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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WRITER'S WORKSHOP AND IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS USING WRITING AS RESISTANCE, by KARLA JEAN ZISOOK, was prepared under the direction of the candidates Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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## ABSTRACT

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WRITER'S WORKSHOP AND IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS USING WRITING AS RESISTANCE

by  
Karla Zisook

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to uncover the ways that women elementary school teachers negotiate their identities within the context of writer's workshop by exploring issues of gender, literacy, and identity. The two central participants were women elementary school teachers who were involved at their Professional Development School with university partnership and were learning how to implement a writer's workshop instructional model. This study considers how the participants' involvement in professional development with a university faculty member shaped their identities as women and professionals. The theoretical framework is based in critical theory and identity theory, in which literacy and identity are deeply connected (Moje & Luke, 2009). Furthermore, this study is situated in the literature exploring teachers' roles and identities historically in order to position them today (Carter, 2002; Hoffman, 2003; Biklen, 1995). The questions this study will explore include: (a) How have the participants' identities been affected by their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative? (b) How does gender mediate their professional identities? This feminist case study used in depth interviews, document analysis, and observations to generate detailed data. Themes that were prominent in the data were gender and teaching, dealing with mandates, issues of expertise, caring, and writing as resistance. The conclusions of this study reveal that the within the context of caring professional development, teachers were able to take up writer's workshop as a means of

resisting a system that was often frustrating and oppressive. They negotiated their gendered roles as teachers in complex ways and used literacy as a way to reclaim their own power.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WRITER'S WORKSHOP AND IDENTITY: A  
CASE STUDY OF WOMEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS USING  
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Karla Jean Zisook

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in  
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in  
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Next, I'd like to thank my participants. These two women have allowed me to use their voices so that others may see the many complex issues that teachers face and the possibilities that remain in elementary literacy education. You make me want to be a better teacher.

My own teachers have given me a lifetime of wonderful experiences, beginning with my mother, my first and most faithful teacher. Throughout my years of schooling I have been so fortunate to have amazing women, and a few men, cheering me on and challenging me in the ways I needed. My sister and my lifelong friends have been constant and forgiving. You have all been teachers to me. Thank you to my own elementary school teachers, as well as my teacher colleagues who show such dedication to educating children. Dr. Susan Reimer Sacks, you have been a mentor from the beginning in my most formative years at Barnard, where I learned about sisterhood, social justice and teacher activism.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

PDS	Professional Development School
ELL	English Language Learner
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
CRCT	Criterion Referenced Competency Test (state test)
NCLB	No Child Left Behind



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

When I told my family I wanted to teach elementary school, my mother responded, “but you’re so smart.” She explained that there were so many amazing things I could be: a doctor, an engineer, all better than being a teacher. My mother, who raised me on *Free to be You and Me*, by Marlo Thomas, acted as though I was not living up to all that women had gained for my generation. My father, on the other hand, was delighted and hoped that I would soon marry, have children, and relish my summers off. He was happy that I might settle down into a more traditionally gendered career choice, one that would not interfere with caring for a husband and children. Their responses highlight American society’s notions of who teachers are, and what their value is in our world. Both of their responses are expressly connected to what it means to be a woman in America. This disorienting experience became the first in a string of sticking points that led me to question not only our society, but how our educational system and larger structures create the lived realities of women teachers.

How might our societal notions of teaching as a feminine profession impact teaching and teachers themselves? When I talk with other elementary school teachers, I hear complaints about their decision making abilities being taken away, frustrations with new programs they are required to teach, and general dissatisfaction for the way they are treated. I began to wonder why teachers are in this situation and if it was something new. I started to question the problem from many angles, and to think about the many factors that contribute to teachers feeling this way. My own sense of professionalism has been the result of several years of graduate schools, particular professional development

experiences, and many colleagues who have challenged my thinking. I started to wonder how teachers might gain a sense of empowerment, voice, and agency in their own schools and classrooms using literacy instruction as a vehicle.

I found my own voice when I began to study literacy while teaching in Brooklyn at a public elementary school that was part of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Our status as a pilot school afforded us the opportunity to attend professional development sessions hosted by Teachers College and directed by Lucy Calkins and her research team. In addition to these sessions, our school was given student and teacher materials to guide our facilitation of both reader's and writer's workshop in our classrooms. The transformations that I saw among our faculty were amazing. As teachers we started to question curriculum and worked to include reading and writing workshop in our classrooms. We started thinking about empowering our students by giving them voices for writing and speaking. We wanted them to become critical of what they read. The process was not easy or romantic, but it made me see the pivotal role of literacy in the classroom and led to my desire to learn more.

My own experiences as a teacher inform my inquiry and have led me to a stance of connecting literacy with teacher agency. It was not until my doctoral studies that I began to pair literature with my experiences, finding critical literacy as a way to articulate my own ideas. As noted by Moje and Luke (2009), if we are to consider learning and identity to be deeply connected, then this intimacy also translates to literacy and identity. The power of literacy is that it is profoundly rooted in identity- it is communication, expression, and the basis of thought. I believe that literacy is a vehicle for resistance and agency for both students and teachers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to uncover the ways that women elementary school teachers negotiate their identities within the context of learning about implementing writer's workshop. The data that were gathered allowed the teachers' voices about their experiences with writer's workshop to be in the foreground. This collection of information helped me to explore issues of identity, gender and literacy in their lives. The two teacher participants, Sarah and Catherine<sup>1</sup>, teach at an elementary Professional Development School (PDS), defined as such because of its relationship with a nearby university. Dr. Flint, the university faculty liaison, and a rotating team of graduate researchers partnered with these teachers, who participated in professional development opportunities to develop their teaching practices in the area of writing. The research team supported the teachers in this school as they implement writer's workshop in their classrooms through book study groups, classroom visits, after school workshops and debriefing sessions.

### **Background**

Teaching is often considered to be a feminine profession, which reflects a stereotype as well as the actual imbalance in gender representation (see Table 1). In a profession of predominantly women, particularly at the elementary level, it is of the utmost importance to consider how women teachers generate identities for themselves as professionals.

---

<sup>1</sup> All identifiers, except for the researchers' names, have been replaced with pseudonyms. These include Sarah and Catherine, other minor participants, Corey Richardson, and Dawson County.

Table 1

*Proportion of Women in Teaching, 2010 Averages*

Occupation	% Female
Education, training, and library occupations	73.8%
Postsecondary teachers	45.0%
Preschool and Kindergarten teachers	97.0%
Elementary and middle school teachers	81.8%
Secondary school teachers	57.0%
Special education teachers	85.1%
Other teachers and instructors	66.5%
Librarians	82.8%
Educational administrators	63.0%

*Source:* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In a relevant *New York Times* article, Belkin (October 4, 2009) argued that in today's economic downturn, while women may soon make up for a majority of workers, this is not a positive for women as a group. Rather, this statement reflects the concentration of women in low paying jobs and the assumption that women will work for less. Women in "female" positions like education and healthcare have seen fewer layoffs, while finance, construction, and manufacturing industries (higher paying, fewer women) have taken a dive. This points to the imbalance of men and women in particular fields. As Belkin wrote, "It is not good news when women surpass men because women are worth less...real progress might come when we reach the place where a financial wallop means women lose as much ground as men" (p.2). Belkin's argument is the continuation of a historical trend of women's inequity in the work place. Yet, in education, women appear to be doing well. For example, more administrative positions are being filled by women. We must look back, though, and consider the profession historically to see how women have ended up concentrated in teaching. Over 150 years ago, Susan B. Anthony pointed

out that when women were concentrated in particular professions, status and wages were driven down (Carter, 2002).

### **Rationale**

We must uncover the role that gender identity plays in the lives of teachers if we are to understand how teachers develop their professional identities. Schools are a site of cultural reproduction and recreation of societal values and norms. Certainly other social categories such as race, class, or language could be examined in this study. However, the scope of this study is aimed at looking at one category in depth, gender. Teachers' gender identities are positioned in the public domain and under scrutiny as they are charged with the work of reinforcing the social order and expectations in children (Biklen, 1995).

Teachers are positioned as participants (or possibly resisters) of the gender binary and hegemonic norms of masculinity or femininity (Biklen, 1995; Bourdieu, 2001; Dillabough, 1999). This study contends that contemporary women elementary school teachers often negotiate and express gender identities in ways that conform to hegemonic culture. Using a qualitative case study of two women elementary school teachers as they learn to teach writing workshop, I explored the question of how these women might gain power and agency while working within a system that expects feminine compliance.

Women teachers have a history that shapes society's perceptions of who and what a teacher is, and what teachers are expected to do. Within the context of our historically created beliefs about teachers, we come to our current educational reform. No Child Left Behind has created a patriarchal curriculum that silences teachers and disconnects them from their own decision making abilities (Schwandt, 2005). Schwandt argued that the separating of teachers from using their judgment in curricular, management, and even

mundane matters positions them as minions of the patriarchal power structure in which decisions are made in a top-down fashion. For example, in literacy education, teachers have been positioned as Stepford wives and given scripted literacy programs to faithfully follow without question. These literacy programs are purchased across states and districts and teachers are evaluated on their fidelity to the program. Research aimed at understanding how teachers might resist and claim professional identities is essential to advancing not only teacher status, but the quality of education.

The vehicle explored here for questioning and changing identity constraints is that of authentic writing in the classroom. Authentic writing occurs when a writer's workshop approach to writing creates a community of writers in the classroom, which the teacher is both a participant and guide. Teaching authentic writing may provide teachers a parallel experience to the curriculum of the students: finding their voices, writing for authentic purposes, and becoming critical thinkers. The preparation and intellectual engagement required of writer's workshop positions teachers as experts and professionals and defines authentic writing as process oriented and recursive (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1994).

Writer's workshop is a way of teaching that grew out of dissatisfaction on the part of teachers and researchers with a more structured and formulaic writing curriculum.

Graves (1975), one of the first researchers to propose writer's workshop, explained:

It is entirely possible to read about children, review research and textbooks about writing, "teach" them, yet still be completely unaware of their processes of learning and writing. Unless we actually structure our environments to free ourselves for effective observation and participation in all phases of the writing process, we are doomed to repeat the same teaching mistakes again and again (p. 29).

Graves illuminated the crux of writer's workshop where in the teacher acts as a facilitator in the classroom, rather than remaining separated from the students by staying at the front of the room lecturing, or at his or her desk maintaining order. The teacher works with students, writing and trying the tasks they have been given as well (Atwell, 1998).

Writers work on topics of their choosing and learn as they work through the process of writing, creating their own pieces of literature.

The daily routine of writer's workshop may vary from class to class, as the teacher is able to flexibly use his or her knowledge to determine the class procedures rather than following a set of orthodoxies (Atwell, 1998). However, many writer's workshop classrooms have similar models or procedures in place to free the teacher from lecturing and allow space and time for listening and guiding students as they write self-selected pieces and work to improve them.

One such structure is the minilesson. Minilessons are the most comparable to traditional direct teaching (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). However, the prefix of "mini" is taken seriously. The teacher determines a lesson topic that might best meet his or her students' current needs and efficiently and quickly presents it to the class. Students may then try to apply their new learning, if it is appropriate to their piece at that time during the workshop portion of the class. Minilesson ideas can come from many places, but they are primarily culled from teachers' observations and interactions with students and are designed to meet their current needs (Ray, 1999). Typically, minilessons are followed by a period of independent writing where students have the opportunity to work on their pieces.

During independent writing, teachers have time to meet individually or in small groups with their student writers. These meetings are called conferences and allow the teacher to listen to students and help them negotiate any struggles they are facing, as well as guide students toward improving their writing (Anderson, 2000). Conferences are essential to the writer's workshop because they give teachers a view of where each student is and where they can go (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001).

Finally, the important ending structures of writer's workshop are publication and sharing of pieces written by students (Calkins, 1994). Throughout the life of a piece, students are given opportunities to share and get feedback from their teacher and classmates. This may be done with the whole class or in small groups. However, when a piece is completed it is celebrated. Publishing is important because it connects the purpose of writing for students so that they can understand that their work has an audience. Sharing work with their peers, or even larger audiences of parents and others in the community gives students a feeling of authentic purpose (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983).

### **My Interest in the Writing Collaborative**

As a member of a research team examining professional development opportunities, I had access to the processes that teachers engaged in as they learned about and began to implement writer's workshop in their classrooms. Over the past four years, teachers within this school have increasingly seen the benefits of writer's workshop for their students. In year one, only two teachers were involved and by the end of the third, fourteen teachers participated in the professional development experiences voluntarily. Together, these teachers participated in what has been termed the Corey Richardson



Writing Collaborative, in which they shared and discussed writing instruction through debriefing sessions with the faculty member and during after school workshops. For many teachers at this school, writer's workshop has been a transformative experience as they expanded their view of themselves as professionals and advocates (Flint, Fisher, Kurumada, & Zisook, 2011). These substantial shifts in identity led me to consider how women (all but one member are women) of the writing collaborative viewed themselves in terms of gender identity. Using a critical feminist lens, one that questions and analyzes the role of gender in the lives of teachers in terms of their power and agency, I intend to investigate the following questions:

1. How have Sarah and Catherine's identities been affected by their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative?
2. How does gender mediate their professional identities?

### **Overview and Significance of the Study**

In an era of teacher accountability, there has been a rejection of the feminized curriculum (progressive, student- centered teaching), an embracing of patriarchal policies such as No Child Left Behind, and a dismissal of teachers' decision making authority. For example, high stakes testing holds teachers accountable for teaching standards for each grade level. This more regimented and prescriptive curriculum positions the teacher as a technician, directed to follow particular tasks and curricula. A curriculum such as this can be seen as a backlash against teaching methods that position that teacher as a facilitator who has more inquiry based approaches to curriculum. While the previously mentioned issues will be discussed in more detail in the literature review, they are certainly necessary to mention here for building the significance of this study.

Walkerdine (1990) raised the issue of teachers having a false sense of control of their classrooms and their teaching, and this is still applicable. Unfortunately, there has been little research on teachers and gender in the recent past. Research about students and gender, teachers and learning, and writing workshop has thrived, but the way gender has mediated teachers' learning and professional identities has been almost ignored. Power and gender must be considered in concert with teaching.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Introduction**

To investigate the study's questions, I used identity theory and critical theory to design this study as well as to interpret its findings. The four key tenets of my theoretical framework are listed below. These ideas guided all aspects of the study from methodology and design to data analysis and conclusions. They represent my own beliefs about the world. Each tenet will be further explained and situated in the following section:

1. Identity is not unitary or fixed, rather it is in constant flux and constructed in social contexts (Davies, 1997; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain, 1998; Munro, 1998).
2. Individuals position themselves and are positioned within figured worlds in which they participate (Fairbanks, Crooks, and Ariail, 2011; Holland et al, 1998).
3. Power structures within society serve as a means for transmitting and maintaining hegemonic norms, as illustrated by Foucault's panopticon (Butler, 2003; Foucault, 1978; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002). Individuals can resist these power structures.
4. One of the ways that power is enacted is via gender roles and expectations of women (Apple, 2004; Bartky, 2003; Freire, 1970; Walkerdine, 1990).

As elucidated by Munro (1998), researchers must consider ways to “disrupt the unitary subject and thus reconceptualize resistance” (p. 30). We can reconsider the unitary subject and recognize an identity in flux. Thus, identity theory and critical theory are necessary to understanding my research questions, context, and findings. Using identity theory and critical theory as magnifying glasses help to examine with more detail the complexities of the participants’ lives as women elementary school teachers in ways that consider identity and power. These four tenets drawn from identity theory and critical theory help to frame this study in a way that allows me to tease apart the complexity involved with women elementary school teachers.

**Tenet 1: Identity is not unitary and is in flux.** Identity theory allows for a recognition of a non-singular, non-unitary, unstable identity that is in flux and is dialogic in its response to and interaction with social contexts (Munro, 1998). As noted by Ariail (2002) performance and construction of identity happen concurrently. Identity is constantly changing in response to social experiences and as individuals move across spaces. Holland et al (1998) argued that identities are performed and are relationally constructed.

Davies, Dormer, Gannon, Laws, Taguchi, et al (2001) explained that identities are not simply within an individual, but are what people are subjected to from the world. Davies et al’s work with school girls illustrates the point that autonomy is an illusion as individuals participate within particular contexts with particular goals. Ambivalence is inevitable for people as they work to accomplish and meet the demands of society and themselves appropriately within the possibilities made available to them. Identities are

crafted through available discourses and are both under powerful influences of society, while at the same time fluid and open to potential change (Davies, 1997).

**Tenet 2: Individuals position themselves and are positioned in figured worlds.** Further detail on identity can be gained from the work of Holland et al. People perform within *figured worlds* which are historical phenomena, socially organized, reproduced, and distribute people across different fields of activity, and participants in these worlds have their own positions. People do not belong to a singular figured world, but rather multiple figured worlds as they engage and interact with others in various contexts. Within the *figured worlds* a teacher may occupy- the classroom, the school, the recess yard, and so on- relationally built identities for each world are taken up and performed. Teachers are not simply the products of their *figured worlds*, but they respond to each situation and the artifacts within it to negotiate their identities. These figured worlds are situated in history and context and often move along a predetermined path or trajectory. Understanding identity in this way allows a freer analysis for considering ways to alter inequity or repression of certain groups. It also explains how groups continue to participate in ways that do not promote equality.

Positional identities offer another perspective on identity that complements identities in the context of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). How one “identifies one’s position relative to others, mediated through the ways one feels comfortable or constrained” makes up positional identity and has to do with the “day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 127). Positional identities are the teachers’ understandings and

perceptions of their position as created from their knowledge of others in the space, the activities occurring, and who has authority in that context.

Consider this hypothetical. In the figured world of the teacher lunchroom, the positional identity of a teacher might be that of a team player and competent teacher. When other teachers complain about the curriculum or expectations, the teacher might modify her language to fit with what the others are saying in a way that complies with the position of competent team player. Women elementary school teachers have particular positional identities that have attached scripts that can be played out. Such positional identities include such labels as rule follower, feminine nurturer, and other commonly held assumptions about women elementary school teachers. These markers cut across many figured worlds and act as stereotypes. Taking up the position of woman elementary school teacher can lead women to arrive at positional identities that conform to these stereotypes which do not disrupt privilege in a critical way. As Holland et al. (1998) explained:

“The development of social position into a positional identity- into dispositions to voice opinions or to silence oneself, to enter into activism or to refrain and self-censor, depending on the social situation- comes over the long term, in the course of social interaction” (p. 138).

Positional identities are not immediate and are created as individuals negotiate their figured worlds over time. Teachers’ positional identities are created as they interact with their colleagues, students, administrators, the educational system, and society in general. Each of these interactions leads to identities where teachers position themselves in certain ways that they find appropriate for themselves in the context. Teachers may find themselves objectified by the system and claim stances against or with that positioning. Positional identity theory, as with the concept of figured worlds, helps illuminate the

identities of this study's participants in ways that are complex, connected to social context, and meaningfully add to our understandings of women teachers' identities.

Fairbanks and Ariail (2006) point out the possibility of agency and transformation of one's positional identity. In a study focused on adolescent girls' literacy-related school experiences, Fairbanks and Ariail found that not only do positional identities push individuals to perform the story lines expected of them, but that they also provide a "means by which individuals resist and revise them" (p. 316). The multiple identities and positions that an individual might have are constantly changing, refiguring, and interacting with the figured worlds one inhabits. Significantly, the spaces that allow someone to resist the dominant narrative and claim agency are essential to understanding positional identity (Fairbanks, Crooks, & Ariail, 2011). The usefulness of identity theory in this study is that it helps to understand how women teachers might resist and claim agency within a figured world that typically does not offer that position as an option.

**Tenet 3: Individuals can resist power structures.** Power is transmitted in our society in many ways. Schools are one example of how power is distributed in an institutionalized manner. Critical analysis and deconstruction of power is essential to understanding how power is transmitted and potentially disrupted in our world. As Foucault so plainly stated, "where there is power, there is resistance" (1978, p. 95-96). Many educational researchers and theorists have offered ideals for teachers, who operate within schools and are part of the institution of education and the power structures created by schools. Today, the work of reimagining and reframing teachers is taken up by critical theorists. Perhaps most idealistically, bell hooks (1994) positioned the teacher as a facilitator and guide teaching as a practice of freedom and helping learners become

critical and democratic citizens. Critical theorists from Freire (1970) to McLaren (2007) and Apple (2004) were the originators of this sentiment and argued that teachers could be the agents of social transformation and voices for the future of a new, more just society.

McLaren wrote:

teachers must function as more than agents of social critique. They must attempt to fashion a language of hope that points to new forms of social and material relations that break free from the material conditions of everyday life with their unequal distributions of wealth, power, and privilege based on the appropriation of surplus labor. (p. 256)

McLaren places teachers in a position of power in which they can create change in their classrooms, schools, and ultimately larger society, a highly optimistic view. These new ideas about teachers must be situated in a historical context so that their connections and resistance to the past notions of what it means to teach can be seen more clearly. Radical thinking about teachers and their role in the world is essential to understanding teachers' identities and the ways in which they position themselves in relation to new and old notions of who they are and what their purpose is in the classroom. Critical theory helps to understand the forces of inequity and oppression that teachers have had to face both against themselves, as a profession of predominately women, and in their classrooms with students from every social strata.

Critical theory has changed and developed from its beginnings in the Frankfurt School in the years after World War I (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). From the beginning, critical theory was concerned with the political liberation of the oppressed as well as uncovering assumptions of the dominant classes. Now, and in relation to education, critical theory has situated schools as possible places of hope and empowerment of marginalized groups by rejecting schools as places where hegemonic cultural norms are reproduced. While critical theorists such as Apple and McLaren have

found poststructuralism to be missing this crucial political connection, others such as Lather (2006) and Stinson (2009) have explored the idea of using different paradigms in ways that can help researchers make sense of phenomena. Critical theory can be situated within poststructuralism because of its focus on deconstruction power relationships. However, critical theory takes this deconstruction to a level of action, where the discovery of inequities and domination must be revealed and addressed in political arenas. Furthermore, the roots of critical theory lie in Marxism and the reproduction of sociopolitical inequities through work (Munro, 1998).

For my study, critical theory is essential to understanding how the participants negotiated their highly politicized profession as teachers. Critical theory contends that education is a means of freedom for those that are marginalized and oppressed in our society, those that are not in a dominant position due to their race, class, gender, culture, and so forth (Freire, 1970). Teachers are acting within a system that is constantly changing as political decisions are debated and made. Therefore, critical theory is a suitable framework for understanding the everyday power relations in their lives.

Schools are a site of cultural reproduction and places that enforce hegemonic societal values and norms, such as appropriate gender performance. This positions women teachers' gender identities in the public domain and under scrutiny (Biklen, 1995). How has the femininity of teaching been perpetuated? Perhaps one answer to this question lies in Foucault's explanation of panopticism (Bartky, 2003). The Panopticon is Bentham's architectural design of a prison, though it can be applied to any institution, in which the inmates' cells ring a central surveillance tower. Prisoners are entirely visible yet the supervisor is "unverifiable" as to where and when his attention is cast (Foucault,



1995, p. 201). Foucault use of the physical structure of such a building is also generalized to a more abstract level through which modern society is controlled, or disciplined, by itself in that the gaze of the supervisor is internalized, contrasting to the more spectacular forms of violent coercion of previous centuries. This ensures, “automatic functioning of power...the inmates should be caught up in a power situation in which they are themselves the bearers” (p. 201).

While panopticism can also be applied to all individuals in a society, in this study we consider women teachers, the intermediaries between the supervisor and the student in the institution of the school. Not only are women teachers surveillers of their charges, but they are also surveilled. As women they are also subject to an ever present male patriarchal gaze, and whether the gaze is actually turned upon them, women act at all times as if it were. Women may internalize this fear of rejection by the patriarchy and therefore perpetuate their gender role and also internalize this structure (Foucault, 1978). Furthermore, it is arguable that if women were to step out of their own fabrication of themselves within the power structures of our society, this would threaten women’s very identities with a possible “deskilling, something people normally resist: beyond this, it calls into question that aspect of personal identity that is tied to the development of a sense of competence” (Bartky, 2003, pg. 39). Women are participants in their own restrictive gender roles because it is known, it can be accomplished successfully, and it maintains their status as women.

**Tenet 4: Power is enacted via gendered expectations of women.** For the purposes of this study, one particular site of power struggles was selected for exploration—gender. As mentioned previously in the rationale and purpose of this

introduction, in a career that is predominantly women, I feel obligated to carefully consider how gender mediates my participants' experiences as teachers. It is somewhat artificial to select one socially constructed facet of my participants, gender, over other categories such as race, class, language, etc. However, in order to probe the topic fully, this limitation must be made. According to Smith (1987), understanding comes from connecting women's lived experiences with ideology. Certainly there are many sites of power at play in all lives, but by foregrounding gender, this particular intersection can be explored in greater depth. While the so called "essentialist trap" must be considered, but studying women and considering gender is not synonymous with reifying woman as category (Munro, 1998). In order to have a political argument, foregrounding socially constructed categories, including gender, creates research that reveals power dynamics in various contexts, structures, and institutions.

Applied to women teachers, a critical view would mean that they are in a continuous state of maintaining themselves as women teachers through their performance of the gendered role of woman teacher. Certainly in history, this patriarchal gaze appears without restriction and is part of the social discourse around teaching. Yet today, this discourse has changed with the times, and women teachers seem to not include gender in discussions of their work (Biklen, 1995).

Before continuing further, my theoretical orientation of what is meant by gender must be presented. Gender should be considered as a creation of both social construction and individual performance. According to Butler (2003), gender is not biologically defined. People take on gender identities that are formed by society and interact with them individually in performance of their own gender identity. The dialogic nature of

social construction and performance of gender are continuously responding and changing to fit a context. This poststructuralist explanation does not consider the individual as unified actor, but always involved in the discourses and social environment in which someone exists. Walkerdine (1990) pointed out that there is no finality in accomplishing gender, or completion of being a man or woman, but that it must be proven again and again in various settings. Both internal and external to an individual are factors that shape how gender manifests itself, and how the person then performs gender. The accomplishment of gender is self-perceived and measured against societal and personal expectations of what it means to successfully perform gender. Said another way, a woman performs her view of what women should be and measures herself against what she perceives society to expect of a woman.

Bourdieu (2001) highlighted the dualism of the gender binary. Gender inequity is perpetuated by a binary system that positions masculinity vs. femininity, dominance vs. submission, and so on creating oppositional stances that are defined in contrast to the other. Resultantly, women are positioned in a negative and undesirable place. As applied to this study, women elementary school teachers are also subject to this binary and are cast as feminine, submissive and soft, the opposite of the masculine leader and rational thinker. Gender inequity is perpetuated by dualisms such as masculinity/femininity, dominant/submissive that become institutionalized in society through work, family, schools, and religion.

One way to further problematize issues of gender is through critical feminism. Within critical theory, critical feminism attempts to take on issues of social justice and marginalization associated with gender, race, class, sexual orientation, language, and

other social categorizations. However, critical feminism considers patriarchal forces and the way women, in particular, are influenced by such societal structures. These categories are socially constructed and may subject people to constraints that limit them. Like the broader critical theory, critical feminism examines and critiques the practices and politics of educational system, taking a stance of responsibility for working towards social justice and democracy by confronting the patriarchy (Lather, 2006). This theory is appropriate for considering gender identities of elementary school teachers, particularly because of the predominance in the profession of women. Women teachers encounter the kinds of stereotypes, constraints, and gendered expectations that can be understood more fully using critical feminism. Apple (2004), a critical theorist, argued that teaching is enmeshed in gender politics and issues of power and domination. Research can expose systems of dominance and reconsider what counts as knowledge (Lather, 1991). As said by Davies, “Subordination is thus the precondition for resistance and opposition (2001, p. 181). Therefore, the theoretical lens presented here informs my study with an eye towards the potential of individuals to claim power for themselves and for others.

### **Conclusion**

In literacy research, focusing on identity has been helpful for understanding the connection between learning to read and write and generating identities. This study is positioned to take the theoretical framework previously described and use it to consider women elementary school teachers teaching writer’s workshop. The necessity for this study is apparent in our current climate of surveillance, and the role of gender in this situation must be uncovered. In chapter two, a review of the literature will allow connections between teachers historically and teachers today to be made. Chapter three,

the methodology section, will reveal the qualitative research paradigm, examine case study, and lay out the design of the study. Chapter four will be a report of the data and analysis including a detailed account of the context of the study site, information about the school, the participants, and information about their experiences in a Professional Development School. Finally, a discussion of the findings and their significance will be included in chapter five.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Contextualizing Women Teachers**

In today's climate, there are two conflicting messages that schools send teachers. First, teachers must follow the prescribed, proven methods for success in literacy instruction, and second, teachers must teach students to be critical readers and writers who are able to participate in literacy in authentic and meaningful ways. How can a teacher who is following a lockstep and scripted curriculum teach critical thinking? The tension between the goal of teaching students to be lifelong readers and writers and the expectation that teachers follow an imposed curriculum that separates them from using their own knowledge of how to teach plays out in the daily lives of teachers. This mismatch becomes apparent when teachers are given scripted literacy programs and expected, like the famously subservient wives of Stepford, to adhere to their manuals and unquestioningly deliver instruction. Literacy instruction that comes from a teacher's manual is in stark contrast with the foundations of writer's workshop, where the teacher makes constant decisions and judgments about how to teach his or her students. The current neoliberal climate of education has been a rejection of this progressive and student-centered classroom, where teachers serve as expert facilitators and decision makers. Rather, the climate favors patriarchal policies such as No Child Left Behind where teachers are relegated to the role of technician and curriculum deliverer. We must consider where this tension originated. How have the development of American education and the position of women teachers within that system come together?

A historical perspective illuminates how women teachers and society once considered the teaching profession and foreshadows contemporary teachers' responses. Historical consideration helps deconstruct the notion of whom and what a teacher might be. After presenting a historical overview, this chapter will detail and define many of the concepts introduced here such as progressive teaching, neoliberalism, and patriarchy in education. An historical backdrop will help the reader see the connection between our current educational climate and the past, with teachers at the center of the narrative.

As the following sections will explicate, our societal definition of the woman teacher is bounded by our collective vision of what is feminine. There are many ways that teachers have been constrained by femininity. Appearance, conduct, curriculum, and relationships of teachers have all been constructed in ways to reflect a feminine ideal. Teachers have faced societal expectations about teacher behavior, and also larger gender stereotypes that position them as having what are considered feminine traits: morality, nurturing, caring, and self-denial. Women teachers are living within these identity narratives and often authoring themselves to reflect these traits. The imbalance of women in elementary classrooms is connected with teachers' identities and the ways in which women teachers perceive themselves. An historical discussion of women teachers situates the argument that the woman teacher is confined by our gendered assumptions and stereotypes of who she is and what she should be.

### **Teachers in History**

A review of the literature reveals historical information about women teachers, despite that the voices of women teachers have been silenced (Casey, 1993). By considering the historical span of women teachers, a contextualized idea of women

teachers in our current era of accountability and standardization of classrooms can develop and help to reveal spaces in which teachers resist an oppressive system and claim agency. Various historical documents are available, such as life histories, narratives, journals, letters, and more typical historical surveys. Many of these pieces have been written as an effort to combat the lack of teachers' voices available in publication (Casey, 1993; Weiler, 1988). In an effort to provide a rich description of women teachers in the past, this literature review focuses primarily on the more personal accounts of women teachers.

The studies presented include the historical feminization of teaching and the resistances some women educators made as gleaned from their personal narratives (Kyle, 1992). The use of the word "feminization" in this context indicates the numerical predominance of women in the teaching profession in America. This numerical imbalance certainly influenced the sociopolitical context of public education and both shapes and is shaped by the number of women. The larger setting of women teachers must be presented, as Apple explained, "for women teachers, the personal has always been the political, in part because of the history of the ways teachers have been regulated in both their public and private lives" (in Casey, 1993). As Casey so poignantly proved, the voices of teachers, especially the "ordinary" teachers, are essential to reversing the denigration of women teachers. Therefore, the personal stories of women teachers are central to our understanding of education and the possibility of their resistance to a system that discounts them.

**Why did women teach?** In the United States, changes to the education system brought about changes in the demographics of teachers. Teaching transitioned from



predominantly male to predominantly female under the influence of forces such as immigration, migration, and child labor laws during industrialization. The rapid expansion of common schooling created a role for women teachers in what Horace Mann advocated as a natural and fiscally responsible way to meet the ever increasing demand for teachers (Carter, 2002). As one of the few venues for employment for women, a surplus of possible job candidates positioned women as an affordable and willing labor force. Mann publicized what many women educators were advocating regarding the idea of a free education system, and the opening of normal schools for teacher training followed (Preston, 1993, cited in Carter, 2002). However, most teachers at this time did not attend teacher training schools, and were funded by their students' attendance (Kyle, 1992). There were a variety of teaching settings, reasons for teaching, and rewards for teachers at this historical moment. Understanding these factors will create the background necessary for understanding the continuously reproduced feminine gender identities of teachers.

The written documents such as journals and letters home expose the realities of teachers' lives in the 1800's. Biklen (1995) analyzed texts created by teachers to gain insight into their situations and perceptions of their lives. In the middle of the century, many teachers in the South had to garner financial support from families to survive. In other areas, teachers may be required to board with students' families while some were given their own living quarters. Some teachers knew they were not going to be paid well, yet chose the career for reasons of social change, including African American teachers such as Charlotte Forten, who selected teaching to promote abolition and educate fellow black people who had not been allowed literacy previously.

Other teachers were more financially concerned and prioritized the pay available for different teaching situations over any larger social obligation. Harriet Cooke was one such person and chose to turn down a missionary teaching position based on the lack of compensation for a more lucrative offer in Middlebury: “Having been satisfied that the compensation offered could not meet necessary expenses, and having no capital of my own on which I could fall back in trying emergencies, I was compelled to give the negative to this plan” (Cooke, 1861, pg. 172 as cited in Biklen, 1995). Cooke’s husband and father were both deceased, and she had four children; she needed to base her decision of where to teach on her own financial needs.

The financial compensation of teachers was not standardized and often varied from place to place. Teachers started classes in their living quarters until enough students were gathered to move locations. The women of this time often had no alternative for meeting their financial responsibilities to their families- as many whose fathers had died or were in debt were drawn to teach, as was the case with Harriet Cooke above.

Some teachers were interested in teaching for social change, some were financially compelled to teach, and still some chose teaching primarily for religious reasons. Religious fervor produced teachers who were teaching to do God’s work (Biklen, 1995). Particularly during the Second Great Awakening, this motivation strengthened. As explained by Sugg (1978), “Woman’s claim to the holy mission of teaching was advanced and honored in an ambience of religiosity, not of academic, intellectual, or scientific purpose (p. 61). Teaching connected women with doing the work of morality. It is also in women’s “purer morals” that Horace Mann argued them “infinitely more fit” than male counterparts for teaching (as cited in Sugg, p. 74).

Religious reasons combined with women's morality solidified the woman teacher's place in the workforce outside the home.

Yet another motivation for young women to enter teaching was for their own intellectual stimulation. While this argument was not made publicly as a reason for women to teach, it was found in personal communications of teachers (Biklen, 1995). For these women, teaching was the only opportunity available for intellectual pursuits. Visiting lectures, and other such events, were also available to young women teachers that otherwise would have been unseemly for a young unmarried woman to attend. Also, teachers wrote about the intellectual challenges of providing their students with solutions to learning problems.

Women may have been attracted to teaching is for the potential independence it allowed. Teachers who moved West had little supervision and created schools from the ground up. Furthermore, single women were able to prolong the time before marriage or consider marrying for love by teaching, as once married they would be released from the position. Often teachers moved to new locations to teach, and this allowed for those with a sense of adventure new opportunities.

Some teachers became activists at this time of rapid social change as industrialization pre and post Civil War changed the landscape of the country. The life of Emma Willard can also be used to demonstrate the motivations of women who became teachers. Willard became a teacher out of financial necessity, but then continued to pursue greater education for women in America. However, Willard advocated "true womanhood" for her students and believed their future included only marriage and motherhood, while simultaneously advocating for equity between men and women.

Catharine Beecher, an activist for expanding women in education, argued that teaching was a “natural extension” for women. This extends the private sphere of mothering and nurturing into the classroom (Clinton & Lunardini, 2000). By the end of the century, women teachers predominated. With the feminization of education, our nation’s perceptions of teachers became shaped and informed by experiences with women teachers.

It is important to note that women teachers have acted as agents of change in American history. Women teachers became involved in political activities not just for the advancement of teachers, but for women as a group. As noted in Carter (2002), many women teachers organized themselves to improve conditions for teachers. Often larger educational organizations allowed women only as associate members who had little sway and few official positions. As previously illustrated by Catharine Beecher, many women teachers used a domestic feminist argument to defend their positions as morally superior and agents of cultural reproduction. However, as Carter explained, this stance changed in the 1900’s as women began to take on issues of equal pay by creating organizations that collectively worked for change. They became a political and social force for pushing agenda items that mattered to them as women and teachers. Carter argued that Biklen excluded an important element, the role played in progressive education by women’s clubs, which advocated for changes in education and teacher compensation (2002). These early organizations were often successful in challenging the patriarchal education system. Various historians have argued the positioning of these organizations as feminist, and that their actions aligned with feminist ideologies that took up the issues restricting women. There were complex reasons for women to teach: economic gain,

religious fervor, social change, activism, independence, intellectual stimulation, affinity for children, and postponing marriage. Each reason is compelling in context, and illustrates the variety of entry points of women teachers to teaching.

**Constructing the feminine teacher.** Hoffman's (2003) historical analysis of teachers gives many examples of the ways that teachers were forced into feminized roles lacking voice and power. Other historians (Carter, 2003) have also detailed the events of the past to focus on the many instances of resistance to this pressure and the ways teachers used their positions to change society, as in the case of the women's suffrage movement. Leaders like Margaret Haley would have agreed with modern theorists such as Apple and McLaren in their vision of the role of teachers as change agents. What Hoffman contributed is a sense of how the times affected teachers. Women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were teachers because they were less expensive than men, because it was their patriotic duty, and because they were naturally suited to teaching. Today this rhetoric has subsided to a degree, but it cannot be erased from our collective history. Esposito (2011) most recently added to the conversation of femininity in educational settings by studying how women in a university participate in narratives of femininity. The women used different, contradictory, and competing discourses of femininity to connect with institutional privilege and power. How women teachers view themselves as women is tightly woven with their connection to the institution of education and their necessity to perform as women within it.

One compelling source for understanding the feminized role of the American teacher can be found in the rules of conduct placed upon them (see Table 2). As seen by the changes in rules between 1872 and 1915, more emphasis was placed on monitoring

young women teachers outside the classroom as the demographics of the workforce changed. Written and unwritten codes of deportment such as curfews, conduct expectations and other

Table 2

*Rules for Teachers*<sup>2</sup>

School Rules—1872	Rules for Teachers—1915
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You will not marry during the term of your contract.</li> <li>2. You are not to keep company with men.</li> <li>3. You must be home between the hours of 8 PM and 6 AM unless at a school function.</li> <li>4. You may not loiter downtown in any of the ice cream stores.</li> <li>5. You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have permission of the chairman of the chairman of the school board.</li> <li>6. You may not ride in carriages or automobiles with any man except your father or brother.</li> <li>7. You may not smoke cigarettes.</li> <li>8. You may not dress in bright colors.</li> <li>9. You may under no circumstances dye your hair.</li> <li>10. You must wear at least 2 petticoats.</li> <li>11. Your dresses may not be any shorter than 2 inches above the ankles.</li> <li>12. To keep the classroom neat and clean you must sweep the floor once a day, scrub the floor with hot soapy water once a week, clean the blackboards once a day and start the fire at 7 AM to have the school warm by 8 AM when the scholars arrive.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will fill lamps, trim wicks and clean chimneys.</li> <li>2. Each morning teacher will bring bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.</li> <li>3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.</li> <li>4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week if they attend church regularly.</li> <li>5. After 10 hours in school the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or any other good book.</li> <li>6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.</li> <li>7. Every teacher should lay aside for each pay day a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.</li> <li>8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barbershop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.</li> <li>9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of \$.25 per week in his pay providing the Board of Education approves.</li> </ol>

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> The sources for these “rules” are unknown; thus we cannot attest to their authenticity—only to their verisimilitude and charming quaintness. They have been used for years by the Museum of New Hampshire History as part of its *Going to School* outreach lesson, but they also appear independently on numerous other websites from Auckland to England. The rules from 1872 have been variously attributed to an 1872 posting in Monroe County, Iowa; to a one-room school in a small town in Maine; and to an unspecified Arizona schoolhouse. The 1915 rules are attributed to a Sacramento teachers’ contract and elsewhere to an unspecified 1915 magazine.

restrictions seem to point to maintaining the virtue and appearance of morality of these young teachers. Even more fascinating is the rule that once married, women teachers would not be permitted to maintain employment. This indicates a firm belief that the work of parenting and homemaking required a woman in the home full time. To take this idea lightly would mean avoiding the perception that women are biologically and naturally designed for child care and nurturing. As populations increased and primary schools became filled with women teachers, this idea of naturally nurturing women teachers perpetuated many stereotypes. Furthermore, it trapped teachers in less than advantageous working agreements. For example, teachers' attempts to organize and strikes have been often times thwarted because it implies that the teachers do not really care for their students. Therefore, we have layered teaching with the performance and expectations of mothering. Teachers were considered naturally able to teach, and that they were the ideals of feminine morality (Kyle, 1992). Teachers were (and perhaps are still) charged with reproducing the culture in their students.

Teachers in more modern times such as the 1950s also dealt with issues of feminine gender stereotypes at work. Cavanagh (2005) used the oral histories of women teachers in Ontario, Canada from the mid-twentieth century to examine the ways teachers defined themselves as women. Many of the teachers she interviewed talked about rejecting the spinster image held previously by teachers and deciding to marry despite that this went against what was considered professional at the time. The post-war culture elevated marriage and family and single teachers were compelled to follow the heterosexual family lifestyle. This led to the problematizing of the unfeminine single teacher as deviant. Furthermore, after this change, women teachers had to negotiate dress



codes that permitted mini-skirts but denied trousers. They often had to deal with sexual harassment from male administrators and chose to adopt masculine traits in order to follow that career path.

Even in second half of the twentieth century, women elementary school teachers continue to struggle with gender identities that constrain them as well as the notion of who a teacher can be. Atkinson (2008) analyzed the conversations of several student teachers around their perceptions of elementary school teacher clothing and identities. The student teachers offered a feminist critique of teachers they had seen in schools, despite having little background in feminist thinking. This prompted Atkinson to use feminist post structural analysis of their talk, from which three categories of teacher dress emerge: apple jumpers, teacher babes, and bland uniformers. Her methods are not explained, though presumably this conversation was a one-time happenstance occurrence followed by member-checking with the participants. Atkinson argued that these categories can also be sites of resistance to these stereotypes by using Foucault's (1980) idea of the subjective and the body to understand discourses of femininity in schooling. The student teachers advocated the dress of the bland uniformer teachers. bell hooks (1994) considered a bland style of dress that disguises the body to be an "erasure" of the body whereby the teacher is under constant scrutiny to be controlled. Atkinson suggested that the student teachers preferred this dress because they were uncomfortable with claiming a feminized professional identity, or teaching as "women's work." Ultimately, this conversation analysis pointed Atkinson to argue that teacher education must also include feminist education so that women teachers may continue conversations about feminine professional identities. Furthermore, this study points to the ways that teachers

maintain or reject feminized bodies in the classroom. How teachers dress is important because the student teachers are claiming a more professionalized and defeminized mode of dress as if to reject teaching as simply a feminine career. These conversations revealed a strong connection for the student teachers between feminized dress and lacking professional status. They were concerned about how their dress would position them as women teachers.

As argued by Altenbaugh (1993), teachers' voices have not been properly highlighted by researchers; as time has passed, this has improved. Reframing what we know about the past is essential to creating honest conceptions about who women teachers were, and what their legacy has been for teachers of today. Not only is this empowering knowledge, but helps to create new understanding of the potential of teachers working for common goals. The way teachers have been treated by historians has shifted from a more objectifying gaze to one of trying to understand the power that teachers exerted in their lives and the lives of others.

### **The Educational System and Women: Neoliberalism and Patriarchal Structures**

There are competing viewpoints on what is meant by the feminization of education. On its face, the feminization of teaching can be the sea change in American education from the school master to the predominance of the woman teacher, as explained previously. As illustrated by the 1920s, women teachers were the norm in America (Perlmann & Margo, 2001). Though there were regional differences as to how this change came to be, pay, and expectations of teachers, women gained the overwhelming majority of teaching jobs, particularly in the younger grades. However, as curricula have developed and changed, a further look is required. The changes in how and

what teachers teach in recent years reflect a change in our understanding of how children learn, all within a social and political context. The industrial model of education positioned the teacher at the front of the room imparting knowledge in a “banking model” (Freire & Macedo, 1998). The teacher delivers the curriculum to each student in the same way. This model of education, as particularly evidenced in bureaucratized city school systems, prized efficiency and valued conformity among teachers and students (Perlmann & Margo, 2001).

The other aspect of “feminization” of education deals with the changing American curriculum. Changing the curriculum from a more traditional banking model to a student-centered pedagogy has also been referred to as feminized. While the inference can be drawn that this is also connected to the feminine teacher delivering a “soft” curriculum, on the surface the feminized curriculum is a pejorative term for progressive teaching methods. In this context, the term progressive is meant to encapsulate student-centered and teacher facilitated teaching methods that are based in research about how children learn. The goal is to value the child and understand different ways children learn. Therefore, the feminized curriculum can be contrasted with the banking model, top-down, efficiency-oriented, and ultimately masculine tradition. What is now considered “traditional” can be situated as patriarchal because of its highly structured and formal design. This concept has been taken on by conservative political groups and led to reform models that are based on creating “teacher-proof” curricula and are highly structured and scripted (Casey & Apple, 1989). The structures of power in traditional teaching and curriculum flow from the top down, rather than from the empowered student. Applying critical theory to this idea helps to foreground the lack of power afforded to students in

this pedagogical model and the reproduction of societal inequities. Identity theory helps connect traditional and patriarchal models of curricula and teaching methods with the positioning of the student in a way that does not give space for agency or resistance (Fairbanks & Ariail, 2011).

### **Progressivism Responding to Patriarchal Curriculum**

In response to the failings of the traditional industrial model of education that marginalizes different types of learners, progressive reformers, such as Dewey (1938/1963), have advocated for a more child-centered and experiential approach to teaching. In this vision of education, the teacher is a facilitator and individualizes the curriculum for each child by providing formative experiences in which the child participates, rather than passively listening to a lecture from a teacher. While Dewey did not claim progressive teaching as anti-patriarchal, he did consider learning imposed from above to be problematic and inappropriate for all children (1938). The assumption is that the student brings his or her own experience and knowledge to the table and the teacher can connect with this to assist in new learning (hooks, 1994). Progressive educational reform is intended to elevate our society and has been further developed to consider social justice as a goal (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970; McLaren, 2007).

The argument presented here is that progressive teaching methods can be considered a response to a patriarchal, traditional education system. Particularly when situated within a critical framework that views literacy and identity as intertwined, writer's workshop has the effect of empowering students engaged in this learning method (Moje & Luke, 2009). Critical literacy methods allow teachers to present their students with ways of learning that help them to question their world in meaningful ways (Freire,

2000). Thus, if writer's workshop is a means of becoming critical as a learner, then it is also a means of becoming critical of a patriarchal educational system. Harding and Hintikka (1983) explained the Aristotelian roots of patriarchy as based in a social system of male domination that situates women as inferior. Clearly, women teachers being positioned as feminine and progressive educational methods being considered feminized are resultant of a patriarchal mindset that views the feminine as inferior. While progressive education methods have not been driven by feminist responses to industrialized, standardized, top-down, and therefore patriarchal teaching methods, this connection is obvious when women teachers are considered as part of the equation.

Writer's workshop is one example of a progressive educational reform that is student-centered. As detailed in the first chapter, teaching writing is a complex and critical endeavor in the elementary classroom. It requires intensive teacher knowledge and skill, and I argue that it is a potential vehicle for teachers to gain agency, power, and voice in schools. Teaching writing is a form of resistance to the standardization and deskilling of women teachers that has been so common in history and today because it is a creative process that is a format for critical thought. Teachers can engage in the process of writing authentically are therefore able to engage in resistance. Carter (2002) explained that "at least some teachers reproduce and accommodate the hegemony while also questioning, resisting reproduction, and trying to change it" (pg. 31). This points to the possibility within writing to serve as a way for teachers to reclaim some authentic version of teaching in their classrooms and in doing so claim their own voices and professionalism as women. Considering identity theory helps to illuminate how positioning teachers in multiple ways allows spaces for agency and resistance, which can

occur when teachers are engaged in teaching methods such as writer's workshop (Flint et al., 2011; Holland et al., 1998).

Moje and Luke (2009) offered helpful metaphors for understanding literacy and identity. Because literacy and identity are so intimately connected, studies that concern these topics need to consider ways that identity is being used as a rhetorical tool. This study positions itself as part of the literacy and identity research being discussed here. Furthermore, the authors delineated commonalities between most literacy and identity researchers. One concept is that identities are social in nature, not individually constructed, and yet lived out by individuals. Second, identities are in flux, comprised of many dimensions, and not fixed or stable. Finally, we consider identity to be recognized by others (Gee, 2001). These three perspectives, while taking on various nuances when taken up by different researchers, are overarching commonalities of literacy and identity research.

Based in Vygotsky, identity as mind or consciousness positions identity in dialectic with activity, both cycling and shaping each other (Moje & Luke, 2009). Vygotsky (1934/1996) theorized that literacy shapes the mind, which then shapes the identity or self. One particularly compelling contribution to the identity as mind and consciousness metaphor is Anzaldúa's (1987) explanation of writing. She situated writing as "not merely an act of constructing identity; it is her identity, it builds on the self (not just a sense of self, but the actual self), sustains the self, and emanates from it" (Luke & Moje, 2009). This concept helps strengthen the connection between identity and writing.

Writing is by nature an act of self-revelation, where the author takes a risk to put down his or her words on paper to share with others. In the classroom, writing is a subject that requires the teacher to view him/herself as a writer in order to teach effectively. A writer's workshop model hinges on the belief that writing is an ongoing process in which the teacher is a facilitator guiding students toward new thinking as writers (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1994). The writing workshop allows students time to write on topics of their choosing and includes structures including teacher-student conferences, author circles, author chairs, and writing celebrations for published pieces (Calkins, 1994). Teachers provide students with exposure to texts and opportunities to write authentically. This model is student-directed and responsive to student competencies, yet relies on the expertise of the teacher as writer and guide through the recursive process of writing. Writing in this setting is not prescribed to students, rather it is authentic and purposeful. Calkins and Atwell both advocated the teacher writing along with and in front of their students, meaning that the teacher is not simply a facilitator, but also a writer in the classroom community.

Writer's workshop classrooms require teachers to participate in writing. Teachers learn to how to craft writing pieces that are reflective, authentic, and have voice- the very same message that the teacher attempts to teach the students. Writing in this manner is liberatory and feminist work that reveals one's identity. Frequently the focus of writer's workshop is that this will be empowering to students, but a fortuitous byproduct is that it may have the same effect on teachers. In recent research with elementary school teachers, teachers began to take a stance as teacher-leaders as they learned to teach writer's workshop in their classrooms (Flint et al., 2011). As they developed an

understanding of writer's workshop as a means of critical literacy for their students, they mobilized other teachers to participate in professional development in writing, presented at conferences, and questioned surveillance and directives aimed at increasing standardization of their classrooms.

### **Neoliberalism as a Backlash to Progressive Teaching Methods**

Neoliberalism, politically speaking, is the attempt to transfer power from the public sector to the private sector (Lakes & Carter, 2011). Lakes and Carter apply this concept to the educational system, showing that this privatization positions students and teachers at the mercy of the market, "chasing credentials" and adhering to scripted curricula that are popular at any given moment. Most recently, conservative political backlash to progressive teaching methods have led to a neoliberal stance that positions these methods as "soft pedagogy." Making teaching methods feminine or masculine aligns them with gender roles or stereotypes (Geerdink, 2007). Geerdink posits that there are stereotypically male and female poles that are dimensions of education. The feminine includes student-oriented, intrinsic motivation focused on others. The masculine is opposite: content oriented, external motivation, and object focused. This division in education is easily linked to progressive teaching versus traditional teaching methods. By these measures, neoliberalism in education is decidedly masculine with privatization focusing on extrinsically motivating and concerned with the self, as opposed to a community oriented view and concern for all. Notably, according to a Pew Research Center survey most Americans from both genders, all races, and all ages say they prefer women as elementary school teachers (2008). How does this impact our notions of who



teachers are today? Preferring women elementary teachers belies the implicit truth that American society views teaching as feminine.

As previously explained with writer's workshop, progressive teaching methods are considered feminized. Not only are these methods thought to be inferior instructionally, but many believe they actually cause damage to boys and their masculinity (Sommers, 2000). In addition, a "moral panic" over perception that girls have surpassed boys in academic school success has contributed to the sense that schools are feminized in ways that privilege the perceived feminine ways girls learn and exclude masculine ways of learning (Driessen, 2007). In response to this backlash in the educational climate, policies have returned schooling to a more economic model, in which efficiency and measurement of progress are essential. Not all research has found that a more student centered, or typically progressive classroom is beneficial for all involved, particularly the teachers. One such dissenting opinion is that while appearing to empower students, teachers actually disempower themselves and relegate themselves to the periphery of the classroom. Gomez (2007) argued against student-centered pedagogy as an alternative to more masculinist or traditional teaching methods. Teachers trade the marginalization of some students for their own, and are relegated to the edges of the classroom as facilitators. In doing so, they embrace the values of white middle-class motherhood. Rather, Gomez wants teachers to use their expertise in various classroom spaces, not just the margins.

Pitzer (2008) argued that policies such as No Child Left Behind, operate on a patriarchal model. This neo-liberal policy institutes accountability and standardization in a falsely professionalizing way. Pitzer claimed that this policy devalues teaching and

assumes that teaching is “glorified babysitting” and that anyone could fill the role of teacher. Dillabough (1999) commented that this type of professionalism actually has deleterious effects on teachers because they rest on gender dualisms. This constrains teachers’ ability to teach authentically and deskills them by forcing teachers to follow protocol and standards. Furthermore, she argues that masculine ideals of standardization and professionalism devalue any gender codes associated with the feminine. This pushes women teachers further away from the locus of power, as they will never be viewed as rational and masculine. Dillabough wrote:

However, the dominance of an essentialized teaching ‘self’ in teacher education- the rational teacher- functions to mask the reality that most women teachers are situated on the inferior side of the gender binary. This position ultimately leads to women’s exclusion from the formal language of teacher professionalism, yet simultaneously defines their inclusion on the basis of female subordination (pg. 381).

Dillabough called for feminist analysis of teachers and action towards reclaiming the “political and social dimensions of teaching” (pg. 391).

While Pitzer, Gomez, and Dillabough all addressed the gendered issues of power and teachers, arguably, they all can offer something useful to a new way of seeing student-centered pedagogy in the particular arena of writing in the classroom. Literacy is one particularly sensitive area in the division of policies. More scripted and sequentially lock-step programs are favored by conservative and traditional-minded people, while a whole language approach and writer’s workshop are seen as progressive and liberal. Schwandt (2005) connected curricular control with the deskilling and deprofessionalizing of teachers. Keeping teachers separated from decision making about curriculum (essential to scripted literacy programs) actually deprofessionalizes them, under the pretense of creating a more structured, systematic and accountable approach to teaching.

### **Professional Development and Teachers**

When elementary school teachers take on intellectually engaging teaching practices, such as writer's workshop, they claim identities beyond disengaged professionalism that is prevalent in No Child Left Behind policy (Sec. 1119). These teacher-writers must understand and build relationships with students in order to create classroom writing spaces, as well as know the particular methods required to reach and teach each child. Far beyond this, they must also develop themselves as writers.

Professional development is one way that teacher quality can be addressed. As part of No Child Left Behind (Sec. 1119), getting trained and certified teachers into classrooms has been a priority. Often, their reactions to professional development reflect a resistance to a top down, "banking model" of instruction (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Freire & Macedo, 1998). In our current political climate, politicians are pushing for highly qualified teachers. Many districts also provide professional development experiences for in-service teachers as means to develop and increase the quality of their teachers. Unfortunately, teachers typically have little input into their professional development experiences. Typical teacher responses to professional development range from unwillingness to resentment at top down approaches to teacher learning (Borko, Liston & Whitcomb, 2006). However, several viable alternatives have been used with success in schools around the country. Models such as Critical Friends Groups and Professional Learning Communities (National School Reform Foundation, Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) have allowed teachers more input into their own learning. Study groups have had a positive impact on teacher learning and development in many content areas (Birchak, Connor, Crawford, Kahn, Kaser, & Short, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 2003;

Florio-Ruane & Raphael, 2001). Some of these outcomes include stronger partnerships between teachers, a better connection between theory and practice, and a renewed feeling of professionalism from teachers (Birchak, et al.; Nieto, 2001). Teacher study groups are based on a call for more dynamic, dialogic thinking about the ways in which knowledge can be generated (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Flint et al., 2011). Similarly, Professional Development Schools have formed connections with universities to provide expertise to schools and help renew both schools of education as well as teacher learning (NCATE, 2010). Professional development in writer's workshop that empowers teachers is an important avenue for reshaping the role of teachers in the education system. Professional development that connects teachers and engages them with writer's workshop helps them to reclaim a more powerful position in their own professional lives. In order to reach out to teachers and develop critical stances in them as professionals, professional development that is caring must be in place. A generative collaborative model of professional development using an ethic of care helps teachers claim positions of agency in their classrooms (Flint et al., 2011).

### **Caring in Teaching: Is It Feminine?**

Considering care begins with understanding how care is involved in education. Typically, caring is situated as flowing from teacher to student in a way perfectly befitting a feminine teacher. Teachers today are still affected by constricting gender stereotypes that may affect their identities. One struggle teachers have dealt with is that women teachers are stereotyped as naturally caring and nurturing. The construction of teachers as caring and nurturing has been examined by both Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984). To understand this concept, their work will be reviewed. The teacher as

nurturer and caregiver is a common expectation that is tied to femininity and positioned women teachers as mothers in the classroom (Grumet, 1981). Deconstructing caring is essential to understanding how care works in progressive classrooms and how it is or is not connected to femininity and women teachers.

Whether they are mothers or not, women today are still too often cast in the nurturant role, whatever their occupation or location. This nurturant position is that of the self-sacrificing listener and stroker, the one who turns toward the wounded, needful ego that uses her as a mirror and enclosing womb, giving nothing to her, and she is of course, polite enough not to ask (Young, 2003).

Young captured the role expected of teachers, particularly in the elementary classroom. Teachers are expected to become the caregiver of the child, rather than the facilitator of learning. As recently as 1974, the teacher has been positioned as a mother in the classroom. Donovan's *The Schoolma'am* described the teaching as suited for women because it "provides her with an outlet for maternal sentiments often as great, and sometimes even greater, than that of women who have borne children" (1974, p. 314). How can we tease apart the caring that is foundational in a career based on helping others from the maternal and feminine care that is stereotyped as feminine?

That said, teaching is undeniably a career that creates relationships with people. It requires the teacher to know his or her students and be responsive in teaching style. This positions teaching in a potentially treacherous way because in neo-liberal society (valuing efficiency and cost-effectiveness in education), caring and teaching are considered feminine and therefore "other," or outside the realm of rationality and politics (Dillabough, 1999). But what exactly is caring and what does it mean in education? Noddings's (1984) definition of caring centered not solely on warmth and empathy, but rather on teachers' authentic care for the development of a student. She defined caring as

the engagement of the teacher with the student working towards his or her authentic progress. It is not particularly feminine nor an innate personality trait, but rather purposeful and intentional dialogue between teacher and student. Considering the implications of teachers as caring is necessary to explore the gender stereotypes of teachers today. The common stereotype of an elementary school teacher is that of a naturally caring and warm woman. However, while this conception is pleasant, it limits the understanding of what caring is, and who can care and be cared for. Furthermore, it positions women as biologically predestined to care, further essentializing teaching as feminine.

It is imperative that the ethic of care be understood from various perspectives, including the mistaken notion that caring is something particular to women. When Gilligan (1982) began to use the term ethic of care, she explained it as a moral stance in which a person is ethical and strives for justice. However, Gilligan also pointed out the common conception of care as feminine. Examining the relation between gender and caring is essential to understanding the meanings people have for caring. Walby (1989) describes caring as situated in both gender and class in the patriarchal context. In a case study of students and teachers, Vogt (2002) found that caring emerged among both men and women primary teachers, and was understood as “responsibility for and relatedness to” (pg. 251). Vogt’s research did not find that caring was uniquely the domain of women teachers. Vogt studied how teachers described issues of caring in teaching through interviews, sometimes involving photos and opportunities for participants to draw. Vogt found that the teacher’s gender did not define his or her attitude about caring; in fact he or she operated within a framework of caring as part of the demands of the profession.

Vogt considered that the ethic of care, as defined by Noddings (1984), is useful for discussing teaching, but found also that some teachers reject ideas of feminine caring as undermining the professionalism of teaching. The ethic of care does not relate to gender in these findings and rather uncovers a spectrum or range of understandings and modes of caring that teachers have. These range from the gendered motherly care to caring as commitment. Vogt aimed to expand Noddings' definition of caring as being prevalent among women primary school teachers.

Noddings and Gilligan fall into the category described by Weiler (2006) as maternal feminists, claiming the moral superiority of women and possibly essentializing them as unchangingly feminine. The problems associated with casting teachers as caring include this idea of teachers as moral, nurturing, and sacrificing. As Dillabough (1999) pointed out, women are cast into feminine definitions that are therefore opposite of what is politically valuable and therefore on the outside of the discussion of change and decision making. Carter (2002) argued that the construction of women as natural caregivers allows women to be teachers: "Society at large generally believed women to be superior teachers, especially for the lower grades, reasoning that a biological predestination gave them a natural affinity for children" (p. 100).

There is little to no research on teachers as recipients of care in their professional learning. Research on caring has focused primarily on adult teachers "caring for" younger students. For example, in a study of the underachievement of U.S.-born Mexican high school students, Valenzuela (1999) develops the concept of subtractive schooling. This is the term for a schooling process that actually takes away from its students; actually leaving them feeling that nobody cares for them or their success and as if they have little

to contribute to their own learning or the learning of others. Valenzuela misses the opportunity to consider caring for teachers via professional development. The idea of subtractive schooling, apparently traditionally patriarchal in nature, can also be applied to professional development that deprofessionalizes, demoralizes, or disrespects teachers' own voices. Conversely, according to Valenzuela, schooling that is additive takes into account the need for authentic caring to occur that recognizes the learner as a whole person and values what he or she brings to the table. Professional development for teachers can also serve the same purpose.

Applying identity and positioning theory to this study helps to see how teachers might be able to create new positions for themselves when spaces for resistance and agency can be carved out (Fairbanks, Crooks & Ariail, 2011). Additionally, critical theory situates literacy, in this case professionalizing experiences around writer's workshop, as a vehicle for teachers to resist and craft multiple identities in which they can translate their own feelings of being cared for into authentic caring for their students. Students that are cared for, as argued by Valenzuela, can then take on agentive identities as students. Caring, and the emotions that result from being cared for, is connected with identity formation. Zembylas (2003) connected teachers' emotions with their identities in a way that indicates how "emotions can become sites of resistance and self-transformation" (p. 214). Teachers engaged in caring professional development can also craft agentive and resistant identities. The connection between emotion and identity formation can be seen in this context.



## Conclusions

While this new research is promising, more must be done to examine the possibilities of writing instruction and teacher identity. Directions to consider should include how teachers' self-identification of gendered attributes reflects their own identities as teachers. How teachers' identities change as they implement authentic writing. Some recent research has explored how teachers' identities are "discursively co-constructed in the particulars of everyday practice" (Handsfield, Crumpler, & Dean, 2010). Handsfield, et al. shed light on the difficulties teachers have balancing their own ideologies of teaching literacy in culturally relevant ways, and their own multiple and sometimes conflicting identities as teachers. Britzman (1986) studied how teachers participate in perpetuating cultural myths about who teachers are and can be. For example, student teachers quickly come to believe that teaching is lonely, individual effort. Narratives such as this may contribute to the possible positional identities that teachers can claim. Finally, it would be interesting to consider how students and teachers can use writing as a way to study and investigate social inequities, be they gender, race, class, disabilities, etc. This literature review highlighted the historical influences of gendered expectations and identities on women elementary school teachers.

Furthermore, the potential for teachers to write a way out of the current neo-liberal and patriarchal school system has been laid bare. It is now up to researchers and teachers to expand the ways writing within a critical context is understood and use it as a form of teaching that empowers all who are engaged in it. Teaching writing may provide teachers a parallel experience to the curriculum of the students: finding their voices, writing for authentic purposes, and becoming critical thinkers- all agentive and resistant acts. Weiler

(1988) defined voice to mean teachers and students becoming authors of their own worlds. Furthermore, situating themselves in history, students and teachers can use their voices to become critical of their own identities and the positions they may not have previously interrogated. Considering teachers as authors and connecting literacy with identity is crucial to determining how women teachers can create empowered identities and position themselves in agentic ways.

The preparation and intellectual engagement required of writer's workshop positions teachers as experts and professionals, while also maintaining authentic relationships with students. The work done around teaching writer's workshop with children reflects this premise and will be the basis of defining authentic writing as process oriented and recursive (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1994). An alternative application of this is using teachers and the ways they are able to question gender constraints by learning and implementing writer's workshop in their classrooms. Teachers claiming a knowledgeable and expert voice as practitioners of writer's workshop situate themselves as critical of a patriarchal system that denies them expertise and requires obedience to mandated curricula. Furthermore, teachers who experience and give authentic care resist a system that diminishes students to serving only as sources of test data in a system overly concerned with efficiency and standardization.

The connections made here to the past were meant to illuminate the gendered power relations that teachers must negotiate today. As demonstrated, there is literature on teachers, their history, gender, power, and identity that can inform future research. However, what has yet to be considered fully is the ways teachers shift or alter their identities from previously limited self-definitions to more empowered ideas of

themselves. We see from the work of teacher educators and researchers that these kinds of transformations are essential to teacher learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Yet, the power relations within schools and between teachers and society must not remain hidden to teachers. In the particular case of women elementary school teachers, researchers need to examine how identity works and changes. This study addresses the following questions: (a) How have the participants' identities been affected by their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative? (b) How does gender mediate their professional identities? By considering these questions in the magnified viewing lens of a case study, detailed conclusions with real life examples will be culled. The kind of research this requires is emancipatory and action based in order to reveal inequities and work for solutions (Lather, 1991). This study explored teachers in the context of caring, generative and collaborative professional development using writer's workshop. How they respond as women teachers to this activity will be detailed in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Methodological Orientation**

This case study explored the perspectives of two women elementary school teachers, Sarah and Catherine<sup>3</sup>, who serve as a case to investigate. The research questions were: (a) How have the participants' identities been affected by their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative? (b) How does gender mediate their professional identities? The methodology of this study reflects the theoretical framework. Identity theory and critical theory, both with poststructuralist epistemologies that work to deconstruct assumptions and beliefs about phenomena, benefit from a case study methodology because they provide the details of a phenomena that can be teased apart in a revelatory way. The research questions for this study were best explored using a case study methodology that allowed me to delve into the participants' lived experiences as women teachers and perceptions of their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative. As a case, these two participants provide insight as to how and why women elementary teachers involved in writer's workshop professional development craft professional identities.

This particular case study is grounded in the larger field of qualitative research. Using Creswell's (2009) definition, qualitative research is the exploration of the meanings people make from social and human problems. The flow of reasoning is inductive, and produces insight by focusing one phenomenon. Qualitative research is situated within certain beliefs about knowledge and truth as contextual and multiple.

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<sup>3</sup> All names are pseudonyms

Qualitative research is the methodological stance that informs this case study. The emphases of qualitative research are experience and interpretation, within the context of studying a particular phenomenon. Qualitative research is based on this way of knowing and makes knowledge claims based on that premise.

The effects of postmodernism on social research have led to a methodology that does not seek a universal truth, but rather the multiple truths that are constructed in context specific moments (Esposito, 2007, class notes). Schram (2003) described the complexities of postmodernism as “the positioning of inquiry and the inquirer amidst contradictory and complicated issues of power, ownership of knowledge, and political and economic contexts” (pg. 3). According to Merriam (1998), qualitative research can be interpretive, meaning that it is centered on the participants’ lived experiences of a process. In this study, these lived experiences are the teachers’ own explanations of how they were involved in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative as they began to discover and implement writer’s workshop. Case study, under the influence of postmodernism, allows participants’ multiple realities and responses to a process to be detailed. Complexity and depth are at the forefront. The literature review presented studies that highlighted teachers’ voices and life stories through history (Carter, 2002; Biklen, 1995). Case study is most appropriate for the kind of research that values participants’ voices, and allows researchers to gather vast detail on individual participants.

Qualitative research can also be critical in that it is an “ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression in areas of educational practice” (Merriam, 1998). This strand of research is of the advocacy and participatory worldview (Creswell, 2009). Case

study methodology places participants in a place of power where their answers guide the researcher to what is to be studied and what is important. Situating qualitative case study as an ideological critique is particularly relevant to the research questions of this study, in that they consider the identities of the participants within a larger context of the educational system. Critical theory and identity theory inform every aspect of this study, in my attempt to deconstruct and identify power, resistance, and agency in my participants' experiences as women teachers. As detailed in the literature review, teachers' identities are positioned in different ways and are possible sites of agency and resistance to a system that is potentially constraining to women teachers (Apple, 2004; Weiler, 1988; Acker, 1989).

Yin (2003) explained that the goal of case study work is to be able to "expand and generalize theories" (pg. 10). Case study is used when the context is integral to the case. Merriam added to this definition stating that case study is "employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (1998, pg. 19). Merriam noted that case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. By nature of being particularistic, the case study is therefore concerned with the bounded unit as the focus, while making a "holistic view of the situation" the final product (pg. 29). The descriptive aspect of case study includes the idea that "thick" description, including as many aspects as possible is required (Geertz, 1973). Thick description is possible in case study because of the deeper and prolonged engagement with individual participants. Finally, case study as heuristic means that the researcher will explain the phenomenon by giving background, reasons for problems, and providing the reader with a deeper understanding and meaning of the phenomenon. In summary, a case study is useful when

there is a particular situation or phenomenon that the researcher wants to understand. While a particular case study is not generalizable in a quantitative way, it will provide a report for readers to inform themselves and possibly affect policy decisions. The hallmark of qualitative research is its particularity rather than generalizability (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, in Creswell, 2009).

Case studies are useful for exploring an unusual or representative case or a case that has been overlooked in the past, as is often the case with research overlooking women (Reinharz, 1992). This study's theoretical framework also takes a critical stance and uses feminism to help understand case study, meaning I considered issues of gender and power in interpreting the case. Case studies may reveal knowledge that contradicts the status quo or commonly held beliefs. This might reveal the role of gender and power in social phenomenon so that researchers can better understand these concepts in action. Reinharz positioned case studies as defying the social science norm because of their concern with specificity, context, and completeness as opposed to generalizability. An over reliance on generalizability has often "obscured phenomena important to particular groups, including women" (pg. 174). Esposito (2011) called for research that is concerned with how gender and femininity are negotiated and demonstrated in educational contexts. This case study attempts to deal with the gendered ways that women teachers create their identities as professionals. The participants in this study are both women, and the research questions are aimed at uncovering potential issues of power, resistance and agency in their lives as teachers.

Case study best addresses the research questions because they ask for in-depth knowledge about teachers' identities. By studying a smaller case closely, this knowledge

will be more likely to be found, as it is not something easily seen on the surface. The hope is that by looking at this particular case, larger issues that might be affecting other women teachers will become evident. While my intention is not to generalize, particular information can be helpful to researchers, policy makers, and others in the field of education to make thoughtful decisions. Furthermore, case studies are helpful because they allow a focus on the process, as in the participants' involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative over time.

### **Case Study Design**

Stake (1995) explained that case studies have the following characteristics: a bounded system that is bounded also by time and place, an extended time frame, and deep and detailed data collection. Before proceeding, the case must be defined. This is a single case study meant to explore a representative or typical case (Yin, 2003). The boundaries of this single case study are the teachers within the context of the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative that was part of the Professional Development Schools grant at Corey Richardson Elementary School. The boundaries are further defined by the teachers choosing to participate in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative. In addition to the single case's context boundary, there were also time boundaries. The grant lasted for five years, and is completed. However, because the research questions of this study are reflective in nature, data collection occurred after teachers' participation in the grant concluded. The time boundary of their involvement in the grant helped to determine interview protocol and study design. The data collection time frame was therefore determined based on how much time it would take to build rapport with the participants, allow them time to reflect between interviews, as well as include the time needed to take



photographs and collect documents for discussion. Additionally, time needed for the researcher to engage in data analysis throughout data collection was considered when making the study timeline (see figure 1, p. 65). Further details about the study time line will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

In addition, case study is useful for “contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context” (p. 13). Case studies are helpful when answering questions about the “how” or “why” of a phenomenon; they are explanatory and exploratory. As opposed to an ethnography, case studies may begin with prepositions and have a more focused question within the context of a bounded system. Merriam (1988, p. 21) called qualitative case study “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit.” Case study design can be emergent because the researcher can alter and develop the design as more data are collected from the case. In the case study presented here, careful decisions about design were made by the researcher based on prior knowledge and involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative.

This embedded case study used purposive sampling based on particular criteria that are connected with the research questions. Criteria helped to determine which participants to select from the group of teachers participating in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative. By designing this case study using embedded units of analysis I had the opportunity to compare teachers during data analysis. Because the study focused on the gender issues of women teachers, both participants are women. The decision to exclude men from the study was not made easily; there was one man teacher named John that I determined not to ask to participate. I considered the value of a comparative case study between men and women teachers, but decided against it. The reason for this is

because I wanted to locate women elementary school teachers within a historical context, and as part of a larger group. Men elementary teachers, unfortunately for the sake of equity, do not have this same historical entry point to teaching. Furthermore, because of the small sample in this case study, I wanted my participants to have more similarities than differences. While gender is a socially constructed similarity, it nonetheless acts as a classification giving Sarah and Catherine a strong commonality. Sarah and Catherine both present themselves as heterosexual, feminine women.

Additional criteria for selecting my participants included that both participants have been involved in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative and have taken steps that indicate their interest and success in using writer's workshop. Despite their varying degrees of involvement (Sarah was involved longer in time), both teachers became comfortable using writer's workshop in their classrooms and at the time of writing this, are still implementing writer's workshop as a teaching method. Of the pool of teachers that were also involved and using writer's workshop, Sarah and Catherine in particular took further action based on their learning. Of the teachers in the pool considered, only Sarah and Catherine fulfilled all of the criteria. Both attended professional conferences outside of the school day. Sarah presented at conferences and Catherine enrolled in graduate school during the time of the PDS grant. Both Sarah and Catherine, while different in age, have similar family backgrounds. They are both Caucasian and middle class, from families that valued education. Sarah and Catherine have many differences, such as age and years teaching, but as outlined above their similarities are important to the questions of this study. Finally, both Sarah and Catherine were willing to take the time to be interviewed and were interested in being participants in my study.

Case study is a research strategy with inherent design and guidelines (Yin, 2003). As detailed above, this single case embedded design with two units of analysis has been selected for several reasons. The units of analysis for this embedded case study were the two participants. Data were collected separately for each participant, and therefore they each act as a unit of analysis. In the data analysis process, their data were considered both separately and together in a comparative fashion that allowed continual contemplation and reconsideration of emerging themes. Embedded case studies are helpful when the units of analysis comparison may illustrate or indicate particularly salient findings (Yin, 2003). Further detail about the data analysis process will be presented subsequently.

### **Participants and Context**

The case for this project included two women elementary school teachers who were purposively selected. This section briefly introduces Sarah and Catherine, with detailed profiles of them and their school provided in the next chapter. The first is Sarah, a veteran teacher with over 25 years of experience who teaches third grade. Recently she has been involved in the professional development around writing offered to her by the university partnership, the Cory Richardson Writing Collaborative. The second participant is Catherine, who has been teaching less than five years and also has been involved in the same professional development, although only for one school year. This is her first permanent teaching position, and she has exclusively taught first grade at Corey Richardson. Sarah was selected to participate because of the unusual nature of her case. Being a more experienced teacher, in the larger research program in which this study is situated, Sarah has changed in considerable ways. She has implemented writer's workshop in her classroom and started to challenge the current curriculum in other

subjects. Sarah has also become a teacher leader and attended and presented at conferences such as Whole Language Umbrella and National Council for Teachers of English, as well as encouraged her colleagues to become involved in professional development in writing. Catherine joined the writing collaborative one year after Sarah, and has begun to implement her new learning. She too has become involved in professional experiences such as attending conferences and starting graduate school. By collecting data from both of these women, rich picture of their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative can be made. As part of their involvement in the generative collaborative professional development offered at Corey Richardson, Sarah and Catherine engaged in a variety of learning activities. These included in class modeling of writing lessons, after school workshops, debriefing sessions to discuss classroom instruction, and the study of professional literature such as *Choice Words* (Johnston, ) and *Wondrous Words* (Ray, 1999).

### **Researcher Role**

My role as the researcher in this study must be revealed and transparent to participants and readers. The power dynamics that are in place that affect the teachers includes the affiliation of the study with the university. As a member of the research team headed by Dr. Flint, I spent over a year working at Corey Richardson before launching this study. I knew both Sarah and Catherine professionally and socially. I have facilitated teacher study groups, transcribed, gathered, and analyzed data, coauthored papers, and presented on the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative at conferences. My involvement with the PDS grant research group and the affiliated university gave me an “expert” status upon entering the school. This power differential was constantly

negotiated between me and the participants, and I continually tried to position the teachers as experts and as knowledgeable. In my interactions with Sarah and Catherine, I tried to frame myself as a teacher colleague to make them more comfortable. I emphasized my own position as an elementary school teacher and tried to relate to them as I would any colleague. This gave us more of an equal status as I collected research, and I feel that my own experience as an elementary school teacher allowed me to easily build a rapport with my participants. In addition, by providing positive commentary on the ideas they shared, leaving space in conversations for their responses, and pointing out ways of knowing that they have, I further created a more equitable relationship. Moreover, the relationship had been established through my participation in the overarching research project. I continually had to be reflexive in the ways that I presented myself to Sarah and Catherine and worked, as all qualitative researchers should, to let my participants' feel comfortable sharing themselves without feeling judged by me. I adopted a neutral tone and often agreed with them to encourage them to continue to share their thoughts and perceptions of their lived experiences as women teachers.

I had to bracket my own beliefs about what the participants were experiencing based on my previous experience at Corey Richardson. As Merriam (1998) explained, "When belief is temporarily suspended, consciousness itself becomes heightened and can be examined in the same way that an object of consciousness can be examined" (p. 16). By bracketing my own beliefs about the influence of the professional development offered to teachers at Corey Richardson, I attempted to see the participants with fresh eyes and reconsider my own perceptions of their experiences. I continually tried to give more weight to their words and responses than to my own reflections and thoughts. This

was aided by my ability to take time away from my work as a research team member before beginning my own study at Corey Richardson. Re-entering Corey Richardson independent of the research team several months later allowed me to metaphorically re-enter the field and attempt to shed my preconceived notions to the degree that any person can accomplish that task.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study were multiple and ongoing within a larger, more prolonged study during a PDS grant, which evolved organically into the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative. Data previously collected includes interviews, transcriptions of debriefing sessions between the teachers and the faculty member, observations, and student work. While the data previously collected by the research team informed my research questions and afforded me prior knowledge of the setting and participants, the study presented here collected data completely independently and in a new direction from previous work.

A case study does not only depend on participant observation, as an ethnography might, but has more sources of evidence to triangulate the data because there are many variables. The following data types were collected: observations, interviews, and documents.

As a participant observer, I was involved in the school during professional development sessions and am familiar with the issues that arose for the teachers concerning the day to day implementation of new writing instruction. I observed the two teachers' classrooms at three times during the initial month of the study. Observations were made for the duration of the literacy block, typically one to two hours in length. The

observations had the goal of determining exactly how the participants were teaching writer's workshop to triangulate the data from interviews, so it was not necessary for these observations to be spaced over the length of the study. Using the continuum which ranges from solely observational to fully participative (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002), my researcher role was typically participative in the classroom. Field notes were taken from classroom observations that occurred during writing instruction. These field notes focused on the happenings of the classroom primarily, though not limited to, during writing workshop, and gave me space for researcher commentary relating to gender and identity issues. Purely observational notes would have been forced due to the relationship already developed with the participants, being a fly on the wall is more difficult when you are known well by your participants. Qualitative research is time consuming and requires that the researcher be present in most cases, perhaps except for some cases in which historical data are collected. The goal of data collection in qualitative studies is to provide a "thick description" of the phenomenon (Geertz, 1973). Thick description of the school, participants, and observations provided the necessary detail for the reader to understand the context.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were crucial to understanding the teachers' identities and responses to teaching writer's workshop (see Appendix A for interview protocol). I scheduled and completed five in-depth interviews with each participant over the span of five months. Using a series of interviews spaced over time allowed me to build rapport with my participants. It was extremely important in the interviewing process to empower and respect the participant that trust is established by building a rapport with the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Building rapport means connecting

and allowing relationships to grow with participants. This relationship building has been an ongoing project for the researcher, and benefited the research during interviews. Each interview lasted one to two hours. The first interview focused more on the teachers' perceptions of writing instruction in their classrooms, and each interview thereafter focused on the related set of questions. However, these questions changed as part of my data analysis. As I learned more from my participants, questions were added, subtracted or reworded. Flexible interview protocols allowed the researcher "access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than in the words of the researcher" (Reinharz, 1992, p.19). These changes were part of the data analysis inherent in data collection of qualitative case study and are detailed in the following section. Narrative data from interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. These files were stored as audio files for use during data analysis as well.

A third source of data was document based. These documents included student writing, teacher writing, or other print materials such as memos, literacy programs, or other documents that were in the setting. Documents can become informative when they are viewed as data sources. These documents were used in two ways. First, they were part of the collection of data that were analyzed. In addition, these documents were used in interviews to encourage conversation and reflection (Prior, 2003). Visual data were incorporated into this category of in the form of photographs. I asked the teachers to take photographs for the subject of a photo elicited interview, following Prior's suggestion for using visual data as a source of conversation. These photographs were teacher selected and helped to triangulate data and themes. Documents and photos became the subject of interview conversations.



## Study Timeline

Data were collected over five months (see Figure 1 below). Beginning in May, I visited the site to gather data. I conducted five interviews with each teacher and observed in each classroom three times during literacy instruction. The last two interviews were centered on collected documents and visual data sources. Documents were collected throughout this process, as were my analytic memos.

<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>
Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5
Professional History	Personal History	Literacy History	Photo Elicitation	Document Elicitation
Observation 1,2, and 3				
Initial Coding and Reflection		Continuation of Refined Coding		Final Code Development
Document Collection throughout				
Researcher Memos throughout				

*Figure 1.* Timeline for Study.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis occurs when data collection begins. Decisions about which data to collect, what to include or exclude, were made as data were collected and interpreted. As more data were gathered, I made decisions about what to do next, such as which interview questions to ask, or which documents may be needed. This decision making process was aided by the use of analytic memos (Strauss, 1987). Memos are a tool for researchers to reflect and write about their thoughts from being in the field, as well as at crucial points throughout data analysis as codes are developed and defined. My data

analysis was also aided by the use of audio files. Between interviews I listened to all previous interview recordings from both participants. This process helped me feel like I was living with my data. I became very familiar with my participants' voices and responses. This process was hugely influential in my thinking because I felt very comfortable with changing interview questions and seeing possible patterns in my data. My memos were also audio recordings, which allowed me to further reflect on my initial reactions after interview sessions. I came to each interview having recently listened to the previous interviews. I timed the interviews so that each participant was on the same interview concurrently. I made notes on my interview questions after each interview and also considered the questions in my recorded analytic memos. The following example illuminates the process I engaged in as I transformed interview protocol. This approach is one facet of constant comparative data analysis where data is collected and considered in light of previously collected data and emerging themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

I began the first interviews with Sarah and Catherine with the protocol for their professional history (see Appendix A). I determined that having a conversation about their professional lives would be an ideal starting point that would not be overly intimate for a first interview, yet would also provide inroads for probes in following interviews by giving me an overarching picture of who the participants are as teachers. What I discovered was that in discussing their professional lives, Sarah and Catherine also revealed many details about their personal lives. For example, when answering the third question asking them to describe how they were prepared to be teachers, and why they became teachers, it was unavoidable for the participants to tell me details of their personal lives. Their professional decisions were very much rooted in their personal

histories. Therefore, in the second interview when I had planned to ask Sarah and Catherine about the role of work in their lives, I found that I already knew the answer to that question. Similar situations occurred as the interviews progressed where I needed to delete questions planned for subsequent interviews that were already covered in some fashion previously.

In addition, I added questions that probed into topics I had not planned when writing my interview protocol. One example of this is in the third interview, focused on literacy history. I realized that I needed to explicitly have the participants explain their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative, so I added a question addressing that. I found that my questions about how they changed and how their teaching had changed (questions 8 and 9) were difficult for them to answer because they were broad. I added the following question to redress this issue: What do you believe is effective writing and reading instruction? This allowed me to follow with a probe into how that belief might have been influenced by their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative. I also asked participants to describe their experiences teaching writing in order to have a clearer point of reference for discussing their changes. The following questions were also included:

1. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a reading and writing teacher? Are these related to being a woman?
2. What were critical points in the process of learning writer's workshop for you?
3. What are challenges you face now as a literacy teacher?
4. What do you feel have been your successes as a literacy teacher?

I purposely left questions open for the last two interviews so that I could have the opportunity to head in the direction I felt my participants were guiding me, rather than following my imposed set of interview questions. This helped me gain distance from my preconceptions about what would be important to my participants, and prioritize what they thought was important to discuss. Interviews four and five were further placed in the hands of my participants by giving them control over the documents and photographs collected.

The fourth interview was a document elicitation. I previously asked Sarah and Catherine to gather any documents they thought were interesting or telling of their experiences. I had also previously asked to photocopy documents that I noticed or that were mentioned in the first three interviews. The interview questions for the fourth interview were:

1. What documents would you like to share with me?
2. What do these documents show about you and your teaching?

These simple questions were discussed in a natural conversation as we pored over the photocopied documents that included pieces I had asked for as I spent time noticing things in their classrooms and school, as well as pieces the participants selected.

Interview five had a similar format. I left my camera with Sarah and Catherine after the third interview and asked them to take up to ten photographs each. I told them to take pictures of anything they thought was interesting at their school. After collecting the camera at the fourth interview, I developed the pictures and returned with them for the fifth interview. I asked the following questions about the photographs:

1. Why did you take each of these pictures?

2. What do these pictures mean to you?

Then I asked Sarah and Catherine a series of questions that I found I needed answers to as I reflected on the data I collected up until that point in the study. The following questions were asked:

1. How does your view of yourself as a writer influence your teaching of writing?
2. What are some of the most important influences on how you teach writing?
3. What do you wish people outside of education would understand about teaching?
4. What makes you different from other teachers you know?
5. What do you wish your principal/administrators would understand about you and your teaching?
6. What do you wish for other teachers at your school and in general?

The changes I made in my interview questions reflected the analytic process of constant comparison, where as a researcher I repeatedly looked for possible codes and themes. I added or deleted questions based on the data I collected at each interview session, allowing particular topics to become more developed in my data set. I continually referred to my research questions to determine if they matched the data I collected and if there were areas where more data might be needed.

After all data were collected, I continued to listen to the audio files from interviews and memos. Being able to listen to the data set in its entirety was extremely helpful in my analysis. Once my data were transcribed, I was able to start open coding, but I entered this process with my participants' voices in my mind. I could hear their inflections and intentions when I read through the transcribed data. I attribute this to

listening to the interviews repeatedly. I cannot stress enough how valuable listening to my data set was in terms of my analytic process and in my ability to develop a close intimacy with my participants' words.

I began more formal data analysis with open coding, in which I labeled the data with words that seemed to describe what was being said in a word or short phrase. This process generated about 200-300 codes per participant, which I then placed in a new document with line numbers that corresponded with where they were located in the interview transcriptions. The following are samples of open codes from this exercise:

1. Initial teaching very different from her background
2. Unprepared for realities of urban classroom
3. Very unfamiliar setting
4. Mandated desegregation of teachers in county
5. Career decisions based on children
6. Worked on children's schedule
7. Family first
8. Wanted to go to college for the degree
9. Both parents finished college
10. Not many choices for women careers
11. Stopped teaching and sold insurance after a few years
12. Very difficult first school
13. Not prepared for environment- drugs, poverty, behavior issues

The hundreds of open codes were then further distilled. I noticed repetitions and patterns that allowed me to condense them. Then I looked at these codes for repeating patterns, or ideas that could be collapsed into a larger category. Categories were created as I continued to work through the data and notice how my initial codes could be compared and reconsidered (Creswell, 2009). I also noticed codes that appeared frequently in both Sarah and Catherine's data. These were the codes I attended to with priority. These became categories. For instance, drawing from the brief sample above, I collapsed open codes 5, 7, and 10, as well as others not included in the sample, into a category called

“gender influencing career choices.” As I collapsed the open codes into categories I noticed that there were categories that could be grouped together based on common ideas. A sample of the categories I created included data vs. the whole child, tension between doing her job and doing what is right, agent of change, belief in authentic literacy, resisting the gender binary, and feelings of surveillance. There were approximately thirty resulting categories, though these were not static and were flexible in their interpretation. Abstracting these kinds of categories into themes required careful thought. This work was analytical in nature and required my constant reconsideration as to how the categories might be abstracted into themes. I reviewed my categories and worked to develop statements that could describe them in thematic ways.

As suggested by Merriam (1998), then I used the categories in conjunction with considering my purpose and questions of the study. I found that by viewing my categories through the lens of my research questions, the five themes that are discussed in detail in the next chapter became apparent. This allowed me to see which categories might be useful to further collapse or expand into themes. One example of this abstracting process occurred with my category of the teachers claiming “the whole child” over data in their talk about their work. I considered their participation in caring professional development as well as all of the data collected and understood this to be a move by my participants to show care in similar ways they were receiving care. The analysis approach for this study relied on constant comparison where patterns and themes were recursively analyzed for meaning, and decisions were made about data as this process occurs (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998). The resulting themes are presented in the next chapter.

### **Trustworthiness**

There are several ways this study created trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Creswell (2009) there are eight strategies that can contribute to trustworthiness. By incorporating various data sources, triangulation is in place. Data can be compared across sources for themes and patterns to be established. Asking the participants to member check the findings is also essential for both trustworthiness and valuing participant involvement. Prolonged engagement is another component building trustworthiness in the study. While this particular study collected data over five months, it is within the context of a larger multi-year study and therefore my time in field was lengthened. My perspective has been made very clear in the previous sections of this paper. By claiming a critical stance and asking questions related to gender, it is with intention that I entered the field with a curiosity directed toward gender and identity, and this is a strength of the study. Discrepant information is reported in subsequent chapters. Triangulating data between observations, interviews, documents, and visual sources also helped build trustworthiness. By dealing with information that does not fit the emerging themes, I was able to create a more authentic and complete portrayal of the setting. Finally, other researcher peers were asked for feedback on codes and categories and to act as external auditors.

One of the most influential experiences of this study occurred when I met with my participants to engage in member checking my data and findings. I met with each participant separately and asked her to read through the quotes I had selected for the findings section. They both agreed that the quotes were illuminating of their experiences. When I showed them my themes, they agreed that these were issues of importance in



their lives as women elementary school teachers. They supported my conclusions and were overall positive about the paper shared with them. Member checking gives the arguments and conclusions made here the support of the involved participants. In my stance as a researcher, I did not want to present information that made Sarah and Catherine uncomfortable or with which they disagreed.

### **Reporting Findings**

Writing the report of qualitative research can take many forms and organizational formats. However, this report follows what Lincoln and Guba (1985) described as the various components of naturalistic inquiry, such as having a preliminary literature review, purposive sampling, and clear data collection and analysis plans. However, the flexible design of the study emerged as the researcher gained more insight. It is not uncommon for questions to change or rewrite a literature review after the data have been collected. The final report includes the research process as well as the findings and implications of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

As stated in Chapter 1, this study explored the way in which two teachers, Sarah and Catherine, experienced professional development for writer's workshop. The results reported here are focused on how their professional identities changed as they began to learn about and implement writer's workshop. Of equal importance, however, are their identities as women and teachers. The intersections between their professional development experiences and identities are displayed here with the intention of bringing forth their voices and thoughts. Taking the theoretical framework of this study allowed critical theory and identity theory to inform the analysis of the data and to determine which data were selected and which themes were generated. Said another way, critical theory allowed me to focus on deconstructing issues of power and resistance with a wide lens, while identity theory provided a way to consider the teacher's identities and agency at a more individual level. This study is guided by a stance that the participants' voices are central to any potential conclusions. Over the interview and observation process, the data collected created a telling picture of the working lives of my two participants. The first part of this chapter includes a detailed profile of the school as well as a narrative description of the two participating teachers. The second part identifies the themes that were uncovered during this study with supporting data.

#### **Profiles**

##### **Corey Richardson**

The site of this study was Corey Richardson Elementary School. The school was located near the highway in an independent city within a large metropolitan area in the

southeast. The school was nestled in a residential neighborhood adjacent to the middle school. The building itself was of an institutional style popular in the 1960s. Both participants complained that the building was not well-maintained. Indeed there were some painting, landscaping, and renovation needed to update the facility. The faculty parking lot was gravel, not paved. On my visits to the school, there were times when the restrooms were not in service. Typically, the front doors to the building were locked and I had to ring the doorbell to be let in to the school. If the participants left their classrooms they always locked them and either brought their purses or hid them somewhere, even when they would not be out of the room long. Immediately outside of campus were modest single family homes. Further away were rental apartments. At dismissal time, it was common to find children walking home from school with their parents.

Corey Richardson had nearly doubled in student population over the past decade, currently enrolling 750 students. These growing pains were evidenced by the many portable classrooms surrounding the school. Furthermore, many of these new students were also English Language Learners (ELLs; Dawson County School System, 2010). Corey Richardson students come from a variety of backgrounds. 95% of the students were economically disadvantaged and 62% had limited English proficiency. Racially, 73% were Hispanic, 16% were Asian, 8% were Black, and 3% were Caucasian (Great Schools, 2010). To comply with federal legislation, Corey Richardson was on a Consolidated School Improvement Plan. According to the county website:

The Consolidated School Improvement Plan (CSIP) is an internally developed blueprint designed to increase student achievement. In the Dawson County School System, we use one plan for school improvement, accreditation, funding, programs, and initiatives. The CSIP satisfies the requirements of The Elementary and Secondary Educational Act of 1965 (formerly known as No Child Left Behind), AdvanceEd/Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Title I. The schools must disaggregate and analyze data (test scores and survey results), identify needs through a comprehensive needs assessment, and develop action plans to address all subgroups, content areas and concerns. The school improvement process is a continuous process. This plan is a living document, which means it can be revised and updated throughout the school year. (Dawson County School System, 2010)

For this Title I school, meeting Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) on state standardized tests has been a consistent goal, which was achieved for the 2009-2010 school year. Other goals from the CSIP included using data to make instructional decisions, increasing parental involvement, and providing teachers professional development activities. Compliance with the CSIP was monitored by the county to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

As part of the mandates from No Child Left Behind, Corey Richardson began using *America's Choice* as a model for reform in literacy instruction in 2001. *America's Choice* is a scripted literacy program designed for at-risk students who are not on grade level (*America's Choice*, 2011). The program is driven to help student gain literacy skills and succeed on high-stakes tests. As part of the implementation of the program, facilitators from *America's Choice* came to Corey Richardson to ensure fidelity to the program and to provide professional development on its use in the classroom. Teachers were required to follow the scripted program very closely and were monitored for compliance. *America's Choice* is no longer fully implemented at Corey Richardson, and a new reading series has been introduced for the 2010-2011 school year as part of the state's investment in new literacy materials. The new series has not been as strictly monitored, but it is expected to be implemented. This school's Title I status qualified for various funding for technology, reduced class size, materials, professional development, etc. Of particular relevance to this study, is a partnership with a nearby large research

university. Corey Richardson became a professional development school in 2005. Not only did this provide funding for materials, but also a connection to university faculty for on-site professional development activities.

**PDS at Corey Richardson.** The Professional Development Schools grant was part of a larger multimillion dollar project taken on at the university level (Georgia State University, 2010). The overarching goal of PDS at Corey Richardson was to improve student achievement. The PDS grant had four areas of interest: preservice teacher development, developing faculty, inquiry based on improving instruction, and student achievement. Initially, 15 schools from elementary to high school were selected to participate. Based on areas of expertise, university faculty members chose which school to work with and how they might approach the goals of the PDS grant. A variety of possibilities existed from having student teaching practicum and teaching courses on site, to offering professional development experiences to current teachers. University faculty members worked with administration to facilitate teacher professional development for the current teachers of the schools. University faculty came from various departments within the College of Education and therefore their approaches were as varied as their areas of expertise. At Corey Richardson, Dr. Amy Seely Flint was assigned as liaison. She elected to ask the teaching staff what they would like her support with in terms of literacy instruction.

**Profile of the project.** Beginning in 2005, the PDS program at Corey Richardson organically emerged from authentic realizations from both the teachers and the researchers involved. When Dr. Flint initially asked the teachers at Corey Richardson the area they would like support in, Sarah (study participant) was the only responder. Sarah

asked Dr. Flint to help her with reading. However, when Dr. Flint went to observe in Sarah's classroom, upon the query of one student, they began to talk about where she came from, and then where all of the students were from, until they turned to writing to help them communicate all of their stories. Ultimately, Dr. Flint began working with Sarah on writer's workshop. Sarah was initially very skeptical and defensive about working on writer's workshop because of her negative experience with *America's Choice* (Sarah, Interview 1). She remembered vividly the scrutiny of *America's Choice* facilitators and was worried about getting involved in something else. Furthermore, she doubted the ability of ELL students to write in English. Dr. Flint visited Sarah's classroom where she modeled writing lessons, worked with students, and debriefed with Sarah on a weekly basis. These debriefing sessions focused on the "just passed" moments that had happened during Sarah's writing instruction and allowed Dr. Flint and Sarah to discuss how the day went.

The next school year, Sarah convinced a grade level colleague, John, to join in her work with Dr. Flint. She wanted John to experience some of the same success she had seen in her classroom, and he agreed based on his own view of her success. Similarly to Sarah, John was initially resistant and took some time to fully commit to participating. Dr. Flint visited and participated in both teachers' classrooms during literacy instruction during the second year. In addition, Dr. Flint met with Sarah and John during their planning and lunch periods to discuss how their writing instruction went in debriefing sessions together. During these debriefing sessions, Sarah and John received support and guidance from Dr. Flint, as well as each other. Dr. Flint provided Sarah and John with professional reading such as Ray (1999) and Johnston (2004). This reading helped to

guide the teachers as they learned new ways to teach writing. Additionally, after school sessions on literacy topics were held that teachers attended voluntarily. Professional readings were also shared with other teachers, and Sarah and John modeled how they used these readings to shape their teaching. At this point, Dr. Flint had gathered a research team comprised of graduate students, including the author, who worked with the teachers during and after school.

In the third year of the project, 2007-2008, the research team worked with an expanded group of self-selecting teachers. In addition to Sarah and John, the research team held debriefing sessions with two first grade teachers. The research team continued to offer study and discussion sessions after school on literature and writing topics. That school year, the participating teachers grew in number and in represented grade levels. In 2008-2009, the fourth year of the project, teachers from pre-K through third grade attended after school as part of what was now named the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative. These after school sessions were based on planning literature-based minilessons for writer's workshop and consisted of cross grade level groupings and researcher presentations on related topics. One example of an after school session included the reading of *Abuela* (Dorros, 1991). A research team member provided handouts on teaching sensory images with the book as well as titles of other books that similarly combine Spanish and English. This was followed by grade level discussions of possible mini-lessons using Ray's (1999) method for creating minilessons from literature. Then teacher met across grade levels to share and comment on classroom writing. The research team members hosted monthly afternoon sessions, modeled in classrooms, and debriefed weekly with teachers about writing instruction. In 2009-2010, the fifth year of

the project, the same work continued in the final phase of the PDS grant. During this year, no money was available from the grant for books or other materials for the after school sessions, but the structure of the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative remained and the research team continued to visit the school. Throughout the project, the teachers' interest and participation increased (Flint et al., 2011). Some of the teachers involved went on to attend and participate in national educational conferences. The terms of this grant have expired, but the project has continued on, with the exception of one semester, with funding from other sources.

The research team used a model of professional development that they ultimately defined as generative collaborative professional development (Flint, Zisook & Fisher, in press). The model operates under the assumption that teachers are knowledgeable experts who deserve caring professional development. Professional development should be responsive to the teachers' needs and perceived purposes, build trusting relationships, and occur over a prolonged period. This model of professional development relies on an ethic of care that values what everyone involved contributes to the conversation and growth.

### **Participants**

Each of the two teachers for this case study was selected purposively (see Chapter 3). Sarah, a veteran teacher, and Catherine, a newer teacher, are both women and both who been involved in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative to varying degrees. Most importantly, they both have taken on writer's workshop and use it in their classrooms every day. Through the data collection process, more information about these teachers was gathered in order to create a detailed account of their experiences. By understanding their lives, a clearer picture of their entry points and perspectives can be



pieced together. These entry points to teaching position Sarah and Catherine in particular ways that are essential to understanding them more fully.

**Sarah.** Sarah is a petite blond Caucasian woman in her sixties with a lilting southern accent. She can strike up a conversation with anyone and does not shy away from discussing difficult issues, though she sometimes frets that she has said the wrong thing. Her manner is friendly and warm- she exudes a sense of caring and compassion for the people she encounters. I first “met” Sarah through transcribing debriefing sessions for Dr. Flint. I got to know Sarah better by being part of the research team at Corey Richardson. When I asked her if she would participate in my study she was enthusiastic. She truly seemed to enjoy our meetings and I felt we developed a caring relationship. Every meeting that I had with Sarah left me feeling uplifted and excited; she has that effect on people.

Sarah was raised in a large southern city along with her older sister. Both of Sarah’s parents, as well as her grandparents were college educated and expected the same for her. Her father was an educator, working as a high school teacher and then as a principal. Her mother stayed at home and took care of the house and the children. Education and reading were an important part of Sarah’s upbringing. She fondly recalled her trips to the library while her mother was grocery shopping. As a youngster, Sarah felt confident as a student. She looked forward to beginning school and recalled how disappointed she was on the first day of kindergarten when she did not learn to read immediately. School was a place that she enjoyed being and learning was something she loved to do. She had teachers she adored and felt confident as a student. She earned high grades throughout and went on to a state university for her undergraduate degree. Sarah

was not permitted to flaunt her grades at home as her sister struggled with learning difficulties and attributes her patience as a teacher to her experience of watching how her sister dealt with these troubles.

Sarah's teacher preparation program had courses that she felt were helpful.

However, her student teaching experience offered little guidance about how to teach:

- Sarah: The only thing is I was the only one- the only person in the school who's Caucasian. And it always amazed me that the children would call me mama. But my student teaching would consist of observing for a short time and then taking over and the teacher leaving
- Karla: So did you see good teaching then? I mean, do you feel that—?
- Sarah: No.
- Karla: You know—I mean not necessarily good teaching by your standards now- like good teaching, you know, like how to run a classroom, anything like that?
- Sarah: The discipline was more of a fear type discipline. And I remember one little boy that was holding his book upside down to read it. And I asked the teacher if there was something, some sort of help that he needed and she said, “No. He can read just fine just as long as it's upside down.” (Interview 1)

Despite this lackluster teaching apprenticeship, Sarah still felt she had some experience to draw upon due to the fact that her father was an educator. She explained that being raised in her household, she had a good understanding of how to navigate schooling, the realities of school life, and the way to build up students to succeed.

Sarah began teaching in her own classroom immediately upon graduating from college during the 1970s and the Civil Rights Movement. For her, attending college was for her own personal satisfaction, not just the “M-R-S Degree” that many of her peers were seeking (Interview 1). She did marry during college, but still finished her education, as both she and her family expected. Teaching was the primary career option, she felt, for college bound women at this time. She was the only white teacher hired in her district in a southern city that year. She believed that she was hired because her father

was a principal in that district and was able to help her get a position. At that time in history in the South, racial and social tension was rising as community members dealt with desegregating schools and changing expectations of racial equity. Sarah told the story of being in her car downtown and being caught in a civil rights demonstration where marchers rocked her car as they swept past her. While this experience was frightening, she does not resent having had it. Sarah positions herself as different from many of her peers in age and social status, whom she finds are still harboring racist tendencies. Sarah had been part of an affluent white social group for most of her adult life, and was acquainted with the many lingering stereotypes of her peers towards minorities. She attributed this difference to her parents' attitudes about racial equity and the way she was raised.

In her first teaching position, the harsh realities of poverty proved too much for Sarah. "I thought if you just did your lessons then the children would do what they needed to do," she explained (Interview 1). Several incidents precipitated her leaving teaching. One such formative experience was when a parent threatened her with a gun. The parent accused Sarah of beating her child. Sarah was able to remove herself from the confrontation through a door in the principal's office, but there were no consequences for the parent. Another incident that created a feeling of resentment towards her administration occurred when Sarah was reprimanded for not being on the correct lesson plan. She was using the third basal reading program of the year (the previous two had been replaced), but despite an outbreak of chicken pox in her classroom she was still chastised for being behind. Sarah began to view the system as out of touch and unrealistic to her situation. She saw children left home for days without supervision, and believed

one of her third graders had a pimp. All of the accumulated hardships, both for her physical and emotional well being, forced her to leave teaching after just three years. She believed that she was just not “cut out” to be a teacher. She explained, “I just couldn’t deal with a life that I never encountered.” At the same time, she divorced and began working in the insurance industry (Interview 1).

After working in the private sector for about five years, Sarah remarried and had two sons. She decided to try teaching again after her children were school age. Sarah believed it was most important for her to meet her family’s needs first, and was cautious about work that might take away from her ability to do that in the way she wanted. Beginning part-time, Sarah worked her way up to working everyday as a classroom teacher and ultimately as the Kindergarten Coordinator at the private school her children attended. When her children started to attend a different private school with higher tuition, Sarah decided to try teaching in public school for a higher salary. First she substituted around the area so that she would have a clear picture of the school before she committed to working there. At that time in her county, teachers with more than 10 years of experience were only permitted to work in underperforming schools in the financially struggling part of the county. Because Sarah did not want to work in a school similar to her first experience, she selected Corey Richardson, but could not secure a position as a classroom teacher, only as a paraprofessional. She did this until that particular mandate ended and then became a classroom teacher. Furthermore, Sarah wanted to be available to her children and ailing mother. Paraprofessionals have fewer responsibilities, so the position suited her needs at the time. She was able to pick her boys up from football practice and be there for her mother when needed. The teacher with whom she worked

viewed her as an equal and Sarah contributed to the classroom with her years of experience as a teacher. Sarah was then able to have her own classroom at Corey Richardson, where she still teaches third grade.

Sarah knows that retirement is just around the corner, but has plans to be active in her community in some way. After working for financial reasons in the past, now that her own children are adults she is working for its own sake, though she would happily give up the early wake up time. She finds teaching to be very fulfilling and says that she is “too selfish” to give up that feeling every day. Sarah explained, “I just feel like there’s got to be more that I can do. I see these wonderful families trying so hard. And I see it more as a mission now rather than a profession” (Interview 1). Some ideas she has for after retiring include continuing to work with the ELL students at Corey Richardson in various programs she has worked with in the past such as the local Rotary Club and the YMCA.

**Sarah’s classroom profile.** Based on my observations of Sarah’s third grade classroom, I was able to pull together a representative image of her teaching style. Sarah’s classroom at Corey Richardson is typical of the building. There are shelves of materials from different series. In the front of the room she has a chalkboard and her desk and computer. The students sit in desks that are clustered into small groups. In reference to the desks, she says that they are only there because they have to be, as she prefers to use her rug in the corner for teaching. The large rug in the back of the room is edged by a collection of books grouped into bins by genre or topic. There is an easel that Sarah uses for minilessons that has large chart paper on it. Students are generally allowed to move around the room at will for supplies or to work with a partner.

Sarah has a very kind way of speaking with her students because she sees them as someone's children and knows how she would want her own children treated. Her favorite time of the day is during read aloud because she enjoys having the children gathered around her as they delve into a new book. She is generous with praise and corrects children quietly. Sarah smiles constantly. She views the children as having different strengths and needs. One student is allowed to get up to check a word spelling on her word wall, while another can ask a friend for help. Her students are enthusiastic and listen when she talks to them. They like to show her their work, and they want to hear her comments on it. Sarah prides herself on knowing her students and is not reluctant to visit their homes so that she can know their families.

Sarah works to balance her obligation to the district's decisions about curriculum with her own approaches for teaching her particular students. She incorporates a read aloud, small group guided reading and writer's workshop into her literacy block each day. Sarah's book selections are titles that challenge her students to be critical thinkers such as *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 2001) and *The Yellow Star: The Story of King Christian X of Denmark* (Deedy, 2000). She often uses these read alouds for multiple purposes such as for a writing minilesson, class discussion, or for a reading lesson. In addition to children's literature, Sarah uses the new textbook series recently purchased by her district. This series replaced *America's Choice* and is called *Storytown* (Harcourt, 2010). The new series is comprehensive and includes a large quantity of materials to teach all components of literacy including teacher manuals, center activity cards, student anthologies, leveled books for students. The teacher manuals contain lesson plans for each portion of the day's instruction as well as scripts for teachers to follow. Sarah was

asked to use the reading materials and to complete the end of story tests, though she does not use the writing materials. The leveled readers have preselected vocabulary words that her majority ELL students find difficult. The whole class story that is read each week from the textbook is often frustrating to her class for the same reason. Sarah tries to spend as little time as possible with the series, and focuses her instruction on her individualized interactions with her students during writing conferences and small group reading time. During literacy instruction she is usually circulating, having students meet with her individually or sitting with her students on the floor reading a book or listening to student writers share their compositions. Never during my observations did she stand at the board and give a whole class lesson.

Sarah's students work in writer's notebooks and then on notebook paper as they draft pieces. Published pieces are often typed on the computers and then displayed prominently in the classroom. Throughout the process, Sarah calls the students together to share portions or all of their pieces with the class for support and feedback. Students share their published pieces not just with their classmates, but with other classes in third grade. They write in a variety of genres, and Sarah often has minilessons focusing on a particular type of writing and encourages students to try it. Sarah tries to convey to her students that they all have stories to tell that are important and valuable. During writer's workshop I rarely saw students in the classroom that needed redirection. They clearly took their work seriously and took pride in doing their best.

Sarah attempts to teach the standards set by the state for her students, but is often frustrated that they do not match where her students are academically because so many of them are English language learners. She posts the state standards she is currently teaching

in her room, as required by the district. She prefers that she be assigned more ELL students because she worries that other teachers do not know how to work well with them. When asked to draw a picture of herself teaching, she was on the rug in the corner with her students close by as she read to them. This image is a good summary of her classroom environment (Appendix B).

**Catherine.** Catherine is an easy going blonde Caucasian woman. The 30-year-old dresses in a relaxed Bohemian style and has a big smile. She was very willing to participate in my study and was accommodating about meeting me for interviews. We met during the after school Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative sessions and got to know each other better when we attended a conference out of state. Catherine has a good sense of humor and a positive attitude. Because we are close in age, we built an easy rapport.

Catherine was raised with her younger sister in the South. She has very fond memories of her childhood and feels that she was very lucky to have such a supportive family environment. Her parents divorced when she was in elementary school, but her father stayed very close by and was very involved in her upbringing. Catherine was in the same suburban school system from kindergarten through twelfth grade. She reported vivid memories of learning how to read and write in school through a new computer based spelling and writing program that was being used at the time. Catherine recalled winning a state writing award in sixth grade; she enjoyed writing stories for pleasure. In her home, school was very important. Her parents did not attend traditional four year undergraduate colleges, but work in white collar jobs. Her father is an accountant and her mother works as an administrative assistant. Both of her parents encouraged her to



read and played an active role in her schooling. In fact, when she began to diverge from her typical success in high school, what she called “slacking off,” her father immediately made her quit her after school job to focus on school work. Catherine explained:

I loved school. I was always the perfect student. I was in, they called it AG- academically gifted, back then. I was always in AG, and then I always wanted, I didn't ever want my teacher to be mad at me. I wanted to be a perfect student. And then it just kind of changed all of the sudden. I was like that through middle school, had all honors classes, mostly all A's, all my teachers loved me. Then in high school it changed. I don't know what happened, but I just kind of slacked off and...I was still in honors classes, but I went to a really, really competitive high school. Super competitive...I just started to slack off and didn't work to my potential. I don't know. (Interview 1)

Overall, Catherine enjoyed her schooling experience and was a successful student despite this brief bump in the road. Her younger sister, whom she is quite proud of, went to a larger state university that Catherine believes she would not have been accepted to. Ultimately, Catherine attended a small liberal arts college and was successful there. Initially she pursued a degree in historic preservation, but then realized that drawing was not her forte. The college was located in a historic city, and this surrounding inspired Catherine, but she did not think she would be successful in the resulting career. She applied to the elementary education program and found her niche. The classes she took for her new major were interesting and enjoyable. Her parents supported her decision even though she changed her mind from her original idea. She is still happy that she became a teacher and would not have chosen a different career path.

Catherine learned a lot in her teacher education program about pedagogical theory and the ideal kinds of activities she could use in her own classroom one day. She liked her professors and came away from the program feeling she was as prepared as anyone entering teaching can be. Part of her teacher education program included student teaching

in a low income inner-city school. Catherine did not feel that she had a helpful student teaching experience. Her supervising teacher had students watching cartoons most of the morning. This was followed with several worksheets at their desks and then recess for the rest of the day. Catherine did not see much teaching and left the experience uninspired and doubtful of her choice. At the time she thought, "I don't want to do this. This is not what I thought it was going to be." Catherine felt compassion for the students whose lives seemed so different from her own background and saw that they deserved better schooling than they were getting. Her student teaching did not mesh well with her college learning about education, so she knew that there were other ways of doing it, but did not get a chance to see them in action.

After graduation, Catherine worked a few different jobs such as a being a nanny and working at a Montessori preschool. She characterized this period of her early twenties as typical of that age and that she was not really concerned with pursuing a career, but more with her social life. After a couple of years, she and a friend decided to move to Atlanta for a change of pace. Upon arrival she landed a position as a long term substitute in a public elementary school the day of Open House and few days before school started. This job was a formative experience because she worked extremely hard to get the classroom running with very little support or preparation:

It was an empty classroom. This other teacher had moved out and I had no supplies, I had no idea what I was doing, and I had to start school on Monday. It sucked and so I worked- and it was a really good experience just because it taught me, like, I mean I was working 12-13 hours a day just trying to make it work. I worked there for twelve weeks and then the teacher came back and it was really weird. (Interview 1)

Catherine continued to substitute teach for the rest of that school year until she secured a position teaching first grade at Corey Richardson. She enjoys working with the

immigrant population at her school and likes being part of the community there, but was also happy just to land a permanent position.

Catherine has an active social life. She is not married and has many friends that she spends time with. She explained that teaching does not interfere with what she wants to do in her personal time, though she does have to make sure she is rested enough for the early start to the day. Catherine has many friends who are also educators, and she tries to save work related conversation to settings when only these friends are present. She worries that other people would not understand what it is like to be a teacher and does not want to complain to friends who are not in education. While she did not enter the education field because of its schedule, she admits that it is a career well-suited for having children because of the early end to the work day and the summer vacation. Currently, she added, she rarely leaves work at three o'clock and puts in many extra hours after school. She also said that she is always thinking about her students, bringing home student work, and planning her next day at home in the evenings.

**Catherine's classroom profile.** Catherine's first grade classroom is colorful and has student artwork hanging on the walls. She selected to photograph these art pieces when I asked her to take photographs (Appendix C). When we discussed the photo, she explained how the activity was something she did that was not part of the math textbook, but something she thought would give her students the chance to be creative. She seemed pleased that she had been able to incorporate some math into the project using geometric shapes. Catherine frequently mentions her students' creativity and how impressed she is by them. She also posts the required state standards she is covering and a class schedule

for the day. She has a large word wall on her cabinet doors and has lots of small spaces for students to work with partners or individually throughout the room.

Catherine has the student desks grouped together in two large tables near a Promethean board that she uses for math instruction at the front of the room. A large rug dominates the rest of the room where an easel with chart paper and different shelves of books are located. There is a bulletin board set up with Calendar Math for her daily Morning Meeting. There are larger bookshelves lined with materials from different programs that Catherine admits she does not use, but facetiously noted that the materials look nice. Catherine's desk is in the corner with her computer on it.

Based on my classroom observations and interviews, it is clear that Catherine works to create a caring environment in her classroom. Students are praised for being kind to one another and learn about how to treat each other from Catherine and the activities she coordinates for these purposes. Catherine speaks in a gentle tone with her students and gives genuine praise to them when they are doing something well. She laughs when they tell her jokes and is quick to give them a pat on the back. She knows what they have been struggling with and comments when she sees them progressing. Her students draw pictures of her and tell her they love her and that she is pretty. Students are typically free to move around the classroom to get what they need or to move to a more comfortable spot for reading or writing. Catherine is usually found sitting on the floor working with individuals or small groups. In my observations of Catherine working with her students, I never saw her raise her voice or diminish a child, yet she maintained order and was able to correct children who were not on task. Her rapport with her students is easy and loving. It is evident she enjoys her work:

I love being in a classroom, I mean, watching a child go from Point A to Point B and having a part in that community...I really think that I'm good at it, and I think I have something to offer and bring to these kids, especially these the demographics, teaching the immigrant population like this. I don't know why I love teaching kids like that. And I just love being in the classroom, and I think that just watching them grow and being a part of that, and also being knowledgeable to like child development and all that kind of stuff. Even outside the classroom and outside of teaching, when I have friends that are telling me about their kids or their schools or their teachers, I can offer advice now and actually give some good advice, you know, knowledgeable and stuff like that.

Catherine incorporates the state standards into her teaching. She follows directives from her school district but also tries things that are different. She teaches writer's workshop and guided reading during her literacy instruction. She balances between what she is required to do and what she thinks would best suit her students' needs. According to Catherine, the new reading series, *Storytown*, does not have interesting literature. Instead, Catherine uses the leveled books in the school book room to teach reading to small groups. Catherine employs a variety of methods during the literacy block: read alouds, independent writing, small group reading, partner and independent reading, and minilessons. Her minilessons could be on a range of literacy topics such as using a shared reading to teach a particular phonics element or using a read aloud to teach a writing strategy. Catherine also has various literacy related centers for students to use independently as she works with individuals and small groups.

When Catherine works with individual students during writer's workshop, she typically calls them to her where she is sitting on the rug. She references what the child has been working on and helps the student progress with the piece by listening and guiding gently. Students move between their writer's notebooks and "books" that Catherine makes by stapling plain paper into small booklets. Writer's notebooks begin with cutting out pictures or drawing and labeling at the beginning of the year. Catherine

then begins to show students how they might write their stories down and introduces the books she makes them. These books are then planned and illustrated by the students. They finish the process by sharing their work with their classmates. Students are encouraged to work in a variety of genres and to try new formats including poetry, nonfiction, narratives, and fantasy. Catherine's students work with dedication and focus during writer's workshop. They have some freedom to move around as needed, but they rarely appeared to exploit that and were on mostly on task.

Currently, Catherine and two other colleagues from Corey Richardson are working on their masters degrees. When asked if she would leave the classroom, she was reluctant to answer affirmatively. If she were to leave, she conceded, it would be to work with teachers. She reported that she is enjoying graduate school and thinking about many new topics in education. She likes learning and trying new things in her classroom.

### **Themes and Data**

After gathering various forms of data from interviews, observations, documents and photographs, I compiled all of the information into usable formats. All interviews and observations were transcribed and photos and documents were mounted and put into binders along with the transcriptions. This proximity made triangulating and coding the data a closely related process. Using open coding and then refining down to the most essential and abstracted themes through the constant comparative process, the data patterns shaped into cohesive thoughts and understandings that could be gleaned for writing (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

For this study, I wanted to reframe the discussion on teaching writing away from students to examine how teachers might negotiate this process and what it means in both

a political and personal way. Utilizing critical feminism allows me to understand the melding of the personal and political that occurs in any given classroom. Of particular importance is the way that gender identities mediate action in classrooms.

After an extensive process of coding, comparing, and refining ideas during data analysis, I determined five themes that were apparent across the data for both participants, though not always in identical ways. Each of these themes is connected to the theoretical framework rooted in identity theory and critical theory. While the participants did not speak in overtly feminist terms, their actions and thoughts, particularly around writing showed a strong motivation to resist patriarchal forces in their working lives. The issue of expertise and legitimacy became of central concern after analyzing the data. The confluence of these themes helps to explain the ways that teachers might utilize authentic literacy approaches in a way that is both personally and politically liberating. In addition, this resistant stance is nurtured by professional development that is generative and collaborative. The following themes were abstracted from the data:

1. Gender influences teachers.
2. Mandates and surveillance create tension for teachers.
3. Expertise matters to teachers in different contexts.
4. An ethic of care in professional development translates to students.
5. Writer's workshop offers resistance to the educational system.

In the second part of this chapter, each of the five themes are discussed and illustrated with data for both Sarah and Catherine. Every effort has been made to

highlight the voices of the participants over the voice of the researcher in an effort to give them the foreground that they are often denied.

### **Theme 1: Gender Influences Teachers**

*The female teacher remained truly feminine; she had no desire for notoriety and, like the ideal mother, worked not for money, not for influence, nor for honour, nor for ease, but with the simple, single purpose of doing good. (Catherine Beecher in Hoffman, 2003)*

This theme directly connects with the second question of the study: How does gender mediate the participants' professional identities? Gender very much mediated how Sarah and Catherine viewed themselves as professionals. Sarah and Catherine were both able to discuss gender and teaching when asked about it during interviews. However, they were not quick to bring up issues relating to women teachers. While many of their responses were congruent, there were some ways that they diverged. The way Sarah and Catherine came to teaching was somewhat different. Sarah explained that when she was growing up, teacher was one of the few career choices available to women who wanted to go to college. Furthermore, as mentioned in her profile, Sarah consistently explained that she made decisions in her career based on her ability to still care for her children and family in the way she believed was best.

Sarah: A lot of my decisions were based on my children.

Karla: Well that's actually another question to ask the question. The next question, which is perfect right now is that how did being a woman influence your career or decisions to teach or not to teach?

Sarah: The most important thing to me has always been my children. I wanted children. I was over 30 when I had them. I didn't want somebody else raising them and I was willing. And fortunately my husband was willing to do without and so I that I can be there with them. And that's why I started back with their schedule so that I was there when they were there. That's really why I was willing to be a para instead of a teacher because in addition to that my mother was ill and she lived on this side of town... and I didn't want to be that far from mom or kids.

Karla: Also being a para did you not have a lot of afterschool responsibility?



Sarah: Exactly, although I really wanted to be a teacher. It was kind of hard to not to. (Interview 1)

Sarah considered her children to be her priority over her work. She mentioned that if they were sick she would leave school at a moment's notice. It was very important to her to be available to take her sons to after school activities as well. Financially speaking, her sons' school tuition was a precipitating factor in her working. Initially, she taught where they attended school. In her reflection on the changing times, Sarah said:

What hasn't changed is that most of the teachers I know do still put their families first. And even back then, people would bring their children to school so that they can be near them (Sarah, Interview 2).

These types of statements indicate a host of gender issues. First, Sarah views her role as mother above her role as teacher. In her family, her career was secondary to that of her husband's in that it was negotiated based on her perceived needs of her children. Notably, she is satisfied with this status and seemed proud of her ability to create this situation in her family's life. Overwhelmingly, Sarah defined herself as a mother first and a teacher second.

Catherine, on the other hand, had no such stance. Being a single younger woman did not seem to impact her career choice much. She had considered that in the future, should she have children, it would be a flexible career. However, that was not her motivation to teach. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, Catherine had considered other careers, such as historical preservation, and intentionally chose teaching. For Catherine, being a woman did not necessitate her being a teacher, or vice versa. However, both Catherine and Sarah felt that women naturally make good teachers.

## Perceptions of Gender in Teaching

Sarah and Catherine both brought up issues of gender in teaching that were not related to their own identification as women. They both thought that having more men teachers would be beneficial to education. Some of this response was related to particular negative traits that Sarah and Catherine noticed in the women colleagues. Sarah contrasts women and men teachers in a way that follows along the gender binary (Bourdieu, 2001). It is not evident that she supports the notion of the gender binary, but she sees it in action in her everyday life. Men teachers are able to give more time, possibly because of their own family responsibilities and situations. Here Sarah positions teaching as not necessarily feminine, but that women teachers play feminine roles in the profession, while men play more masculine roles:

I've noticed that the male teachers, often times they treat it more like a profession, like a business and give it 10 hours a day. Whereas I always thought of it as a profession, but not all inclusive in my life. My children call and I was out of there. So when one was sick, I didn't think twice about leaving. Whereas, I think a lot of the male teachers still allow their wives to take care of that. I'm thinking about several of the male teachers in school and they're able to give every bit of their energy to teaching, but I don't think they always connect with the children. (Interview 2)

Sarah went on to give examples of men teachers at Corey Richardson who coach as well as are involved in extra events at the school. She admired all of the time and energy they are able to commit, but noted that they were married and had fewer family obligations. Sarah pointed out that men teachers, particularly at the elementary level, have to be very confident in themselves because of the stigma against them by society. She said, "The male elementary school teacher does not get society's respect" (Interview 2). Sarah used her experience as a mother to be a teacher. She said that once she became a mother, she realized she had a "vested interest" in improving society through her teaching. While she

explained that men teachers can learn the type of connection that teachers who are mothers have to their students, it is not as easily done.

As a woman elementary school teacher, Catherine noted that she does not interact with many men as part of her profession, a contrast from her friends who work in the corporate world:

I'm working with all women [on my grade level], and you know how women can act, you know catty and just the stereotypes, you know, catty and just—I don't know, I would like to be able to be in a situation where it was half men, or fifty-fifty. You know, because even my friends that work in the corporate world now, it's not mostly male dominated any more. A lot of—it's very even now but they get—and you know, like I really haven't had experience, since I probably I waited tables in college of having to interact professionally with a male, you know? So it's totally different, it's totally different, and I think that we need that dynamic in elementary school but I just, I haven't had to do that. (Interview 1)

She feels that having more men in elementary schools would be beneficial for the school environment. In Catherine's experience in her teacher preparation program, most of the professors and students were women. In her current graduate school experience she has a man professor and finds this to be refreshing. She can appreciate his perspectives and admires his knowledge of elementary education. Catherine tempers her ideal of having a more balanced faculty with the knowledge that having more men in elementary schools could be uncomfortable:

And I can imagine for a man coming into this profession, especially at a school, you know that's mostly dominated by women, it can probably be pretty intimidating for them too coming in like that. You know, because face it, women can be mean [Laughs]. (Interview 1)

Sarah not only perceived herself to have certain qualities that only women teachers and mothers might have, but she also resisted those definitions. When she explained about the differences between men and women teachers, she notes that the men have wives who “still” take care of that, referencing the more historically traditional role of women taking

care of the household. Sarah is insinuating that these traditional gender roles have changed, but that in the cases she sees with her men colleagues, they have not. She also is bothered by the lack of men teachers and wishes that they could not have such a stigma to face. Sarah offered that she did not think many young, college-aged men would be secure enough in their own identities to enter elementary teaching education programs.

Catherine highlighted the many complexities that women face in the workplace. There are cultural messages telling women that they have certain traits and men have others, yet these stereotypes are just that- urban myths. My interviews with Catherine revealed ambivalence on her part about how gender and teaching intersect. It is a topic she has begun to consider in her graduate school course work.

Catherine: Well, we've been talking about this a lot in class [graduate school] so I don't know if like this has an influence on my opinion now, because we've been talking about it so much. Just because by nature I think women, by nature we're nurturers. I think that's a big thing about it, but then we've been learning that you know, a lot of the reason that women became teachers to begin with is the fact that they were cheap to pay.

Karla: Do you feel like that's true for you?

Catherine: I don't know. Like I think, I mean if it were all men in this profession, would we be making what we do? I don't know. I think we put up with a lot more than- this sounds so sexist, but I don't mean it too. I think as a profession with mostly females, especially in the elementary level, we tolerate a lot more as far as like not having the power. Does that make sense? And not having a say. Like just because we are nurturers than I think by nature we are more sensitive maybe? I don't know. We've been talking about this a lot in class and just like how there aren't a lot of males, especially in elementary school...

Catherine sees herself and her fellow women teachers as allowing the school system to have control over them. She connects this with her assumption that women are nurturing and therefore unwilling to create conflict with others. Yet at the same time, she qualifies

her statement with the acknowledgement that it might sound sexist, and that she does not have that intention.

Sarah and Catherine notice gender issues in schools, but rely on traditional gender roles and stereotypes to make sense of them. Both of them also see there is room for improvement in education in terms of having a more equitable workforce. Catherine takes a step further to note that women tolerate being powerless, and explains that a more balanced workforce might lead to better pay and more power for teachers. Sarah also admires men teachers and thinks they are important in schools, but also recognizes the maintenance of the status quo in household equity and gender roles that enable men teachers to perform well as teachers.

### **Gender in the Classroom**

One unexpected point that was made by Catherine concerned gender and her students. Catherine notices gender at play among her first graders and was able to pinpoint what she saw and offered thoughtful critique. When talking about women in teaching, Catherine brought up the topic of gender in her own classroom. She explained that she was particularly worried for her girl students. Many of them come from families where the mother stays home and cares for the children. When Catherine sees her girl students playing at being a “mommy,” she worries that is the only possible occupation they see for themselves. She connected this to their more traditional culture as many are recent immigrants from Hispanic countries that have fewer opportunities for women. She feels the need to be a positive role model to her girl students. Catherine knows that their families came to America for more opportunities and wants her students to understand that there are many ways to be successful in America in addition to being a mother.

Catherine and Sarah both take notice of how gender plays a role in their lives as teachers. They tended to consider gender issues outside of themselves, such as men teachers and their students. Generally, they felt that more men in teaching would help schools be more balanced. They both relied on stereotypical views of women's traits, both negative and positive: nurturing, caring, catty, mean, etc. There was some discussion by Catherine about the way teachers are treated being related to the profession being predominantly women, but she did not take this line of thinking any further when questioned.

### **Theme 2: Mandates and Surveillance Create Tension for Teachers**

*The realization that teaching, especially at the elementary school level, has in large part been defined as women's paid work (with nearly 90 percent of elementary school teachers and over 65 percent of teachers overall being women) documents the connections between teaching and the history of gender politics as well. Thus, whether we like it or not, differential power intrudes into the heart of the curriculum and teaching. (Apple, 2004, p.xx-xi)*

The second theme culled from the data is: Mandates and surveillance create tension for teachers. Using a critical lens allowed this theme to develop because data were considered in light of the flow of power in Sarah and Catherine's context. As with almost any career, teachers must operate within guidelines and follow decisions made by those with more power and authority such as principals, boards of education, etc. However, teachers also have a particular knowledge of their own students and what they need. During the majority of their time at work they are alone with their students making informed decisions about how to teach them. Conflict arises from this situation when teachers are asked to follow decisions with which they disagree. External forces enter their classrooms and requirements on how and what to teach can cause teachers

frustration. Furthermore, when teachers are monitored closely to determine if they are adhering to these external requirements, a feeling of surveillance and scrutiny appears.

Sarah and Catherine, independent from my questioning and each other, introduced the idea of mandates. The way they use the word mandates is particular to their setting. Mandates, for them, are any kind of directives, rules, or guidelines that are handed down to them. These mandates typically come from the district via the school administration, but may also come from the state or from the administration without prompting from the district. Sarah and Catherine said the word mandate with negativity and indicated their dislike of almost all mandates that there were asked to implement.

Interestingly, among teachers the discourse around mandates and surveillance does not connect with issues of gender and patriarchal policies (Biklen, 1995). Teachers may even internalize these policies and monitor themselves, as explained by Foucault's panopticon (Bartky, 2003). The participants in this study felt some ability to resist against policies they did not agree with, but only to the degree that they felt they were harming their students. Policies were never situated as having a patriarchal nature, or being related to elementary teachers being women. Sarah and Catherine struggled with how to resist in meaningful ways. Both were very frustrated by mandates that they disagreed with but felt compelled to follow, at least in some superficial way. Like most people, Sarah and Catherine did not want to lose their jobs by not complying with what was asked of them.

### **Being at Odds**

Sarah continually negotiated the tension between being a good employee and doing what she felt was best for her students. Identity theory informs the understanding that Sarah had to position herself in multiple ways in order to navigate her role as teacher

(Holland et al., 1998). She often felt that these two ideals were at odds with each other. She repeatedly talked about mandates and how ridiculous or thoughtless they were. Mandates Sarah disliked could be anything from a memo detailing which state standards should be posted on the classroom walls to a meeting that discuss how teachers should use the new reading textbook. Sarah felt that she had to shield her students from mandates that were not developmentally appropriate. For instance, the new basal reading series, *Storytown*, had end-of-story tests that the school required teachers to administer and grade. Sarah did not like the stories in the series, but she had her students read them quickly despite that. She also gave them the test, but then refused to include their scores in their reading grade averages (Appendix D). She showed me the test and pointed out the questions on it that she believed were inappropriate for her students in that they had overly difficult vocabulary words and confusing comprehension questions. Sarah indicated that she felt frustrated and guilty about having her students take the test because she knew it was not the right thing for them.

After a conversation about a document given to Sarah with a checklist of all the artifacts and items that should be on display in the classroom, she explained how she sometimes feels like a “renegade” (Appendix E). By positioning herself in this way, Sarah finds spaces in her daily life that allow her to have agency, that provide her the chance to have a voice in some way. In the school library, she gets angry that her children are told they cannot check out a book unless it is on their level as determined by a test they took previously. She believes this holds her children back and is not willing to follow the rule. When asked how she feels about these kinds of decisions from above, she responded:



- Sarah: Resentment, that they want me to waste my time putting up fluff. What's going in the classroom is so much more important than what's showing around the walls. Artifacts are not indicative of what's going on.
- Karla: Do you believe that the state or whoever made that checklist, maybe the district...who's interest do you think they have in mind when do something like that?
- Sarah: Theirs. And I honestly think that it's to ensure the fact so that the principals and a.p.'s [assistant principals] can walk in and check—they could check off that you're doing this, this and this by looking around the room and not by staying in the room and watching and seeing what's going on.
- Karla: So, to save time?
- Sarah: Yes, to save time, they make sure everybody is doing exactly the same thing.
- Karla: Mm-hmm. Your expression on your face when you say "everyone is doing exactly the same thing" makes you feel that you don't like to do the—exactly the same thing as everybody.
- Sarah: I've never seen two children that were exactly the same...So, you're going to ask teachers to be exactly the same with twenty different children? You take the child and just cannot sit down and tell them that they're going to have sit in a desk all day. I don't care if they stand up while their doing their work.
- Karla: Why do think people, or the county, or the state, or whoever wants teachers to be the same?
- Sarah: I think it's insecurity, a fear. I think they're afraid if they let teachers go who knows what kind of product they'll get. I think it's still a manner of control, because I have worked in a private school and my children went to private schools and the teachers as long as they were teaching, they're allowed to do it anyway they wanted to. Well, the result was much better. You get more creative. You get more student involvement if it's something that the teacher owns, not something that just told to get or just told to do. Right now, they're telling us exactly what we need to have in the way of grades: a project, a test, three homeworks . . . None of us do it exactly the same. So now, we are actually calling things projects that normally would just been an activity.

This particular conversation is rich with important ideas about patriarchal policies and how the participant responds to rules and ideas she disagrees with ideologically. A critical analysis helps to uncover the larger systemic power issues at play. Sarah is very much aware of the top down nature of decisions made in the educational system. Sarah points out that many of these decisions are meant to save time. At another point in the

conversation she mentioned that school systems want conformity among teachers and compared education to the industrial model and assembly line. She explained that this cannot apply to schooling; every child is not going to need to go through the same process at exactly the same time. While Sarah notes that this is motivated by a fear of losing control of teachers, she does not connect it to gender or position it in that way. Rather, she contrasts public and private school and idealizes how private school teachers are able to have more flexibility in their teaching. The struggle she faces is clear though, whether she should follow what she is asked to do, or do what she believes is best for her students.

Catherine also felt pressure from various authority sources she encountered either directly or indirectly such as her principal, district officials, politicians, etc. This pressure was, she explained, not founded in any real knowledge of the classroom or of students and learning:

I think No Child Left Behind and outside mandates trying to tell me what, how to teach and how to run a classroom, and how to, when they don't even know the kids . . .

I think the big thing is just outside forces mandating what goes on in the classroom, they don't know anything about the child, they don't know anything about the background, they don't anything that—I mean I think that's a major problem, and just pretty much people telling the teacher how to teach. I think if they just kind of entrusted the teacher . . .

(Interview 1)

She diminishes any respect she might have for these authority figures by stating that they do not know her students and therefore cannot make determinations about how she should teach them. A resistant attitude to being under surveillance is present in Catherine.

In another instance, Catherine positions herself as resistant in connection with the new reading series at Corey Richardson. She complained that she did not like the literature that it came with because the stories were not interesting. When asked how she

liked the new reading series, she pointed to the books on the shelf and commented that “they look good there” (Interview 2). Catherine also included a photo of the leveled readers from the series in her set of photos that she took on her own (Appendix F). When discussing her photographs, Catherine pointed out that she took the picture to show how all her leveled readers were still in the box and yet to be unwrapped. It is important to note that Catherine takes some pride in her ability to resist the pressure from her school and district to fully implement this new reading program. Both Sarah and Catherine claimed this photo of unwrapped books as their own, as the pictures were on the same camera and I consulted with them after developing the pictures to note which photos belonged to which person. While the matter was easily resolved by noting the details of the picture were of Catherine’s classroom, it is telling that they both wanted to have this symbol of resistance to a mandate as their own.

Sarah tries to maintain the appearance of following the rules by complying with mandates. She is particularly concerned with how to use the new reading series in her classroom while still teaching reading and writing the way she prefers. She said,

My weaknesses are really often in trying to make what we’re asked to do and what I feel is right to do compatible...trying to weave the two things together so that you feel like you’re doing the right thing for the children, but you’re following the mandates. (Interview 3)

Sarah battles with being a renegade when thinking about how her students are graded on a writing test with samples taken from the beginning of the year. Sarah disagrees with this process because it does not show how students grow over the school year as writers.

Sarah: So, I don’t really take it very seriously as other people do.  
 Karla: So, you view that as a strength?  
 Sarah: Not the renegade part... but if I said that being a renegade is a weakness and then I turn around and say it’s a strength, it just sounds like I’m really off base.

- Karla: Can't it be both? I mean it could be both, sure, why not? Because the part of you, like you were saying, part of you wants to do well in your job and then a part of you also feels like you know what's right. You said that.
- Sarah: Well, I think having had an expert or even experts walk this road with me, gives me the confidence and perhaps if I had had some of the similar experience in reading then I would have the confidence to not question myself as much. (Interview 3)

Ultimately, Sarah feels that she is not successful at meeting the mandates given to her and admits, "I can't make it work. I end up doing what I feel like is right" (Interview 3). This excerpt of data indicates how issues of expertise are connected with having power.

Sarah's response to a constant stream of mandates has caused her to believe that often her own expertise is not enough. She needs someone to give her credibility to make decisions.

### **Under Surveillance**

Catherine talked about pressure to follow mandates that she disagreed with in other contexts as well. Here she explained how she would not succumb to the dominant feeling at her school to become anxious and motivated by benchmark testing (district wide tests meant to prepare students and teachers for the state wide test):

- Catherine: And I really made that promise to myself this year I was going to do that without fighting the benchmarks. Really, benchmarks that are not developmentally appropriate for some of these kids. They literally cannot do this yet, and then we're judged on it, and I'm just not going to worry about it this year. And we're just going to work hard, but we're going to...
- Karla: Do you worry about being judged?
- Catherine: I always have the past few years and stuff because we have to sit down with our principal at the beginning of the year and go over our test scores from the year before. And I think that a lot of people really think that that CRCT scores are a judge of how well you taught the kids and it's not, at all. (Interview 2)

The pressure to perform on tests, as well as to withstand the potentially damaging scrutiny of her test scores created stress for Catherine in previous years. Her comment

above reveals a desire to be true to herself and her students by eschewing testing.

Catherine positions herself here as willing to question authority. Furthermore, she does not feel that those who are placing her under surveillance and judging her have the expertise to do so. Catherine makes this point more saliently when discussing the new superintendent's requirement to post their lesson plans (see Appendix G) weekly on a website, Catherine not only casts doubt on the motivation behind the mandate, but also on the superintendent's expertise:

I don't think he's ever even been a teacher to tell you the truth. And he's got all this new accountability now. Our principal has to send in—she has to send in a check list every week to him when she receives everybody's lesson plans. We don't have any money. Who are you paying right now to check all this stuff? It's such micro-managing, so micro-managing. So, whatever. I just keep my door closed (Interview 3).

Catherine explained that they were told that the superintendent would be checking their lesson plans that were posted online. She said, “He's going to look at those lesson plans and you never know when he's going to pop in. If you're not doing what's on those lesson plans, he's going to come down on you” (Interview 2).

Her response to being judged and scrutinized is to isolate herself. Although she complies with the directive and posts her lesson plans, she is not willing to relinquish all control of her classroom and identifies herself as operating on her own terms when she is not being watched. Her comment about keeping her door closed is a common refrain among teachers who are in her situation where they feel that the powers that be are encroaching on their territory.

At the same time, issues of gender connect with being under surveillance and following mandates. On this topic, Catherine explained:

Women are always, that sounds so bad- we don't like being told what to do. I don't know if that has anything, in general, to do with being a

woman, but I think if there was a man in my position, he would have the same complaint. But like we talked about the last time, if there were a bunch of men at this school, I don't think there would be as many mandates as there are. I don't know. I might be totally wrong. And I think if the elementary school had all male teachers, and it was a mostly male profession, I don't think it would be like it is now. I don't know. I just feel like the people that are higher up...I feel like I'm not trusted. You know what I mean? Like they don't trust us to do our jobs. Now we have to post our lesson plans so the whole county can see them (Interview 3).

Catherine readily draws the conclusion that the surveillance and mandates are patriarchal in nature and connected to the fact that most elementary school teachers are women. Not only does she see them as related, but she furthers the idea by explaining that she feels that she is not trusted. Yet, she is not willing to say this idea wholeheartedly and adds in ambivalent phrases such as "I don't know" and saying that she isn't sure of the connection. By starting with stating that women don't like being told what to do, she situates the problem on women, rather than on the patriarchy, yet when she continues on, that is who she blames. This selection indicates knowledge of patriarchal power and surveillance, tempered with a lack of commitment to the idea. She is not quite settled on her view of the situation.

Similar to Catherine, Sarah expressed discomfort with the level of surveillance she perceived. When discussing a program she had helped organize for her students outside of school with the Rotary Club, Sarah explained her wish for an end to being scrutinized:

The nice thing about it was that there was no negative to it. There was no one watching over your shoulder. There was no- you could do anything you wanted to, and you could do what you thought was right.  
(Interview 2)

Sarah looks forward to her retirement as a time when she can really help children without being told how to do it and having to follow mandates that just interfere with their best interests.

Sarah and Catherine dealt with mandates in similar ways. They both complied, yet attempted to teach in different ways without confrontation. Closing the classroom door epitomizes the feeling of underground teaching and being under surveillance for compliance with mandates that are accepted. This tension between doing what they are asked to do and doing what they believe is right causes them frustration and stress, and creates a resistant attitude, the renegade stance. Being under surveillance requires Sarah and Catherine to adopt a perspective of themselves as renegades who do not fully follow all mandates. This data is connected with the first question of the study and helps answer how the identities of the participants changed due to their involvement in the writing collaborative. The ability of Sarah and Catherine to position themselves in resistant and agentive ways developed from their participation in the collaborative because they had to work around the tension between teaching “what was right” and what they were being mandated to do. Teaching in authentic ways included writer’s workshop, which was the product of their involvement.

### **Theme 3: Expertise Matters to Teachers in Different Contexts**

*Knowledge is power.* (Sir Francis Bacon, Religious Meditations, Of Heresies, 1597)

The third theme from the data is: Expertise matters to teachers in different contexts. Throughout the data collection phase, both participants indicated their anxiety about expertise. The word expertise, in this study, means the knowledge of educational methods that were instituted at the school site. Expertise, to the study participants, meant

a genuine and flexible knowledge of teaching, specifically teaching writing. The participants were worried that those with power in the system did not have expertise about teaching practices. They also doubted their own expertise at times, particularly when reflecting back on their teaching of writing prior to being involved in the professional development school at Corey Richardson. Issues of expertise permeated many of our conversations about the administration and in regards to the mandates they were instructed to follow. The participants gained further confidence in their abilities and their own professional judgment as they learned more about writing and selected how to use this knowledge in their own classrooms. In a previous study at the same site, the participants showed increased advocacy for themselves and their students as they learned about writer's workshop (Flint et al., 2011). The connection between increasing teacher expertise in writer's workshop is reflected in a more empowered identity.

### **Teacher Expertise**

Catherine and Sarah both worried about teaching writing because of their own self perceived lack of expertise. Neither took classes in the teacher preparation program about how to teach writing. At Corey Richardson, the professional development around literacy had been based on implementing *America's Choice* with fidelity, but they did not believe that this scripted program required teacher expertise or knowledge, but simple adherence to the script. As a seasoned teacher, Sarah already had a great deal of expertise for how to teach children. Furthermore, she knew about how to teach her population as she had been working at Corey Richardson for several years. She had established opinions about how best to work with ELL students, but was also willing to hear from the university research team what other experts might have to offer her pedagogy. Sarah, like all dedicated



teachers, cares for her students and wanted to provide them with the best education possible. She was initially resistant to new ideas about teaching writing:

And yet, I see these children with so little language, and I told Amy [Dr. Flint], they need more vocabulary. They need more time in our country before we make them write. And she proved me wrong. And I hear people in the building say, they can't write. They can't speak. And they're wrong (Sarah, Interview 3).

As Sarah witnessed changes in her students' abilities and confidence levels, she shifted her own views. She also became an expert on teaching writing by trying the workshop approach, reading professional literature on the subject, and debriefing with the university research team after writing lessons. She began to collaborate with colleagues and they pooled their expertise to solve problems. The participants began to value their new learning as they saw students succeeding.

Catherine had taken classes on teaching reading, but was very unsure about how to teach a more integrated literacy program that included writing. Catherine had attempted to use what she could gather from *America's Choice* materials that were still in the building, but when Corey Richardson became a Professional Development School and the faculty was offered support in teaching writing, she recognized her own needs, as well as her wish to try something new that might be more effective. Catherine further demonstrates her desire to become more of an expert by her decision to attend graduate school this year. Catherine and Sarah both want to increase their own expertise.

After working with the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative for the past few years, Sarah sees herself as more of an expert in teaching writing. She considers writing to be one of her areas of strength in teaching. She starts teaching writing on the first day of school and does so without anxiety. When Dr. Flint had to take a pause in her work at Corey Richardson for a semester, Sarah explained her thinking as follows:

- Sarah: Now that she's not here for this semester, it's natural. I'm going about it without a crutch. Not even an emotional crutch. Now John [grade level colleague] and I are feeding off of each other. And we still have that going, but I didn't know if it had really changed me.
- Karla: Yeah, and you feel it really has?
- Sarah: Oh, I know for a fact. During the summer, I read a great deal and I read a few books to help me, and I was very, very much aware of when I was reading of the things—I was reading more like a writer than I was just a reader sometimes. And I never had that experience before. I'm sure over the years I've built it up, but as I said, I didn't realize it because it was still part of an ongoing project. And I hope this spring, when she comes back, that she'll be able to see that where she left off, we're still moving.
- Karla: Right. So, when you started this year was it, obviously it's different because she's not here too, but did you have different feelings about starting up your writing workshop?
- Sarah: I really didn't. That was really, of all the academic things that I did, that was the one thing I started the first day. I started with her interest inventory and then I went on to the "Where I Am" poems.

The learning that Sarah had from being involved in an authentic experience with an expert allowed her to own expertise in a way that was not available in other types of professional development. Sarah claims her expertise and knows that it exists beyond Dr. Flint. Teaching writer's workshop is not something she does to avoid reprimand or because she feels a need to follow the rules, but because it has changed her identity in a way that makes her a writing teacher, not a teacher who is following a guide on how to teach writing.

### **Lack of Expertise from Authorities**

While Sarah and Catherine want to become more knowledgeable, they both view their superiors as lacking expertise. It appears to them that those with power do not have the background to wield it properly. Expertise is a way of claiming power in this situation. When asked about how she feels about the decisions made by those in power, Catherine contends that teachers would make better decisions than district:

Absolutely. Yeah. I mean I just heard that the Governor, you know that first grade wasn't supposed to have their CRCT next year, and apparently he just overturned that. I don't understand why. And they're like, "It better prepares the kids when they take it in third grade." Why do you think that taking a test like that is going to better prepare the kids for when they take it in third grade? I don't understand. It's just so silly to me, and he has no idea. I mean he's never been in a classroom, he's doesn't know how it is...and not having the materials, I mean, sometimes it is a challenge. It's like, they always go big, they've got these big things, and I'm like, "I just want dry erase markers." But they always go big...(Interview 1)

She explained that not only do policy makers not understand learning and elementary students, but that they also have their focus in the wrong place. She cannot get appropriate materials such as pencils or the replacement light bulb for her smart board, but there is little concern for the day to day issues teachers face. Efforts are misguided and motivated by making a statement rather than letting teachers make decisions from their own positions of firsthand knowledge and expertise. Teachers would be better equipped to decide how money is spent because they know what they need to run their classrooms effectively, according to Catherine. Catherine feels that this lack of expertise is partly connected to the emphasis that administrators and policy makers have put on testing, as opposed to learning and child development:

I think that they just get so testing oriented and data oriented and numbers, numbers, numbers, that they forget about the elementary school, and these are kids and not [numbers]—you know? We're trained to do this. We're certified to do this. We're good at what we do. And they're just so focused on test scores, and numbers, and data that they forget...that's not the only thing we're here for. And some of them have never been in an elementary classroom before. (Interview 1)

The comment above summarizes well Catherine's frustration with those in positions of authority's lack of expertise in education. She does not view their decisions in a favorable light because she believes they are made without thought or consideration for what actually occurs in elementary classrooms.

In another instance, Catherine explained how the district influences administrators to mistakenly focus on data that she does not believe is applicable. It seems that Catherine sees the district's view of data as lacking expertise in that it does not truly reveal helpful information about how her classroom works. Even when she was praised for increasing her test scores, she felt that the praise was not accurate because it was based on data from two different classes. As a teacher, she feels that to compare different students from different years does not produce very helpful data. Seeing her administration focus so heavily on data that she did not feel was legitimate further proved to Catherine that they lacked expertise about classroom realities and teaching:

Well, one year my tests were really low, but I had a low class and it had nothing to do with my teaching ability. They were just not as good as they normally are. I had a very low class that year. And I had a very low class last year, but my CRCT scores were pretty good. But you have to do this data card. And you have to write your scores for reading and math for the past four years on this data card... I don't base my focus on these CRCT scores. First of all, you have a different class every year. It's not an indicator of how well I taught something. Maybe if a teacher had consistently low scores every single year, I can see that. (Interview 3)

Her negative reaction to this way of thinking illustrates a lack of confidence in her administrators' expertise. She doubts their ability to understand how classrooms work, how students learn, and how teaching works. Catherine also demonstrated a fundamental difference from the system in general- that children are all different and that over-reliance on data is not something an expert teacher would do. Expertise is something that Catherine feels she has, and those who are making decisions that affect her classroom and teaching do not have.

### **Professional Development Expertise**

The participants were struck by the university research team's willingness to let them direct their own professional learning. The university research team came into

classrooms and talked with teachers, but they did not provide the type of authoritarian leadership that the teachers were accustomed to from their own administration.

Generative and collaborative professional development never required them to complete particular tasks on the days researchers was not there, though there was an implied agreement that they would continue on with their work. This attitude gave the teachers ownership of their new knowledge and expertise as they continued to get support. Sarah explained how the process worked:

There was no lesson plan saying okay, you must read this book Tuesday and then the children are going to make a list of this Thursday, there was none of that. It was all very natural and that's what I found out I'm doing now. It's just coming naturally- where I want to go with them and what I want to do. Also, we were exposed to such good literature. We were exposed to all these wonderful conferences. So, there was a lot of stimulation coming from a lot of different angles. (Interview 3)

She appreciated being able to let things unfold more organically rather than following a lock-step curriculum guide.

There again Amy [Dr. Flint] kind of gave us permission to go off on our own. She was questioned several times about her activities meeting the standards from what is required of the school and if writing this way was going to be adequate for our evaluations. I mean, there was some questioning of her, so imagine what was there to us. (Interview 3)

Sarah's perception of her school environment is one that does not appreciate or value divergent thinking or actions. The school administration heavily questions different ways of teaching and seems preoccupied with how test scores might be affected. It appeared that even an expert from the university level was not trusted to make suggestions. The fear over test scores overrides the willingness from school leaders to accept expertise that does not explicitly follow what the district or state has mandated. Perhaps some of the administration's fear came from there not being a clearly laid out pacing chart or teacher's guide for implementing writer's workshop. It relies heavily on

teacher expertise, which has not been previously valued or admired by the system. Teachers themselves are cautious about trying new things and changing how they teach as well.

Sarah explained that it was Dr. Flint's "skill" and "expertise" that garnered her respect. Sarah felt she was "privileged to her talents." Sarah was willing to listen to the university research team even more as she saw changes in her students, but she also valued them because of their credentials and background. The university research team offered a different perspective than other professional development facilitators- one more connected to university learning and less focused on mandates. Sarah said that having experts present helped the collaboration between teachers go smoothly. They were better able to stay on topic and were also given appropriate resources as needed. Other professional development experiences Sarah has had left her feeling frustrated, demeaned, and overwhelmed. In the generative collaborative professional development model she participated in at Corey Richardson, she felt she had more ability to guide her own learning and felt valued as a professional. The long engagement of the Professional Development School program at Corey Richardson also allowed for slower more intentional growth over time, which offered a less overwhelming experience than short, intense, and high stakes professional development offered previously to Sarah.

*America's Choice* had frequent professional learning where the schools' instructional coaches were in an auditorium setting for a few days and then the coaches returned to their schools to redeliver what they learned:

It totally spiraled out of hand. And the people delivering it were not experts. They would go to a meeting and then come and redeliver. (Sarah, Interview 3)

Sarah felt that the coaches were not experts and doubted that the professional learning they participated in would help at her school. Many suggestions, such as having a model classroom that teachers could visit, were impractical as they were not given time in the day to visit. This lack of expertise, however, did not diminish the control over teachers' classrooms, but rather intensified the need for teachers to conform:

But that was the atmosphere and it was rigid. It was so rigid that if you were not doing what you were supposed to be doing then you were called in and written up...for not being professional(Interview 3).

Sarah connected expertise to responsiveness and relevance to her own environment. Professional development that she experienced with facilitators who she did not think were experts did not have the flexibility to adapt to her situation and simply created more rules for teachers to follow. Instructional coaches that were trained did not help her become a better teacher when they redelivered. Sarah contrasted the difference between university expertise, authentic learning and exploring that she was involved in, to the kind of redelivered training that came from non-experts and put more mandates and rules in place. For Sarah, generative and collaborative professional development meant authentic learning for teachers.

#### **Theme 4: An Ethic of Care in Professional Development Translates to Students**

*We cannot justify ourselves as carers by claiming “we care.” If the recipients of our care insist that “nobody cares,” caring relations do not exist. (Noddings, 1984/2003)*

The fourth theme from the data is: An ethic of care in professional development translates to students. The ethic of care is based on the premise that education is relational. Noddings explains that this relation building is a central construct of teaching and the ways teachers go about reaching their students (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). By understanding the work of Noddings, the ethic of care can be applied not only to adult

teachers and young children, but also to teachers as they participate in professional development activities within a school system. This idea is foundational for professional development engagements that are based on interpersonal commitment and an ethic of care and that teachers should also feel cared for in order to translate this caring to their students.

In this study, the participants felt cared for by the university research team's generative collaborative model of professional development. They mentioned that they were listened to, supported and guided. These kinds of feelings were unique to their professional development experience; Sarah and Catherine did not get these types of caring responses from their administration, the county, or the state. Meanwhile, both teachers carried this caring attitude over to their interactions with their students around literacy. This shift addresses the first question of the study: How did the participants' identities change as a result of their involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative? Sarah and Catherine constructed a stance of caring that considered the whole child and rejected the view from their own superiors that placed data over individuals. They constantly referred to the district asking them to do things that were not "developmentally appropriate" indicating both their own knowledge of their children's needs and their own insistence on focusing on the whole child.

### **Care from Professional Development**

The notion that professional development might be a means to care for the teachers of Corey Richardson was a switch from what they had been accustomed to in their experiences with professional development. Sarah explained how she had never actually felt that kind of connection before:



You know, in all of my experience, I'll go down with this being the most remarkable—and everybody that she encountered felt the same care. She [Dr. Flint] cared about what we felt. She cared what we needed. And even though what we might have thought we needed, wasn't exactly what we needed. She had a way of guiding us into that direction, without the fear and intimidation, and the "I'm going to put in a letter in your file." Or if you go to administration and ask for help, which a teacher did the other day, and the administration is finding her a mentor because she needs help and she's a very experienced teacher and a very good one. But because she went to them and asked advice, they thought that she was weak. (Sarah, Interview 5)

The freedom to express what one need's help with and how that care might be most effective is important to Sarah. With Dr. Flint, Sarah has developed a professional relationship as well as a friendship. She considers Dr. Flint a "dear friend" and feels comfortable with the research team (Interview 1). The type of professional development that Dr. Flint offered at Corey Richardson considered teachers' goals and needs as learners. The teachers experienced authentic caring from their professional development that was organic, flexible, and considerate of them. There was not a power struggle between them because Dr. Flint's intention was not to make the Corey Richardson teachers follow her, but rather to help them learn about other ways of teaching that they might find useful. Sarah explained her initial resistance to writer's workshop, which she blames on her previous experiences with other literacy programs that were rigid and scripted:

Many, many days we told her it wouldn't work. Many, many times did we tell her that this was not the right place for writing. I just heard someone say it yesterday, "Until they get some language they can't write." She just calmly took it all in, never fought back. She just proved us wrong. And the more we saw evidence of this working, the more excited we got. (Interview 3).

Caring for Sarah meant showing her what writing could look like in her classroom without being forceful or punitive. It meant accepting her questions and concerns and

continuing forward. Sarah felt heard, but also was able to see possibility without fear of being reprimanded.

In previous professional development experiences, Catherine felt that the delivery was not receptive to her needs. For instance, the spring before the new reading series was implemented, the teachers were asked to participate in a webinar on the new series. They had yet to receive the new materials for reference and the webinar took place at the very end of the school year when they were busy with other things. This mode of professional development did not show care for the teachers because of its timing and lack of interaction and preparation. Our third interview occurred the same day that Catherine had been at a district level professional workshop. She was clearly irritated with the experience and explained what happened. She felt her time had been wasted; the facilitators spent much of the morning making enough copies for everyone there. Then they had an hour lunch break and worked on a concept that Catherine felt was flimsy: power standards. They went through the math standards and picked out the most important ones and created a document with them. Catherine was dismayed because she believes that the task was pointless in that all the standards are important. Power standards were never mentioned at Catherine's school or by the district after this instance. This type of professional development moves in one direction, from the facilitator to the teacher. There is not space for hearing the genuine concerns of the teachers regarding the premise of the task.

Catherine explained how different the PDS model was from professional development she had gotten from her own district. She decided she was interested in

trying something new and the university researchers met with her and gave her ideas.

Catherine explained the feel of those meetings:

She would just come in and watch me and we would talk about how things went, and she would just kind of give me some ideas for mini-lessons, or I would have a question about a child and she would, kind of, let me know what was the right thing to do and what wasn't such a good strategy for helping this child. Kind of just reassured me that I had the choice of how I wanted it to be done. And there really wasn't a right or wrong, but just kind of guiding me. (Interview 3)

Catherine explained that she felt supported by this kind of professional development that was not judgmental and offered individualized feedback and resources to her:

She just listened, and came in and debriefed with us. We just talked to her about it, we showed her our work, and she would acknowledge it saying, "Have you tried this? Have you tried this?" (Interview 3)

The interactive nature of working within an ethic of care allowed Catherine to be heard and to get feedback on what she was trying to master. This contrasts with professional development that has a goal that is not derived from the teachers' aims, and is trying to guide the teacher to that, rather than allowing the teachers to guide themselves on the path they have initiated.

For Catherine, caring professional development included being able to communicate her needs and ideas. Part of care is giving others the chance to speak and be heard. Catherine gave several situations where she felt she was not heard, despite her efforts to share her voice. Sometimes she would be asked to participate in helping to make decisions for the school, but her opinion was cast aside if it did not agree with what those in authority positions wanted. Feeling heard gives one a sense of value and of being integral to making decisions. Generative collaborative professional development gives teachers the chance to talk about and reflect on their ideas in ways that help them move forward in new directions that they choose.

### **Data vs. the Whole Child**

Sarah began to view writing as a means for giving the same kind of care she was receiving from professional development to her own students:

It is something that they don't have to be afraid of. They don't have to guess, they can be themselves. And there is no grade. We're not judging them on their ideas and thoughts. (Interview 4)

Writing, for Sarah, became a way to nurture the whole child. Previously, writing was another subject area to accomplish, not a means for connecting with or empowering students. Sarah and Catherine used the term “the whole child” to mean the many facets of their students beyond just the academic, but including their social, emotional, and physical well-being as well. In other areas of their schooling, she saw her students being pressured to perform in ways that were not appropriate for them developmentally. In writing, she was happy to give them the opportunity to express themselves. She showed me writing samples from her students that moved her emotionally. One such sample was from a student who wrote a story about how he came to America. He wrote about not having enough money to buy food in Guatemala, as well as his family's garden dying. When they got to America they were able to work and have a “a whole bunch of money” to buy food (see Appendix H). This type of activity allowed the students to share their stories in a safe and comfortable place. Sarah showed she valued their past experiences and connected with them. She cares about her students and wants to know them as individuals with stories to tell. She learned about teaching this way via teaching writer's workshop and from Dr. Flint's modeling. Before her experience, more formulaic writing activities such as writing an informational paragraph following a set model would have been something she taught.

Teaching from a stance of caring is sharply contrasted to the way Sarah feels the district sees her and her students. Rather than being truly concerned with the students and teachers as people, they are viewed as numbers and data that will be compiled to build the school's reputation and standing in the district. Sarah explained the way the administration considers the children in terms of the data they produce for the school. She told about a meeting she had with her principal where she went over her class list:

Last Wednesday we had Planning for Results, and that means that for half a day we go sit in a trailer and the principal asked us to name the children that are not going to pass. And this is September! (Interview 5)

This scenario reflects the pressure put on all members of the school system to perform in ways that create positive gains in data. While the principal was the messenger in this particular situation, the message that schools must perform comes from district, state, and national educational officials.

Sarah told me of many examples where she felt students' true needs were deprioritized in favor of achieving on the state wide testing. For instance, she was told to help her ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) student learn to sit down while working because he would not be able to stand during testing, despite that Sarah found he worked better standing up and had encouraged him to use this strategy. Sarah told me a story about the seriousness of the pressure placed on the students to perform on the test to show how little the students' feelings were sometimes considered:

We have teachers here that sit down the first of the year, and go over their CRCT scores with them [the students], and explain to them what they mean... So instead of learning for the sake of learning, now we tell them what to learn and what they can't learn, or what they can't trouble with. Parents start in the first quarter of the third grade with the test— are they going to pass? It's not are they going to learn, are they going to make progress, it's just a matter of pass and fail.

Sarah related another scenario to illustrate how this kind of thinking is passed down from the all the way from the state to the school level. School principals are under extreme pressure for their schools to perform on tests. This kind of pressure takes the focus off of the whole child and puts it onto data. When school systems force principals into these situations, teachers receive the same pressure, which they then pass to their students.

The principal came down and talked to them before the CRCT and told them that if they didn't do well then her boss was going to call her in—and our school wouldn't do well. She drew up stair steps and said, "If you don't do well, you fail. Then if you don't do well, then the school won't do well, and the school fails. And then when school fails, then I fail. My boss calls me and tells me that I can't be here anymore." She gave them the whole outline. What are we doing to these children? (Interview 5)

This milieu of incidents and messages caused Sarah pain because she believes that the whole child is more important than data. This places her in opposition with the dynamic of her school and district that tells children that testing is their most important goal in school. The above story told by Sarah is centered on the lack of authentic care that she feels students get, and that they are in a situation that is not truly for their benefit. She emphasized that they are not learning for themselves, but to meet the data qualifications of others.

Similarly, Catherine struggled with the tension she felt between considering the whole child and choosing to value that over worrying about data. She explained:

I really want to worry about what the actual child needs...not where this kid is, or they're not where the stupid pacing chart of Dawson County says that they need to be, and I'm really going to concentrate on them. (Interview 2)

Sarah and Catherine learned about the relational nature of learning and how caring can feel in a school setting as they engaged in professional development that considered them as whole people, not just teachers needing a particular skill set. Their perspectives of their

students, particularly Sarah's, began to grasp the idea of the whole child. This became a site of tenacity where Sarah and Catherine quietly resisted the hegemonic messages in their district about the primacy of testing. This site of resistance answers the first research question about how the participants' identities changed. Understanding authentic care and viewing their students in a new light helped Sarah and Catherine feel empowered enough to make decisions that did not follow the system's mandates but were in the best interest of their students. Sarah and Catherine positioned themselves as caring in a new and agentive way.

### **Theme 5: Writer's Workshop Offers Resistance to the Educational System**

*To write, to be a writer, I have to trust and believe in myself as a speaker, as a voice for the images. I have to believe I can communicate with images and words and that I can do it well. A lack of belief in my creative self is a lack of belief in my total self and vice versa- I cannot separate my writing from any part of my life. It is all one. (Anzaldua, 2007, p. 95)*

The fifth theme from the data is: Writer's workshop offers resistance to the educational system. This theme is perhaps the most intriguing and unexpected of the study. The participants continually referred to writing as having no right or wrong answer. They framed writing as a freeing, although vulnerable, activity. Writer's workshop was a sacred time in both of their classrooms, something they did not cancel when busy, and that they looked forward to each day. They made writing a priority and it became essential to their classroom dynamic. They built caring relationships with their students and learned about them during writer's workshop. Considering writing as a means of resistance is a way of positioning the teacher as a person who has a response to offer the system's forces of standardization, conformity, and deprofessionalization. Teachers claiming their students as whole children who have something important to say is a stance that reacts to situating the child as merely a collection of data. This may not

seem to be rebellious, but given the onslaught of messages telling Sarah and Catherine otherwise, to take a different perspective, though seemingly integral to teaching, is in fact a form of resistance. Furthermore, when considering the act of writing as an act of self expression and of sharing one's voice, then the act of teachers who feel discounted teaching marginalized students to express themselves via writing becomes a break from the system's demands of compliance and conformity.

Teaching writer's workshop was not always easy for Sarah and Catherine. Catherine and another colleague on first grade, Theresa, both chose not to openly discuss their choice to teach writer's workshop with other members of the grade level team. They did not want to be judged or hear their colleagues' opinions about their departure from the lesson plans that were in place already. This resistance, though non-confrontational, is of a personal nature and allowed Catherine to make her own decisions about how to teach for at least the portion of her day devoted to writing.

Sarah also felt pulled to continue with writer's workshop despite her own initial reluctance as well as the doubt and skepticism she felt from the administration. The stories the children wrote kept her motivated to learn more. She saw her students taking risks and being vulnerable by writing and she also chose to take a chance: "When you see these amazing things coming out of these children, you can't turn back" (Interview 3).

Sarah and Catherine valued their learning from the professional development provided by the PDS, but they ultimately continued to teach writer's workshop because the children's stories were powerful and reinforced their caring perspective of themselves as teachers. They were surprised by the insight and meaning in what their students wrote. They believed that writing was a way for their particular students from poor, immigrant,



ELL backgrounds to express themselves in ways that mattered. Furthermore, teaching writer's workshop was an act of resistance for them as teachers, diverging from what the school system encouraged. They claimed writer's workshop as a path for challenging authority, building their own expertise, and caring for their students. Writer's workshop became a vehicle for Sarah and Catherine to care for their students in an authentic way. This caring stance countered and resisted the messages from the district about testing as a priority, learning as measurable, and education for the purpose of creating data.

### **Writing is Personal**

Though Sarah felt confident of her abilities as a student, she did not feel that she was a good writer. She explained that even when she was completing her master's degree, she had to ask her son to help revise and edit her work. Writing was an area of schooling that caused her stress and frustration. This is particularly true in regards to grammar and mechanics. She studied grammar as a youngster, but never felt that she had a grasp of the minute details in her own writing. She felt fearful whenever she wrote that there would be some mistake that would lead to her teacher marking her paper in red and giving her a low grade. Sarah could not recall a time when she was ever taught how to actually write. She also expressed some resentment for never having been taught how to teach writing either. Her feelings about writing are encapsulated by this statement, "I was just fascinated by something I hated and how it could evoke such strong emotions in me, because I never did poorly in school" (Interview 2).

Sarah still doubts her abilities as a writer. While she has become more comfortable writing in front of her students, it has taken her time to achieve. Writing has always been something that caused her anxiety. She was terrified of making grammar

mistakes and being wrong. In the classroom, she hated teaching writing under *America's Choice* and told people as soon as it was over that she was not going to be teaching writing that way again. Sarah started to change her ideas about writing, though, when she experienced writer's workshop, she started to see writing in a different way. She told me about a student who for months attempted nothing in writing:

He would not do anything. And once he started, he didn't stop. So there's something if writing can make me freeze as an adult. Then couldn't the reverse be true? That it could open up a young person? Because the lock it had on me, and probably still does, if I have to be honest. If I were to write something to the Superintendent, I probably would get help. (Interview 2)

Sarah changed her view of writing from something that holds her back, or makes her "freeze" to something that unlocks a world for herself and her students. She positions writing as a path to freedom.

Sarah had experiences as a mother that also shaped her views of writing. One of her sons was having trouble in school and Sarah was called. They told her that her son, who was a talented writer already, could not write. They expressed their concern for his lack of knowledge of grammar rules.

- Sarah: Let's see he was in a fifth grade, no, I'm sorry sixth grade going into seventh grade. He went from a small school to Coleman which was a more free and open school, and his principal called me at school one day. We've got a really bad problem with Clark. He can write, but he doesn't know why he can write. He doesn't know the rules. He doesn't have any grammar. He doesn't know
- Karla: What does that mean?
- Sarah: Well, he didn't know grammar. He didn't know that—I don't know—if you gave him a grammar test, I guess he didn't do well on it.
- Karla: Okay, because if you can write, you have to know grammar.
- Sarah: It really slapped me in the face with cold water, because it was like, sure do whatever you want to, but if the idea is to get him to be a good writer then why does it matter, because he's already there. (Interview 2)

This experience shaped her view about what writing is and how it is learned. If her son was able to be a writer without knowing grammar rules, then the problem the teacher had with him was unfounded. Her son went on to become a writer. This kind of personal experience allowed Sarah a way of connecting with writer's workshop personally.

### **Thinking about Writing**

Catherine put a lot of thought into her writing instruction. As a newer teacher, she felt pressured to follow what her colleagues were doing, and was reluctant to judge anyone else's way of teaching as wrong. Being a first grade teacher, she struggled with teaching her students to write when they come to school with such varying skill sets:

You just don't know what to expect, and it's a long, long process trying to get them to even write anything. And so, a lot of the writing plans and the writing curriculum starts off with the prompt... It is so frustrating for a teacher when you have to teach them a prompt and it's a piece of lined paper, and there's four kids just sitting there the whole time because they can't think of anything, or they don't know how to write it, or they have had a teacher that drilled into their brain that they have to have correct spelling, and so they're so scared and they don't do anything. And it's so refreshing this way because everybody is participating. And it's so nice, and it's such a slower process... it's just so natural, but it works better. I feel like they have become better writers taking that approach, as opposed to today you are going to write about this, and tomorrow you are going to write about this. (Interview 2)

Catherine values writer's workshop for a variety of reasons. She prefers writing that was student directed and did not focus on responding to a prompt. She said, "I liked that it emphasized ideas and actual writing over spelling, grammar, and mechanics...because that is what makes a writer. It's not how well you spell" (Interview 3). She also felt that publishing their work was important for her students. As a teacher, she was also able to see and build on her students' creativity:

One thing is, the main reason I stuck with it is just because they love it so much. And instead of them dreading it...they love it [writer's workshop]. They could seriously work in their writer's notebooks all day and be

totally happy with it. They just get so excited to work in their writer's notebooks, and I think it teaches them more a love of writing than the old way—for these kids in general. It just teaches them a love of writing. Like this kid—let me show you this. They are so creative this year, so creative. This kid is not that high academically, and right now we are pretty much still doing cut-out and labeling, and then a lot of them are writing sentences and stuff. But he did this, this was like the third week of school, right. He drew this picture and it says “car car goes.” (Interview 3)

The piece she refers to is a child's notebook where he had glued pictures from a magazine and then started writing about the pictures. It was a big step for a first grader who came to her without experience writing. She also noted a difference from the old way she taught writing when her students were able to read almost everything they wrote. Catherine considers the “old way” to be based on having her students respond to daily prompts provided by a writing program. Also, this way includes more of a focus on writing skills such as handwriting and spelling over writing down ideas and learning skills along the way. Catherine resists this old way of doing things by providing creative learning experiences for her students. Aligning herself with creativity and ideas allows her to distance herself from scripted programs that the district is encouraging. She places herself in a space where she uses writing to resist that force and her own expertise guides her teaching.

### **Choosing Writing, Reclaiming Children**

Although Catherine willingly and knowingly resisted some mandates and curricula from the district, she did not flaunt this at her school. In some ways, she tried to appear that she was following the rules so as to avoid problems. In terms of teaching writing, Catherine did not speak openly with many of her colleagues about how she was teaching writing. She described a situation in which she did not want to offend the other teacher who had been making the grade's writing lesson plans by telling her she did not

follow them. Catherine did not want to hear the opinion of some of her colleagues that were more traditional in their teaching. She completed the paperwork she was assigned, such as posting her lesson plans online or filling out data forms for the year, but when she went into her classroom she still taught writing in a way that went against the messages she got from her school environment.

Catherine described a “pact” she made with a colleague on her grade level, Theresa, who was also involved in writer’s workshop at Corey Richardson. Catherine and Theresa are in graduate school together as well. They decided that they would not fall prey to the message sent by the administration and the district about the priority of testing and that they would make time for writing and teach it in a caring way that allows their students to express themselves. The tension Catherine feels to follow mandates is resisted by her involvement in teaching writer’s workshop. She commented about her feelings when scores and testing were the focus of faculty meetings.

I think it’s very degrading, completely degrading. But like I said, I’m really going to try not to worry about it this year. I’m just going to nod smile when we have these meetings like that, pretty much telling us that we’re not doing a good job. Because I know I’m doing a good job, and I’m just going to close my door and do what I need to do and what they need. Theresa and I made that same pact. We’re doing that this year. We’re not going to sit there and worry about that and be like, “They need to do this.” Well, why do they need to do it? Because it’s on the test? I don’t know. (Interview 4)

Teaching writer’s workshop became a way out of the conversation about children that sees them as lacking and having deficits, rather Catherine’s view of her students as creative and having stories to share.

Sarah told me about her shift in thinking about how ELL students learn. She initially did not believe they could write until they learned English. After writing with her

students, she sees things differently and believes that writing only helps them learn. She notices that other teachers still have her previous belief:

I heard today what a teacher was saying, we were talking about lesson plans, and she said “Well, we’re working on paragraphs right now. So, if she came in here, they [Sarah’s students] are not working on paragraphs, they’re not working sentence structure, they’re working on ideas. So, those two things would not be compatible at this time. (Interview 3)

Not only does Sarah now view writing as centered on ideas, but she values those ideas as important. She considers teaching writing to be a way to care for her students and to teach them as whole people. She knows that her perceptions of her students, their abilities, and her role as a teacher have changed:

Karla: Do you think that your beliefs about your children changed?  
 Sarah: Totally. I got to know them better because they were giving me a piece of themselves (Interview 2).

Knowing her students became more important to her, and she uses writer’s workshop to accomplish that.

When telling the story of a student she had who was struggling with reading and writing, Sarah explained how writer’s workshop helped him:

I think he was probably dyslexic, because as the year progressed he found ways of coping with it- and one of the things writer’s workshop did for him, it released him from what was right. So, once he figured out that it was okay to do it and that it was okay to go around and try to find [the word] . . . (Interview 2)

The child, much to Sarah’s relief, ended up passing the statewide testing that year. She strongly attributes his success to his opportunity to participate in writer’s workshop.

Sarah: But it was writer’s workshop that did it, because he was forced to sit down there and put his thoughts on paper and it didn’t matter how it looked.  
 Karla: Have you ever seen changes like that in students with other subjects?  
 Sarah: No.  
 Karla: So, you really firmly believe that it’s something about being able to put your story down?

Sarah: Mm-hmm, about doing something that really only you can judge.  
(Sarah, Interview 2)

Sarah further explained:

The philosophy, I think, right now in education as I see it from public education, is that to make them better you make it harder. That we've been too easy on them, and that's what's fun about writer's workshop is that you can. They can work at their own level. They can be proud of where they are, and there's really no comparison because what they're writing is their own. (Interview 2)

Sarah solves the dilemma between writer's workshop and the education system, by choosing to be in opposition to the system via teaching writing in an authentic way and reclaiming her students.

In the following chapter, the implications for these findings will be addressed.

Further discussion of the themes and their interconnection will follow in Chapter 5. The data presented in this chapter serves as the basis for the following conclusions.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an overview of the study and important conclusions drawn from Chapter 4. Four major conclusions based on the findings are presented and discussed. Finally, the implications meant for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers are detailed for the reader. The questions of this study are: (a) How have the participants' identities been changed by being involved in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative? (b) How does gender mediate their professional identities?

The preceding chapters situated this line of questioning. In Chapter 1 the purpose and problem this study addresses were explained. In Chapter 2, relevant literature helped to provide the reader with the requisite background knowledge for this topic. In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study with attention to the particulars of data collection and analysis built the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 detailed the findings and revealed the five dominant themes that were culled from the data. In this chapter, these themes have been further analyzed and couched in the context of literature to help the reader have a clear picture of the results of the study.

This qualitative case study was designed with the participants' voices in mind. The majority of the data collected came from semi-structured interviews with the teachers. Interviews were about an hour in length and occurred five times separately with each participant. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. To triangulate the data, other forms of data were collected. Three observations of each teacher during writing class were made. Visual data were collected in documents, such as memos, student work, and teacher created materials. The teachers both agreed to take photographs as well.



These photos were the basis of the final interview and provided the teachers the means for directing the discussion. All of the data were compiled and organized for analysis.

Using constant comparative analysis, I began the process of thinking about my data from the moment the study began (Merriam, 1998). After each observation or interview, I recorded analytic memos as recommended by Strauss (1987) and used them to decide if the next session would need to be changed or if new questions became necessary. As I collected audio data, I burned them to compact discs so that I could listen and re-listen to them before the coming collection session. This greatly influenced my data collection because my high level of familiarity with the recorded data allowed me to consider my data collection and analysis in a recursive fashion. It also helped me to build rapport and trust with my participants, not only so that I could collect honest data, but so that my participants' vulnerabilities were attended to carefully and that their willingness to share themselves with me was not abused. Both my connection with them and their connection with me grew and helped to create a study that respects the participants.

The questions for this study were intended to explore on how teachers who learn new teaching practices might change their own identities in the process. My interest was in how writer's workshop influences them as women teachers specifically. Because of the qualitative nature of these questions, answering them has taken copious amounts of data from different sources. As a researcher using a critical approach, I attempted to foreground the teachers' own voices in my findings section. Again, my own interpretations and analysis of the data have been inspired by the participants.

The first question of this study, "How have the participants' identities been affected by their involvement with the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative?" has

been addressed via the collection and analysis of data from various sources. Sarah and Catherine changed in important ways because of their involvement in professional development at their school. Holland et al. (1998) describe the way that identities are shaped and formed as fluid and interactional. Sarah and Catherine, in the figured worlds of their school and their classrooms had to negotiate and navigate through opposing forces, which helped them to create identities that are more empowered and more confident in their own expertise. First and foremost, they started to teach writing in a different way. The importance of this is not to be understated. The writer's workshop approach calls on teachers to become authentically caring, engaged, and experts in their classrooms. The very nature of teaching in this way required Sarah and Catherine to adopt a way of thinking about themselves and their students.

The second question, "How does gender mediate their professional identities?" led me to understand that while the participants only partially identified these opposing forces as related to their gender, the very act of taking up this new way of teaching writing was a stand against patriarchal forces in their lives. The surveillance and survival under what Foucault called the *panopticon*, created a conflict for Sarah and Catherine (Bartky, 2003). They struggled with following what they were asked to do by those in charge and simultaneously meeting their perceived needs of their students. Often these goals were not congruent and made Sarah and Catherine feel pressured to teach in ways they did not regard well, such as test preparation.

### **Identity and Themes**

The five prevalent themes from the data were:

1. Gender influences teachers.

2. Mandates and surveillance create tension for teachers.
3. Expertise matters to teachers in different contexts.
4. An ethic of care in professional development translates to students.
5. Writer's workshop offers resistance to the educational system.

Each of these themes is a part of the world of the women teachers in this study. For both Sarah and Catherine, the ways in which they live through these themes and the ways in which these themes interact and intersect are crucial to their shifting and responding identities as people and as teachers. Identity theory helps to explain themes in a way that is helpful for understanding the context and the participants in a way that is useful for considering possible approaches to professional development. Furthermore, this study is based in the belief that critical pedagogy and critical theory are essential for changes in education that promote social justice. In order to move forward as a democratic society, we must understand and how teachers learn and become empowered to teach their students in ways that lead to this ideal.

The following four conclusions take the findings of the study to another level of abstraction, beyond the simple facts to larger ideas. I will connect my conclusions with the literature of the field where appropriate. The five themes have been combined in ways that aid in illustrating the four conclusions of this study. Taking a critical lens to how Sarah and Catherine experienced mandates revealed a gendered response to a patriarchal system. The conclusions are listed below:

1. The entry points of teachers matter. Their identities and perceptions about themselves as teachers are contextual.
2. The way women teachers interact with and respond to mandates is gendered and leads to formation of particular identities.

3. Teachers value care and expertise in professional development and do not respect authorities that do not have those traits.
4. Writer's workshop appears to be a vehicle for teacher resistance to an education system that does not match their values.

The following discussion places each conclusion with the research question that it answers.

### **Explanation of Conclusions**

#### **Conclusion 1: Entry Points Matter**

The first conclusion of this study is that the entry points of teachers matter. Their identities and perceptions about themselves as teachers are contextual. What is it that allows women teachers to adopt identities that question, reflect, and learn? Research on education has been concerned with how to improve teacher quality and how professional development can assist such matters (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This study turns our attention to the often overlooked component of gender and how issues of power and voice can be opened within particular contexts, such as writer's workshop. Given our collective history of women as teachers, it is notable that Sarah and Catherine found agentive ways to respond and resist a patriarchal system using writer's workshop as a vehicle for that action.

How were Sarah and Catherine able to make changes in the ways they taught and in their professional identities? Their entry points must be considered to situate them both in a larger historical context. The process of adding to their professional identities was somewhat different for Sarah and Catherine. For Sarah, her involvement gave her a transformational experience. Her views were challenged and changed. For Catherine, her experience with the writing collaborative was more conformational of her previously

held, but not always acted upon, views of teaching. Each participant must be considered in their historical entry point to teaching.

**Sarah: Teaching as a mission.** Sarah entered teaching at the time of the civil rights movement in the South. Though she wanted to become a teacher, she stressed that teaching was really the only choice. The other options were the secretarial route or nursing, and she knew she did not want to do either of those. Furthermore, she knew she wanted to have children and thought that teaching would be the most accommodating schedule for a mother. Sarah's family expected that she would attend college. Certainly the women's movement at that time influenced her thinking, but Sarah made little reference to it. Perhaps because she chose a traditionally feminine career, she did not feel connected with the movement.

However, Sarah did claim the renegade identity and started to talk about teaching as a mission. I would argue that this claiming of teaching as a mission is related to her experiences during the Civil Rights Movement when she entered teaching. Sarah positioned herself as caring about social justice and wanting, even in her retirement, to work to help students. She has committed herself to being a teacher on a mission. Every conversation with Sarah revealed her passion for equality and justice in education.

Having taught for many years in private school, Sarah tasted the freedom of being a teacher who created her own curriculum and determined how to teach it. This contrast with the top down decisions of public schools must also have helped her to develop a resistance stance. It was not until she tried writer's workshop that she was able to see a way out of the conflicts she felt about following mandates but also serving her students well. Sarah's experience was transformational. This is particularly true in regards to how

she viewed her students. Rather than seeing them as having impossible deficits, she started to see what they brought to the table. This occurred primarily during writer's workshop as she was able to see their important stories come to life on the page. Additionally, Sarah has lived through many different programs and textbooks that have come and gone. The difference with writer's workshop is that while it is an approach, the knowledge and skill needed to implement it lie within the teacher, therefore giving teachers power in their own classrooms. She transformed her way of teaching, but also her view of herself as a teacher who is able to see children in a different way.

**Catherine: Choosing to teach.** Catherine started her career during the No Child Left Behind Act at the turn of the twenty first century. Catherine considered other careers, but believed her talents best suited teaching. Deciding to teach, for Catherine, was based on interest and did not stem from her wish to be a mother with a similar schedule to her children. Her family expected that she would attend college and have a meaningful career. Catherine expected that when she entered teaching that it would be more than just because she liked being around children. She knew she wanted to help people and was not hesitant about taking a position at Corey Richardson, where so many students are low income and have limited English proficiency.

Entering teaching in this time meant that Catherine has always dealt with standards and tests. She is familiar with the kinds of textbooks that have exactly what the teacher should say written in them. Her teacher preparation program taught her theory and practices that would enable her to make decisions about teaching. Therefore, when she was in a school that was under surveillance from the district, she was disappointed to find that she could not put all the best practices she knew about into action. Writer's

workshop confirmed her thinking that teachers could make judgments about their students and guide them towards progress in authentic ways without constantly measuring them with supposedly objective tests.

Her experience being in a Professional Development School and participating in professional development that was generative and collaborative was more confirmational than transformative, like Sarah. She already believed that her children could write, but she did not quite know how to go about it. Catherine tried using a prompt and skills based approach, but found it was not very successful in her classroom. She had many positive experiences around writing as a child, and did not fear it. However, like Sarah, she felt her teacher education program did not offer much in terms of teaching writing, even though it had given her the foundational belief that as the teacher she was capable of making instructional decisions as opposed to being a technician of a set program.

Both Sarah and Catherine come from different entry points, yet benefited from participating in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative as part of the PDS program at their school. The university research team provided generative collaborative professional development that gave them both the opportunity to view themselves as experts and to receive care. This setting contributed to their taking up of resistant stances that questioned mandates and surveillance. Writer's workshop became their vehicle of resisting messages that devalued children and teachers.

### **Conclusion 2: Gender and Mandates**

The second conclusion is that the way women teachers interact with and respond to mandates is gendered and leads to formation of particular identities. While this conclusion may not be surprising to any woman teacher, it has been neglected in

educational research studies. Identity theory and critical theory do help to tease apart this issue, however. Holland et al. (1998) argued that positional identities are figured as the person lives and interacts with their environment. Positioning occurs through relationships and is mediated by gender, race, class and any other form of grouping in which a person is embedded. In addition Holland et al. (1998) considered more specifically how gendered language, expectations, and interactions foster particular identity characteristics in people. In this study, the women teachers are enmeshed in our collective history of what makes a good teacher. As discussed in Chapter 2, historically speaking the ideal teacher is a woman who has many of the selfless traits of an ideal mother. She gives of herself but does not question the rules in which she operates.

Hoffman (2003) told of the era of feminization in teaching where women teachers were fairly autonomous, which has changed as our economy has developed and educational bureaucracies have become established. As our nation grows, we have created a large system that attempts to educate masses of people with efficiency. Teachers must comply with the system, often creating feelings of powerlessness in them and ultimately recasting teachers as a mere delivery mechanism for a predetermined curriculum. The patriarchal nature of this structure is unavoidably obvious. Decision making, expert judgment, and evaluative processes are removed from the hands of women teachers and controlled by politicians and superintendents.

Sarah and Catherine both grapple with the powerlessness they feel in the face of “mandates” that they do not believe benefit their students. Not only do they disagree with the ideology behind these mandates, but they are not even heard in the conversations held to make decisions. They are both caught in conflict, where they feel compelled to be



good employees and follow the rules, but at the same time they worry that the mandates are harming their students. They find ways to comply with mandates but at the same time shield their students from what they believe is not beneficial. However, they cannot shield their students from everything and then feel frustration and guilt about this fact.

Sarah and Catherine operate within the system as women and confirm their status as such through their actions. To do otherwise would result in a crisis of not only their professionalism but their gender identities, as well as our social expectation of the feminized elementary school teacher. Both Sarah and Catherine turned in required paperwork such as data charts and classroom checklists, but complained bitterly about it. This unwillingness to create conflict in their workplace can be related to their desire to fulfill the feminine image of the ideal teacher: selfless, giving, and not complaining. Catherine was very insistent in her ability to “close her door and teach.” Catherine said it best when she argued “I think the big thing is just outside forces mandating what goes on in the classroom” (Interview 1). Catherine is frustrated by these mandates, but still follows them. Certainly she does not want to lose her job, but there is also the fear of confrontation that might result in her appearing to be a bad employee. The dichotomy presented here shows Sarah and Catherine trapped by the femininity of being a teacher and what it would mean to disrupt their own identities to challenge mandates in a more aggressive way.

Greene (cited in Biklen and Pollard, 1993) explained that our historical imagination of women has crafted them as the daughters operating within patriarchal structures as our nation industrialized. She depicts the “girls” working in factories and schools as they were viewed by the men who were profiteers and school superintendents.

According to Greene, such men saw women in these arenas as exactly that, girls not women, because of their obedience, docility, and ability to be controlled. How can these historical perceptions be completely erased from our culture? Despite the efforts of feminism, women school teachers face the remnants of this shared past, not only within their own identities, but in the expectations of others for them. Additionally, the world of school and the way it is situated in society creates the figured world where teachers craft their identities.

Identities become important outcomes of participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in ways analogous to our notion that identities are formed in the process of participating in activities organized by figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). Women elementary teachers participate in the world of school and are therefore influenced by gendered expectations of how their participation should look (Munro, 1998). These women are docile to these expectations and collaborate in their perpetuation.

In this study, I found that Sarah and Catherine were inconsistent in connecting their own daily problems with mandates to the idea of the feminized teacher operating under patriarchal policies. This finding is not problematic, and was even expected. Women teaching in a school of mostly women would be unlikely to see larger more abstract and systematic oppression. Biklen (1995) had similar findings in her longitudinal study of women teachers. They were able to see more day-to-day issues related to being women, but did not see a larger picture of women being forced into particular roles. Furthermore, this contributes to the idea that women are also self-monitoring and vested in their own maintenance of their gender identity as women.

Identity is a flexible, interactive, and socially responsive construct. In a context of directives and mandates, Sarah and Catherine have to walk a fine line between compliance and resistance. To challenge too much could result in losing their identity as women and teachers. As part of generative collaborative professional development, they are in a community of practice that gives them space to form different voices and identities.

### **Conclusion 3: Caring and Expertise**

My third conclusion is that teachers value care and expertise in professional development and do not respect or learn from authorities that do not have those traits. Showing care for another does not mean imposing your will upon them because you know what they need more than they do. Teachers are often recipients of “care” by “experts” that is not authentic caring. Sarah and Catherine did not feel cared for by their administration or the district authorities. Furthermore, they doubted that these individuals were experts on teaching and learning. What Amy offered was a stark contrast to the types of professional development experiences they had previously endured. As a society, we seem to understand that students need authentic caring in order to be able to learn, particularly if they are disillusioned with the educational system. Why then is the same not true for teachers? It seems that in our desire to hold teachers and students accountable with standardized tests we have removed the human element out of schooling. Noddings explained that the ethics behind caring need to be focused on the growth and development of the one being cared for, not the self.

To act as one-caring, then, is to act with special regard for the particular person in a concrete situation. We act not to achieve for ourselves a commendation but to protect or enhance the welfare of the cared-for. (2003, p. 24)

However, the centralization of data and student achievement has shifted the focus of administrators and school officials to performance by the numbers. As Sarah pointed out in Chapter 4, the purpose of learning is obscured by data, and I would expand that the ability to care is disintegrated by data. As said by Noddings above, when the interests of the one being cared for are supplanted by the interests of others, caring does not occur. When applied to teachers instead of students, this would mean that when teachers' interests are not the center of professional development, then decisions being made in an effort to improve teachers will always be inauthentic caring. Valenzuela (1999) explained that authentic caring in schools requires knowledge and understanding of students and their goals. Applying this to teacher learning is crucial as well. It is remarkable that for Sarah this experience with Dr. Flint where "She cared about what we felt. She cared about what we needed" was the most important of her career. It is astounding, yet obvious, to think that simply caring and responding to a teachers' needs might lead to transformative professional development.

Professional development that is caring considers the identity of the teacher. It considers how teachers view themselves and their students. Holland et al. explained the significance of identity in caring:

Identities are a key means through which people care about and care for what is going on around them. They are important bases from which people create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being (1998, p. 5).

For Sarah and Catherine, beginning to see themselves as writing teachers was crucial in their ability to learn and implement a new way of teaching writing. Hooks (1994) positioned teachers as whole people and argued that they need to consider their students in the same way by creating a more critical pedagogy that does not claim neutrality or

recreate the status quo. According to hooks, teaching cannot be separated from the political. We can extend this idea from student empowerment to teacher empowerment. Teachers can become empowered people who are then able to show their students how to question and engage in new ways of thinking. Teachers are often silenced, but generative collaborative professional development gives them voice in their learning and values them as professionals. Furthermore, it parallels the ways students are considered with how teachers are considered, from a position of respect. Teachers often face system-wide obstacles to teaching, and the type of professional development that helps develop teachers become advocates for themselves, their students, and the profession is caring and delivered by experts. Teachers are given the freedom to view themselves in a new light as experts and professionals.

An appropriate description of respect is feeling that others value you and your qualities. Because of the historical position of teachers as self-sacrificing and maternal they have not always been treated with respect (Biklen, 1995; Carter, 2002; Hoffman, 2003). Today, teachers must still face with these prevalent stereotypes and expectations. Grant's (1988) landmark ethnography about the many changes of Hamilton High is an example of what could happen when teachers felt they had a voice and were valued. Grant argued that when teachers feel respected, schools are better places for students. This kind of respect was introduced by Dr. Flint's research team to Sarah and Catherine in that their ideas were valued, they were seen as equals, and they were free to make decisions for themselves. Using hooks's (1994) terms, "teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (p. 15). Sarah and Catherine have

found that their work in writing has spilled over into their entire lives as teachers. They both believe that their students are benefiting immensely from their new knowledge about teaching writing.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) offered the idea of inquiry as stance in which practitioner knowledge is valued and consider this idea “the collective intellectual capacity of practitioners to work in alliance with others to transform teaching, learning, leading, and schooling in accordance with democratic principles and social justice goals” (p. 118). When teachers have the freedom to be experts at their profession, transformation can occur more readily. Generative collaborative professional development enabled Sarah and Catherine to learn from each other, from professional readings, from experts, and to feel ownership of their learning. The overarching goal of their learning was also shifted away from generating data for the school, but to helping students become better readers and writers.

#### **Conclusion 4: Teachers as Renegades**

The final conclusion, that writer’s workshop became a vehicle for teacher resistance to an educational system that does not match their values, is discussed here. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the participants’ identities changed in response to their professional development experiences. The conclusions drawn from the data indicate that the participants have both transformed and confirmed their identities. One important facet that they claimed is the renegade stance. Sarah and Catherine both positioned themselves in new ways that allowed them to claim agency. Even though writer’s workshop might have only been a portion of their day, this time and space gave them the opportunity to be resistant and claim power. The connection between the

renegade stance and teaching authentic writing in the writer's workshop classroom cannot be understated. Sarah and Catherine began to see their own students claiming their voices and expressing their own ideas during literacy instruction. They empowered their students through writing about their lives. Holland et al. (1998) connected language with identity and used Vygotsky's (1934/1986) idea of inner-speech. Identities are related to the inner-speech and thoughts of a person, which create an identity from external positions and situations then turned inward. Because of the relationship between identity and writing, teaching writing to students in an alternative fashion became an act of resistance for "renegades" Sarah and Catherine.

Anzaldua (2007) artfully explains the way writing and identity are intimately intertwined; To write means that you must have belief in yourself. Then to teach writing, one must have not only the courage to face this vulnerable act oneself, but also the confidence in self and ability. Sarah and Catherine are courageous in the way they take up the task of teaching their students to become critically literate people. So much of what they convey to their students about meaningful learning they have started to apply to themselves. Anzaldua further explains the potential for identity and writing to separate and for women to fall into the roles expected of them:

We do not engage fully. We do not make full use of our faculties. We abnegate. And then in front of us is the crossroads and the choice: to feel a victim where someone else is in control and therefore responsible and to blame (being a victim and transferring the blame on culture, mother, father, ex-lover, friend, absolves me of responsibility), or to feel strong, and for the most part, in control. (Anzaldua, 2007, p. 43)

Writing claims a voice for the writer. Sarah and Catherine spoke again and again about the ways their students were able to become more confident and expressive through their writing. As they both engaged in teaching writing, Sarah and Catherine started to position

this particular teaching method as a form of resistance to all of the frustrations they deal with in their school lives. They started to take control. Yet, this control created tension. Sarah explained, “If I said being a renegade is a weakness and then I turn around and say it’s a strength, it just sounds like I’m really off base” (Interview 3). Teachers face this kind of pressure everyday when they feel conflicted about what they are asked to do and what they know is right to do.

Gender mediated Sarah and Catherine’s identities as professionals as well, and this is also rooted in claiming the renegade stance. All women teachers, including the participants, face many expectations and regulations about their role in the school system. When it comes to having voice whether spoken or written, women teachers have historically had to silence themselves and follow the directives of their superiors. As detailed in the review of the literature previously, teachers are deprofessionalized, deskilled, and generally disconnected from decision making. By engaging in caring professional development on writer’s workshop, Sarah and Catherine began to reclaim themselves from the hegemonic school culture. Particularly, it was their expertise in teaching writing in a way that is intentional and emancipatory to their students that led them to see themselves as professionals with expertise who were capable of making decisions in their classrooms and school. They consistently said it was their students’ stories that made them continue to try writer’s workshop. It is not a coincidence that as they learned more, they became more willing to question their own practices as well as those of their administrators and the district. While the intent of the professional development was not to encourage teachers to become difficult employees, it is notable that gaining confidence in teaching writing let them see that they have important voices.



These questioning and disruptive ideologies are typical of teachers engaging in critical literacy practices. When teachers take up critical writing pedagogy, they see a larger purpose to their instruction; they want their students to understand that writing is a means of communicating and therefore having power (Lewison & Heffernan, 2008).

### **Limitations**

Case study is a helpful research methodology for education. Giving voice to participants is an outcome of this particular research approach, and in a world where teacher voices are often silenced, this is essential. However, case study by nature is also limiting. There are not many participants to corroborate the findings over a large scale. One particular issue found in this study is that when conducting interviews, the participant might respond differently depending on her mood or time constraints. While I accounted for this by having multiple interviews and other sources of data, this certainly affected my findings. However, as a qualitative researcher, I value the depth and intimacy achieved in the data and how they contributed to my knowledge of the participants' lives.

Another limitation is that this project had a narrow width of the scope. A case study with all of the teachers of Corey Richardson as the unit might have provided more variation among the participants. Time and financial restrictions prevented me from this large of a study, but the results would have been interesting to see how teachers who were involved in the professional development with Dr. Flint and those who were not compared with each other in terms of identity, resistance, and agency. Were there teachers at Corey Richardson also resisting and claiming agency, but with other vehicles than writer's workshop?

My own role in the study in regards to its limitations is worth explaining in detail. I believe that I influenced my participants in ways that were unintended, but will be revealed here. Because I knew Sarah and Catherine from my work as a member of Dr. Flint's research team, they were aware of my stance and preferences about teaching methods. Furthermore, having been to conferences with Sarah and Catherine, we have shared academic ideas as well as social time together. These factors are certainly at play during any data collection with both participants. However, I argue that they did not affect the results of the study in a way that skewed them towards my position, but rather they allowed the teachers to feel free to express themselves in honesty without fear of reprimand. They both know that they are respected and cared for in our relationship and were, therefore, willing to share their thinking even when it might make them vulnerable.

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 3, my own biases as a researcher enter into this study. From the questions I asked, to the data analysis, all parts of this study have my fingerprints on them. It is impossible for any researcher to remain absolutely objective; every decision made in a study bears some of the researcher's bias. I belong to several groups that influence my bias. Like my participants, I am an elementary school teacher. I am a woman. I am white and middle class. I have taught writer's workshop. I have been Dr. Flint's graduate research assistant. The list could continue on, but that would not relieve me of the responsibility of being a trustworthy researcher. I have made every attempt to view my data as new and open to possibility by bracketing my own beliefs and preconceived notions. Through my analytical processes, I continually reviewed my codes and listened to my data for other options. I consulted with my participants to ensure I was representing them honestly. I positioned myself as neutral and withheld judgment from

interview conversations. In large part, my participants were able to determine which visual data they found important for collections. Finally, I attempted to reveal my bias as a feminist researcher by including that stance in my theoretical framework. While my own researcher bias limits this study, hopefully my explanations of my own biases and my forthright attempts at objectivity have been noted by the reader.

### **Implications for Research, Policy, and Teaching**

*Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*

(Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed)

### **Further Questions for Research**

This study is just the beginning of a line of research looking at how teacher identity interacts with teacher learning. There are several other areas worth exploring as well as other research designs that might be fruitful:

Are teachers today able to resist the encroachment of scripted programs and heavy scrutiny? Are there ways of supporting teachers that allow them the kinds of resistance that women from history demonstrated at times? How might teachers begin to see themselves in a critical stance and as agents of social and moral change? These questions are important for future research because they get at the heart of what we collectively believe about the purposes of education.

A larger scale interview study would also be helpful in answering questions about how teachers see gender in their work and home lives. Without having a connection to a particular subject area, as opposed to the study presented here, studying teachers and their gender identity is an important and often overlooked facet of educational research. It

seems to be the elephant in the room that researchers shy away from so as not to pigeonhole themselves as studying this topic that might be addressed in the women's studies department of a university. In an effort to be taken seriously, it seems this topic has been ignored.

Research questions about how teachers' past experiences with writing influence their present use of writing in the classroom would be helpful. Sarah and Catherine both were shaped by their personal experiences. Considering how teacher preparation programs present writing instruction would also help in designing writer's workshop professional development. Additionally, I am curious about how society in general feels about writing and what they expect schools to teach in terms of the purposes of writing.

Finally, the context of women teachers should be further examined. How has history shaped our concept of teaching and how does this play out in schools today? Issues of class, race and gender would also arise if a more historical approach were taken. I believe that in order to move forward, we have to have a sharper focus on teasing apart our collective historical experiences in education.

### **Policy**

Sarah and Catherine repeatedly expressed their frustration with an educational system that silences their voices and makes decisions about how they should teach without knowing their students. The policy implications of this sentiment are far reaching. For too long, teachers have been excluded from making decisions about how schools should operate and how students should be taught. Their expertise is ignored and they are seen as technicians on an assembly line who must conform to a standard operating procedure. Schwandt (2005) argued that as educational research and practice

divide further, teachers become technicians instead of practitioners. He also points out that as the educational system moves further away from a human approach and closer to a technical or “scientific” approach, all aspects of the system become producers of measurable outcomes. This essentially removes difference, creativity, caring, and any human impulses from schooling.

Policy makers must become more attuned to this slippery slope and find ways to honor and respect the expertise of teachers. Rather than encouraging schools to invest in scripted literacy programs, funding should be directed toward professional development that empowers teachers to make decisions about how to teach their students. To dovetail this type of professional development, policy makers need to reconsider their funding of scripted literacy programs. These do not help teachers know their students and do not give students the full and developmentally appropriate experience that writer’s workshop provides. Teachers need to stand up “what is right” as Sarah explained. They need to expose the tensions they experience between following mandates and caring for their students.

We need to realign our purpose for education. If our true goal is to educate the people of our country to participate in a democratic society, then critical literacy must become our vehicle for education in reading, writing, and communicating. These are not discrete skills, but attitudes and understandings about the purposes of literacy and how people can interact and express themselves. Viewing oneself as a reader and a writer is crucial to full participation in a democracy. As a nation, we have become obsessed with data and have pushed aside educators and children in favor of trying to perfect a method that generates proof in standardized tests.

## Professional Development

An issue worth exploring as new models of professional development are implemented is the possibility that teachers may feel that they are going to be admonished by their administrators for participating. Teachers may not feel free to try new things in their classrooms, particularly in schools that are under various reform efforts. It seems surprising that an expert in the field of literacy might not be immediately appreciated for the knowledge that he or she might bring to the school, but many may view involvement with new methods as a risk. Apple (2004) explained that curriculum is an ideological stance that is created to perpetuate the social order that values individualism over community. Challenging such an entrenched ideology is not simple and can create disruption that is uncomfortable and threatening to hegemony. One obstacle that Corey Richardson teachers had to face was being questioned about the legitimacy of whole language and writer's workshop. The Professional Development School model was able to provide some protection for them from questions because of the connection with university faculty, but they were still concerned about being questioned for trying the new things they were learning about. Sarah explained, "The county is not open to new and different. So if we want to go up and shout and cheer about something new that works it makes them nervous that we've stepped out of our roles" (Interview 5). They were worried that they may face repercussions for teaching outside the box and not following a more prescribed curriculum. Their school had previously been using *America's Choice*, and there were still many residual effects from the program. University faculty members need to be aware that a question of the legitimacy of their methods could be daunting to teachers. The anxiety of trying something new that

may not be well received can cause teachers to reject change. In addition, Sarah mentions feeling good about Dr. Flint providing her with plenty of praise and encouragement. This helped Sarah build up her confidence, as well as increased her opinion of the changes she was trying in her classroom:

After years and years of being put down, and even when she came in I had the principal and assistant principal in front of me question her as if to say, “Are you using the standards and the elements? Are you going by the state curriculum?” (Interview 5)

Teachers might find themselves in a tense relationship with administration when they begin to work with outside faculty. Dr. Flint had to continue to work with the principal at Corey Richardson to build communication and trust. As other teachers began to see the acceptance of Dr. Flint by others at the school, more became involved and more invited her into their rooms.

### **Final Thoughts**

Each time I met with my participants, I was inspired by their expertise and professionalism. Their immense dedication to their students while struggling to meet their needs is phenomenal. I learned that teachers do not feel free to make decisions in their own classrooms and that they fear scrutiny and reprimand. As an outsider, it was easier to see the influences that gender and power played in their daily lives, but for Sarah and Catherine, true to form, the focus was always how to do the best for their students.

Sarah and Catherine were advocates for their students, but who would be their advocate? While writer’s workshop professional development did give them tools to resist and ways to reconsider themselves, there is still much left to do. Professional development that gives teachers the chance to guide their own learning, to experience caring and to have true experts to call is crucial for improvement in schools. The role of

universities in public schools is clear—we must become involved and focus efforts on helping teachers find their voices through professional development experiences that support them in forming critical identities. Universities that engage in empowering professional development experiences are helping teachers create new identities for themselves that are professional, engaged, and confident enough to reshape schools. Writing is an accessible way for this to occur. Sarah and Catherine felt strongly that teaching writer’s workshop made a difference for their students and for themselves. There may be other avenues to achieve this goal, but because of the free and open nature of writer’s workshop, it is a particularly effective medium. If we are going to change our societal notion of who and what a teacher is, we must begin with teachers changing their own self-perceptions. We can apply our thinking about students’ identities as “constantly constructed and reconstructed by societal and cultural forces” to teachers’ identities (Ariail, p. 36, 2002). Linking writing, identity, and the transformative possibility of critical literacy instruction is essential.

I am reminded each day about our ultimate purpose in empowering teachers, and that is empowering students so that our society may advance to a higher level of understanding, connection, and human compassion. When I let my students use their own voices in authentic ways, they never fail to inspire me. They can see the raw power of being able to communicate with other people using the written word. They question the assumptions and power structures we take for granted. They inspire me to do the same. We need to tap into our students’ potential by helping teachers discover their own voices. Our education system can only become truly liberatory if the teachers within it are activists who view themselves as powerful agents of change. By failing to recognize



issues of power and gender in teachers' identities, we distance ourselves from the realities of teaching today and keep our society from progressing towards the educational system that democracy requires.

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## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

## Sample Interview Questions

Although the interviews will be very open-ended and participant directed, these questions will be used initially for the purposes of beginning the conversation. The first three interviews are outlined here. It would be difficult to predict the direction my participants will take in later interviews, particularly the photo elicited interview because I do not know what they will select to capture on film.

*Professional History*

*Before beginning interview, ask participant to draw a teacher using pencil and paper. Use this drawing to discuss what the participant has indicated a teacher is and does- what it is really like to be a teacher.*

1. Tell me about your history as a teacher.
2. How did being a woman influence your decision to teach?
3. Describe how you were prepared to be a teacher?
4. What are the benefits of teaching? What are the challenges of teaching?
5. If you could go back in time, how would your career be the same or different from what it is now?
6. What have been defining moments in your career as a teacher?
7. What do you see are the gender issues in the teaching profession?
8. Why do you think most elementary school teachers are women?
9. What is it like to work in an environment of mostly women?
10. In what ways do you think women might teach differently from men?
11. If you could design a professional development program, what would it be?
12. How do you feel about Corey Richardson? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

*Personal History*

1. Tell me about your childhood and your experiences growing up.
  - Where were you raised?
  - What were your school experiences?
  - What did your parents do for a living?
2. Tell me what ever you'd like to about your family and their attitudes towards education?
3. Describe your current home life. How does being a teacher fit in with your personal life?
4. Does being a woman influence your personal life? How?
5. If you could change anything in your life, what would it be?
6. Describe the role of work in your life. Do you think it is typical to most women?

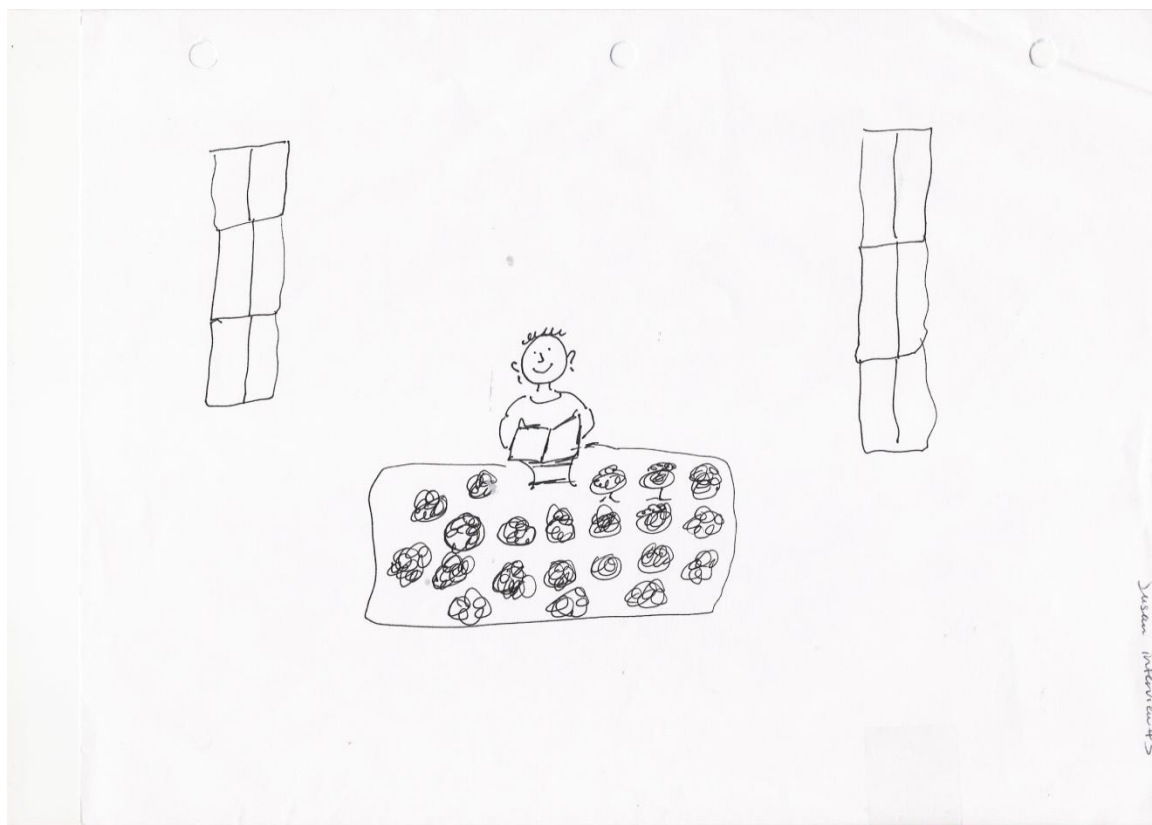
7. How do you think being a woman has influenced your life decisions?
8. What are your career plans for the future?
9. What are your hopes for your personal life in the future?

*Literacy History*

1. What are your earliest memories of learning to read and write?
2. Describe any school instruction you can remember having to do with reading and writing.
3. How does how your view of yourself as a woman influence your teaching?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a reader and writer?
5. If you could teach your students anything about reading and writing, what would it be?
6. In retrospect, how would you describe your teacher preparation program? How has it influenced you as a teacher?
7. In what ways if any has your involvement in the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative influenced the ways you teach literacy?
8. Have your ideas and beliefs about teaching changed because of your involvement?
9. In what ways have you your ideas about yourself as your teaching has changed? ( as a person, teacher, woman, professional)?
10. How have your ideas about yourself been shaped by the Writing Collaborative?
11. What specifically about the Corey Richardson Writing Collaborative has influenced you? Personally? Professionally?

APPENDIX B

Sarah's Drawing



APPENDIX C

Catherine's Art Photograph





## APPENDIX D

## Sarah's Reading Test

Weekly  
Lesson Test  
.....  
Lesson 1

**Selection Comprehension**

▶ Choose the best answer for each question and fill in the circle next to the answer you have chosen.

1. What is "Ruby the Copycat" MOST LIKE?

- A. a fable
- B. a fairy tale
- C. realistic fiction
- D. poetry

ELA3R3n

2. Why does Ruby say that she was a flower girl at her sister's wedding?

- A. She wants to be just like Angela.
- B. She is playing a game with Angela.
- C. She knows her teacher likes weddings.
- D. She is excited that she was in a wedding.

ELA3R3l

3. On Monday, Ruby's first day in class, how is Ruby DIFFERENT after she comes back from lunch?

- A. She has on a sweater with daisies.
- B. She is wearing a red bow in her hair.
- C. She is wearing a hand-painted T-shirt.
- D. She has on a red-and-lavender striped dress.

ELA3R3m

4. What is Ruby's biggest problem in this passage?

- A. She tries to be like other people.
- B. She does not like other people.
- C. She never gets to have fun.
- D. She is not good at reading.

ELA3R3c

Selection Comprehension  
"Ruby the Copycat"  
© Harcourt • Grade 3

5

## APPENDIX E

## Classroom Checklist

10 Identify the standards-based indicators that were evident during the observation

- 1 Instruction is linked to the standards and elements.
- 2 Instruction is on target with the appropriate Yearlong/Semester-long Alignment Guide.
- 3 Students know the expectations for the day (i.e. lesson agenda and assignment(s) posted).
- 4 Teacher introduces, discusses, reads, points to the standard of the day or has students discuss standards and explain standards in their own words.
- 5 Lesson has an Opening (e.g. uses a mini-lesson, assess prior knowledge, actively engage students, discuss relevant vocabulary, explain topic).
- 6 Teacher emphasizes vocabulary development.
- 7 Teacher scaffolds the lesson.
- 8 Evident in lesson delivery that teacher considered Depth of Knowledge Levels 1, 2, 3, & 4.
- 9 Students involved in completing rigorous work or activities; evidence of Depth of Knowledge Level 3 and 4 is found in student work samples.
- 10 Students know the expectations for mastery of the standards through rubrics, anchor papers; teacher explains the evidence of learning; student reflection of what it takes to meet standards; teacher detailed commentary, etc.
- 11 Standards-based displays (i.e. current instructional board with task, student work, commentary, and rubric) are used for teaching.
- 12 Students complete a 5-10 minute sponge activity related to high-stakes test preparation (CRCT, GHSGT, EOCT, SAT, ACT, NAEP).
- 13 Teacher allows students to work solo before working in groups.
- 14 Teacher uses appropriate grouping strategies (i.e. pairs, think-pair-share, threes, fours).
- 15 Students are engaged and actively involved in learning.
- 16 Students communicate with other students about the content area using the Language of the Standards (Accountable Talk).
- 17 Students evaluate and revise their own work.
- 18 Students evaluate each other's work and provide feedback.
- 19 Students participate in kinesthetic hands-on activities, and/or use technology.
- 20 Teacher uses technology to enhance instructional delivery and engage students in the learning process.

APPENDIX F

Catherine's Leveled Readers Photograph



APPENDIX G

Catherine's Lesson Plans

Elementary School						
Grade: 1	Date: 9-13-2010	Focus: short a, blending, fantasy, word order,				
Reminder: Regularly updated lesson plans for centers and flexible reading groups should be kept in the lesson plan binder.						
	Standard/Objectives	Materials	Procedure	Evaluation		
Monday	<p><b>Standard/Element(s):</b> ELA1R2a: Isolates b, m, e sounds                      ELAS1R2c: orally blends 2 to 4 phonemes                      ELA1R1A: Understands that there are correct spellings for words                      ELA1R6c: Essential narrative elements                      ELA1R6i: Plot, setting, character</p> <p><b>Opening/Mini Lesson, Work Session, Closing:</b>  <u>Reading:</u> Big book <u>There's A Billy Goat in the Garden.</u>                      Discuss concepts of print, beginning, middle, end.  <u>Phonics:</u> Digraph ck T322. Use letter cards to blend words with ck digraph.  <u>Spelling:</u> Introduce spelling words (ck)  <u>HF Words:</u> review: hold, have, so, the, what, too  <u>Writing Workshop:</u> Minilesson: Choosing a topic/drafting                      Guided Reading/Centers</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Manipulatives <input type="checkbox"/> Folders/Source Book <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practice Book/Text <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead/Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Handout/Graphic Org-Scratch/Boardwork	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tell Objective <input type="checkbox"/> Conferencing/Commentary <input type="checkbox"/> Small/Flexible Group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent Work <input type="checkbox"/> Author's/Reader's Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher Observe/Oral Responses <input type="checkbox"/> Projects/Reports/Published Work <input type="checkbox"/> Rubrics <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz/Test <input type="checkbox"/> RR/DRA/Portfolios <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homework		
Tuesday	<p><b>Standard/Element(s):</b> ELA1R2a: Isolates b, m, e sounds                      ELAS1R2c: orally blends 2 to 4 phonemes                      ELA1R1A: Understands that there are correct spellings for words                      ELA1R6b: Makes predictions using prior knowledge                      ELA1R6c: Distinguishes fact from fiction                      ELA1R6c: Essential narrative elements</p> <p><b>Opening/Mini Lesson, Work Session, Closing:</b>  <u>Reading:</u> Rhymes and Poems p9 "Cat Kisses" (Song during Morning Meeting)                      Whole Group Reading: Media Center                      "Phonics: Phoneme Isolation, ending sounds, T337  <u>Spelling:</u> T338 Build and change spelling words  <u>HF Words:</u> Intro late, oh, yes  <u>Grammar (Writing Minilesson):</u> Review what makes a good sentence. A naming and telling part. S choose pics from mags and tell what person is doing.                      Guided Reading/Centers</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manipulatives <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Source Book <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Book/Text <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead/Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Handout/Graphic Org-Scratch/Boardwork	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tell Objective <input type="checkbox"/> Conferencing/Commentary <input type="checkbox"/> Small/Flexible Group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent Work <input type="checkbox"/> Author's/Reader's Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher Observe/Oral Responses <input type="checkbox"/> Projects/Reports/Published Work <input type="checkbox"/> Rubrics <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz/Test <input type="checkbox"/> RR/DRA/Portfolios <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homework		

*Where the Wild Things Are*



## APPENDIX H

## Student Writing Sample

- Why My family came Here  
Because in Guatemala our garden was  
ding and we didn't have that much  
money to buy food so my dad tried  
and tried to find food for us but he  
couldn't find any so he moved to
- America and we had to stay at  
Guatemala for a few weeks when it  
was time for us to come here  
my dad got a job and my parent  
earned money then we had whole bunch  
of money and had food to eat and
- that's why my family came here to  
America