"We Can Position Ourselves as Experts": Teachers Learning to Write and Publish on National Blogs

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Abstract

This article focuses on a collective case study of two teachers attending a professional development workshop focused on writing for publication via educational blogs. Through a qualitative study, we sought to understand how attending the workshop and publishing on a national organization's blog shaped the two teachers' own identities as teachers and shifted their thinking about blogs as a genre. We argue the two teachers had a shift in conceptualizing what counted as scholarship as well as problematizing who counted as a scholar. In an era of increased attacks on teachers' intellectualism and autonomy, we believe publishing on national blogs is one way teachers can reclaim their professional knowledge in our current socio-political landscape. Our work has implications for the fields of teacher education, teacher leadership, and professional development.

Keywords
writing, educational blogs, teacher identity, professional development, teacher leadership

In an era of increased attacks on teachers as professionals and intellectuals, we believe positioning teachers as public scholars who write about and inform their field can be a powerful way to fight against policy and discourse that abets such attacks. Providing professional development for teachers that supports them in becoming public writers could be one way to achieve such an aim. This article focuses on a collective case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) of two teachers attending a professional development workshop focused on writing for publication via educational blogs. The workshop was

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designed and facilitated by Cody, who was a high school English teacher at the time and is currently an assistant professor of English education. Gage was a faculty member at the local university, whose research interests in writing made Cody reach out for collaboration. This case study was guided by the following research questions: (1) How does participation in a workshop on teachers writing blogs shape teachers' professional identities? (2) How does participation in a workshop on teachers writing blogs shape writing teachers' understandings of blogging as a genre of writing?

We position the findings and ideas from this article in terms of teacher leadership as a way to conceptualize the broad impact teachers writing for public audiences can have on the profession. Teachers' learning to write for public audiences via national educational blogs has the power to reshape teachers' own identities and beliefs about expertise as well as reframing ideas around the genre of writing known as "blogging." Blogs can provide adult learners a space for collaborative experiences where their existing literacy practices can be braided with newer digital applications (Sharp, 2017) and be a forum for sharing student writing as advocacy (Melly, 2018). We were intentional throughout this process about demystifying what it means to publish one's writing for teachers. For this project, we focused on educational organizations' blogs as publication outlets. Through such outlets, teachers are in fact writing in consideration of a wide, national audience, as they navigated barriers and constraints to publishing in more traditional genres such as educational journals. In writing for public audiences, teachers enact a type of public pedagogy that we consider an act of teacher leadership.

Blogging as a Form of Teacher Leadership and Public Pedagogy

Previous research has demonstrated the usefulness of teachers engaging in online writing for inquiry and advocacy (Woodard, 2015). As an extension, we feel that this research can promote the "everyday advocacy" (Fleisher, 2016) that involves being smart and savvy as teachers share their expertise with a wider audience. We believe that teachers writing their own blogs can challenge what Lawrence (2017) saw as the researcher/teacher binary that often exists in school and university spaces. Classroom teachers publishing invites a variety of stakeholders, beyond those in academia, to listen in on and join conversations involving practice. Moreover, publishing in online spaces brings teacher knowledge beyond their classroom walls. In turn, blogging seemed a practical way for teachers to not only share their knowledge but also interact with one another.

Additionally, we believe that blogging for broader public purposes can be a way to resist and act against what Vilson (2017) describes as the "devaluation of teachers as experts" (par. 10). Such devaluation has been abetted by the last two decades of federal and state education policy. The post-No Child Left Behind standardization movement has resulted in a usurpation of teacher autonomy and decision-making (Kumashiro, 2010, 2012) and has diluted the potential for teacher leadership by turning teachers into "technicians" responsible for implementing predetermined, scripted curriculum (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Giroux, 2003; Sleeter & Carmona, 2016). Our current policy landscape attempts to remove the expertise from teachers and places it in the hands of curriculum developers and legislators. Teachers writing for blogs, we believe, can offer a way to speak back to such policies as an act of teacher leadership.

Rodesiler (2018) argues that online participation should be folded under the umbrella of "teacher leadership." We agree and would stretch his definition of "online participation" to include teachers writing and publishing for national organizations' blogs, which have wide readership and are easily shareable via social media. Writing for public spaces like national blogs is an act of teacher leadership

because it has the potential to push against the forces that seek to usurp teacher autonomy and professional knowledge. Teachers writing, publishing, and sharing their expertise can be an explicit refuting of the forces that seek to standardize and flatten the nuances and complications of teaching.

This particular form of teacher leadership illustrates the importance of educators attending to the public sphere beyond their classrooms; it is teacher leadership as a form of public pedagogy (Giroux, 2003, 2004). Teachers developing, generating, disseminating, dialoguing, and reflecting on their own knowledges and practices can help fight against the "ravaging influence of corporate culture" that seeks to turn teachers into technicians whose teaching is tightly aligned with the aims of neoliberalism (Giroux, 2003, p. 13). Indeed, the forces that seek to malign the knowledge bases teachers generate and refine through their practice is concerned with a "technocratic rationality" that seeks to position students and teachers firmly within "testing and sorting models" that replicate existing socio-political inequities (Giroux, 2003, p. 6). This technocratic rationality locates expertise and knowledge outside of teachers' domains by outsourcing ideas of "best practices" to corporate consultants who "aren't worth their weight in whiteboard ink" often due to their harmful ideologies (Vilson, 2017, para. 9). Teachers sharing their knowledge through blogging, especially within blogs that have large national platforms, can push against the current "paradigm of expertise" that devalues teachers as experts, professionals, and public actors (Vilson, 2017, para. 13).

A model of teacher leadership that calls for teachers to reclaim and publicly advocate for their expertise and intellect is one that resists the "production of social hierarchies, identities, and ideologies" that govern schools and educational structures (Giroux, 2004, p. 73). The teacher leader as public pedagogue works to shape the future of the profession and engage in public dialogue to name the social, economic, and political forces that harm schools and students. As Vilson (2017) notes, such teacher leadership looks "society eye-to-eye, feet firmly planted, and let truth sprout from within" (para. 17). That truth sprouting can manifest in many forms, including turning to national publications as venues for teachers writing.

When Teachers Write

Prior (2006) contends that "writing is a phenomenon that seems ever more connected to who we are and who we will become" (p. 64). For teachers, writing can serve as a vehicle for thinking, reflection, and change at both external and internal levels, which can lead to teachers developing a "more nuanced sense of ourselves as being in the world" (Yagelski, 2009, p. 15). Lines might be blurred in terms of what counts as personal and professional writing. Such blurring can demonstrate the relationship between the bifurcation of "personal" and "professional" writing genres, which is valuable for teachers in illustrating the porous nature of institutional definitions of writing (Whitney, 2009). In fact, writing about and between professional and personal topics for teachers with other teachers can create opportunities for teachers to "stretch into both personal and professional domains" (Whitney, 2009, p. 255). The focus on teachers' experiencing writing together stresses the importance of seeing the value of writing beyond the final product. Rather than focus on a draft or publication, examining how teachers engage in the process of writing illustrates how "'process' connotes experience" (Elbow, 1993, p. 57). The focus on process, including drafting, receiving feedback, and revising, can help inform teachers' own practice. For instance, Whyte et al. (2007) report how teachers engaging in writing, sharing their writing, providing feedback, and presenting writing practices can benefit not only themselves as writers but their students as well.

It has long been argued that teachers should engage in writing processes alongside their students within and beyond English language arts classrooms (Atwell, 2015; Johnson, 2018; Kittle, 2008). Specifically, Anderson and Kraushaar (2017) distinguish between teacher of writing and teacher-writer, noting that teacher-writers engage in writing processes and craft products in the role of (often struggling) writer rather than the role of teacher expert. As Cremin and Baker (2010) note, when teachers write their identities shift and rupture as a result of a "complex and interwoven mix of jostling interpersonal, institutional and intrapersonal influences" (p. 26). As teacher-writers, engaging in writing processes often become pedagogical and curricular tools that transfer to classroom spaces and extend beyond professional development settings to the work in which teachers engage with student writers. Moreover, this practice demystifies writing processes for students as teachers model vulnerability through sharing feedback and conversations around their writing products (Johnson, 2018).

Teachers writing with their students is certainly paramount to fostering meaningful writing experiences for students and teachers alike. The writing in which teachers engage, however, often is intended for a limited audience: their students. In certain writing situations, this audience might be most appropriate, but it is equally significant that teachers share their writing with colleagues in their professional communities of practice. We connect this task to Whitney's (2017) focus on authentic writing purposes, processes, genres, and audiences. Writing for a range of audience and for a variety of purposes challenges concepts of who conducts and what counts as research, as well as what constitutes an expert in the field. Writing about our practice can challenge beliefs about what counts as knowledge, who disseminates that knowledge, and how we can counteract traditional dichotomies of teacher versus researcher.

Methodology

This case study began with a professional development writing workshop for teachers designed to formalize insights of their daily work in classrooms with students in a publishable format. This workshop was designed to open doors for professional growth as teachers wrote for educational blogs, inspiring confidence to share their perspectives through professional publications. The one-day workshop allowed time and space for participants to turn classroom teaching experience and insights into professional blog posts. After creating and facilitating the workshop, Cody wanted to conduct a study to better understand how attending teachers made sense of the workshop and the publication process. He reached out to Gage, a faculty member at the local university, to collaborate on the case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

This study was designed as a qualitative case study. We sought to "seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 17) through the case study methodology. We used both Darcy and Amy as cases and then compared their experiences. Studying two cases around the same phenomenon, in this case the enactment of experiencing the workshop on writing blogs for national publication, allows for a richer understanding of that phenomenon (Stake, 2005). Through the case study methodology, we sought to understand the "meaning people make of their lives in very particular contexts" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 9). As noted in our literature review, we are situating this study through an analysis that addresses topics relating to issues of power and marginalization and focusing on steps that lead to action, which are features of qualitative research concerned with social justice (Creswell, 2013, pp. 34-35).

Participants

We employed purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) to recruit participants whose experiences aligned best with our research questions. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) The teacher attended the professional development session, (2) the teacher published their piece in a national organization's blog, and (3) the teacher enacted writing instruction in their classroom. Only two of the eight educators in attendance published their work online. These two educators both taught writing, one in elementary and one in secondary. Both participants are white, able-bodied, cisgender women. Portraits of the participants' teaching experiences are in the table below (all names are pseudonyms):

Table 1
Participants of Study

Participant	Teaching Position at Time of Study	Years Teaching	Highest Degree Completed	Published Blog Topic
Amy	10th grade English Language Arts Honors	3	M.Ed.	Identifying and incorporating relevant in-person writing feedback to high school students
Darcy	4th and 5th grade English Language Arts	13	M.Ed.	Providing writing feedback to elementary students using digital tools

Cody had worked with both Amy and Darcy for at least two years during the time of the professional development. Such insider knowledge can make up for time spent collecting data (Rogers, 2018). Cody had professional and personal relationships with both participants. For instance, Cody had presented at conferences with Amy prior to this study. Cody and Darcy had worked on professional development opportunities at the K-12 school together before the study. As evident by personal communication, the relationships cultivated through work and meetups for coffee helped Amy and Darcy feel comfortable sharing their writings and ideas with Cody during and after the workshop. The familiarity and closeness abetted the data collection process.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews composed the primary source of data, which is appropriate for a case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Documents from the professional development session such as handouts and a PowerPoint file acted as supplementary material. Cody interviewed Amy and Darcy separately within two months after the professional development session. The interviews took place at a local coffee shop and lasted

around two hours. Cody's collegial and personal relationships with both Amy and Darcy provided background and context that helped construct the interview. These interviews were semi-structured and avoided binary questions to elicit deeper understanding of the participants' understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Cody's proximity to the participants meant the interviews frequently took on a collaborative nature where interviewer and interviewees asked questions back and forth of each other (Kval & Brinkmann, 2009) often relating to experiences with publishing and sharing writing through an education blog. Gage transcribed the interviews before both authors met to read through the transcripts for analysis.

We met in person to review physical copies of the transcripts. Preceding our meeting, we both made notes of some of our initial thoughts about the transcripts. Additionally, Cody made notes about initial thoughts after completing both interviews. These initial thought notes helped shape the discussion prior to our analysis. We began our analysis using physical copies of the transcripts though later conducted further analysis through digital copies. Initially, we read through the data digitally using open coding with the goal of "breaking up" the data (Bazeley, 2013). From these open codes, categories emerged. By comparing the categories, we were able to construct themes together (Bazeley, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Saldaña, 2009). Once the individual cases were initially seen as complete, we conducted a cross-case analysis with the goal of identifying common themes across the two cases (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2018). Below is an example of our analysis process:

Table 2
Example of Analysis

Theme	Category	Example
Expanding Idea of What Gets Published and Who Gets Published	Reconstruction of identity and genre	"I guess my assumption coming into the workshop was that publishing and writing and doing research was not for practicing teachers I guess."
	Battling imposter syndrome	"You make these little babies and you want to share the babies with the world so sometimes that rejection --- I mean rejection is good --- I would take it and I would probably revise it and edit and then try to send it off again or whatever but it's also I think fear of the unknown."
	Problematizing what counts as research and knowledge	"I still feel like there are barriers and how [research] is transferred and shared with the teachers, the people in the trenches so to say."

We triangulated data and member checked our findings in order to establish trustworthiness. The initial thought notes discussed in the previous paragraph were used to check against the emerging themes throughout the analysis process. We sent the initial draft to Darcy and Amy to review our

findings and writings as part of the member checking process (Bazeley, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995). Participants were encouraged to question, clarify, and critique findings that did not align with their perceptions of the experiences. Participants' responses helped us strengthen, amend, or erase findings as fit.

The Professional Development

During Cody's time as an English teacher at his former K-12 public school, he had published several blogs for national organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English, Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance), and the International Literacy Association. These blogs were shared among and discussed with colleagues, including administrators. An administrator at the school reached out to him about conducting a professional development session aimed at supporting other teachers in publishing blogs during the 2017-2018 school year. Teachers at the school were required to conduct annual teacher inquiry projects (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2019) as part of their contract, and the administrator felt distilling teacher inquiry projects into publishable blogs was a valuable opportunity for teachers at the school. Cody brainstormed and constructed the professional development session during the spring 2018 semester.

The professional development was housed at the K-12 school on a Saturday. The professional development lasted from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM with a lunch break folded into the schedule. The school advertised the professional development session to adjacent school districts for interested teachers. Of the eight attendants, three were teachers not from the K-12 school affiliated with Cody. Again, the two teachers who published and are participants in this study were colleagues of Cody. A detailed outline of the agenda follows.

Item One: Why Should Teachers Write? Cody began the professional development institute by framing the importance of teachers writing for public audiences. Specifically, Cody wanted to explicitly connect the work of writing for public audiences to the idea of teacher leadership. To do so, the attending teachers read José Vilson's (2017) blog post "Why Teachers Need to See Themselves as Experts." The content of the piece is a call for teachers to center themselves as experts within the field by challenging structures and internalized beliefs about what constitutes an "expert." Cody opted for this piece because of its content and its form. That is, teachers read a blog post to highlight the importance of blogging and provide an example of the genre. Teachers completed a Four A Protocol adapted from the National School Reform Faculty in which they identified parts of the blog they agreed with, argued with, aspired to, and noted assumptions from the article. This structure allowed for a deeper engagement with the blog's content and offered a chance for Cody to connect the material of the blog with attending teachers' own experiences and ideas about "expertise" and "leadership."

Item Two: What's a Blog? Why Blog? After grounding the day in the importance of teachers engaging in public writing, Cody offered the genre of the blog as a way to enact such public writing and advocacy. Cody wanted teachers to not only have a working definition of a blog, but also develop an understanding of genre conventions of the blog. To do so, Cody introduced a brief definition of a blog and explained the purpose of educational blogs: a short piece of writing typically 500-700 words that are accessible to a wide audience and easy to share online. Cody noted that blogs can be personal or

published by major organizations. For the purpose of this professional development, Cody stressed the importance of the latter.

Next, attending teachers read two blog posts Cody selected and analyzed the blog using the following questions: What is the point of this blog? Who is the intended audience for this blog? How would this blog help classroom teachers? What type of examples does the author use? How readable or understandable is the blog? Does it require background knowledge to understand? After reading independently, Cody walked the teachers through a whole group discussion in which the group unpacked the mechanics of a blog and how the authors of the two examples worked within or strayed from the definition Cody provided. This agenda item was meant to help demystify the idea of a "blog" and public writing for the teachers. Additionally, Cody wanted to use these examples as mentor texts for teachers in writing their own blogs.

Item Three: From Brainstorming to Writing Up a Blog. Connecting to the opening discussion of Vilson's blog, Cody discussed the importance of knowing and naming our expertise in the education field to ground teachers in their own expertise in terms of teaching and schools. Before writing, Cody wanted teachers to feel confident in their own professional knowledge and pedagogical ideas so teachers would see they have something to contribute to the public discussion, which was noted as a key reason to write a blog. Attending teachers began to brainstorm and discuss what topics and ideas they feel are their expertise and that they could elaborate on for public writing. On chart paper, teachers were asked to write down professional knowledge, insights, and strategies they felt they knew well.

After writing, attending teachers were asked to code their brainstorming into three categories: teaching/curriculum idea, school-wide/teacher leadership idea, and community/policy idea. These categories echo Giroux's (2003) concern that public pedagogy must be concerned with classroom and curricular questions as well as the "institutional constraints and larger social formations" that work to thwart any change within schools (p. 8). Cody asked the attending teachers to note where their ideas mostly landed in this coding session. One teacher wrote about a poetry lesson and how to structure a thematic unit, ergo the majority of their ideas was coded under the "teaching/curriculum idea" umbrella. One participant wrote about providing feedback to teachers through teacher-to-teacher observations, which was labeled with the "school-wide/teacher leadership" code. Another teacher notes how they were using online platforms to communicate with families and build connections across the spaces students engaged in daily. These ideas were coded under the "community/policy" code. Cody formulated these codes to help attending teachers consider publication venues as well as thinking about how they could write about their ideas. To elaborate, the attending teacher who wrote about poetry and thematic units could incorporate student examples and strategies used as they framed their piece around teaching ideas for other English teachers.

Then, attending teachers shared their ideas and codes with each other and asked questions to elaborate and explain their responses as a type of brainstorming activity. Cody offered some guiding questions for the attending teachers to ask each other such as: What experiences as a teacher informed this idea? What are your hopeful takeaways from this idea? What examples from your classroom can you use to develop this idea? These probing questions were meant to help teachers elaborate further on their initial brainstorming and talk through the examples and experiences they could draw on to write their blog. At the end of this sharing activity, teachers could confidently explain their expertise and what insight they bring to the conversation based on their expertise.

Item Four: Identifying Publication Outlets. With brainstormed ideas in tow, Cody wanted teachers to begin considering venues for their ideas. Cody offered a handout with possible publication outlets for teacher blogs. Such venues included Teaching Tolerance (now Learning for Justice), the International Literacy Association, the National Council for Teachers of English, the National Council for Social Studies, and others. Cody wanted teachers to become familiar with potential outlets as part of the demystifying process in addition to having teachers identify an outlet so they could begin writing towards that outlet using recent publications as additional mentor texts for their own blog. Teachers considered which publications they felt aligned with their ideas best by reviewing the blog and reading some recent publications on the blog. Attending teachers were asked to collect data on word length, submission process, and recent blog topics as they viewed potential outlets. Finally, Cody asked that attending teachers select one or two pieces that could serve as mentor texts for their own writing.

Item Five: Writing Our Blog. By now, the morning was complete, and Cody wanted teachers to have a significant amount of time to write and receive feedback. Cody had attending teachers return to their brainstorming list to develop one idea further by completing a quick write in which they took their expertise and responded to the following questions: What is the major idea you have about your topic? What stories can you tell about your topic? What insights and classroom suggestions can you provide? What student voices/examples do you have? How can you use the examples from the "mentor text" blog to help structure your piece? The responses to these questions became the base of the blog attending teachers would eventually write.

For the rest of this time, which was the lengthiest agenda item, attending teachers spread out in the room (or outside) and began writing their blogs. Cody circulated the room to answer questions, provide clarity, and offer suggestions for ideas when necessary. Cody was able to meet with teachers one-on-one to provide support for teachers' writings. Cody wanted this portion to provide teachers with a sense of personalized attention to their ideas and writing. For instance, Cody took time to coach through how he writes blogs and how he draws on his own classroom teaching to provide insight into broader teaching ideas and strategies. This time was also valuable for Cody to address the emerging imposter syndrome that some attending teachers felt. When it came time to write, some attending teachers felt reluctant due to their belief that their practices and ideas were not worthy of a broader audience. Cody tried to alleviate that hesitancy through further brainstorming. To illustrate, Cody asked an English teacher to name ways they engage students in poetry and wrote down the ways. Then, Cody and the attending English teacher worked to find themes across the examples to build up a larger statement that could be made about teaching poetry.

Item Six: Feedback Cycle. To continue highlighting the attending teachers' expertise and push against imposter syndrome, Cody ended the session with a round of peer feedback. Cody wanted this feedback process to add to a sense of community among the teachers that was established throughout the day. Cody stressed that writing an entire blog in one sitting can be daunting and feedback would be given on what was written rather than focusing on attending teachers having completed an entire blog draft. Attending teachers formed into pairs for rounds of feedback on their piece. All teachers, at this point, had written a significant portion of a blog. For the rounds of feedback, partners read each other's work and commented on the following components: The thesis statement/main idea of the blog; the use of classroom anecdotes and student voice; the value of classroom takeaways or what other teachers would learn from reading their blog; and the use of transition words to help the piece flow better for readers. Attention to these topics for feedback was to ensure the attending teachers' blogs had important

components of blogs based off of Cody's own blog publication experiences. Subsequently, peer reviewers made note of things they liked about their partner's piece and things they still had questions about. Attending teachers received their feedback, read their feedback, and then wrote down a plan for how they would move forward with their potential blog.

Teachers who attended the professional development session were encouraged to stay in contact with each other and with Cody as they continued to refine and develop their potential blogs. Both Darcy and Amy followed up with Cody several times to receive feedback, edits, and suggestions before submitting their blogs to the desired outlet. Both Darcy and Amy indicated they would like for their publications to be included as examples for future iterations of the professional development if given the option.

Findings

In the following section we outline our findings from the study. As guided by our research questions, the findings focused on the teachers' identity development around writing as well as their understanding of blogging as a genre of writing. Writing and publishing on a national organization's blog allowed both participants to reconsider ideas about publication and reshape their own internal beliefs about their professional knowledge and writing. Additionally, through sharing on social media, Amy and Darcy were able to expand their audiences and build community. The following section outlines these themes in more detail.

Expanding Ideas of What is Published and Who Gets Published

Both teachers considered how writing for publication might be a vehicle to make what they know and do more accessible to a wider audience. Beyond traditional publication outlets in academia, these teachers recognized how blogging could lead to their experiences being shared with teachers rather than solely researchers. Whereas many teachers, these participants included, may view research as something outside of the classroom, the venue of educational blogs allows research to be disseminated beyond one's own site. However, viewing the value of publishing on a blog first required participants to expand their understanding of both "publishing" and "blog." As Amy illustrated:

> Before the workshop I thought of a blog of something that was like fashion-oriented probably because that was the only scope that I had. I guess a lot of the blogs I used to read were around style. So, I never thought of a blog as being this kind of window into teaching or any career for that matter. And then I guess after the workshop, it was interesting for me because I think, also when I think of publications, I thought this is not for people like me. The formatting is in this very prestigious journals that are closed off and blogs to me seems a lot more accessible for everyone, which is important I think, especially for the idea of sharing the work that teachers are doing with teachers. They shouldn't have to sacrifice like the readability or the audience just to like feel like their work matters and that's what I love about blogs.

Amy and Darcy needed to see blogs positioned as valuable texts to their profession and professional knowledge in order to expand their ideas of publishing. Prior to the workshop Darcy had read some teacher blogs but "mostly had no idea that there's a lot of people posting really great information about education and teaching and best practices." She started a blog to share information with families years

prior, but only saw blogs as places where teachers reported to families the happenings in their classrooms rather than seeing blogs as a space where teachers communicate pedagogical and curricular ideas with other teachers. Darcy noted that reading the Vilson blog post earlier in the workshop was instrumental in her rethinking about blogs and publications. Both Amy and Darcy saw their understanding and valuing of the genre of blogging shift to something unrelated to practice to something potentially deeply intertwined with practice.

Additionally, the process of writing and publishing a blog abetted an internal rethinking of their identities as teachers in relationship to writing and publishing. Amy noted that she previously believed that "writing and doing research was not for practicing teachers" and she was plagued by an idea that writing and publishing "was for someone who had a higher degree or more experience" than herself. Similarly, Darcy echoed common concerns she heard teachers express when conversations about research and publication arise, such as the idea that people who publish are removed from schools and don't interact with K-12 students daily. She knew that was a faulty statement and there exists "a lot of research that is humanizing and embedded in the work we do in our practice." Reading teacher blogs and then writing a teacher blog helped Darcy concretize some of the "humanizing" publications that were "embedded in the work" of the classroom. Writing and publishing a blog helped both Amy and Darcy reconstruct their identities from "workers," who absorb but do not produce knowledge, to "experts," who generate knowledge with others in the profession. For instance, Darcy reflected:

> Unfortunately, I don't feel like because of mostly policy and institutional rules and regulations, teachers are not really valued as professionals or necessarily as experts. We're more kind of the little worker bees but we are experts in our field, and should be valued as such. I think [Vilson's] blog post was interesting because it got us into the mindset to see how we can make change, and how we can position ourselves as experts and professionals. Whereas maybe that might not have been a view or more subconsciously teachers might not have seen themselves as those professional experts, but then reading [Vilson's] blog post it's like, "uh oh yeah I can do that!"

Both Amy and Darcy noted that some of their previous ideas about teachers not being positioned as writers stemmed from systemic barriers and cultural norms within schools. For instance, Darcy felt she only had access to journal articles when she was a student and could easily access the university library. Publishing on blogs, easily accessible to anyone with Internet access, felt like a way to open up conversations to teachers who may not have institutional access to journals. Publishing on a national education organization's blog made Darcy feel like she was circumventing barriers and expanding on her understanding of how writing is "transferred and shared with the teachers," who she called the "people in the trenches so to say." Amy noted that she felt decisions made by policymakers and administration sometimes resulted in teachers having limited imaginations of how they could generate and disseminate knowledge from their own practice. Additionally, she felt as a newer teacher it was harder to be seen as a producer of knowledge by administration and more seasoned colleagues. Publishing in a national blog provided Amy with validation that she does have professional knowledge and can share that with other teachers even earlier in her career. The combination of accessibility and centering their own teaching practices helped Amy and Darcy overcome some of these limiting ideas about writing and publishing as classroom teachers.

The rethinking of the genre of blogging was braided to the rethinking of themselves as experts. These conceptual revisions worked in tandem. Amy and Darcy had shifts in their thinking about the genre of blogging: from something related to life and leisure to something related to their practices as educators. Then, locating blogs as accessible and shareable, Amy and Darcy envisioned and constructed

themselves as writers of educational blogs, which helped them reimagine their own understandings of expertise. In short, blogs became seen as a valuable genre of learning, and publishing on a national blog meant Amy and Darcy saw themselves as contributors to valuable learning for other teachers. That value was in part derived from the feedback their pieces received and the communities they constructed through publishing.

Publishing Blogs as a Form of Building Community

Publishing on a national organization's blog and the ensuing sharing of the publication acted as a form of community building for Amy and Darcy. At times, that community building was made through expanding the networks of teachers the participants came in contact with from sharing their work. Other times, that community building resulted from local interests of the blog from colleagues and families of students. Amy and Darcy also noted that sharing their experiences with students continued to strengthen the classroom community. Both participants saw building community as core principles of their teaching philosophy and identities as teachers. Therefore, the act of publishing a blog fortified those identities by becoming a new method to build classroom community.

Both Amy and Darcy shared their publications with students and discussed the process of brainstorming, writing, revising, submitting, and publishing as forms of modeling for their own student writers. This sharing, including the vulnerability, worked to strengthen the classroom community. Darcy even shared the original draft along with her partner's feedback on the draft with her class:

Originally we had [blog draft] in a Google doc in the feedback process that we had, and some people left their own comments in mine. I was sharing that with [students] and showing them how I also use Google comments. So that's how I give them feedback, like, "I use that too. People write comments to me." And they were like, "oh my gosh, there's [colleague's name who left comments]. Oh I know that person!" And I was like, "yeah, see we do that too. I'm the expert but experts do this too."

Amy printed and posted her blog on her classroom white board, which she called "the fridge" which hosted several printed works from students throughout the school year. Students could opt to read papers on "the fridge." Amy posting her work on "the fridge" modeled for students the importance of sharing our work and being comfortable with feedback. Again, these were important values to Amy's identity as a teacher.

Additionally, Amy and Darcy turned to social media as one method of knowledge dissemination that resulted in building community. As Darcy noted, the goal of sharing her published blog on social media was "for teachers to actually find my profile and see more of my work." Amy and Darcy published on the same national organization's blog, and both found the organization sharing their pieces on Twitter and Facebook to be helpful in connecting with other teachers, thus expanding their professional networks online, and strengthening their relationships with colleagues in their buildings. These acts served as moments of building community for both Amy and Darcy. For Amy, seeing the national organization share her work sent a message to other teachers and families of her students that her work mattered in the community:

I think that the idea of parents and families and stakeholders all seeing that, not only does this teacher care about the work she's doing with her students, but she cares about it so much that she's publishing it in a way that other teachers can see and learn from it.

For Darcy, the national organization sharing her work opened up conversations about potentially publishing and expanding on ideas with colleagues in her building. Two of Darcy's colleagues within her building sent her an email saying they read her blog and incorporated some of the strategies into their teaching. Another colleague paired up with Darcy to write a piece relating to curriculum revision for another national organization. Darcy found publishing on a national level also brought attention and interests in her work on a local level in her own school building.

Publishing a blog on a national platform expanded into other writing opportunities for Amy. She pinpointed the publishing and sharing of her blog on Twitter as something that helped her "grow her network." Additionally, later in a Twitter chat the same national organization reached out to her via direct message and requested she turn some of her ideas on Twitter into a publication based on the one she published from the workshop. She agreed and later published a second blog. Both blogs resulted in "a ton of teachers" reaching out to her via Twitter and email to share ideas and discuss curriculum.

Publishing on a national organization's blog provided new community building opportunities through social media venues, especially Twitter. Simultaneously, Amy and Darcy were able to use their publications to continue developing their classroom community and make connections with colleagues in their buildings.

Discussion and Implications

This study highlights the important role both reading and writing blogs can play in developing teachers' and teacher candidates' understanding of public writing and expertise. One way to have teachers consider the importance of writing for public audiences through blogging and having teachers see blogs as a valuable genre for professional learning is for teacher educators to include educator blogs as part of their syllabi and for professional development leaders to cite and use blogs in their sessions (Miller & Svrcek, 2020). Such a move can demonstrate how blogs disseminate knowledge and alter teachers' ideas on blogs as texts worthy of study. Of course, all material must be vetted. A blog written by a teacher is the first requirement. The ideological and pedagogical dimensions of the blog are equally important. Incorporating educator blogs, of quality and sound pedagogy, could help alleviate some ambivalence teachers or teacher candidates may hold about blogs, writing, and publication in general. Teacher educators displaying the work of teachers in tandem with higher education researchers can model for teacher candidates the importance of writing for public audiences as a form of advocacy for the profession as well as growing their own practices and developing community. Teacher educators could start by having teacher candidates collectively create a blog and write entries throughout their teacher education program. Even if unpublished, a cohort blog could familiarize teacher candidates with the genre and provide an opportunity to write for an audience of their cohort size.

This study also suggests possibilities for teacher professional development. Teachers publishing blogs through professional organizations is a pathway to disseminate teacher professional knowledge that can be viewed as more accessible than traditional bodies of research such as journals, books, and book chapters. Teacher educators could work to build partnerships with schools and teachers to support teachers in publishing and disseminating their professional knowledge. In other words, teacher educators and teacher leaders could construct a similar workshop to the one Cody created and lead for the study. Such a partnership could help bridge the distance between teachers and researchers, K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Teacher educators and administrators working to amplify the work of teachers through blogging should also position such as work as a form of teacher leadership,

especially if teachers publish and then opt to share their publications through social media outlets (Rodesilar, 2018). Such framing and sharing can be part of a larger strategy to challenge forces that wish to narrow the work of teachers to technicians only concerned with the aims of dominant social forces (Giroux, 2003, 2004).

Finally, the study has implications for our own practice moving forward. For instance, Cody, now an assistant professor, worked with an English education graduate student to turn a term paper into a published blog for the National Council of Teachers of English. Cody used his experience constructing the professional development workshop to support the student through revisions, submission, and publication. However, Cody has not systemized the approach in the English education program he coordinates. Incorporating a similar workshop into the English education program could be a step in making writing for blogs more inviting for teacher candidates. Gage is part of the faculty contingency who oversees an online doctorate of education program at his institution. Supporting doctoral students, who are all practicing educators, in turning their findings from their dissertations into blogs could be a step towards supporting doctoral students disseminating their research outside of traditional academic journals. As reflective educators, we believe this research guides us towards important revisions we can make in our respective programs.

Limitations and Future Research

A major limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size. Although the purpose of a qualitative case study is to understand the experiences of participants deeply rather than to produce large-scale implications and replicability (Yin, 2018), this study only offered insight into two of the eight participants due to its focus on publication of a blog. The experiences and insights from the other six participants are a notable limitation from this study. Knowing what caused the participants to not continue the publication process could inform future research into why teachers decide to publish or not. For example, insight from participants who did not publish could illuminate barriers teachers face when constructing their work for the public. The fact that the majority of participants did not publish their work indicates the importance of understanding why. Future research should seek to better understand teachers' experiences in not completing the publication process.

Conclusion

Amy and Darcy's experiences writing and publishing blogs for national organizations offers one method of speaking back to narratives and policies that seek to usurp teachers of their intellect and professional knowledge. By writing for and engaging with public audiences through blogs, Amy and Darcy worked as teacher leaders inside and beyond their specific school to disseminate their professional knowledge to a broader swath of the teaching profession, thus engaging in a "politics of resistance" that places its influence beyond the classroom walls (Giroux, 2003, p. 14). One of our goals as teacher educators is to elevate and amplify the work of teachers, especially during an era in which devaluing the complex work of teaching has become the norm. Incorporating the work of teachers in teacher education courses and professional development sessions via published national organizations' blogs is one way to achieve the goal. Another equally important step is for teacher educators to work with teachers and teacher candidates in crafting their own identities as public scholars and writers. Both moves can push against maligning forces and position teachers as the public intellects we believe they have the potential to be.

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