed that.

27 **Maxine:** Studies have shown that females are just as bad as males at not including girls.

27 **Anna:** Usually we don't call on them [males]; they volunteer. And it's usually the boys who are dominating.

28 Dorothea: But it's certainly something to make them aware of.

29 **Selma:** We have that in my intern situation, and you just made me aware of this, and I am thinking, I am going to look at this now. I don't think she's aware of it, but the men are more outspoken. . . . I am just going to track that. . . . I mean, I wasn't aware of it until you, I mean I was, but I wasn't.

30 Dorothea: Right. The next step is trying to come up with strategies to deal with that.

31 **Selma:** Um hmm. 'Cause I think it's happening in 3 out of the 4 classes.

Excerpt Three shows significant movement from earlier conversations. The mentor teachers do not direct the conversation to specific instances of teaching or mentoring that are disconnected from an in-depth focus on pedagogy as they did in Excerpt Two. Further, the mentors follow up on each others' comments, building deeper knowledge about the topic at hand rather than offering short answers to the university participant's prompts. As several different responses focus in on gender and participation, the mentors consider this issue from different angles and perspectives. In addition, men-

tors now combine knowledge gained from their specific classroom experiences with broader ideas and research they have read.

The shifts in participation and discourse that occurred in this excerpt were facilitated by the joint examination of a shared text. In prior excerpts, university teacher educators referenced several texts from their work, sharing their central ideas about discussions with the mentor teachers. The mentor teachers did not have access to these texts, limiting their participation in the talk the university teacher educators initiated. The videotape, in contrast, was accessible to all Network participants. As we see in Excerpt Three, having a text to analyze collaboratively enabled the mentor teachers to make connections with their classrooms and their work with their interns in ways that they were not able to do when the university teacher educators told them about texts.

The shift toward a more dialogic space was also facilitated by the emergence of conversational brokers in the group. In turn 27, Maxine moves outside the traditional teacher/mentor discourse to make an objective, research-based statement about gender participation and teacher behaviors. She breaks the divide between the university teacher educators sharing research and the mentor teachers sharing classroom stories. This opens the door for Selma to incorporate both the university and school discourses in turn 29. Selma combines the school discourse of sharing classroom stories with the university discourse of generalized pedagogical strategies. Her statements show a growing affinity among Network participants; Selma uses a subjective modality to claim ownership over both discourses.

Excerpt Four: A Dialogic Space, a Dialogic View of Discussion

In the final excerpt, the mentors arrive at a dialogic conception of literature discussions in which students and teachers jointly construct meaning by engaging with multiple worldviews. Close analysis of Excerpt Four highlights changes in our discourse community that facilitated this conceptualization. In Excerpt Four, we see the creation of a new, shared discourse for talking about our jointly created text, the Discussion Rubric. In addition, we see both school and university members serving as brokers, crossing over into new positions within this discourse community to facilitate equal participation and ownership in the conversation and task.

The mentor teachers came to Excerpt Four having piloted the Rubric with their interns. Based on this piloting, the mentors came to the Network meeting (one month later) with specific ideas about revising the Rubric. As the excerpt opens, it is Jill, a mentor teacher, who exerts control of the

agenda by suggesting we work in small groups to revise each Rubric category:

35 **Jill:** Is it possible for us to take maybe 20 minutes and do what we did last time and have one group work on one [rubric category] and one on the other to look specifically at . . . where the problems might be and how we might be able to solve that?

36 **Dorothea:** Absolutely.

37 **Kathryn:** That's a good idea.

Once in small groups, Chris, another mentor, takes control and proposes that we work on criterion #3 of the Questions and Responses category:

38 **Chris:** Number 3 on the discussion questions [category] is kind of baffling. . . . Maybe we need to . . . clarify the third more: [reading] "There is a balance of student and teacher generated questions—"

39 **Bridget:** Perhaps not always.

40 **Chris:** "—but not always focused to the purpose." You know, if we can maybe clarify that more.

41 **Kathryn:** Yeah, OK.

42 **Dora:** And this is realistic, because you will get, if there's student and teacher-generated questions, you will get questions from kids that don't go along with what you are planning.

43 **Kathryn:** So, how do we say that?

44 **Chris:** A balance of student and teacher generated questions, sometimes addresses purpose.

As the mentors take control of revising the Rubric, they open the way for their mentor colleagues to critique and question the conception of discussion represented in the Rubric. In turns 38–44 above, the mentors begin to question both the role of student questions in a discussion (since students might ask off-task questions) and the relationship between questions and purpose. This leads Anna, another mentor, to question the need for discussion to help students connect personally to a text:

45 **Anna:** What if they don't have a connection, personally, to text? . . . I mean, sometimes they're not going to hook into everything . . .

46 **Bridget:** There may be a reason why they don't have a connection.

47 **Anna:** Right.

48 **Jill:** But think about things that you read personally . . . isn't that what reading is about, to experience things that we are not familiar with? . . . I read tons of mystery things. I don't identify with the characters; it takes me away from something into a different world.

Jill takes up Anna's question about the need to connect personally to a text and pushes the group to consider why we read literature at all. Drawing on her personal reading experiences, Jill suggests that we read to understand other worlds and other people's experiences. Jill's comment pushes the group to redefine the purpose of discussion reflected in this Rubric criterion to reflect a more dialogic approach to discussion, one where multiple worldviews are considered:

49 **Anna:** Are we saying that we want the intern to try to draw clear connections between the students and [the teacher's] purpose in the lesson?

50 **Bridget:** Instead of saying between them, could we say between life? 'Cause it's not just them, but it's life in general.

51 **Anna:** Right.

52 **Kathryn:** 'Cause, that's the ultimate, to get beyond the text or the student and to get into these bigger universal kinds of—

53 **Dora:** And if they cannot relate to it they can discuss what they see in other people or in a movie they saw or a character in another book. . . .

54 **Kathryn:** I think that's one of the reasons we expanded the canon, too, is to get them beyond the world they live in into other worlds.

55 **Dora:** Especially in middle school, it's real narrow.

56 **Jill:** But their world means their world.

57 **Kathryn:** But if we said other worlds, or other life views or something? . . . Now Anna and I were just saying, is there any place in here where we talk about the purpose of discussion is to comprehend other worlds or other people? . . .

58 **Bridget:** Yeah, I think you say between life experiences . . .

59 **Anna:** Other life perspectives.

60 **Dora:** Human experience.

61 **Jill:** How about with clear connections to the human experience and their purposes.

62 **Anna/Dora:** That's good.

Excerpt Four highlights significant development in the mentors' PCK for literature discussions. Drawing on their experiences as teachers and readers, and on their experience piloting the Rubric with their interns, the mentors re-conceptualize their view of discussion as a means for engaging students with the varied experiences and perspectives represented in literary texts. Their initial conversations about the importance or benefit of valuing student questions and personal connections to the text led them to question their purposes for reading and thus the purpose of having students read and discuss literature. This view of discussion represents a significant shift from the view presented in Excerpt One, where discussion referred to varied forms of talk with a wide range of purposes.

Further, in Excerpt Four, unlike in earlier excerpts, participants employ a new, shared discourse that draws on our shared experiences creating the Rubric. Participants now combine their institutional discourses with the discourse reified in the Rubric to create a hybrid, multivoiced discourse. For example, in turn 42, Dora draws on her experience with students asking unrelated questions to provide a rationale for not always using student-generated questions in a discussion. In contrast to earlier conversations, where mentors sought solutions to their teaching problems, Dora uses a teaching problem here to clarify the Rubric criteria. Similarly, Kathryn draws on her university discourse in turn 52 to push the group's thinking about the purpose of discussion for understanding other social worlds. The intersection of school, university, and Rubric discourses creates a space that includes everyone's voice, thereby inviting input from all participants. This is reflected by the way in which both Jill and Chris invoke a *Network ethos*, referring to the "we" of the Network who created this document and now need to revise it (turns 35, 38, 40).

The intersection of school, university, and Rubric discourses creates a space that includes everyone's voice, thereby inviting input from all participants.

Drawing on a similar, multivoiced discourse facilitates the back-and-forth talk and uptake necessary to push participants to think deeply about the ideas on the table. We are having *one* jointly built conversation where participants build on and from each others' responses instead of listing disparate features of classroom talk (Excerpt One) or asserting different purposes for Network talk about discussion (Excerpt Two). What's more, the

talk is noticeably more democratic, with *both* university and mentor teacher participants assuming facilitation roles, asking and answering questions, and participating equally in the conversation.

The shifts in our discourse and interactions were also facilitated by the presence of conversational brokers in the Network. These brokers were able to move in and out of various roles or identities and make connections across them. In Excerpt Four, several mentors played key roles as brokers. In the beginning, Jill steps up to take control of the agenda. She proposes that we break into small groups to revise the three Rubric categories. By crossing into the role of facilitator (previously assumed by university participants), Jill exerts her ownership of the Rubric and commitment to improving it. Having piloted the Rubric with her intern, Jill realized its potential for transforming both her practice and that of her intern (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Basmadjian, 2007). After using the Rubric with her intern, Jill had a greater appreciation for the challenges and importance of learning to lead discussions of literature. Reflecting on the experience using the Rubric, Jill later wrote:

My intern and I used the rubric as a tool for planning, teaching, implementing, and assessing discussion in the classroom. We began by talking about our views of discussion. What did each of us think that meant for the classroom? We talked about how our ideas overlapped and where they diverged. As a planning tool, we read through the rubric and talked about each of the specific focus areas and how we might apply them to our lessons.

Piloting the Rubric gave Jill insider knowledge of how to use the Rubric. As a result, she came to the next Network meeting invoking her role not only as a mentor teacher but also as an English teacher and a creator and user of the Rubric. In adopting this multifaceted role, Jill exerted control over the Network's work, asserting her authority to direct its tasks.

By assuming a facilitator role, Jill opened the door for other mentors to adopt new roles in the Network. Excerpt Four shows Chris also playing a brokering role, stepping up as facilitator to direct our work. Like Jill, Chris's experience piloting the Rubric impacted his commitment to the Rubric and shifted his affiliation in the Network. On returning to the Network after piloting the Rubric, Chris shared his feelings about the Rubric and how it affected his practice as a mentor:

This might go without saying, but I would like to say as a mentor teacher anything like this is helpful. . . . I mean, discussions in the past are usually, "Well, what'd you think? How did it go? What were some problems? What

were you happy with? And what can you do better next time?" And this is so much more structured. I found my discussion was much more in depth than it would have been otherwise.

Once in groups to revise the Rubric, Chris led our efforts to revise the Questions and Responses category of the Rubric. He proposed specific areas to work on (turn 38) and suggested new language (turns 40, 44) to rewrite the criteria. Later in Excerpt Four, Chris is deep into revising the Rubric, speaking aloud about his struggles and desire not only to get the language right but also to rethink what to look for in a good discussion:

I mean focus and purpose of discussion is mentioned in number 6. Maybe [we] can take that out of there. . . . I mean, number two also talks about a clear tie to the purpose. I don't know. I am struggling.

In Excerpt Four, Chris assumes a multifaceted role in the Network. His participation in this revision group evokes his roles as mentor teacher, English teacher, and Rubric creator. By enacting each of these roles, he coordinates multiple communities of practice and opens the door for the various discourses and roles from these communities to intersect in the Network space.

Excerpt Four also shows Kathryn, a university participant, serving as a broker. In contrast to Excerpt One, where she sets the agenda and controls the mentors' talk, Excerpt Four shows Kathryn positioning the mentors to take control of the revision work. For example, when Chris raises a question about criterion #3, Kathryn asks the mentors how they might fix it (turn 43). A few turns later, Kathryn raises a potential problem with criterion #2 and asks the mentors if they think it's clearly written. She asks, "Are we saying that clearly enough in #2 do you think?" A mentor immediately responds, leading the group into deeper conversations about student connections to a text. Kathryn helps to "open new possibilities for meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 109) by shifting her role and making it possible for the mentors to shift their roles in the discourse community.

In taking on roles as brokers in our conversations, Jill, Chris, and Kathryn break down boundaries that existed between the roles we brought from our respective institutions and open up new ways for Network participants to interact and talk with each other. With both mentor teachers and university participants assuming facilitative roles and taking ownership of the conversation and task, we achieved a more dialogic conversational space where multiple texts and discourses were drawn on and ultimately mixed to construct a dialogic view of discussion.

Conclusion

In this article, we trace the development of mentor teachers' PCK about literature-based discussions over the course of their participation in creating the Discussion Rubric in a cross-institutional teacher education network. Our analyses document how this development occurred as Network partici-

In particular, we have highlighted how the use of shared texts, the co-construction of a boundary object, and conversational brokers facilitated the development of a shared ethos and the assertion of mutual ownership that enabled teachers to enrich their understanding of literature discussions.

pants worked with colleagues and university teacher educators to construct the Network as a dialogic space. In particular, we have highlighted how the use of shared texts, the co-construction of a boundary object, and conversational brokers facilitated the development of a shared ethos and the assertion of mutual ownership that enabled teachers to enrich their understanding of literature discussions.

The close study of our discourse and interactions helped to delineate the processes by which a basement in a community center became a dialogic space where Network participants assumed new roles and identities as English educators. In particular, critical discourse analysis focused our attention on how issues of knowledge, power, and identity shaped these processes. It illuminated the ongoing negotiations of institutional boundaries and social languages that can divide or bring together a community of practitioners. Critical discourse analysis thus allowed us to understand the discursive and interactional conditions necessary for creating a conversational space for teacher learning.

We conclude with a discussion of the more macro-level features of the Network that supported its development as a professional learning community. Though the Network included several components of effective professional development—embedding professional development in teachers' daily work and needs, supporting teacher learning over extended periods of time; and actively involving teachers in their learning—we highlight three features less commonly cited in the literature on teacher learning in professional communities. When we take a step back from the micro-level analysis of discourse, we see that the Network's success as a cross-institutional learning community is also linked to our focus on the teachers' roles as *mentors*, to the truly *interdependent* nature of our work, and to our functioning in a neutral, *third space*.

The development of the mentor teachers' PCK of literature discussions emerged from the Network's focus on their work as mentors. Research

on professional development aimed specifically at mentor teachers' knowledge and skills for preparing preservice English teachers is relatively sparse compared to research on teacher learning more generally. Our work in the Network focused on the English teachers' roles as mentors—on the particular needs and issues they faced in this role and the knowledge and tools they needed to effectively enact it. Taking their learning and knowledge as mentors seriously was both novel and exciting. The mentor teachers in the Network received little attention or assistance from their schools to enact these roles. As such, the Network provided a rare and welcomed opportunity for these teachers to share their struggles and strategies for mentoring beginning English teachers, and to develop their knowledge and skills. The mentors regularly expressed their gratitude for having the space and time to talk about their mentoring, and for the opportunity to develop materials to use in their practice (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Basmadjian, 2007).

The focus on the teachers' roles as mentors also altered conventional power relations in which university teacher educators and researchers provide classroom teachers with ready-made tools and resources to improve their teaching practice, relations that position the former as possessing valued knowledge and the latter as lacking it. The emphasis on intern practices positioned university teacher educators as co-equals with the mentor teachers and highlighted our joint responsibilities and respective challenges. As university teacher educators, we used the Rubric in our classrooms. Further, one of the first tasks we engaged in as a network was jointly revising the curriculum for the intern methods courses we taught. Positioning our work around the interns' learning and emphasizing our shared responsibility for it created a safe space for the mentor teachers to examine and question their discussion practices. When mentors shared problems their interns faced with discussion, such as involving girls and boys equally, helping students to connect to difficult texts, or moving beyond translation in Shakespeare, they raised key issues related to discussions that prompted them to examine, reflect on, and revise their own ideas about the nature and purpose of literature discussions. The work of fleshing out Rubric categories and criteria further prompted the mentors to examine their conceptions of discussion. Throughout this work they were thinking as both English teachers and mentors. This required them to consider the knowledge and practices they held and enacted in both roles. As the teachers shared their knowledge and practices and opened them up to examination by Network participants, they expanded both.

Another key feature of the Network that advanced the mentors' PCK was the genuine interdependence among Network members necessitated

by the task of creating the Discussion Rubric. As our analyses show, creating the Discussion Rubric forced participants to negotiate the unique knowledge of and experiences with discussions we each brought to the table. As university faculty, we relied on the mentors' experiences with interns leading discussions of particular pieces of literature in particular secondary classrooms to gain important insight into how interns were learning to enact this complex pedagogical practice. We also relied on the mentors' experiences piloting the Rubric to assess and enrich its usefulness. At the same time, the mentors were influenced by the university participants' knowledge of rubrics, current standards, and scholarship on discussion as a pedagogical practice. Creating a performance assessment tool that could be used with interns in both secondary English classrooms and university methods courses necessarily drew on these diverse bodies of knowledge and encouraged all of us to examine our understandings of discussion. Our mutual need for improving the teacher preparation program and creating the Rubric led to an exchange of knowledge and experience. We are less likely to see this combination of experiences and knowledge when teachers work together in their own schools and classrooms, or when experts provide top-down knowledge to teachers.

Finally, the Network's location in a neutral, third space—the basement of a local community center—facilitated a renegotiation of roles and identities. Removed from both school and university settings, Network members were able to establish new identities as participants in our joint endeavor. The university and school participants could not define themselves solely by their institutional roles as professors or mentor teachers in this neutral space; everyone had to try on, negotiate, and adopt new roles. For the Rubric to support their work as mentors, the teachers had to take ownership of the tasks involved and assume leadership roles in the group. The mentors assumed many different roles, including meeting facilitators, critical colleagues, teacher preparation program reviewers, consumers of research, reflective practitioners, mentors, and English teachers. Each of these roles encouraged the mentors to consider discussion from a different perspective and for a different purpose. Locating our work outside of the K-12 setting pushed the mentor teachers to move beyond the lens of an English teacher to consider the multiple ways in which they experience and understand literature and literature discussions.

Cross-institutional mentoring networks can provide rich sites for in-service teacher learning. English mentor teachers bring two sets of knowledge to the table—that of experienced English teachers and that of teacher educators. The merging of these two knowledge bases, combined with the

knowledge and experience brought by university teacher educators, can encourage the intersection of content and pedagogy that is essential for developing teachers' pedagogical content knowledge.

Notes

1. Mentors, often called "cooperating teachers" in other institutions, are classroom teachers who mentor preservice teachers (interns) during their yearlong teaching internship.
2. The numbering refers to a single turn. The turn changes when a new person begins speaking.

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2008 CEE Election Results

CEE Executive Committee (four-year terms)

Sara Kajder, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg

Matthew Kilian McCurrie, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois

Louann Reid, Colorado State University, Fort Collins

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Carl Young, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, chair

Leslie David Burns, University of Kentucky, Lexington

Jonathan Bush, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo

Samantha Caughlan, Michigan State University, East Lansing

Jamie Myers, Pennsylvania State University, State College

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