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Jessica Rivera-Mueller
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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CULTIVATING A LEARNER'S STANCE FOR ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHER-

INQUIRY: AN AIM FOR WRITING PEDAGOGY EDUCATION

by

Jessica Rivera-Mueller

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CULTIVATING A LEARNER'S STANCE FOR ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHER-

INQUIRY: AN AIM FOR WRITING PEDAGOGY EDUCATION

Jessica Rivera-Mueller, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2016

Advisor: Shari Stenberg

This dissertation argues that writing teacher educators (WTEs) can more purposefully advance their commitment to sponsoring inquiry-oriented teacher development by helping pre-service and practicing writing teachers examine how they are developing as inquirers. Building from scholarship in Composition and English Education and the findings from a narrative-based qualitative study that included four secondary and post-secondary teachers of writing, I have named this attention to how teachers learn and grow their inquiry processes a *learner's stance for engagement in teacher-inquiry*. This stance is a readiness to see and engage professional work with an eye toward growing one's ability to engage in teacher-inquiry. Drawing from Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's theory of learning, legitimate peripheral participation, I present three kinds of learning activities that WTEs can foreground in teacher education contexts to cultivate a learner's stance. These activities include: developing goals for teacher development, exploring tensions involved in the interpretation of teaching moments, and negotiating stakeholder positions. Using findings from the qualitative study, the dissertation chapters demonstrate how these learning activities enable teachers to examine and develop the frameworks supporting their inquiry practices. Additionally, the conclusion offers concrete ways that WTEs can implement these activities in teacher education courses.

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INTRODUCTION

We all have it in us to formulate questions that invite honesty, dignity, and revelation.
There is something redemptive and life-giving about asking a better question.
–Krista Tippett, *Becoming Wise*

It was late spring, and I was daydreaming, planning ahead for summer as I soaked in the warm breeze that snuck in through the propped-open door of my fifth-grade classroom. My teacher called me back into focus when she began reading the scripted directions for the year's standardized exam. As instructed, I broke the seal of my exam booklet with my sharpened #2 pencil and began to complete the personal information section. I paused when I reached the question about my racial identity. In years past, I marked either "Hispanic" or "White." Marking different categories from year to year seemed fair in my kid logic. This year, though, I felt robbed of the opportunity to express my identity as I knew it. I marked both—despite the explicit directive to choose only one response. I felt a moment of gratification in my rebellion. Later, though, I felt upset again because I wanted the question to be different. I wondered, "Can't there be a question that lets me be known?"

This story highlights one way I began to see how our questions reveal our knowledge and beliefs. Questioning my exam's question about identity revealed that I saw the world differently than the test's creators. As a member of one of the few families of color in my elementary school community, moments such as these helped me learn the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and questions—how our knowledge helps us formulate questions and how our questions shape our learning. While this relationship between the questions we pose and the learning that follows as a result is important in all aspects of life, it especially fuels my professional development and inquiry. As a teacher

and a feminist researcher, I seek to know the limits of my perception, how these perceptions frame my questions, and the consequences that follow from choosing to initiate and pursue particular questions about teaching and learning. As a writing teacher educator (WTE)[1], I aim to help pre-service and practicing teachers do the same.

This dissertation emerges from my commitment to helping writing teachers grow their ability to critically examine their questions about teaching, and it is grounded in the principles for professional development that are present in both Composition and English Education. Both fields agree that teachers of writing develop by continually inquiring into their teaching and learning, as well as investigating the teaching and learning of others. Teachers cannot simply develop from taking a seminar, participating in a workshop series, or applying advice from an "expert." Teacher development, in other words, does not result from an external source that defines "good teaching." Instead teachers must pose and pursue their own questions about teaching and learning. However, this view of teacher development is often unsupported by institutional structures that promote a training approach to teacher development. Orientation workshops for graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) and occasional workshops for secondary teachers—traditional sites for teacher development—often under-engage teachers' role as creators of pedagogical questions and knowledge. Because of this prevalent tension between our field's commitment to teacher development and the conditions in local teaching contexts, writing pedagogy education, a field that includes

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[1]In "Preparing Writing Teachers: A Case Study in Constructing a More Connected Future for CCCC and NCTE," E. Shelley Reid introduced the term "writing pedagogy education" to name the teacher preparation and teacher development efforts that occur for both secondary and post-secondary teachers of writing. Throughout the dissertation, I draw from Reid's term to name the compositionists and English educators who enact writing pedagogy education as writing teacher educators.

both Composition and English Education, has been enriched by arguments for and examples of inquiry-oriented practices that facilitate and sponsor teacher development. In this dissertation, I build from this body of scholarship, arguing that WTEs can more purposefully advance this commitment to sponsoring inquiry-oriented teacher development by helping pre-service and practicing writing teachers study how they are developing as inquirers. The central chapters are devoted to sharing findings from a qualitative study that was designed to identify activities that initiate, grow, and sustain a process for learning how to engage in teacher-inquiry.

While professional inquiry can be conceptualized in a variety of ways, I define teacher-inquiry as a process that helps writing teachers name and investigate their questions about teaching and learning, their pedagogical questions. While teacher-inquiry can include professional research or collaboration in professional learning communities—activities that are commonly labeled as teacher-inquiry—my definition is broader. This dissertation examines the kinds of pedagogical questions secondary and post-secondary teachers of writing pose and how teachers attend to these questions throughout their careers. Taking a career-long view of teacher-inquiry allows WTEs to consider how teachers critically examine their pedagogical questions in and through experience. This conception of teacher-inquiry additionally helps WTEs view teacher-inquiry as more than a process for becoming better teachers. We can begin to see teacher-inquiry as a process in itself that we can develop.

Based upon my engagement with the scholarship in writing pedagogy education and the insights I've arrived at through my collaboration with teachers of writing, this dissertation ultimately argues for cultivating a *learner's stance* for engagement in

teacher-inquiry. This stance is a readiness to see and engage professional work with an eye toward growing one's ability to engage in teacher-inquiry. My language purposefully builds from Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle's conception of inquiry as a stance, which is a "grounded theory of action that positions the role of practitioners and practitioner knowledge as central to the goal of transforming teaching, learning, leading, and schooling" (*Inquiry* 119). In this framework, teachers, as knowledge-makers, are agents for educational reform and teacher-learning. Cochran-Smith and Lytle explain that

> fundamental to the notion of inquiry as stance is the idea that educational practice is not simply instrumental in the sense of figuring out how to get things done, but also and more importantly, it is social and political in the sense of deliberating about what to get done, why to get it done, who decided, and whose interests are served. (*Inquiry* 121)

I propose that a learner's stance, which is a willingness and readiness to develop our understandings and experiences of teacher-inquiry, is a way that we can get better at wrestling with these questions. Beyond focusing on the inquiries at hand, I call upon writing teachers and WTEs to participate in a parallel journey that allows us to develop our understandings of teacher-inquiry. As Dewey reminds us, "every experience lives on in further experience;" we integrate new experiences and understandings within and/or related to the intellectual frameworks we've already established (*Experience* 27). An enlarged understanding of teacher-inquiry allows teachers to see and examine the beliefs and frameworks shaping their inquiry practices. Further, a learner's stance helps us take accountability for these choices. Just as Donna Qualley urges writers to take

accountability for the logical frameworks they employ in their writing, a learner's stance calls upon teachers to account for the frameworks that shape their conceptions of and experiences with teacher-inquiry.

Throughout this dissertation, I draw from Dewey's conception of inquiry as a process involving a movement between problem-posing and problem-solving to help us see how we might purposefully support the development of teacher-inquiry. Dewey asserts that inquiry involves two related processes: clarifying a problem and proposing possible solutions (*Logic* 112). Dewey reminds us that to *do* inquiry, we need to search for possible solutions to the problematic situation *and* account for the way we have defined the situation. These two processes work together to transform "an indeterminate situation into a determinately unified one;" they work, in other words, to resolve the situation (Dewey, *Logic* 117). While teachers of writing often pose questions without an expectation or desire to find a definite answer or neat solution, the movement between looking for solutions and clarifying the problem is central to my conception of teacher-inquiry. This movement foregrounds the critical nature of teacher-inquiry. While the scholarship on reflective practice has encouraged and guided teachers in important problem-solving, I argue renewed attention to inquiry processes allows teachers to equally engage in problem-posing. This call for renewed attention to teacher-inquiry is driven by my belief that some questions have greater relevance and consequence for teaching and learning. I agree with Kenneth Zeichner and Robert Tabachnick that "teachers' actions aren't necessarily better just because they are more deliberate or intentional" (2).

Defining teacher-inquiry as a process involving problem-posing and problem-solving is important for another reason, too. This conception of teacher-inquiry is a way to further enact our field's commitment to social justice pedagogy. Pressing ourselves to critically examine the questions we ask about teaching and learning is necessary for creating more equitable educational experiences and structures. While deliberation, of course, does not inherently lead to "better" or more just understandings of teaching and learning, we know that deliberation is integral to revising our pedagogical beliefs and practices. This is particularly important for supporting teachers' work in diverse classrooms. While current conversations about educational reform are often filled with language about success for all students, they too often fail to wrestle with the complex interactions between culture, power, and systems of education. For example, when we teach standard written English in the name of student success without considering the debate between code-switching and code-meshing, we fail to recognize the linguistic contributions of non-standard codes. Complexities such as these—ones that consider power, culture, and systems of education—are valued and foregrounded in this definition of teacher-inquiry.

This conception of teacher-inquiry is also timely. Nancie Atwell, a leading teacher educator and scholar, recently articulated this need publically in a CNN interview. In the interview, which focused on her professional success, Atwell explained that the constraints placed on teachers have "turned teachers into technicians, not reflective practitioners" (Klein). For this reason, she discouraged young people from pursuing a teaching career. This interview made national headlines because it seemed shocking for such a successful teacher to express such a disheartening statement. But

Atwell described conditions that many teachers already know and experience daily. In this historical moment when writing teachers are often constructed as technicians, teacher educators are uniquely positioned to help pre-service and practicing teachers view learning to teach as an ongoing, inquiry-driven process. WTEs can help pre-service and practicing teachers see the possibilities for and necessity of supporting their own growth within systems that may not support such work. Because the process of learning to teach may not be valued beyond pre-service contexts, teacher education is an increasingly important site for promoting teacher-inquiry. For this reason, we must be mindful of how we approach teacher-inquiry. We must support a teacher-inquiry process that critically examines *our own* pedagogical questions. Understanding how and why we have constructed our pedagogical questions in particular ways allows us to see and address the consequences that follow from such questions. Teachers of writing need to do more than compose pedagogical questions; they need the opportunity to learn and practice critically engaging these questions. This is especially important in teacher education contexts because it may be one of the only or one of the few places where teachers have structured support to learn teacher-inquiry and wrestle with their own questions about teaching and learning.

Throughout this dissertation, I call for a learner's stance as a pedagogical aim because teacher education is an important site for future and current writing teachers to practice a learner's stance, an orientation toward teacher-inquiry that teachers can build upon throughout their careers. Focusing on how teachers learn to participate in teacher-inquiry also offers WTEs a framework for discussing and sponsoring teacher-inquiry in teacher education. In this project, I contribute to this conversation by presenting three

kinds of activities that can help teachers cultivate a learner's stance. These activities—

developing goals for teacher development, exploring tensions involved in the

interpretation of teaching moments, and negotiating stakeholder positions—emerged

from my collaboration with the teachers who participated in my qualitative study.

Below, I describe the research questions and methods for the qualitative study; introduce

the teachers who participated in the study; and preview the upcoming chapters.

Studying Teacher-Inquiry

In this project, I examined how inquiry abilities, expectations, and processes are

learned and developed through relationships, contexts, and time. As a researcher, I

wanted to know how exemplary teachers, who are committed to their ongoing

development as teachers of writing, would describe how they learn and develop their

inquiry processes. With these research questions in mind, I used a narrative inquiry

methodology to study the development of teachers' inquiry processes. As a method,

narrative inquiry prompts researchers to collect stories and experiences from individuals

to explore a problem or question (Creswell). Drawing from Lave and Wenger's theory of

learning, legitimate peripheral participation, this study sought the "learning curriculum"

or the "activity by specific people in specific circumstances" that provides opportunity

for engagement in teacher-inquiry (52;93). As a researcher, I aimed to listen closely to

how teachers described how they have learned and continue to learn to participate in

teacher-inquiry. Working with individuals allowed me to look for the "learning

curriculum" and consider how teachers and WTEs might come to see inquiry as a process

they can purposefully develop (Lave and Wenger). In this study, then, I met one-on-one

with four teachers of writing (secondary and post-secondary) in order to help me and the

participating teachers study how we've learned to engage in and develop our inquiry processes.

We accessed these broad questions by studying and tracing our stories of and experiences with the pedagogical questions that have most shaped our professional inquiry. These questions were ones that keep resurfacing in our teaching lives and have been important for our development as teachers. They are underlying philosophical questions that speak to the "problems" we pose and aim to understand and solve. For example, as a co-participant in the study, I brought the following question to the study: "Who is responsible for what in teaching and learning processes?" As a teacher, I return to a version of this question time and time again because it names responsibility as an element integral to how I tend to see and address teaching situations. To help participating teachers identify these pedagogical questions, I brought the following questions to our first meeting:

- Can you tell me about a pedagogical question that has been important to you as a teacher of writing? This might be a question that keeps coming up over time.

- How do you think about this question today?

- When was the first time you can recall thinking about this question?

- Where, how, and why did this question emerge?

- Who were the important people in this story?

- Can you tell me stories about other times you've pondered this question? Again, where, how, and why did this question emerge? Who were the important people in this story?

The first meeting, a one-hour interview, helped us determine the pedagogical questions we studied, and the final meeting, a thirty-minute interview, helped us reflect upon our experiences in the study. The two middle meetings were collaboratively designed[2] based upon the themes that emerged in the prior experiences. After each experience, I analyzed the artifacts from the experience (i.e. transcripts from conversations, observational notes from classroom visits, etc.) and prepared an email for each teacher that named the emerging themes I noticed. I also suggested possibilities for the following experience, always leaving room open for the teachers to suggest an alternative possibility that would be meaningful. The narratives (both stories and experiences) and analysis generated in this study emerged from meeting four times with each participating teacher (16 total experiences).

This study also drew from narrative inquiry as an analytic tool. As an analytic tool, narrative inquiry helps researchers explore how experiences and understandings are shaped by interaction (personal influences/conditions and social environment), continuity (past, present, and future selves), and place (the context the story is located within) (Clandinin and Connelly 50). Throughout the study, then, I composed field texts, notes describing the setting, content, and context of each experience. These notes helped me to document my position as a researcher and place a "time stamp" on the experience, recording my perspectives and observations at the time of the experience. Accounting for my perspectives and interpretations was important for me as a researcher because I approached each meeting or experience as a narrative text. While the stories or narratives we told each other were important, the "actions, doings, and happenings" that occurred in

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[2] All meetings were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed for my analysis.

the study were also "narrative expressions" (Clandinin and Connelly 79). In addition to the field texts, I composed analytical notes to trace my growing understanding of the themes present in the field texts, observational notes, artifacts (i.e. classroom handouts), and transcripts. Drawing from D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly's description of narrative inquiry, the analysis focused on coding for continuity, interaction, and place. After each experience, I analyzed each of the research texts with the following questions in mind:

- How does this experience show us more about the inter- and intra-personal relations shaping the teacher's inquiry?
- How does this experience show us more about the teacher's relationship to the question in the past, present, and anticipated future?
- How does this experience show us more about the influence of place on the teacher's inquiry?

Each experience, then, was designed to facilitate narrative collection and analysis.

As this description of my research process indicates, the generation and analysis of narratives were ongoing, recursive processes. This design aligned with my aim to study *and* sponsor teacher development. In other words, this study was both an investigation into and an enactment of teacher development. The research questions yielded insight into the topic of inquiry development, and the research design purposefully allowed for organic and collaborative learning. "Telling stories of ourselves in the past leads to the possibility of retellings" (Clandinin and Connelly 60). Therefore, creating a space to share and critically examine stories about inquiring is a way of sponsoring teacher development (Ritchie and Wilson).

Collaborating with the Teachers

As a feminist researcher, it was important for me to engage the four participating teachers as a co-learner. My study's design enabled the participating teachers to study teacher-inquiry development together, and it could be described as "praxis-oriented inquiry," a process in which data is "generated from people in a relationship" and values the "reciprocally educative process" (Lather 72). Throughout the dissertation, I aim to represent what I learned from the experiences and perspectives of each teacher. My goal was not to uncover universal truths; instead I worked to learn from and with the teachers. With Stephanie Riger, I share the belief that "participants, not researchers, are considered the experts at making sense of the world" (733). It was my goal to listen carefully for each teacher's "learning curriculum" and examine the connections among our developmental journeys (Lave and Wenger).

While the findings from the study will be unpacked throughout the dissertation, this section briefly introduces the teachers who helped me see possibilities for cultivating a learner's stance. Each participating teacher had been teaching for at least five years at either the secondary or post-secondary level and was recognized by teaching colleagues as an educator committed to ongoing professional development. Using snowball sampling as a method for recruitment, I contacted potential participants from a pool of recommendations provided to me by faculty members at my home institution. I sought demographic diversity in the selection and a commitment to the praxis-oriented nature of the project. Below, I briefly describe each participating teacher[3] and share a table that captures the study as a whole, naming the pedagogical questions we studied and the

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[3] Each teacher selected to be identified by his or her actual name.

dates, locations, and kinds of experiences we collaboratively designed. The portraits below were crafted from the self-identified descriptors provided by the teachers. My aim here is to introduce the teachers as they introduced themselves, sharing the identities they named as influential to their work as teachers of writing.

Daniel

Daniel was the first teacher that I met with in the study. At the time of the study, he was teaching high school English in a suburban area in Nebraska. When asked to name the biographical descriptors that are important to his work, Daniel shared that he was 41 and a white male. He also shared that he "grew up poor, relatively poor compared to what [he] would consider [his] social—socio-economic class now, which is firmly middle class." Daniel's dad was in the Air Force, and (though he's not entirely sure how) he imagines that his experience growing up in a military family probably shaped his identity as a teacher. As a student, Daniel enjoyed being in school. He was "good at it," and "told early and often that [he] was smart and [would] succeed—as far as being successful at grades and standardized testing." He got along well with his teachers. Because his mom was an elementary school secretary, he was around teachers "as people." Daniel realized in these interactions that teachers could be funny and could swear, signs of their humanness. Daniel never saw teachers as "some sort of force to be reckoned with;" they were "just people." When he graduated from high school, he was voted most likely to become a high school English teacher and most likely to be famous for contributions to humanity. While he can see his peers were teasing him a bit, he feels that he was destined to be a teacher. Teaching, for Daniel, "seems perfectly in line with [his] political values, with [his] social values, [and his] family." His wife is a teacher,

too. He was expected to do well in school, and he pushes his children to also do well in

school. After many years of teaching, he still gets excited for the first day of school and

can't imagine doing anything else.

When Daniel arrived for our first meeting at a local public library, we were able

to begin our conversation easily. It was easy in part because we had met before; we were

fellow graduate students in an education seminar. We've also participated in our local

writing project community. However, I learned more about Daniel's background in this

conversation. At the time of the study, Daniel had been teaching for 17 years. He grew

up in Texas and began his teaching career in Dallas. His pathway to teaching came

through an accelerated teaching program, which he began a year after earning his

bachelor's degree in English and Philosophy. Daniel also taught secondary students in

Milwaukee, and he had taught in this Nebraska community since 2003. Throughout the

conversation, I learned that Daniel's most central pedagogical question is, "How we can

make the teaching of writing a humane process for both teachers and students?"

Throughout the study, we dug deeper into this question through observation and

conversation. For the second meeting, I visited Daniel's classroom, and we engaged in

conversations for the final two meetings.

Ceic

Ceic is a high school English teacher who brought eight years of teaching

experience in two different schools to this study. In her biographical description, Ceic

shared that "the biggest thing [she] see[s] in [her] own identity as a teacher in [her]

building and what [she's] trying to accomplish is diversity—multiculturalism." She finds

that students of color "always come to [her] classroom even when [she doesn't] know

them." In her professional and personal life, Ceic sees herself as a "facilitator of learning about others" and an "advocate for diversity." Ceic shared that this work began early in her life because she was an advocate for diversity at a young age. As a Mexican-American student attending a "mainly Caucasian school," she "always had to speak up" for her own culture, which was still a bit nebulous to her. In college, Ceic came to know more about her culture and became more attached to it, too. She imagined there were many people like her, wanting to fit in but not wholly accepted in "Mexican" or "White" culture. As a teacher, she feels it is her "duty" to foreground culture in her teaching.

For our first conversation, I met with Ceic at her high school, which is located in a suburban area in Nebraska. We had not met prior to the study, so I was eager to learn more about her experiences. I learned in this conversation that Ceic attributes most of her professional growth to this particular teaching community and the mentorship from her department chair. At the time of the study, she had been teaching in this department for six years, and she taught in another school the previous two years. Her most pressing pedagogical question— "How can reading support writing instruction and how can writing instruction support reading?"—has been influenced by her department, as it's been a key source of inquiry for the past few years. During our collaboration, I observed Ceic's teaching twice, attended a department meeting, and engaged in two more formal conversations.

Maggie

Maggie, a university composition instructor, also participated in this study. At the time of the study, Maggie had taught writing at the college level for almost 20 years, primarily at a mid-sized university in Nebraska. She was also beginning a one-year

position as a writing program administrator, covering a leave for a member of her English department. For Maggie, one of the biggest aspects of her identity is that she is "a working mother." While her children are "getting older now," they "were coming of age" when she worked on her doctorate. As a professional, then, she's "always tried to find that elusive balance between being the scholar, and being a teacher, and …also having a life outside of academia." Maggie shared that throughout her career she has made many "decisions about work and career based on family… [and that] always involves some choices." At the time of the study, Maggie was a lecturer in the English department of her university, a place that provides "opportunities to grow and take on responsibility." Maggie said she's proud of the fact that she attained her Ph.D. later in life and for the work she's done with the first year writing committee at her institution. In this role, she has helped determine the curriculum for the first year writing program and co-edited one of the textbooks that is used for the first composition course in their program's sequence.

Maggie and I met in a coffee shop near her campus for four conversations. These conversation always went over our scheduled time because they flowed so naturally. We had known each other a bit as graduate students in the same doctoral program, but Maggie had completed her graduate work a few years earlier. In the first meeting, I learned that a central question for Maggie has been about the nature of writing. She shared with me that her aim to remain relevant as a teacher of writing—one engaging technological influences—has led her to question what constitutes writing instruction. She wonders, "What is writing? How can I stay relevant as a teacher of writing?" We realized in our first conversation that we have practiced and refined our inquiries by

having to articulate them to others. For our second conversation, then, we reviewed our past writing to find and examine moments when we were pressed to articulate our teacher-inquiry. This conversation led us to study the role of practice when developing inquiry processes, a conversation that continued in the final meeting. Each conversation was exploratory, trying out ideas to come to greater understanding of our teacher-inquiry processes.

Phip

Phip, a community college instructor in Nebraska, also participated in this study. At the time of the study, he was preparing to serve as his department's co-chair in the year ahead. Phip brought a journalism and high school teaching background to this study. The common thread in his professional background is story-telling. In each context, Phip has worked with people's stories and studied how his relationships to people's stories shift in these contexts. Phip has found the role of educator requires a special kind of care and responsibility for people's stories. As he has moved from writing for rural newspapers and teaching in rural high schools in Wyoming and Nebraska, Phip shared that his job in a more urban educational setting with much more diversity is to "encourage counter narratives [from those outside of dominate cultures] and create space for those stories and the practices that help those stories grow." When asked to describe facets of his identity that are important to his work as a teacher of writing, Phip said that he believed race and cultural background are significant to note. For Phip, his identity as a white, middle-aged teacher from Nebraska impacts how he creates and engages his relationships with students from diverse backgrounds.

Phip and I engaged in four conversations to explore the ideas and questions raised in the previous conversations. As we engaged in these conversations, we are able to build from some common experiences and language: Phip and I were colleagues in a graduate course, and we also developed and shared a collaborative presentation for an AERA audience. In our first conversation, I learned that we would study his relationship with the following question: "How do students perceive and make meaning from curriculum?" Moving forward a central theme in many of our conversations was the role of story-telling in teaching and inquiry. Phip recently completed a narrative research study for his dissertation project, so we share a commitment to narrative ways of knowing. In our final conversation, we explored how we can continue to engage in teacher-inquiry when we take on new, often administrative, roles.

Table 1.1: Meeting with the Teachers

	Pedagogical Questions	Experience 1	Experience 2	Experience 3	Final Interview
Daniel, High School English	How can the writing classroom be humane for teachers and students?	Initial Interview at Library (2/26)	Class Observation and Interview at School (4/7)	Interview at Library (6/18	Final Interview at Library (8/7)
Ceic, High School English	How can reading support writing instruction and how can writing support reading instruction?	Initial Interview at School (4/9)	Observation of Department Meeting and Period 1 (4/30)	Interview at School (6/11)	Final Interview at School (7/10)
Maggie, University Composition	How can I stay relevant as a teacher of writing? What is writing?	Initial Interview at Coffee Shop (2/26)	Interview at Coffee Shop (4/9)	Interview at Coffee Shop (6/18)	Final Interview at Coffee Shop (8/27)
Phip, Community College Composition	How do students perceive and make meaning from curriculum?	Initial Interview at Coffee Shop (3/12)	Interview at Coffee shop (4/14)	Interview at Campus (5/30)	Final Interview at Office (7/8)

Overview of Chapters

I begin chapter 1, "Cultivating a Learner's Stance for Engagement in Teacher-Inquiry," by defining the tension that drives this project, a tension between engagement in reflective practice and engagement in an inquiry process. I trace scholarship from Composition and English Education to explain why this tension is the exigency for this project and the foundation of my argument for cultivating a learner's stance. Next, I define a learner's stance by presenting two important findings from the study: 1) learning teacher-inquiry is a cumulative process and 2) teacher-inquiry grows when teachers see themselves as knowledge-makers. I argue these are the foundational principles for cultivating a learner's stance.

Chapter 2, "Developing Goals for Teacher Development," is devoted to showing how the activity of developing goals for teacher development is an activity that can also help us develop as inquirers. In the chapter, I present four goals for teacher development that all of the participating teachers drew upon when discussing their inquiry processes. These goals include: Mastering Teaching, Making an Impact, Refining Pedagogy, and Sustaining an Engaged Teaching Life. As I define each goal, I share the possibilities and limitations I see for inquiry development within each goal, arguing, ultimately, that paying attention to how we move among these goals can help us enact a learner's stance.

Chapter 3, "Exploring Tensions Involved in the Interpretation of Teaching Moments," extends our field's commitment to critically examining teaching narratives by showing how the activity of examining tensions that are embedded in the work of interpretation is an activity that can enlarge our purposes for and perspectives on teacher-inquiry. I begin by arguing that the tension between evaluating and examining our

teaching moments can help us see our purposes for creating the interpretations that inform our inquiries. Secondly, I demonstrate how exploring the tension between the professional self we aim to create and the self that is constructed by our teaching contexts can help us see how local teaching contexts shape our interpretations of teaching and learning, thereby shaping our perspectives on our pedagogical questions. Finally, I show how learning experiences in graduate school may create a tension that shapes our relationship with teacher-inquiry. Throughout the chapter, I argue these tensions are sites for seeing and potentially revising our understandings of teacher-inquiry.

Chapter 4, "Negotiating Stakeholder Positions," demonstrates how the activity of negotiating the responsibilities associated with multiple stakeholder positions is a way of enacting a learner's stance. Drawing from the experiences of the teachers in this study, I argue the activity of fulfilling our responsibilities in these roles is intellectual work that can contribute to our development as inquirers. In this chapter, I theorize the activity of negotiation to specifically address how leadership and administrative roles can help us better understand our tools and purposes for teacher-inquiry. Rather than determining which stakeholder positions might address a pedagogical question better, I advocate trying to understand how and why these stakeholder positions call our attention to different aspects of our pedagogical questions.

In the conclusion, I offer place as a metaphor for describing the kind of commitment a teacher makes when choosing to cultivate a learner's stance. I argue that a learner's stance helps us see that we all live in an intellectual place shaped by our inquiry beliefs and practices. A learner's stance, therefore, calls us to pursue our pedagogical questions *and* explore the landscape of the intellectual place that shapes our problem-

posing and problem-solving. To support this pedagogical aim, I share two ways WTEs

might cultivate a learner's stance in teacher education contexts. First, I argue that WTEs

can help teacher candidates develop an understanding of a learner's stance. Secondly, I

suggest that WTEs can help teacher candidates practice a learner's stance by adding or

extending coursework that requires teacher candidates to develop goals for teacher

development, interpret teaching moments, and negotiate stakeholder positions.

CHAPTER ONE

CULTIVATING A LEARNER'S STANCE FOR ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHER-INQUIRY

"What are those notes for?" asked Kyle, a high school student in my first period composition class. I glanced up from my pile of attendance sheets and lesson materials to see Kyle reading the daily notes I had written for each class period on the board. I had notes for his class, a course designed for seniors who needed to pass the district's writing exam to graduate from high school. But I had also created notes for the other courses I would teach later that day: a dual-credit composition course, a women's literature course, and two sections of advanced placement language and composition. I could see that Kyle was asking about my notes for another course. I explained what we were doing in the other course before moving on to our work for the day. But his question and this moment stayed with me. Kyle helped me pause and consider the extent to which I was enacting my expressed commitment to a strengths-based approach to teaching. As I looked at the kinds of activities I had planned for each class that day, I wondered if I really was providing each class an opportunity to engage in rich critical thinking. I wondered how the daily objectives Kyle and I discussed might reveal how I had constructed my relationship with each group of learners.

While all of the students I taught during this semester were juniors and seniors, their backgrounds and relationships with academic literacy were diverse. I appreciated the opportunity to work with a diverse group of learners, since creating rigorous and rich learning experiences for *all* students has always been a key goal for me as an educator. Whether classes or students are labeled as "high" or "low" or somewhere in between, I've aimed for the kind of development Richard Haswell describes: a change not "from

beginner to finisher, but from experienced to more experienced" (18). This goal respects the nature of literacy development, and it is personally important to me, too. While I had a few wonderful high school teachers who challenged me and nurtured my intellectual growth, some openly discouraged my growth. These experiences shaped my commitment to engaging all of my students, refusing to underestimate them. In Kyle's course, a class labeled as remedial, I worked to be an engaged reader. I "liked" reading students' work, as Peter Elbow advocates, and used my feedback to identify students' areas of success (i.e. picking a compelling topic or providing good imagery) and suggest ways to build from these strengths (299). In a similar way, I believed that my AP students needed course structures and assignments that built from their success and pushed them beyond their comfort zone. Though the contexts changed, it was important for me to engage all learners as "persons in process" (Herrington and Curtis).

As a teacher committed to professional growth, it's important for me to know the gaps in my praxis. My conversation with Kyle caused me to pause because he helped me see the lesson plans from his perspective. Kyle was aware of the fact that his class was a "remedial" one, and he was interested in the learning experiences within the courses that were advanced. He was a curious outsider looking in on the work of another kind of community. Stepping outside of my perspective—a busy third-year teacher doing her best to stay afloat—reminded me of the affective dimensions of learning. While I no longer remember the specific details of the conversation, I remember the feeling of sadness I experienced during the conversation. I can remember thinking, "I really hope I'm doing these students justice. Am I reinforcing definitions of literacy that I really want to dismantle?" I knew that the term "remedial gains its meaning…in a political

more than a pedagogical universe," but I wanted to be mindful of the ways I might fall into the trap of a deficit-oriented view of students—despite my explicit commitment to avoid such thinking (Rose 349).

I had hoped to gain support for this important thinking by collaborating with my colleagues in my professional learning community (PLC), but I found it difficult to articulate and advocate for pursuing this question in this collaboration. The PLCs were small groups of teachers who had been assigned to study and develop a particular aspect of the curriculum. While the PLCs were supported district-wide through an early student dismissal once a week, each building determined the specific structure of the collaboration. In my building, the department chair created PLCs based upon commonly shared courses and assigned instructors to these groups. As one of the reading teachers in the building, I had been assigned to participate in the PLC devoted to improving reading instruction. I had great hopes for this collaboration because I respected my colleagues and believed the activity of collaboration is rich with possibility for learning.

The process, though, was more structured than organic. At the time of this collaboration, district leaders were standardizing the reading curriculum, and our PLC centered on understanding and actualizing these emerging curricular goals. At the end of our weekly meetings, we reported our progress toward these ends. Within this pre-determined structure, it was difficult for me to submit my pedagogical questions to the group. I cared about the aims of the reading curriculum—concepts like comprehension—so I had a stake in the work we were doing as a PLC. And I faced similar teaching challenges as my colleagues, such as collecting work from students or managing

disruptive behavior. It was difficult for me, then, to ask our group to devote time to any alternative topic.

At the same time, though, it felt necessary. The conversations often focused on what students weren't doing well, the skills or classroom behavior that they were failing to demonstrate. As I described above, my pedagogy, instead, is grounded in a strengths-based understanding of students. I see reading development, like writing development, as a process. I firmly believe our abilities as readers shift as we move into new discourses, and all readers benefit from practicing reading strategies, not just "struggling readers." Consequently, I had wanted to shift the conversation. To use, Nancy Grimm's words, I wanted to "stop locating literacy problems in individuals and instead locate them in cultural constructions" (29). I was surprised by my difficulty to propose this shift in our conversations. I had already known my colleagues for a year, so we had the necessary trust and respect in place to collaborate. I also knew that my colleagues and I wanted the best for students and we cared about helping each other grow in our ability to teach. So I often wondered, "Why is this so difficult? What is missing?"

What I craved during this collaboration was an opportunity to question how the situation had been framed. While I understood then (and now) that these conversations were aimed at providing targeted instruction, I felt unable to voice my concerns about the framing of student learning in a way that would be heard, constructive, and transformative. I knew these measures and structures were intended for good, and I thought it would be good for us to questions them, too. During my participation in my PLC, I didn't know how to name this difficulty. Now, though, I name this difficulty as a tension between engaging in *reflective practice* and engaging in an *inquiry process*.

The idea of reflective practice or being a reflective teacher is commonplace. It's probably safe to say that all teachers of writing have encountered the notion that good teachers think back upon the work that they've done and how it relates to their teaching goals. And for good reason. Teaching, like any goal-oriented process, requires ongoing reflection, looking back to evaluate where one is in the process. As a teacher, I utilize reflection daily to consider my work with students, designing curriculum that attends to the past, present and anticipated future. Admittedly, goals can shift in the process of reflection, but reflective practice privileges the actions of measuring and evaluating progress toward determined goals (Hillocks). For this reason, reflective practice alone is not enough for teacher development and educational reform. Reflective practice, as I define it here, falls short because it doesn't inherently ask one to call the pedagogical aim at hand into question.

An inquiry process, on the other hand, makes central the work of calling goals into question. Drawing from Dewey, an inquiry process, as I define it throughout this dissertation, involves problem-solving *and* problem-posing. Reflection, of course, is necessary for problem-solving, but equally valued is accounting for how the teaching problem has been understood and the question about teaching and learning has been posed. In my PLC, I wanted a space for inquiry, an opportunity to question and maybe even change how the situation had been framed. Standardizing the curriculum through pacing and instructional guides had been proposed as the solution for the need to teach reading skills. Problem-posing, though, would have helped us examine the complexity of the teaching and learning situation, specifically investigating how and why we define reading success or failure.

While this specific instance of collaboration centered on reading instruction, the same tension exists for teachers of writing. Teachers of writing in the United States—and consequently WTEs—are working in a moment when there is an increasing push to standardize teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith and Lytle; Palmisano). We see arguments for standardization in conversations about the goals of writing instruction (i.e. Common Core) and the means for achieving those goals (i.e. pre-packaged first year writing curriculum). These proposed frameworks and curricular materials offer predetermined goals, ones that may need interrogation. In broad and local conversations about teaching and learning, though, teachers are most often encouraged to reflect upon their work as it assists reaching particular goals. The language around reflective teaching can be co-opted to serve the larger functional goals of common curriculum and standardized practices. In my PLC, for example, our time for collaborative learning was structured around the district's priorities rather than the pedagogical questions we confronted in our work with students. The questions we posed remained within the subscribed parameters.

Engaging in an inquiry process is less understood and valued than reflective practice by a range of educational stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, school board members, and legislators. We have fewer conversations about the kinds of questions that are central to engaging in an inquiry process (How? Why? Under what conditions? For whom? To what end?). These questions, though, are crucial for student learning and educational reform. Michael Palmisano documents this misunderstanding in his recent work on inquiry and educational reform. His review of the professional-learning literature shows that student learning advances when local teachers engage in an

inquiry process that is "self-directed and centered on investigating issues of student learning… [investigations] centered on *how*, *why*, and *under what conditions* practices and organizational conditions produce results" (20, emphasis original). Despite the evidence, developing and sustaining rigorous and genuine inquiry-based communities of practice is challenging because "education reform in the United States more typically stresses replicating methods and structures over the deep and rigorous investigations of shared practice that characterize collaborative inquiry" (10).

The questions that are central to engaging in an inquiry process are also necessary for teacher development. Scholarship shows that teachers must see their beliefs and practices as constructed before being able to grow and revise them (Ritchie and Wilson; Siebert et. al). In other words, teachers need to understand how their beliefs and practices are shaped by particular values, assumptions, and attitudes. When teachers make explicit their problem-posing and problem-solving—the two key intellectual moves in an inquiry process—potential for teacher development emerges.

Scholarship that is relevant to WTEs[4] has long recognized the need for ongoing, inquiry-driven approaches to teacher education and professional development (Gallagher; Lee; Power; Qualley; Ritchie and Wilson; Simon; Stenberg). While compositionists and English educators work in different contexts with differing demands, they share principles for enacting inquiry-oriented teacher education and professional development. Our scholarship, in other words, attends to the tension between engaging in reflective

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[4] In "Common Ground: Toward Collaboration," Jonathan Bush argues that professionals in composition studies and English education can mutually benefit from collaboration because compositionists and English educators engage in similar roles for different audiences. While the teaching contexts and pressures are different for compositionists working with graduate teaching assistants and English Educators working with English education majors, both kinds of professionals are committed to helping students develop and practice pedagogical knowledge and skills.

practice and engaging in an inquiry process. We recognize the need to do more than reflect upon our teaching; we know we need to critically examine our questions about teaching and learning. We have more to learn, though, about what enables teachers to learn and strengthen their abilities to inquire in communities of practice, especially at this moment when standardized, efficient approaches are valued and rewarded. In what follows, I identify the professional development commitments WTEs share to argue that a learner's stance is a way to more purposefully advance these commitments. I define a learner's stance as an educative orientation that attends to how we *develop as inquirers*. Drawing from the study's findings, I argue that cultivating this stance requires two foundational principles: Teachers must appreciate that learning to engage in teacher-inquiry is a cumulative process and see themselves as knowledge-makers.

The Role of Inquiry in Teacher Development for Compositionists

Contemporary composition scholarship—in explicit and implicit ways—demonstrates a commitment to inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development. By inquiry-oriented, I mean that composition scholars argue that teachers of writing develop by continually inquiring into their teaching and learning, as well as investigating the teaching and learning of others (Bamberg; Gallagher; Hillocks; Kameen; Kay Miller et. al; Lee; Qualley; Seibert et. al; Stenberg). This view of teacher development challenges earlier skills-based approaches to working with composition teachers[5]; it rejects the notion that first year composition teachers can simply be trained through structures like introductory workshops or courses. As our beliefs about and understanding of the

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[5] For example, in *Don't Call it That: The Composition Practicum*, Sidney Dorbin reminds us that "English 67," a Harvard course established in 1912 to remedy teaching "inadequacies," is a historical root of modern composition practicums (7-8).

situated and constructed nature of language have developed, our understandings of teaching writing have also grown. We know, for example, learning to write is not something that can be directly transmitted from one person to another. Therefore, our work is not about providing pre-determined knowledge but working with students to generate knowledge and skills. Effective teaching, like effective writing, is something we learn by doing and attending to each rhetorical situation. The nature of writing pedagogy, then, prompts teachers of writing to continuously examine and revise their work. Activities and assignments, for example, change with new groups of learners. A committed teacher will want to learn from these differences to create the best kinds of learning experiences for students.

Compositionists discuss inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development in different ways. Amy Lee, for example, makes inquiring into the connection between theory and practice explicit in her definitions of "reflective action" and "active reflection." Active reflection is the deliberate way a teacher probes her pedagogical choices, and reflective actions are the choices that emerge from such thinking. For Lee, this process is dynamic and reciprocal. Donna Qualley similarly aims to help teachers take accountability for their meaning-making processes in *Turns of Thought: Teaching Composition as Reflexive Inquiry* by distinguishing "reflective" thinking from "reflexive" thinking. Reflective thinking helps us name what we know, and reflexive thinking helps us name how we've come to this knowledge. Though their terms are different, Lee and Qualley similarly assert the importance of teacher-inquiry; problem-posing and problem-solving are both present in these terms. As Lee illustrates her own movement between "reflective action" and "active reflection," she aims to create a successful critical

pedagogy (problem-solving) and interrogate the definition and nature of a critical

pedagogy (problem-posing). Similarly, Qualley's terms encompass the two intellectual

moves in an inquiry-process. "Reflective" thinking helps a person review her work and

keep reaching for the goal, while "reflexive" thinking prompts a person to critically

examine how the goal is framed, as well as the potential consequences of this framing. In

different ways, both composition scholars (like many others in the field), illustrate the

necessity of engaging in an inquiry process for teacher development.

Two primary principles for inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development

are present in this body of scholarship. One principle is that teacher-inquiry is an active

process. Throughout the literature, teachers are positioned as the agents of their

development. Teachers of writing, over the duration of their careers, use problem-

solving and problem-posing to develop or engage the challenges they naturally confront

as teachers of writing. In highlighting the distinction between teacher "training" and

teacher "development," Laura Davis explains that teacher development is gradually

working out "possibilities" over time (Daniell et al. 456). While some teachers may seek

to improve their teaching (Kay Miller et. al), others may choose to problematize their

teaching (Kinzy and Minter). Yet, other teachers may seek to negotiate the contexts in

which they work (Siebert et. al). All of these examples, though, similarly position

teachers as active inquirers.

Another key principle of inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development is

that teacher-inquiry requires others. Teacher-inquiry, in other words, best occurs in

communities of practice. Paul Kameen's work is a good example of the impact students

can have on a teacher's development. He shows us how "the activity of teaching" raises

new questions and perspectives for a teacher to consider. Kameen narrates, for example, how responses from his students in seminar on race and gender furthered his approach to teaching close reading. He came to this insight by noticing a pattern that emerged in class discussions. He explains many conversations followed a similar sequence:

> The initial speaker/reader would begin with a disclaimer about not being able to know anything about the text or its author and would then go on to comment, often in detail and with a sense of personal authority, not only on the text in question but also on the 'life' that animated it. I remember thinking, 'this is, really, one of the paradigmatic acts of reading for a course of this sort: I cannot read this text; therefore I will read it' (28).

His appreciation for students' engagement with the course helps him see and listen to the patterns that emerge, and these observations inform his pedagogical questions.

Many compositionists also speak about the ways local teaching communities (comprised of teachers and students) sponsor inquiry. Working with others helps teachers see and test their assumptions and values. Others also help us see our assumptions and values as constructed, which is essential for the possibility of revising our beliefs and practices. Colleagues, in other words, create a context for teacher-learning. While interaction with colleagues doesn't necessarily lead a teacher to engage in reflexive thinking, the context provides the possibility. One important condition for teacher-inquiry in communities of practice is that all members are positioned as learners (Gallagher; Lee; Stenberg). Lee argues, for example, that quantity of experience (i.e. number of years teaching) is less relevant than quality of engagement (136). Consistent in composition scholarship, then, is the idea that a writing teacher at any level has the

ability to critically examine and revise her teaching beliefs and practices, an activity that can facilitate her own development and the development of others.

Inquiry's Role in Teacher Development for English Educators

The field of English Education—one committed to studying and sponsoring teacher development in pre-service and practicing teachers—has also well established the connection between teacher-inquiry and teacher development. English educators have provided rich and multifaceted understandings of inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development. For example, inquiry has been described as a disposition, a way of remaining open to ongoing teacher-learning. Scholars like Jennifer Buehler argue that the complexity of teaching and learning demands that we teach with an openness, a questioning stance, which will help us keep raising questions and learning. Inquiry has also been defined as an action or process that helps teachers name and investigate questions that bridge personal and professional contexts (Meyer and Sawyer; Ritchie and Wilson). Inquiry is also used as a term to name a particular pedagogical approach for working with pre-service teachers (Staunton; Fecho et. al).

English educators draw upon the work of inquiry—problem-posing and problem-solving—for different purposes, too. Commonly, scholars study and argue for the work of inquiry-based communities of practice when arguing for inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development for practicing teachers (Cochran-Smith and Lytle; Palmisano; Weinbaum et. al). These arguments for inquiry-based communities of practice— structures that can encompass PLCs—foreground the work of educational reform. Teacher development, in other words, is one of multiple aims, including improved student-learning and more nuanced understandings of local teaching contexts. In the

literature, much like composition scholarship, these communities are ideally established to position teachers as change-agents, people responsible for improving and reforming education. Scholars invested in the development of pre-service teachers often aim to define and describe an inquiry-oriented pedagogy that teacher educators can employ. These scholars let us see inside their classrooms to understand the practices and challenges of helping pre-service teachers understand and practice inquiry-oriented approaches to their development as educators (Fecho et. al; Meyer and Sawyer; Staunton).

While specific conceptions of inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development depend upon particular contexts, English education scholarship offers guiding principles for enacting inquiry-oriented approaches to teacher development (Cochran-Smith and Lytle; Palmisano). The first principle is that teachers are meaning-makers, important contributors to disciplinary knowledge. Teachers are in the classroom, so they have the possibility to make observations that are important to notice and study for improved educational theory and practice. In other words, teachers are in a position to create and tailor curriculum based upon the learning occurring in the classroom. For example, they have capacity to alter pre-packaged curriculum. Further, the particular successes and challenges that a teacher can observe are ones that an outsider (i.e. a university researcher) wouldn't necessarily be able to see. According to the scholarship dedicated to inquiry's role in practicing teachers' professional development, local teachers are best positioned to work on the challenges we face in education. Similarly, scholarship focused on inquiry's role in teacher education stresses the importance of pre-service teachers learning to participate in the discipline. Rather than seeing their formal

education as a place to gain the answers about teaching, the classroom should be learner initiated and shaped. English educators, in other words, are guides, helping newer teachers practice placing their teaching and learning experiences in conversation with the existing scholarship in the field (Staunton).

A second principle is the idea that teachers' meaning-making is a collaborative process. Working with others in educational or professional communities of practice provides a context for teacher-learning. Working with others enables "a continual process of making current arrangements problematic [and] questioning the ways knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated, and used" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, *Inquiry* 121). Collaboration helps us see our beliefs about teaching and learning as constructed, consequently opening them up for revision and development. It is through hearing and responding to multiple points of view that teachers can create new ways to see a situation and new ways to address a situation.

Cultivating a Learner's Stance for Engagement in Teacher-Inquiry

Composition and English education scholarship has been deeply enriched by arguments for and examples of inquiry-oriented practices that facilitate and sponsor teacher development. For example, in *Professing and Pedagogy: Learning the Teaching of English*, Shari Stenberg illustrates through examples how and why positioning teachers as knowers, creating opportunities for reflection and revision, and enabling teachers to participate in cross-talk between institutions and disciplines are central to inquiry-oriented teacher development. Similarly, Joy Ritchie and David Wilson exemplify how the practice of critically examining teachers' narratives about teaching and learning can provide "the catalyst for reflection, critique, and 're-vision' that initiate and sustain

teachers' capacity to resist confining cultural narratives and to write new narratives of teaching and living" (7). In these arguments, the principles for inquiry-based teacher development challenge important assumptions about teaching and learning. For example, the assertion that teachers are agents of their development and disciplinary meaning-makers challenges the notion that teaching is a skill that can be mastered through training (Stenberg and Lee). While training is an important aspect of learning to teach writing, ongoing teacher-learning is central to the work of teaching writing (Hillocks). Similarly, the principle that teacher development is a collaborative process challenges the idea that teaching is an individual endeavor. I highlight these tensions to show the connections between the two fields and to speak to contemporary conversations about teaching and learning. Support for structures such as a one-week teaching orientations for new GTAs or "teacher-proofed" curricular packages for secondary English teachers by nature privilege the view that knowledge about teaching can be determined by outsiders and delivered to teachers through training. Teacher development only becomes a priority when we acknowledge the need for ongoing teacher-learning. Because these tensions are pervasive, compositionists and English educators need to continue to help educational stakeholders understand why teacher development that focuses on how teachers think and learn is important for student learning. Paying attention to how teachers think and learn helps teachers gain agency over their processes for interpreting student learning. Inquiry-oriented teacher development helps teachers critically examine their praxis, rather than uncritically adopting practices with theoretical underpinnings.

While continuing to seek institutional changes that will facilitate teacher development rather than teacher training is critical, this dissertation addresses how we

might more purposefully foster our fields' principles for inquiry-oriented teacher development within the range of current teaching conditions. I propose cultivating a learner's stance for engagement in teacher-inquiry as an aim for writing pedagogy education so that we may build from the rich examples of inquiry-oriented practices in Composition and English Education. Throughout this dissertation, I will show how a learner's stance is a readiness to see and engage professional work with an eye toward growing one's ability to engage in teacher-inquiry. A learner's stance is an educative orientation that attends to how we *develop as inquirers*. This attention to how teachers come to learn and grow their inquiry processes currently remains underexamined. While scholars such as Kay Miller et. al argue that "reflective critique" can be taught through modeling, articulations of how teachers learn teacher-inquiry are missing in the field.

It's important to note that a learner's stance supports teacher development *and* student learning. In this climate of high-stakes assessment-driven pressures, this aim on its surface may seem superfluous-a nice luxury in another time. Central to my argument, though, is the belief that an investment in teacher-learning is also an investment in student-learning. When teachers have the tools and space to critically examine how and why they pursue teacher-inquiry, they have the capacity to revise their inquiry beliefs and practices. We benefit from remembering that curriculum is a journey created in and through experience. Student learning happens in relationship among learners and texts, so an investment in a teacher's developmental journey is also an investment in students' learning. Beyond this recognition, though, a learner's stance can also help WTEs push on what educational stakeholders count as evidence for teacher development. Teacher-

inquiry works at aims that may not be immediately or readily visible. Cochran-Smith and Lytle explain:

> From the perspective of inquiry as stance, professional development is associated more with uncertainty, more with posing problems and dilemmas than with solving them, and more with the recognition that inquiry both stems from and generates questions. In many situations, 'questioning' and 'challenging the system' are rather difficult to explain as the consequences of inquiry-based professional development, and yet these may be precisely the kind of consequences that lead to more democratic schooling and to the formation of a more just society. ("Beyond Certainty" 56)

Cultivating and enacting a leaner's stance, as the chapters ahead will show, is an aim that can help us speak within and against our current paradigms. In the sections that follow, I further define a learner's stance by describing two foundational principles for cultivating this stance.

Learning Teacher-Inquiry is a Cumulative Process

At the heart of my study was a straight-forward goal. I wanted to learn how exemplary teachers—ones recognized as exemplary by members of their local communities of practice—have learned to initiate, pursue, and sustain their most important questions about teaching writing. I brought these questions to the project because professional development structures that support teacher-inquiry are unevenly accepted across local teaching contexts. As a WTE, then, I aimed to learn how we might best use the teacher education contexts, such as methods classes or pedagogy seminars, to support the development of teacher-inquiry. My work with Ceic, Daniel, Maggie, and

Phip—the teachers who participated in this project— underscored the importance of helping teacher candidates[6] understand that learning to participate in teacher-inquiry is a cumulative process. While the teachers in this study could point to important moments that were transformative, our understandings of these moments continue to change in and through time and experience. One of my most pivotal teaching moments, for example, comes from teaching a section of Women's literature during my first year of teaching at the high school level. My experience and story of this moment has been important to me because it continues to be a place of deep examination. The class did not go as expected and was filled with resistance from students and myself as the teacher, so it has been a place to see and critique my pedagogical beliefs. My wrestling with this story throughout the study, as illustrated below, demonstrates why this principle is foundational for cultivating a learner's stance.

In my first meeting with Phip, I provided one of my most simple versions of this story:

> I think about one class where I felt like, "I'm not going to make it in this high school teaching gig." It was teaching Women's Literature. It was because I wanted to enact my version of feminist pedagogy. I had these grand visions, of course, [when] working on my master's. [I thought] "It'll be great." No. They were so resistant. They wanted that traditional education. I never was able to get to a point where … I was hoping, maybe even for some middle ground. I was

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[6] Throughout this dissertation, I use the term "teacher candidate" to refer to learners who are enrolled in teacher education contexts. This term includes individuals who are pre-service secondary teachers *and* practicing teachers who may be continuing their education or working as GTAs. Because my work speaks specifically to WTEs, this term highlights a learner's participation in formal teacher education contexts. It does not signify or speak to a teacher's level of experience.

pretty stubborn. I didn't go there in terms of what they wanted from me as a

teacher. It was a horrible, rocky experience. They just so wanted something that

I didn't want to give as a teacher and who I would be in that space.

This version of the story showcases the key struggle, a tension between my students and

me over the definition of teaching and learning.

In our second meeting together, I revisited this story to share with Phip how this

story has been a central way for me to develop my thinking. I shared that over time this

story has evolved from more than just "a failure story." In this conversation, I named my

ability to revise and complicate my story as a significant part of my development: "I

think now that's what my stories do for me as a teacher, is just provide a window or a

moment to try to grapple with that complexity, where I wasn't doing that work or didn't

know how to do that work maybe earlier in my teaching life." My teaching stories are no

longer just representations of my teaching; they are opportunities to learn.

I advanced this goal in a conversation with Maggie as I worked to examine this

teaching story alongside a story of my own student resistance in graduate school. In this

conversation many of the key details of the story remain the same, but Maggie prompted

me to think about the second year I taught the Women's Literature class. I explained that

"I'm glad I did that second year, because it did help right the myth that I was this horrible

teacher, because I had a very successful year." In this conversation, Maggie asked me if I

took the class in a new direction or kept trying to chip away at traditional notions of

learning. I explained that "I just kept trying to chip away." I also explained that "I tried

to listen hard" to what I learned from the first group of students:

What I did take out of that conversation, which I'm just remembering now, was that they felt or I heard them say that I hadn't done enough relational building before introducing that kind of pedagogy. That they needed more time getting to know me and who I was…The students [needed the relationship] to trust the pedagogy that I wanted to enact. What I did do was I said, "I hear you…Let me build more of that in." I [built in individual] conferences after that, which was really hard, because I was very angry with them. Honestly… I think that was how [I managed]. I'll give you this, but I'm not backing down on my pedagogy. I think it was fair. I think that when you do introduce a critical pedagogy there has to be a trust level between student and teacher. Which you know what? Your [questions are] so good, Maggie. That's what was missing I think from my professor. I think—yeah, because I didn't get—she came at me so hard. We didn't have the trust.

This passage illustrates my development of a new insight about the way trust works for me as a teacher and learner. Pairing these stories together, as I had not done before this conversation, allowed me to gain a deeper empathy for my high school students and my professor. The meanings of these stories, then, have shifted once again.

These ever-changing interpretations make learning teacher-inquiry a holistic process. And it's often the more painful or disruptive moments that help us recognize this ever-present process. Phip shared that "some of the most memorable things in [his] teaching experience are oftentimes painful ones." These moments provide the necessary disruption for rich examination. We keep digging into particular stories and moments because they hurt and we want to understand them. Similarly, ideas and questions may

be simmering with or without our active engagement. Hindsight, of course, is the only

way that we begin to understand these moments. Maggie suggested that "inquiries that

seem routine to us…probably zip by unnoticed almost, and it doesn't mean we didn't

come to an insight, but they don't seem remarkable." A learner's stance, however, draws

attention to this process. Appreciating the ways that our pedagogical beliefs and values

change in and through experience is a foundational principle for a learner's stance

because it provides the motivation to develop teacher-inquiry. Recognizing our capacity

to reconstruct our understandings of teaching and learning—which are the framework for

our problem-posing and problem-solving—provides the desire for teacher-learning.

Teacher-Inquiry Grows when Teachers see themselves as Knowledge-Makers

While the teachers in this project helped me see that learning teacher-inquiry is a

cumulative process, they also helped me see that this growth is not inevitable. Instead, a

teacher must come to see teaching and learning as subject worthy of deep inquiry.

Additional experience does not necessarily lead to this shift because there are many

barriers to teacher-inquiry. For example, Phip has come to believe that we expect

teachers to "not be inquirers." Phip named such barriers as "pre-existing architecture,"

the structures and ideas within and beyond classrooms that foreclose inquiry. He

explained:

> Our teachers today observe what teaching has been for many, many, many years.
>
> It's not always ideal, so we have very powerful…imprints of what teaching
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> should look like… [There is] a hierarchical kind of a structure thing that
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> influences the way we speak to students and students are expected to speak to us

that… can influence how—some students are looking to teachers to always lead

them…The teachers are supposed to have the answers instead of the questions.

This conception of teaching as knowing or having the answers is well engrained

culturally. Mary Kennedy illustrated this dynamic in her interviews with pre-service

teachers. In *Learning to Teach Writing: Does Teacher Education Make a Difference*,

she documented pre-service teachers' belief in the idea that teaching should be self-

evident. When Kennedy presented pre-service teachers with hypothetical situations, the

students were quick to offer answers, rather than dwell in the possibilities for teacher-

inquiry. Kennedy notes that

> [i]t is hard to imagine novice physicians offering detailed responses to
>
> hypothetical medical situations. They would be more likely to say something
>
> like, 'I don't know how I would handle that situation; I have not yet completed
>
> my medical education.' Yet only rarely did the teachers in this study resist
>
> answering our questions. They readily commented on the texts we showed them
>
> and readily announced how they would respond to student authors. They rarely
>
> indicated that they were considering two or more alternative ideas or that the
>
> situation presented certain ambiguities to them. Even before they had studied
>
> teacher education, teachers were sure of their responses to most of the situations
>
> we presented to them. (172-173)

Being a teacher for many and for culture at-large means having answers. To become a

teacher, then, many pre-service teachers believe they need to take on an ethos of knowing

exactly how to respond to a hypothetical situation.

As I will further illustrate in chapter two, this notion is one all of the teachers in this study had to work through. Working through this, though, is a key shift for developing as an inquirer. I could see that all of the teachers in this project have come to see and value the complexity of teaching and learning and see it as something worthy of inquiry. The teachers have come to see engagement with teaching and learning as intellectual, knowledge-making work with significance beyond just the immediate interactions with local students.

Phip, for example, illustrated this transition when he spoke about his journey from his career in journalism to his career in teaching. In our third conversation, Phip asked me if our teaching journeys both shared a period of falling in love with the work of teaching. He shared that he was

> excited about teaching high school, but…would have put, maybe, [his] love or [his] interest in journalism above…the activities, and the interactions, and the actual experiences of learning…Then, over time, through rocky experiences, [he] learned to listen and be drawn to…the process of learning. That became much more interesting to [him].

Phip posed this question because I had explained earlier in the conversation that I hadn't planned on becoming a teacher. But when facing the prospect of graduating from college with a degree in English and no feasible way to pay back my student loans, I created a back-up plan. This changed, though, when I actually began my coursework in Education: "Then, in my practicum work, I would say, I discovered teaching as its own life. That this could be really interesting work, but my understanding of that is much, much deeper now than it was then, of course." Like Phip, I had to come to see how the work of

making sense of teaching and learning was a rich site of intellectual work with political implications, and, as I suggested here, my ongoing learning is focused on learning how to keep seeing and engaging these complexities.

The other teachers in this project shared related stories. Maggie, for example, was caught off guard by the way serving on the technology committee for her department shifted her pedagogical thinking. She initially thought the integration of technology in the classroom "was maybe a tool that would be really helpful. Kind of like an instant copy machine." She didn't expect that setting up computer classrooms would begin a line of inquiry that would ultimately compel her to earn her PhD. In a related way, Daniel struggled to give a sound answer on why he became a teacher, but he said if he had to give an answer, he would say,

> because I thought I was good at it and because I saw *Dead Poets Society*. Which I know is stupid, but I mean, that's about it. I like to read. I liked the idea—and early on in my teaching career, a biology teacher at one of my schools told me, like, "Hey, teaching's a good gig. You get paid to talk about what you say you love. You say you like this; you like talking about these books.

As a high school teacher, though, Daniel likes more than the books he has the opportunity to explore. He also "like[s] teenagers. Not everything they do, and they can be frustrating sometimes, but, I mean, that's why I've stuck with it." His appreciation for this moment in their development and how he can support that in a humane way has been a driving force in sustaining his career and developing his teacher-inquiry. Similarly, Ceic entered her teaching career because of her love for literature. She explained her journey in this way:

I had a love for literature, for reading. When I first went to college, my undergrad, I actually didn't declare a major. I just took everything in English because I knew that it would come easy for me. Not easy so I wouldn't struggle but that I enjoyed it. I thought a lot about education, which, I just wasn't sure if I wanted to be a writer or if I wanted to go in education. I think a lot of educators have that dream. Finally, I decided to go into education. That was, obviously, a good choice for me. I still have the dream to someday write, too, as well. Again, I'm just the kind of person that always wants to do the best that I can do and be at the top of my profession and always seeking to keep working and that type of thing. I guess that was my mindset…I just have a natural drive. If I'm going to do something, I'm going to do it well. I love these kids. I don't think I could be an elementary teacher at all. I don't think I have the temperament or patience for something like that. These kids, I mean that's for all of these kids in here, they know how much I love them because I tell them that they're important to me. I'm hard on them, but I just want to see them succeed, and I want to know that I did the very best that I could do…I see, sometimes, complacent teachers, and they're, like I said, with the worksheets or videos or movies. In my own opinion, that isn't teaching. I mean, I think those can aid in the teaching process, but when that's your daily work, I just think they're not really getting much out of it. Especially when you have so many different kinds of learners, the different modes of learning have to be addressed. If you're only giving a worksheet or watching movies daily, and you're not having them write something so you can assess what they're actually understanding, to me, you're not doing your job. I guess that's

naturally why I came to be where I am is because I like the challenge. I'm

interested in the kids. I want them to succeed. I like reading their writing.

In this passage, Ceic narrated her journey into the work of teaching. She shows us, like

all of the teachers, that falling in love with the work is important. She also defined the

work of teaching as engaging in this complexity. She helps us see that this is not a given.

Seeing and attending to the complexity in teaching and learning—how students engage

texts, each other, and us, as teachers—goes against the pressure to just answer questions.

This lens or way of viewing teaching prompts teachers to understand and not simply

address teaching and learning interactions. This dual focus is necessary for cultivating a

learner's stance because engagement in teacher-inquiry involves the movement between

problem-posing and problem-solving.

Locating Possibilities for Enacting a Learner's Stance

At the beginning of this chapter, I described a tension between engaging in

reflective practice and engaging in an inquiry process. This tension is important for

many reasons. While many of us may already value an inquiry process, moving between

problem-posing and problem-solving, we can easily lose sight of this movement in the

hurried pace of teaching. Institutional structures and relationships can hinder the critical

examination of our pedagogical beliefs and practices. For teachers new to the field,

though, the necessity of moving beyond reflection and into inquiry may not be visible.

Teachers have long needed to question the self-evident nature of teaching, but it is even

more important as our current pre-service teachers have grown up in the era of No Child

Left Behind and Race to the Top (Kennedy; Power; Ritchie and Wilson). Their

accidental apprenticeships are no doubt shaped by these assessment-driven experiences of

teaching and learning. It is an important time, in other words, for WTEs—scholars in both Composition and English Education—to coalesce around our shared commitment to teacher-inquiry. Our shared commitments privilege: 1) teacher-learning by asserting that teachers are the agents of their learning and 2) collaboration by demonstrating how others provide a context for teacher-learning[7]. Calling for WTEs to make a learner's stance a key aim for teacher education fosters cross-conversation and deepens our existing conversation, helping us consider how we can better support critical teacher-inquiry.

In the chapters ahead, I share how we might begin to enact a learner's stance. In chapter two, I argue that we can learn from the ways the teachers who participated in this study continue to develop goals for their professional development. I highlight how the activity of developing goals for teacher development influences the opportunities we have for problem-posing and problem-solving. In chapter three, I present three tensions that emerged from interpreting teaching and learning moments in the study and suggest how these tensions offer teachers an opportunity to examine their inquiry beliefs and practices. Chapter four demonstrates how negotiating stakeholder positions can help teachers see and revise their tools and purposes for teacher-inquiry. I focus on these processes as activities to argue that these processes can be part of a learning curriculum. These activities, in other words, can help teachers participate in and develop teacher-inquiry.

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[7] The National Writing Project's approach to teacher development, which focuses on local teachers using their knowledge, expertise, and leadership to teach each other, is a concrete example of these commitments in action.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPING GOALS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

As a member of my university's English Education's teaching team, I have had

the opportunity to work with pre-service teachers during their first semester in the

program. While the newly admitted students have prepared application materials and

participated in an interview process, my course provides an extended opportunity for

students to reflect upon their goals as pre-service teachers. My course, which is explicitly

structured around transitioning from "student" roles to "teacher" roles, provides an

opportunity for students to name and explore the relationship between teacher education

and teacher development. We begin this exploration on the first day of class by

brainstorming definitions for key terms in the course title: "theory" and "practice."

Typically, some small groups of students commit themselves to generating definitions

that distinguish the two terms. Working toward this purpose, students often create a

temporal distinction, arguing that one process begins before the other one. Other groups,

though, attempt to show the interdependence of the terms. In any case, generating

tentative definitions for these terms helps students articulate their learning goals. If a

student, for example, believes "theory" is something teachers learn before creating

"practices," the student will likely expect teacher education contexts to foreground

educational theories. Likewise, if a student believes the terms are interdependent, the

student will likely expect teacher educators to provide ample opportunities to practice

theorizing and teaching.

Alongside these discussions, I also prompt students to name the kinds of inquiry

teachers should engage. I ask, for example, if high school teachers should be

"educational theorists." As a teacher educator, I value these conversations because they help us examine our views of teacher agency, which have significant implications for teacher-inquiry. Our definitions suggest the kinds of observations teachers should make and the kinds of questions teachers should pursue over the course of their careers. These conversations help us see if we imagine teachers' questions should be aimed at applying goals for education that have already been determined or if teachers' questions should help us reshape our understandings of and visions for teaching and learning. Defining "theory" and "practice" is one way we can consider if teaching is technical work or something more.

With the increasing push for the standardization of teaching and learning, these conversations are timely ones for teachers at all levels. In *A Passion for Teaching,* Christopher Day shares John Elliot's view that the standards agenda employs a view of "teaching as technology…to judge teachers' effectiveness and worth" (5). When teachers are positioned as technicians—as is the case in many national conversations and local teaching contexts— their goals for professional development are devalued or ignored. Within a technical view of teaching, teachers don't need to envision how they hope to grow because teachers' questions and development need not extend beyond questions or matters of application. While policy makers and other educational leaders may have good intentions for student improvement when calling for more accountability from teacher education programs, a focus on finding the "right" accountability measurement tools or raising the stakes of teacher evaluation processes flattens the complexity of teaching and learning, as well as the teachers' long-term aims for growth (Ginsberg and Kingston; Lavigne). Like Alyson Leah Lavigne, I believe "the possible unintended

outcomes could undermine the very goal of high-stakes teacher evaluation and hinder, rather than support, student achievement…[T]he damage to teacher morale and job satisfaction could be crippling" (p). This is the case, I believe, because teachers' goals for teacher development and inquiry are excluded from these conversations. When educational stakeholders who are outside of the classroom exclusively define teacher development and teacher-inquiry—what kinds of questions should matter to teachers— teachers are distrusted. Teachers need efficacy to engage in teacher-inquiry and pursue professional development.

The journeys of Ceic, Daniel, Maggie, and Phip enrich our understanding of the connection between the process of developing goals for teacher development and growing teacher-inquiry. While writing pedagogy education scholarship is filled with rich examples of teacher-scholars illustrating the need to inquire beyond matters of application (Gallagher; Kameen; Lee; Power; Ritchie and Wilson; Stenberg; Thaiss and Zawacki)—challenging a technical view of teaching—the teachers in this project help us more fully understand the importance of and process for developing goals for teacher development. As the teachers described their pedagogical questions, they also described how they envision their development. These goals for professional growth shaped how the teachers approached both problem-posing and problem-solving. As teachers grapple with both theory and practice, they naturally encounter gaps, moments when practices don't achieve their aims or moments when theories don't explain a teacher's observations. The teachers in this study illustrate that how teachers envision their professional development frames how teachers engage these gaps. For example, a teacher may decide she needs to achieve greater mastery over the subject matter; she may

reevaluate her expectations for learning; she may reimagine her beliefs about teaching and learning. Aims such as these contribute to different goals for a teacher's development. Teachers' goals, in other words, shape the inquiries teachers see and address. The teachers in this project help us see *why* paying attention to these connections is important.

To me, it makes sense that teachers who are strong inquirers are guided by their goals for teaching and teacher development. A vision for successful teaching and teacher development enables a teacher to notice the places where she wants to grow and strengthen her teaching. In a similar way, it also seems common sense that teachers' visions for teaching and teacher development change in and through experience. For instance, it seems natural that a teacher will refine her goals for first year writing students based upon ten years of teaching experience. The teachers helped me see, though, that developing goals for teacher development is ongoing work; unlearning and relearning of visions for teacher development helps teachers engage and navigate tensions within themselves, as well as tensions among cultural and institutional visions for teaching. The teachers in this project help us see the importance of growing our goals for teacher development and how this process involves negotiation among self-defined views of teaching and views defined by other educational stakeholders, including the field, institutions, and the general public.

Because each teacher in this project drew from goals for teacher development to explain and examine teacher-inquiry, I saw this area as an important site for enacting a learner's stance. Looking across the teachers' articulations of teacher development, I came to see the teachers' growth has been aimed at particular and multiple goals for

teacher development. I could also see how each goal for teacher development foregrounds different parts of the inquiry process. While some goals foreground problem-posing, others foreground problem-solving. In this chapter, I describe and illustrate four visions for teacher development articulated by the teachers in my study: Mastering Teaching, Making an Impact, Refining Pedagogy, and Sustaining an Engaged Teaching Life. I observed the teachers, myself included, drawing upon these four goals to discuss our work as teacher-inquirers over the course of our careers. These categories emerged from looking across the similarities I saw in teachers' descriptions of (un)successful teaching and teacher development in themselves and others.

These descriptions from the teachers underscore the connections between teacher-inquiry and teachers' goals for teacher development because they help us see how the movement among multiple goals for teacher development provides an opportunity to practice and strengthen both problem-posing and problem-solving—the two intellectual moves driving my conception of teacher-inquiry. I argue, therefore, that developing goals for teacher development is an opportunity to enact a learner's stance. Doing so allows teachers to see how their goals for teacher development influence their opportunities for problem-posing and problem-solving. In the pages ahead, I outline these possibilities by naming how each of the goals connect to the work of problem-posing and/or problem-solving.

Mastering Teaching, an Ends-in-View Goal

Scholarship on teacher-inquiry challenges the notion that teaching can ever be mastered. When a teacher's aim is student learning, a teacher must engage in ongoing teacher-learning to initiate and sustain a dynamic learning process with students who are,

themselves, always changing. However, teachers often enter the profession with the goal

of attaining mastery (Hillocks; Power; Stenberg and Lee). As a WTE, who aligns herself

with writing pedagogy scholarship, I have often foregrounded the goal of helping

teachers move beyond the goal of mastering subject or pedagogical knowledge in order to

facilitate the development of goals for ongoing teacher development. In classroom,

mentoring, and professional workshop contexts, I have aimed to help teachers recognize

the need for ongoing teacher-learning, rather than simply teacher training. This goal has

been important because I want teachers to draw from theoretically-robust practices. I do

not want teachers to unthoughtfully draw upon "teacher lore" (North). However, through

the lens of cultivating a learner's stance for engagement in teacher-inquiry, I have gained

a fuller view of aiming for mastery. I now see potential for inquiry development in a goal

that can be described using Dewey's notion of an end-in-view. A mastery-in-view goal

does not mean that teachers believe learning to teach can be completed. Instead, the

teachers in this project helped me see this goal as an ends-in-view goal that continually

challenges teachers to address the problematic situations they encounter as teachers.

While this goal can initially emerge from a narrow view of teaching and

learning—likely from a transmission model of learning—it can grow into a goal that

helps teachers practice intentional problem-solving. This development likely begins in

our "accidental apprenticeships," as we come to expect teachers to be knowers, rather

than inquirers (Ritchie and Wilson). Reflecting upon these apprenticeships Phip, a

community college instructor in my study, "has come to believe…we expect teachers

to…not be inquirers." He believes the materials (i.e. classroom textbooks) and classroom

architecture (i.e. students positioned to face a teacher at the front of the classroom) are

some of the pieces of our apprenticeships and teaching contexts that perpetuate the idea that a teacher can finish learning to teach. An important shift in this goal occurs when a teacher alters her expectations for teacher-learning. Teachers, likely early in their careers, may strive to master content or pedagogical knowledge during their teacher education or graduate program. For example, when a teacher aims to learn everything she needs during this educational period—hoping to be fully ready to teach in her first position— she enacts the idea that learning to teach can be finished. In my own experience as a teacher, I initially held the view that learning to teach could be fully learned, and I hoped to have completed most of that learning by the time I graduated from my undergraduate program. One of the key images in my mind from this period is "the checklist," the observation and evaluation tool used by my cooperating teacher and university supervisor during my practicum and student teaching experiences. It listed several facets of teaching, such as lesson and assignment design, classroom management, and communication. As a rule-follower by nature, I engaged this checklist as one to be conquered. Daniel, in his experience as a student-teaching supervisor, has also witnessed this view toward similar evaluation tools. While student teachers may know ongoing learning is part of any profession, they may still hope most of that learning can be completed early in their careers. In my own experience, this desire came from a well-intentioned place. While I love learning, I wanted to be the best teacher immediately, offering students opportunities for as much learning as possible. Mastery as a goal once was the hope that I would someday be able to teach perfectly.   This expectation can obviously be crippling. In my case, for example, it has prompted me to take too much responsibility in the teaching/learning relationship. Institutional structures and cultures

are under-examined when teachers hope for perfection. But this goal has developed with the recognition and appreciation for the fact that learning to teach in an ongoing, inquiry-driven process. As an ends-in-view goal, mastering teaching pushes teachers to strive for successful teaching results. The goal prompts teachers to take their understandings of what students need to accomplish and seek to learn the classroom approaches that will most successfully initiate and support student learning.

Ceic, a high school teacher in her eighth year of teaching, moved through a similar revision process in the development of her professional goals. When she initially imagined her classroom, she pictured herself as a master teacher in a physical space with "nice things on the walls" and an environment where the students were "going to be great" and "have fun." Through the experience of teaching, though, Ceic has come to see that there is "still so much growth and so much learning" to do. Part of this shift in thinking has come as a result of her work with her department chair, a mentor Ceic described as supportive and encouraging. Ceic specifically recalled a formal observation during her first year teaching in this department:

> I remember the first year I was here, and she—as a department head, they have to come watch you teach so many times a year, and so do our principals…The principals often, because they don't teach in your area of expertise, they don't see everything. You get flying reports, like, "You're such a great teacher. You did this well." Blah, blah, blah. That had been my experience. She came in; there was a list of things to work on. I remember going home and crying. I'd already taught two prior years before coming here, and I thought, "I must be just terrible." …I talked to her maybe a couple weeks later, and I said, "I didn't realize I was

that terrible." She said, "You weren't terrible. You were really good." I said, "It didn't seem like it." She said, "There were so many good things." She had wrote those in the thing, but all I focused on was [the critique] …I brought it over [to her], and there was just as much good as there was things to work on. She said, "I never would've hired you if I didn't think that you were going to be someone who worked really hard to master your craft" … She said, "I'm always going to give you things to improve on." She says, "I'm working on things to improve on." I guess that's always been my mindset from here forward is, even if I've been teaching 40 years, I'm still going to have things to improve on.

As Ceic illustrates in this story, the idea that we can somehow complete our learning as teachers is a view that is usually dispelled by the actual work of teaching. Her goal, like mine, transitioned into a mastery-in-view goal. This fuller goal helps teachers prioritize student learning.

As a goal, mastery-in-view is a results oriented vision. Phip illustrated this connection in his description of his initial goals when he entered the field. Initially, Phip underestimated the complexity of teaching or the amount of learning he would need to engage in during his professional life as a teacher. This view is most visible in his description of his decision to become a teacher. He explained that his plan was to "go do something in the world and come back." He shared, "I thought it would be neat to come back to a classroom, to high school, and teach…Bring another kind of a life, with me, as a teacher." This earlier vision of mastery shaped Phip's decision to engage in a six-year career as a journalist prior to teaching. As the goal grew, though, to a master-in-view goal, Phip created teacher development goals that were directly connected to student

success. For example, Phip aimed as a high school teacher to "develop a national reputation in competitions, [to develop] a top-flight journalism program." This goal is useful for enacting a mastery-in-view goal for teacher development because it is concrete and measurable for teacher-led student success.

Mastery-in-view as a goal focuses on how the interaction between professional knowledge and teaching experience leads to results. While traditional conceptions of mastery often link mastery to mastering teaching content, the teachers push on such a conception. Ceic, for example, helps us see how mastery of content knowledge is valuable when it prioritizes student learning. As described earlier, Ceic shared that she greatly admires her department chair. In my analysis, part of this admiration resides in her view of her chair's teaching success. While Ceic used to feel "ashamed" for not reading texts she felt "everybody should have read [to be] an English teacher," this feeling of shame was dispelled when her chair shared that she had never read *Fahrenheit 451*. This "confession" from her chair supported the idea that an English teacher can be "great and not have read everything." This movement in Ceic's vision is a movement from the idea that teacher-learning can be finished to the idea that teacher-learning should serve mastery-in-view. This commitment to keeping the end goals in mind is a journey that assumes teachers can have progressively more success. Ceic shared that she was shocked by her chair's admission because she had discussed the book with her. Ceic concluded that her chair always had "an answer for [pedagogical questions] because she's so familiar with archetypes and with themes." The movement is slight, but it is important. In this story, the chair's "not knowing" is acceptable because the chair has reached a certain level of professional understanding and success with student-learning.

As a master teacher, she is not done learning. But she has learned enough to attain reliable and successful results.

Teaching experience, in this goal, also reaches for student success. This goal shows up in my own teaching life and how I have (at times) viewed the kind of teaching life I've led so far. In a conversation with Daniel, for example, I described how heavy teaching loads have been a barrier to my development of mastery. I explained to Daniel that I have been viewed by my employers as a responsible and successful teacher, so I have been given opportunities for multiple kinds of assignments. It's been great, but I also shared how it feels like

> I'm always starting again…I'm always reinventing…I've learned the most in my first year writing classes because that's the [class] I've been able to teach consistently, over time. I've gained a lot from doing lots of different things, but I just feel [a heavy teaching load has] been a part of my journey.

This description shows my commitment to student success and goal for mastery-in-view. While I acknowledged that I have learned a great deal from teaching in multiple contexts, I also expressed that my teaching assignments have, at times, felt like they have stunted teacher-inquiry in any one particular area.

Striving for exceptional student learning is an important goal, which is why the mastery-in-view goal is helpful. When we seek to master a certain area of our teaching or look for specific kinds of results, we have ample opportunity to practice problem-solving and problem-posing. With this goal in mind, teachers aim to ensure that their problem-solving serves the goal of student results. Teachers operating with this goal for teacher development also give ample attention to making sure that they are diligently

attending to these problems—maybe more so than in any other goal for teacher development.

But a focus on success can also limit teacher-inquiry. A quest for observable results can flatten the complexity of teaching and learning (Newkirk; Tobin). Whether a teacher perceives success or not, success as a measurement can foreclose inquiry. In my own experience, this goal has contributed to my tendency to reflect upon my teaching within a success/failure binary. For example, when grappling with a challenging teaching assignment during my first year of high school teaching, I felt the gap between mastery and my current situation was so distant that it might be insurmountable. In one meeting, I shared my tendency to internalize these situations. I thought, "I must not be a good teacher." Rather than considering the difficulty of the work or the level of support I had in place to facilitate the work, my vision for teaching as mastery led me to believe that I wasn't a good fit for the profession. Similarly, Phip shared from his teaching experience how the success/failure binary can deceive. He shared:

> when I feel good about a class that can also be just glossing over some smaller, subtler things that could have gone much better, and instead I just feel satisfied about it and I could let it boost me up for the day… [The success] doesn't invite reflexivity.

A focus on success, then, can contribute to dull perception—thereby stunting possibilities for inquiry. While experiencing success can help us engage in teacher-inquiry by providing helpful information for problem-posing and problem-solving, unexamined success can stop the necessity for inquiry. A teacher needs to pay attention to whether or not and how that success has been examined.

Additionally, Maggie and Daniel show us how institutional structures operating from mastery visions of teacher development can limit teachers' noticing. In one conversation, Maggie shared that the "promotional train" makes "it just easier to move forward [without questioning]." When success is achieved in the mastery vision for teacher development, the exigence for inquiry fades. We have less reason to inquire because our pedagogical questions can appear to be resolved. This tension emerged in my conversations with Daniel, too. In our first meeting, Daniel shared a story about the absence of inquiry early in his career:

> I can't remember thinking about teaching then. I mean, I'm sure I had questions, like, "Okay, how do you conduct a parent-teacher conference?" in my first year, for example. I don't remember asking anybody the question. I could have. I don't remember being told how to think about it. I don't remember anybody ever saying, "Hey, why don't you read this article…from *Educational Leadership Magazine*," or something, whatever. I can't remember asking questions about teaching until 2006.

The year Daniel noted was the year he participated in the Nebraska Writing Project's summer institute. In this environment, Daniel transitioned from seeing himself as "a good teacher" to seeing himself as a "teacher leader." Prior to his participation in the writing project, Daniel had accomplished success as a teacher. He "liked [teaching] and even won a couple of teaching awards…[He] was liked by students and got good evaluations… [But there] was no one ever pushing [him]." Daniel's work was considered successful—evidence for mastery—but he wasn't engaging in rich inquiry at this point. He wasn't examining the consequences for his choices. Aiming for mastery,

then, can allow a teacher to become content with perceived success and foreclose possibilities for teacher-inquiry.

Making an Impact, a Situated Goal

A second shared goal that emerged in my study was teacher development aimed at making an impact in students' lives. Envisioning teacher development as a way to impact students' lives also values student success, but in a more complex way. This goal, as articulated by the teachers, primarily seeks tailored pedagogical choices that enable nuanced educational gains. While a teacher aiming for mastery might locate success in an overall improvement in measurements of student learning, say from year-to-year, this goal of impact more closely tracks individual students and student populations. The goal aims for particular successes that are determined by the teacher. This goal accounts not just for the immediate learning but the impact of that learning in students' lives as learners. Ceic articulated this goal when she said that the best teachers "are those who along the way, fall, get back up and figure out who they are and what's going to be the best way for knowledge to be had for their kids and themselves." Teachers seeking impact persistently seek the best way to reach particular learners and groups of learners. This search, however, is not a simple one. The teachers in this study were not looking for quick or easy answers to helping students learn—what we might loosely call "best practices." Best practices, as typically conceived, are supposed to work or are theoretically preferable despite the teaching context. The teachers in this project, though, searched for an engaged and thorough understanding of the conditions shaping teaching and learning. The teachers help me see that aiming for impact is an attentive goal that provides rich opportunity for problem-posing.

Daniel illustrated this engagement in a conversation following my observation of his teaching. In this conversation, he shared that he is "always trying to figure out some way to give [students] feedback that doesn't take a week." To address this problem, he considers his local challenge of students not completing assigned homework. He shared, "At this school and I think a lot of schools now, to get students to do homework is incredibly difficult." He then reflected upon his work with a specific student from the class period I had just observed:

[S]he doesn't have any support at home to say, "Okay, take this and go home and begin answering a philosophical question about what friendship means in this novel even if she has been reading, which I doubt she has. What do you do? That's one of the things we've been talking about in our department. As a literature teacher, what do you do when a big part of your plan for the day is discussing something that you assigned for them to read the night before, and a third of the kids in the class haven't done it? Which is probably almost every day that's the case. For whatever reason, either they can't read or they don't or too busy or it's just not a high priority. They're not seeing it as oh, I must do this for the grade because that's not the way it is…I've just gotten so tired of this sort of punitive nature of giving reading quizzes every day, but what do you do in that situation? I don't know. I mean, I've tried everything. I've have student teachers the last three years and have been talking with them about it, and they're always saying, "Well, what do I do? What do I do?" Of course, their first—because they're products of the assessment state—their first instinct always is, "Well, let's

just give them a quiz. Let's give them a multiple choice quiz." Well, you could.

Do you really want to do that? What if they all fail it, then what?

As Daniel's story shows, this goal for teacher development prompts teachers to account

for and engage with a range of factors that influence students' learning. In this moment,

Daniel is not aiming to produce a generic solution; he is trying to facilitate meaningful

learning for students.

Consequently, the goal values a trial-and-error approach to improved teaching.

For example, Ceic praised her department chair for her ongoing search for tailored

instructional tools:

> [E]ven at 40 something years of teaching, [she still uses] inquiry as a tool to be
>
> better and to service the kids…She was even…before she left, trying new things
>
> [department members introduced in faculty meetings] …She would even take
>
> those and try to do them in her class…Even at the end of her career, she was still
>
> trying the new things.

As Ceic's comment illustrates, a goal seeking impact assumes that teaching and learning

situations change. Therefore, ongoing teacher-learning is required. The teachers

reiterated George Hillock's argument in *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice*:

Learning to teach, in this framework, can't be completed because students, teachers, and

contexts change. Therefore, teachers expect their inquiries to require flexibility and

agility.

The teachers help us see, though, that making an impact is more than just

accounting for challenging or changing teaching contexts. In the descriptions from the

teachers, aiming to make an impact means confronting the tensions within these

conditions. Phip illustrated attention to these complexities when he shared his concern

"that a lot of African American males are not successful in [his] classes. As a white man

who has had "several rather violent experiences [with himself] being a victim with

African Americans, males," Phip has made it a goal to pay close attention to how he

engages relationships with his African American male students. He wants to

"pay…attention to what's happening in [his] classroom." He commits himself to this

noticing, because he believes that he "can still teach to everybody." He wants to see

"what [he] can control and what [he] can't control." In this conversation and others, Phip

shared his commitment to helping all students succeed and a recognition of the ways

personal experiences of students and teachers, as well as privilege, interact in complex

ways within classrooms and influence learning. These complexities matter to Phip

because they influence the level of impact. Phip's working theory is that getting to know

students' stories through engaged and sustained student-teacher relationships can help

him see more of these complexities. He shared in one conversation that if he can "know

one story," he can "get glimpses into the complexity of [the] story [and] be less likely to

make assumptions about students." He enacted this professional goal through his

dissertation project, which was a narrative research project designed to study his advisor

relationship with Greg, an African American student at his college. He knows, of course,

that Greg's story is just one story, but he values the ways personal relationships can

enable a teachers' seeing of complexity. The goal of impact, for Phip, involves the

pursuit of seeing greater complexity.

This vision of teaching as impactful work is rich with opportunities for teacher-

inquiry. One of the greatest strengths of this vision is the way that it broadens the context

for teaching and learning. Striving for teacher-led success in the mastery vision can lead to an insular focus. Teachers might measure success from the results they see from students in their classes, building, or district, but beyond that scope it is difficult to connect their professional performance with student results. Striving for impact, though, extends well beyond the classroom. Phip explained this broadening in his own process of developing professional goals. He shared that one of the things that should concern teachers is "the persistence of…the achievement gap." There is, in other words, an ongoing lack of impact. As he explained, the problem is structural:

> [Education is] built upon lots of historical, social, economic stuff that is just not quickly fixable. That, and also that good teachers don't necessarily teach good to all students. That's why, even if I think of myself as a good teacher with some students, I'm reminded that I can be a bad teacher to some students…I'm in a field where students are supposedly needing remedial work and I think that's probably as a result of teachers not doing the remediation of themselves, the way they see students.

He noted that he borrows these ideas from scholarship he has read and his questions have become broader over time. His questions "have become broader in terms of the context where school takes place. In the community, in the economics, in the politics that a school setting is." These questions, ones operating from a goal of seeking impact require Phip to look at the larger picture in which education occurs. This broadening also brings attention to the consequences of our work. The goal asks teachers to consider the definition of impact for different educational stakeholders. This additional layer draws

teachers' attention to their problem-posing, challenging us not to stop at our "good intentions" (Grimm).

Just because the vision that teaching should be impactful can prompt a teacher to examine larger, societal structures, though, doesn't mean that it will lead to this kind of examination. Phip's conception of impact operates from a social justice approach to teaching, but we can, of course, imagine other world views that could similarly seek impact. In fact, one risk of this goal is the idea that teachers might operate from a deficit-oriented approach to students. As WTEs, we know that the notion of "fixing" students stems from a deficit-oriented view of students. The problems we pose, then, are often framed within the lens of what we need to fix within students. In instances such as these, the problems we pose also need to be problematized for the assumptions that underlie why we consider them to be problems in the first place.

Another benefit for teacher-inquiry in this goal, though, is the way it opens up communication between colleagues and students. For example, it opens up communication between colleagues as they borrow ideas from each other, process experience, and interpret shared curricular aims. To create tailored and individualized instruction, teachers need to communicate with a variety of educational stakeholders. Not communicating is a violation of this goal. Ceic described this violation by telling a story of a classroom scene she witnessed:

> When a lot of teachers—and I don't just mean here—anywhere—when the
> district gives you, or your school gives you a curriculum, they never go beyond it.
> I write teacher guides here, and they'll look at my teacher guides. I've actually
> seen this happen. They copy parts of the teacher's guide on a PowerPoint, and

that's what they show their students. When the student says, "What does that mean?" "Um, I don't know." I've tried to tell new teachers before, "Listen. I didn't know this when I first taught this book either. If you don't know it, don't teach it, that specific thing, to the kids. Come find out. If it's crept up on you, and you weren't ready for it, stuff like synesthesia." We had a teacher—we were teaching *Fahrenheit 451*, and I wrote that into the teacher guide—and someone asked what it was. She didn't know. I said, "That would be a perfect example of either you come talk to me, research it, or leave that out." Because it isn't one of the most important parts of the book. It's just another aspect of what the author was doing in there. For me, when I started here, I was so—I wanted to be a good teacher. I wanted to do a good service for these kids. I wanted them to leave with the best education I could provide them with. I was up all the time till two in the morning and getting up at five again the next day to get ready for school. Researching everything I could find, and bugging my head of department about this, and asking questions. I'm not embarrassed to say, "I don't know everything." I'm not embarrassed to tell the kids, "I don't know. Good question."

Ceic works for impact, so communication and not knowing are integral to creating tailored curriculum that will impact students. The goal can break down barriers between teachers and students and colleagues.

One of the interesting aspects that connects teaching for mastery and teaching for impact is the notion of responsibility. In both goals the teacher has a great deal of responsibility for student success—either through mastering her craft or creating tailored

curriculum and approaches. This attention to responsibility shows up clearly in the different ways Ceic and I processed seemingly similar teaching contexts early in our careers. Like me, Ceic was "just trying to stay afloat" in her first teaching position. She taught grades 7-12, which included eight preparations. As I shared earlier, I assumed near full responsibly for the challenges I faced in my first high school teaching position. Ceic did not; instead, she was able to consider a broader range of circumstances shaping her professional work. When Ceic realized that she wanted more collaboration and mentorship, she decided to find a new teaching position. When striving for impact, then, a teacher is prompted to pay attention to how she considers responsibility, as this will influence a teacher's problem-posing and problem-solving. A generative use of this goal for teacher development will prompt a teacher to challenge the notion that a teacher must be self-sufficient and examine the role of the workplace structure and culture.

Teaching for impact also calls upon teachers to examine the timing of this impact. Is a teacher working for immediate impact? Or is she taking a long-view of education, aiming for impact that might not be visible until much later? A combination of both? This is a tension that emerged when I observed Daniel's teaching. I noticed the careful way he changed the day's lesson to accommodate the realities he saw before him. I shared with him in the follow-up conversation that I've had to really work on my patience, balancing short-term and long-term impact. Early in my career, "[i]f [impact] didn't happen the way I thought it would happen, then [I thought] I've got to adjust my expectations." I thought that I might have established the wrong aim because I wasn't seeing the kind of movement in learning I had anticipated. A strong commitment to impact, without patience, can be a barrier to problem-solving.

Teaching for impact, however, can also cause us to dig deeper into our inquiries. Maggie illustrated this possibility when she described how she first came to question the nature and relevance of writing instruction. At her institution, Maggie was a member of a technology committee that first began to integrate computers into the composition program. Initially, Maggie did not anticipate that her work in this role would shift her thinking. Her commitment to teaching as impactful work, though, helped her see the connections that began the questions central to her current teaching:

I didn't have a strong belief that [designing computer classrooms] was going to affect my pedagogy at the time…We looked at models across the country and then at that point we really started to think about the pedagogical implications of teaching writing with a computer classroom. The model was really to decentralize the teacher. The best thing about those labs was it…completely changed the teacher position. They were no longer up front in a lecture with desks facing them. In fact, we always joked about how you'd see their backs. Because the computers were in a circle on the outside, on the perimeter of a room and they were looking away. Then we'd turn them around if you had to give some instruction…That immediately allowed…me to wander around and intervene a little bit earlier. We did a lot more writing on the spot. I mean I used to always give in class writings anyway, but it'd be pen and paper. Then they'd turn it in, and I'd read it later. I'd probably return it maybe with a comment or two. This allowed us to maybe put two people together and write collaboratively immediately changing the whole silo kind of writing…I don't think I started with [a] question at all because it was more like hey look at this cool tool. Now it's

> become so is this writing? Am I still teaching writing or am I doing something else?"

Maggie is committed to making her curriculum relevant to students' lives, so this change in classroom structure and tailored instruction opened new questions about the purpose of writing instruction. As we can see from her description, Maggie's goal for making an impact accounts for the on-the-ground situations. This thinking enabled her to reconsider the subject she's teaching. As these teaching experiences illustrate, this goal helps teachers see and account for the ways that the conditions of teaching and learning shape the impact we aim to achieve.

The teachers in my study provide a fuller view of teacher development that aims for greater impact. While impact can be conflated with successful results from students, the teachers in this study demonstrated an engaged and nuanced conception of impact. This emphasis on impact is especially important in our current educational climate. These teachers show us that teachers, as agents of their development, are driven by inquiries that wrestle with the complex tensions present in teaching and learning. Teachers can learn and practice framing inquiries when they are able to critically examine the range of factors contributing to student learning, as well as the consequences for particular learning goals.

Refining Pedagogy, a Process Oriented Goal

Both of the prior visions for teacher development assume change. In the mastery vision, change is a tool for producing successful results. A teacher changes her level of knowledge and/or kinds of teaching experiences to generate results. In the impact vision, change is an avenue for engaging the ever-changing learning contexts teachers inhabit.

These changes help teachers create tailored pedagogical approaches that aim for a meaningful impact—either in the short or long term of students' lives and in the local or broad scope of education. A third goal—teaching as revisionary—also foregrounds change. The goal, however, focuses on process, rather than product. This goal values a teacher who experiments and tries to learn about her conception of composition pedagogy alongside her aim to improve student learning.

A teacher working within this framework may produce messier results, but the messiness is understood as part of the process of learning more about problem-posing and/or problem-solving. Phip illustrated this commitment when we discussed how we evaluate our own and others' teaching. He shared, "my confidence is in my process, my processes, and it's not in these absolutes, but I trust the process." When speaking with his colleagues about teacher-inquiry, he advises that his peers shouldn't necessarily "do it [his] way but [they should] at least [be] thinking about how [they] did [their] thing in class." Phip's description of an engaged process aligns with Stenberg's call for teacher development to be a "learning-centered enterprise" (149). Phip helps us see, in other words, that teachers need opportunities to continually examine how and why their beliefs about teaching are enacted. We can see that the choice to standardize approaches to teaching and learning is a choice that limits opportunities for teacher-inquiry, as it excludes examinations of the theoretical underpinnings present in our pedagogical choices.

It is important to note that change in this process-oriented vision is not haphazard. For the teachers in this study, this process is a refining one, aiming to sharpen a teacher's beliefs and actions. In this goal, prior, less polished versions of our teaching selves are

valued because they are indicators of growth. I operated from this vision when I spoke with Phip about some of my missteps in my first high school teaching position. As I recounted some of the choices I made when communicating with my colleagues and administrators, I described these choices as "embarrassing." I described my growth since this time as learning to be a better listener, which ultimately allows me to be a more effective advocate for students and student-learning:

> I just wasn't experienced enough to listen in ways that I can now. I want to keep growing…so I think…I'll look back on [current situations] in probably 15 years and think, "Oh, Jessica. What were you thinking or saying?'" I guess I try to accept that as part of the process. I'm very hard on myself. I want to be that more finished person.

While I always want to be my best, this goal anticipates a better future self and can accept the lesser prior versions of self. This goal, of course, can negatively impact our expectations of teacher development. Teacher development, like any developmental process, does not suggest we start at our "worst" and get "better." Each moment of the process—which may include regression and the need for renewal—is integral. The central belief, though, is that engagement in this non-linear process can bring about more refined understandings of our praxis or how we understand the relationship between our theories of teaching and our teaching practices.

This commitment is visible in Daniel's choice to share a particular story of himself as a teacher. In our first meeting, Daniel shared the following:

> I went to a workshop, and I still remember. The woman's name is Dr.
> Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson. She was an education professor at A&M, at the time.

I don't know where she is now, but she gave a talk about—and it was mostly African American students, I was teaching. I went to a talk about—it was on November 11, 1996. I remember it very clearly. I went to it, and she talked about—this is the way the thing started. She said, "Raise your hand—if you're in the room right now, and you're a racist, raise your hand." No one raised their hand, of course. She's a black woman herself. She said, "Okay, if you give your black students—you cut them extra slack or don't give them the same amount of homework because they're black—or you think their lives are too hard." That's what she said. "Because you think their lives are too hard, raise your hand," and like, I don't know, half of the room or more. She said, "All of you should have raised your hands at the first question. I was one of those people because I didn't realize—I didn't know the rhetorical trick she was planning on us. I thought to myself, "Holy, crap, yeah," and so I went back to my school, the next day, and I told my students about it. I just told them—which I now realize, that's probably not the thing a teacher normally does—but I went back, and I said, "Hey, I went to this thing, yesterday, and this is what she said, so no more of that. We're just going to— "I even told them, I was like, "Look, I was an honor student, when I was in high school. We had homework, and we did it, and so you're going to have homework and you're going to do it.

Daniel shared with me later in this conversation that this story is one he tells "all the time." This story and others like it are important to him because they are a way to "understand the narrative of [himself]." In this articulation of his view of teacher

development, Daniel's teaching life is a narrative, a moving text. The story represents his willingness to critically examine himself and change accordingly.

Because this goal is a process-oriented one, it takes the long-view. The goal anticipates that teacher-learning will challenge both the ways we frame problems and create problem-solving approaches. Daniel shared, for example, that "there's a certain type of question you ask right after the class, which is a different question than you ask at the end of the day—or the next day or at the end of the term." The goal expects teachers to see teaching with new eyes, given time and new perspectives. Daniel also asserted that "it probably takes an experienced teacher to start truly contemplating while you're working with this year's class or this day's class, how is this, what's happening now, is going to affect tomorrow or next semester or next year or five years from now when you're still teaching or not." This goal utilizes a sowing and reaping logic: Teacher-learning sponsors future teacher-learning.

This logic generates a desire for teacher-learning. Ceic explained, for example, that she possesses a great desire to develop as a teacher. She explained that it is critical for her to work in an environment that expects revision:

> A lot of people…fall into a category where they just read out a textbook and give worksheets and don't ask questions. If that's all that's ever expected, that's all they're ever going to be. Because I've been in that climate before. Then you have that educator who wants to be more than a worksheet queen…[W]hen I interviewed here, that's what I told them. I said, "I want to be more than a worksheet queen. I want to be more"— I want to be someone more than just

reading out of an anthology. I don't want to get comfortable because I think that that makes education stagnant.

In this description of her desire for revision, Ceic illustrates an important distinction between this vision and the prior two visions. Ceic anticipates that her revisions will not just create more successful results or greater impact; she expects her views to shift. Otherwise her work as an educator will become "stagnant." This goal—more than the other goals—attends to problem-posing. It expects a teacher to pay close attention to how we've framed our inquiries, and these framings will be refined in and through experience. Consequently, this goal prioritizes "why" questions. Daniel explained that a key shift in his teaching occurred when he began asking "why" questions. Early in his career, he doesn't remember making

pedagogical choices for [his] classroom, beyond thinking, "Oh, I think this would be cool and be fun for the students." … [He] never really thought, "Why would this be better than this?" or, "How would this be more humane?" or, "How would this be more compassionate?" or, to speak in "Dewey's term, "How would this be a better experience than this?"

Maggie exemplified this same concern, saying that she wants to inquire into her teaching because she doesn't want to "stagnate or coast back."

The aim to refine pedagogy richly engages dual facets of teacher-inquiry. Teacher-inquiry can help a teacher become a more effective educator, but it can also help teachers contribute to disciplinary conversations about teaching and learning. Seeing teacher development as an opportunity to refine pedagogical beliefs and understandings is a goal that can help teachers engage the second facet of teacher-inquiry. As teachers

critically examine their beliefs about teaching and learning, as well as the teaching

practices stemming from those beliefs, they are positioned to make pedagogical

knowledge and share it with professional colleagues. This is different from models that

seek to improve teachers without encouraging reflexive thinking. As Kenneth Zeichner

and Robert Tabachnick have documented, the emphasis on promoting reflective teaching

practices has become so commonplace that "the impression is given that as long as

teachers reflect about something, in some manner, whatever they decide to do is alright

since they have reflected about it" (2). Drawing from Valli, Zeichner and Tabachnick

point out that "*How* to get students to reflect can take on a life of its own, and can

become the programmatic goal. What they reflect on can become immaterial. For

example, racial tension as a school issue can become no more or less worthy of reflection

than field trips or homework assignments" (2). This situation, as Zeichner and

Tabachnick highlight, is problematic because not all questions about teaching and

learning have equal relevance, significance, or consequence. Further, not all stakeholders

agree on the questions that are most important for teacher reflection. Students, for

example, may value different learning questions than a teacher. Envisioning teacher

development as a journey that refines pedagogy is a goal that accounts for this range of

perspectives and foregrounds the need for reflective and reflexive thinking.

Sustaining an Engaged Teaching Life, a Personal Goal

A limitation of viewing teacher development as revisionary work is the way it

assumes changes are inherently positive, moving us to clearer and better versions of our

teaching beliefs and practices. While Maggie, in the quote above, shared that she doesn't

anticipate stagnating, due to her commitment to a revisionary view of teaching, she also

shared that it is "a concern, and life happens." The goal of maintaining an engaged teaching life addresses this tension. In this goal, a teacher's well-being is the aim because the goal acknowledges that teacher well-being fosters student learning. Teachers need to be able to make purposeful decisions about their personal resources, including time and quality of engagement in decision-making. This relationship is similar to the one Laura Micciche described between writing program administration work and an administrator's well-being. In her argument for "slow agency," Micciche argues that time to be still, attend to the present moment, and reflect contribute rather than detract from effective administrative work. A frantic pace limits teachers' abilities to reflect, foreclosing opportunities for teacher-inquiry.

The teachers in this project help us see that teacher well-being can be broadly defined; and figuring out what well-being means for a teacher is part of the work of the goal. Each of the teachers in the project help us to see different aspects of well-being. Daniel, for example, helps us see how striking a balance between professional commitments and other aspects of life may be a part of well-being. While he acknowledged that the first year of a teacher's career will require a great deal to understand the "teaching context and the politics of being a teacher; the interpersonal stuff of being a teacher," teachers also need to "begin thinking, early, about how not to let [teaching] imbalance your life." While Daniel finds that many pre-service and new teachers want to discuss "how to survive," he believes the question needs to shift to "How are you going to make it through the next five years [and beyond]?" Maggie illustrated this thinking by sharing that "family is very important to [her]," and she has "made a lot of decisions about work and career based on family." While this has been

"tough" at times, this goal prompts Maggie to find a way to account for these commitments.

Aiming for well-being may also include discovering the professional environments that are most conducive. Ceic, for example, learned through her first teaching position that she had to be "someplace where they had the means to support [her] and make [her] better." She explained the need for new institutional structures:

> I couldn't get it there because there were no other English teachers. I taught every grade. They didn't have a lot of money to send you anywhere. They did when they could. I didn't have weekly meetings, and I didn't have someone at my hands to go ask questions or to give me things. Everything I created was on my own. Nothing was left behind by the previous teachers…While I knew I was a hard worker, and I was organized, and I had the drive, I still didn't have the academic base knowledge from someone else, and so that's what worried me.

Mentorship and structured collaboration—two of the aspects Ceic listed as missing from her first position—are two central features of her current professional environment. Like Ceic, I have also pursued this goal for teacher development, searching for an understanding of the workplace features that are integral to my ability to educate. In one of our final conversations, I shared with Ceic that growth for me involves seeing with greater nuance; "growing as a teacher is about being able to see more complexity in teaching and learning situations." Knowing how important structured teacher-inquiry is for my work as an educator, I made the hard decision to leave the high school teaching context. "I decided a collegiate setting, for me, where I could have more of a balance of research and teaching, would work better for me." Phip also expressed his ongoing work

to discover how to engage with his institution's environment, which values nurturing teachers. In this context, Phip has been "exploring" the boundaries of relationships with students and advisees. For example, he has provided transportation and a computer to an advisee. Phip purposefully explores what he can do to help students "stay in school [and] continue to learn."

One of the great assets of this goal for teacher-inquiry is the way this goal helps teachers explore and define their mission for teaching. Every teaching context will provide a set of challenges and shapes the engagement of those challenges. Vianne McLean highlights this process by reminding us of Maxine Greene's wise words:

> Maxine Greene…writes of becoming a teacher as a process of choosing yourself—making deeply personal choices about who you will be as teacher. But this is not a solitary of self-contained process—it occurs in time and place where others, some much more powerful than yourself, also are bent on 'constructing' you, in an image they value (Britzman). Thus the whole process is heavily contextualized, not only in terms of the [teacher's] past and present, but also in terms of the past and present of the institutional context in which the program is located, and the past and present realities of the wider sociocultural and political context. (60)

Aiming for sustainability prompts a teacher to recognize these influences and make purposeful decisions about the kind of work she is most committed to doing. Working toward this goal, I allow myself to redefine what being a "good teacher" means in particular moments of my career. I explained in one meeting that "one of those liberating things I think I've done for myself as a teacher is knowing for myself that what it means

to be a teacher can change over time." As Bateson suggests, in order to grow, "we must challenge the assumption that consistency is a good thing" (Fox 172). Daniel shared a similar view when he asserted that

> why some people are good…or not good at [teaching], has nothing to do with test scores or anything like that, but about…the teacher's resilience. Now, of course, good leadership helps and healthy work environment, but a big part of it is also what a teacher is doing to come to grips with what happens each day. From everything from classroom management to interpersonal to the stuff you're bringing emotionally from your family life into your teaching days or whatever.

Sustainability accounts for the demanding nature of engaged teaching and the need for teacher renewal. One of the challenges of this goal is the way ongoing education may shape a teacher's mission. As I'll discuss in chapter three, increased seeing through ongoing teacher-learning shapes the inquiries we feel most prepared and compelled to address.

Developing Multiple Goals

The teachers in this study help us see the integral connection between developing teacher-inquiry and developing goals for teacher development. Teachers who are committed to their development as teachers—as are the teachers in this study—work toward goals stemming from their visions for teacher development. The teachers in this study help us see how teacher-inquiry that is initiated by teachers—as agents of their development—is linked to multiple goals for teacher development. These local examples are incredibly important in our current teaching conditions. Pressures for teacher educators and teacher development leaders to provide results flattens the complexity that

is inherent in teacher-inquiry. When we invest in our teachers by taking a career-long view of learning and growing teacher-inquiry—cultivating a learner's stance for engagement in teacher-inquiry—we cannot provide visions of teacher development for teachers. These teachers help us see how the work of developing goals for teacher development is an avenue for learning and strengthening teacher-inquiry. Each of these goals foregrounds different aspects of an inquiry-process, providing opportunities to practice teacher-inquiry.

The four goals I have described here are the ones I saw in collaboration with the four teachers in this study. Another study with another group of teachers may identify different goals for teachers' development. What's important, though, is the focus on developing goals. We know that teachers enter the field already having to process visions for teaching and teacher development (Kennedy; Ritchie and Wilson), and we hope that our teacher education and teacher development experiences enrich old and developing visions for teacher development. What we can see here, though, is how developing these goals is an activity also connected to learning and growing teacher-inquiry. In the following chapter, I continue to explore how teachers can enact a learner's stance by showing how we can re-see the connections between engaging in teacher-inquiry and interpreting teaching and learning moments. I argue the activity of interpreting teaching and learning moments holds three tensions that are useful sites for exploring our beliefs about teacher-inquiry and practices for teacher-inquiry.

CHAPTER THREE

EXPLORING TENSIONS INVOLVED IN THE INTERPRETATION OF TEACHING
MOMENTS

"I just want to know about all about these kids!" One of my English education

students expressed this after receiving the names of the high school students placed in her

permanent small group for our class's reading partnership. The partnership is a semester-

long collaboration between my pre-service teachers and 11th graders at a local high

school. Together the students engage in reading and writing activities around a common

text. Lori, the high school students' English teacher, handed out the list of student names

in my class after a brief presentation about the high school and our shared aims for the

partnership. Lori, of course, heard my student's enthusiastic request. My student almost

immediately clarified her statement, saying, "I want to know and I don't want to know."

She wanted insight from Lori, and she wanted to craft her own understandings of and

relationships with the students in her small group.

A version of this conversation has occurred each year we've held this introductory

meeting to launch the partnership. I have mixed feelings about this moment—much like

the mixed feelings my student expressed. As teachers, it can be helpful to hear other

teachers' interpretations of teaching and learning moments. But we also don't want our

perceptions to be overly influenced by these interpretations.

Because interpreting teaching moments is complex and central to the work of

teaching, I want my students to develop a critical approach toward their interpretations. I

want them to see the possibility for multiple interpretations and the value in moving

among them. To enable this goal, we frequently discuss how interpretation or "storying"

teaching and learning moments is unavoidable. As teachers we create and share stories

about our students, ourselves, and our experiences. We are also immersed in larger cultural stories about teaching and learning. Pre-service and practicing teachers continually negotiate their own and others' understandings of teaching and learning. As I aim to help teachers critically encounter these stories, I share Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Ted Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." In this talk, Adichie helps us see how we can easily "buy into the single story," an underdeveloped or incomplete understanding of something. Through writing assignments and class discussion, I challenge my students to critically examine the core beliefs and perspectives shaping their interpretations of the teaching moments they experience throughout the partnership process. My goal is to help student practice a critical approach toward their stories about and scripts for teaching and learning. This work is deeply informed by Joy Ritchie and David Wilson's findings in *Teacher Narrative as Critical Inquiry: Rewriting the Script*. They argue that teachers need opportunities to narrate their experiences, to see their identities as constructed rather than "natural, inevitable, or essential" (14).

The teachers in this study are experienced and committed to their ongoing growth, so they have developed ways of seeking out and analyzing multiple interpretations of teaching moments throughout their careers. Often the process of writing has allowed the teachers to move beyond simple interpretations. Journaling regularly and producing scholarship, for example, are two ways teachers in this study maintain a critical approach toward their interpretations of teaching moments. Writing curriculum within and beyond their classrooms is another way teachers in this study engage their interpretations of past, present, and anticipated teaching and learning moments. These practices are important ways to engage in teacher-inquiry. Practices such as journaling, creating scholarship, and

composing curriculum engage teacher agency; teachers are knowledge-makers, rather than consumers or deliverers, of already worked-out interpretations of teaching and learning.

While WTEs may already be doing good work to help pre-service and practicing teachers of writing critically examine their stories about teaching and learning, we can extend this work by paying attention to how we navigate tensions embedded in the activity of creating interpretations. As the teachers' stories will show in this chapter, we benefit from considering what our stories mean *and* how we create these interpretations. This dual focus allows us to purposefully study, practice, and grow teacher-inquiry. In this chapter, I argue that paying attention to these tensions can help us more clearly see the purposes for creating interpretations, the contexts shaping our interpretations, and the resources we draw upon to construct these interpretations. The first tension, one between evaluating and examining teaching, can help us see our purposes for creating interpretations of teaching moments. To argue for enacting a learner's stance, I show in this section how our goals for interpretation connect to our understanding of teacher-inquiry. The second tension, one between the professional self we aim to create and the self that is constructed by our teaching contexts, helps us see how local teaching contexts shape the content we have to draw upon for teacher-inquiry. The third tension, negotiating the gain and loss that comes with advanced perception, helps us see how formal education impacts a teacher's relationship with teacher-inquiry. Because our interpretations of teaching and learning moments emerge from the understandings we already hold, it is valuable to enlarge our understandings of and possibilities for teacher-

inquiry; and this chapter is aimed at showing how leaning into these tensions is a way to enact a learner's stance (Dewey; Schon).

Examining and Evaluating Teaching

By definition, an inquiry process begins with dissonance; it begins when a teacher's attention has been captured in some way. Evaluation of the moment plays a key part in sponsoring this surprise or wonder. As we craft our interpretations of teaching moments, the process of evaluation or looking for evidence of success helps us see and begin to frame the problems that we want to address. This process is important and necessary. The teachers in this study, though, help us see how evaluation can also foreclose inquiry. If we become too preoccupied with evaluating our work as teachers when interpreting teaching moments, we may privilege teacher *performance* over teacher *learning*. In this case, we can become more concerned with creating polished performances at the expense of experimenting with our teaching and digging into our inquiry.

This is an important tension to study because teachers work in a complicated space that values both collaboration and competition. While teachers are increasingly encouraged to plan and reflect upon their work in team contexts, such as PLCs or mentoring programs, teacher evaluation remains an individual experience. Teachers often manage two competing expectations: opening one's teaching up for revision and polishing one's teaching so that the teacher can document successful results. At the secondary level, these results might be documented through students' standardized test scores; at the post-secondary level, these result might be documented through teaching evaluation scores from students. In both contexts, a tension emerges between examining

teaching and evaluating teaching. Teachers may feel torn because aiming for teacher-learning may cause the polished nature of their teaching to suffer. Just like development in writing, regression can indicate important growth (Haswell). Teacher-inquiry, which encompasses all activities that help teachers pursue their pedagogical questions, is deeply connected to teachers' willingness to experiment. This tension reminds us, though, that experimentation can feel and actually become risky. WTEs also face this tension as we make choices about the extent to which we value teacher performance and teacher learning.

In my study, I saw this tension emerge during my visit to Daniel's classroom. Daniel invited me in to visit his classroom after our initial meeting. One of the themes that appeared in our first conversation was that his pedagogical question (How can the writing classroom be humane for teachers and students?) holds both theoretical and practical implications. In this observation, then, we planned to see how his pedagogical question appears in his daily work with students. Together we aimed to see and examine concrete examples of this dynamic through observation.

Following the class meeting, we discussed our observations, and my field text notes my own nervousness about the experience. I had only engaged in a related kind of experience once before in a pedagogy seminar project. In this project, group members observed each other's teaching to study a question we held in common. Our observations were within the context of "learning visits;" they did "not function to evaluate individual teachers, but to enable mutual learning on the parts of both the visited and the visitor" (Stenberg 111). This kind of experience, though, is rare. I have had ample opportunities to observe teachers as a mentor for teachers at the secondary and post-secondary level, as

an English educator, and as a student myself learning about teaching through field and practicum experiences. These experiences span my career, and they all have in common an evaluative thread. In each context my observations were aimed at interpreting the teaching and learning situation for evaluative purposes—either for my own learning and/or the learning of the teacher. In my field notes, I wrote that the experience "was a bit nerve-wracking because I am making up this process as I go. So, I'm always hoping that I am seeing what I need to see for this process." I also documented my explicit intention to *not* engage this experience as an evaluator.

But we drew upon evaluative talk throughout the conversation. At one point in our conversation, I summarized my learning from the observation as follows: "I felt like what I really took away from today was there wasn't any arguing or debating over the assignment. Your expectations stayed the same the entire time…The level, the rigor, of the work didn't change." In my delivery of this comment, I praised his work, which is a marker of evaluating it as successful. While I aimed to summarize my observations about the lesson as a whole, I also evaluated the success of the lesson. At that point, then, Daniel commented that he was glad to hear this commentary: "Well, that's good because I was feeling sort of like a loser." I quickly jumped in saying, "No" and offered my explanation: "Because I was thinking [that] as an early teacher, that was my first inclination. If [the lesson] didn't happen the way I thought it would happen, [I thought] I've got to adjust my expectations. I've got to change the scaffolding." I went on to note that in Daniel's class there "seemed to be a lot of time for students to think and to dwell," which is "something I've had to really build into my courses." I reiterated my evaluation by saying, "That really stood out to me." In this moment, I made a choice to not explore

the tension between evaluation and examination. In hindsight, I wished that I would have explored this thinking further. I would like to have engaged in a bit of meta-conversation, exploring why we were drawing from evaluative language.

Near the end of the conversation, we returned to this discussion by talking about the way he adjusted his lesson plan in the middle of the class period based upon his observation of student progress. In this moment, Daniel summarized the lesson by saying,

> What's the goal of the class for the today? Well, to get ready to write this paper,
> to talk about *Huck Finn*, and to collaborate. If those were the goals for today, it
> worked… It looks a little messy, even a little too messy for me, but at the end of
> the class, when I walked around, I was like, "Oh, yeah. Everyone's done."

When I asked him if specific things made the class meeting feel too messy, Daniel shared that "there was a little bit more than normal sort of side conversation going on today."

In my field notes, this moment is central. I write:

> He said at one point that he was feeling a bit like a "loser," because the students
> were more chatty than normal. I tried to be empathetic, but I also didn't want to
> seem like I was judging him...He mentioned that this was the first year that he had
> been trying the new seating [chart]…Was it uncomfortable for his experiment to
> be visible? Does teaching still have an element of performing [as a] polished
> [teacher]? I guess that's my main question coming out of this experience: Even as
> teachers value inquiry and experimentation, how does the nature of polishedness
> creep in? He said that it was even a bit more messy for him. How and why?

I learned in our conversation that this new seating chart was an important way for him to support his philosophy of student collaboration. This choice, though, leads to a more "messy" learning environment.

Throughout my observation and follow-up time discussing the class with Daniel, the role of evaluation, for me, acted like a filter for how I engaged the conversation. I wanted to participate as a colleague, someone who can support Daniel's perception and interpretive process. I wanted my evaluations to serve as contributions to the inquiry process, not as an overall evaluation of Daniel's work. In the moment, though, I felt a lack of language to make the relationship between evaluation and examination explicit.

Similar questions emerged when I spoke with Ceic about my visit to one of her department's meetings. As we discussed some of the specific moments from the department meeting, Ceic said that she didn't "make things sweeter" just because I was present. To do the work of inquiry, really dig into the issues that the department needs to address, Ceic advocated for the necessity to engage the messiness, encouraging us not to value appearances over the work that needs to be done.

One moment when Ceic enacted this approach occurred when the department chair shared the results of their school's standardized test scores. Ceic cheered when the chair read the writing scores, which were pleasing. Ceic raised a question, though, when the conversation turned toward a discussion of the reading scores, which the department agreed needed improvement. Ceic began by saying that she knows everyone takes this work very seriously. She then aimed to help the group reframe how they were talking about test preparation. In my field notes, I observed the conversation in the following way: "Ceic posed the idea that the new instruction would be an "alternative" rather than

"in addition to," because she already does this [preparation]… She knows that it is important to do well on the tests for the purpose of the school." In this moment, Ceic posed an important question to her department colleagues, asking them to consider their views toward the reading preparation. While she expressed her desire to keep doing her part, she also argued that success takes participation from all community members. All teachers, in other words, have a role in purposefully supporting reading instruction. In this moment, then, Ceic raised a question about their work as a community of teachers. It's difficult, of course, to know how the other teachers experienced this conversation. In a success-driven culture and in the context of a conversation about standardized testing, though, this tension between examination and evaluation is important. Questioning how well the department is working together is a messy conversation, but it is the kind of messiness that Ceic believes is necessary for genuine inquiry.

These two moments from the study illuminate how the tension between examining and evaluating our teaching can influence our purposes for interpreting teaching and learning moments. Engaging in interpretation for the purpose of evaluating our work as teachers can lead us to see differently than interpreting for the purpose of examining our teaching, the work necessary for participating in an inquiry process: "Am I a good teacher?" is a different orientation toward interpretation than "What's going on here?" Both questions are important, but the latter one is the one we need when we are interpreting teaching moments for the sake of teacher-inquiry.

Exploring this tension, then, requires us to examine our beliefs about the boundaries of classroom expertise and shared responsibility. It's helpful for us to consider the classroom teacher as the most important interpreter of his or her classroom

teaching moments. The classroom teacher has the most contextual information about the students and their work together. This teacher also holds daily responsibility for educating her particular students. For reasons such as these, I often talk with my pre-service teachers about the role of hospitality when visiting teachers' classrooms. For example, I ask students to think of themselves as guests in the local high school where we hold our reading partnership. This conception of our work as guests, I think, accurately reflects the fact that we are entering and exiting the teaching and learning space; we are not residents of that learning community. At the same time, though, I am working to help my students see their work as more than just interactions with local students. I want to help them see their work as participating in a historical moment of teaching, a moment that contributes to the work of teaching English. I want them to see their work as contributing to a "shared intellectual project" (Stenberg). Where we locate ourselves on this spectrum, I believe, shapes how we engage the work of evaluation when interpreting teaching moments. In my experience with Daniel, for example, these views open and foreclose different approaches. When I view Daniel's classroom as his classroom—the expert of the classroom—I am a guest and my evaluation seeks to honor his aims as a teacher. If I think about expertise a bit more broadly, though, as a "shared intellectual project," I have a bit more liberty and/or responsibility to critically question our interpretations of the teaching and learning moments (Stenberg). Viewing the work happening in any English classroom as part of the larger story of teaching English allows teachers to use interpretation as a tool for examining the learning situation, which may be a move beyond evaluating the individual teacher or community's performance.

When Daniel and I followed up on this conversation in the next meeting, we spoke at length about trust. We came to see how trust or the lack of it is embedded in our collaborative inquiry processes. Speaking as someone preparing to become an instructional coach in his district, Daniel shared that he thinks carefully through the ways he represents his interpretations of teaching and learning moments to his colleagues. He shared that "[t]hose conversations are difficult to have in the day to day." He explained:

> [S]ome of those conversations have gone well. Some of them have not. "Well, why did you do it that way? If that kid is driving you crazy sitting there every day, why don't you move him?" Well…that question implies judgment. The way I said it, of course, also implied judgment in that situation.

In this example, Daniel explained that a colleague or instructional coach may offer a suggestion (rooted in an interpretation of the learning situation) to sponsor or contribute to the teacher's inquiry process, but that interpretation might not be heard due to the teachers' potential views of evaluation's role in the inquiry process. In an environment of evaluation and competition, it takes trust to hear the comment as constructive. This idea was reiterated in my final meetings with the teachers, too. Maggie and Phip, for example, explicitly spoke about the important role of trust in participating in this inquiry-based project. Maggie shared in our final conversation that our work grew as we moved through the process. She knew that was I wasn't trying to assess her work, but it took time to see how this process would unfold. As I shared my analysis with her, she could see how my observations attempted to understand rather than judge her work as a teacher.

Cultivating a learner's stance calls us to see the extent to which we are growing or not growing our understandings of and expectations for teacher-inquiry. This call also

challenges us to see these possibilities in all areas of our professional work. Trust isn't easily established in all areas, though. Nor are conditions for teacher learning. So a teacher can't realistically eliminate this tension. Even if we could, though, we would lose the potential for enacting a learner's stance. When we ask ourselves how we use the work of evaluation in creating our interpretations of teaching moments, we can examine why we have made those choices and if we want to revise our approach. This is especially important as the larger context of education reform privileges evaluation over examination.

Constructed and Constructing a Teaching Self

Coming to see our interpretations of teaching and learning as a site for investigating our teaching (not just a site for judging our teaching) is an important part of enacting a learner's stance. Also important in this process is valuing the complexity in the act of interpretation. When we create interpretations of teaching moments that involve us, we are one character in the story. In these interpretations, it is important to explore the tension between the professional self we aim to create and the self that is constructed by our teaching contexts through cultural narratives and relationships with community members.

We can further see the influence of cultural narratives and social relationships by looking at examples beyond teaching. Hilary Clinton, for example, has repeatedly faced cultural constructions of gender during her 2016 presidential campaign. One of these critiques has centered on her delivery as a speaker. She's been criticized for shouting during her public speeches—even though her delivery is similar to her male counterparts. Gendered expectations for women to be quiet, however, shape how some people perceive

her speech. It's not a matter of whether or not she is actually shouting; her work is

judged against the cultural construction of women as communicators. Similarly, my

participation in an assigned writing group illustrates the influence of social relationships.

In this particular writing group for a course, I was significantly younger than my peers in

the group. Early in our work together, my age became a defining factor of my identity;

my group members frequently mentioned my age alongside their critique of my work. It

was difficult for me to bring my best work and be vulnerable because I felt patronized by

my peers' comments. In both of these examples, we see that the context shapes the

individual's actions and others' responses to those actions.

Many teachers and WTEs accept and operate from a socially constructed view of

self—an idea disrupting the notion of a unified, autonomous self. The teachers in this

study, though, extend that thinking by helping us consider how teaching contexts shape

our interpretations about teaching, thereby shaping our perspectives on our pedagogical

questions. To enact a learner's stance, we can explore how our pedagogical questions are

shaped by our experiences working in particular teaching contexts. Reviewing our

interpretations with this lens is one way we can see how teachers as social subjects

interface with the limits (and possibilities) of their teaching contexts.

Ceic's experience illustrates the ways that our teaching contexts can shape the

kinds of experiences we have available to interpret. This tension became apparent in a

conversation following my visit to her department meeting. The meeting that I attended

occurred near the end of the school year, and one of the department's new hires attended

the meeting. Before the meeting began, Ceic introduced herself to the new teacher and

welcomed him to the department. She also advised him to take in the information he

could during the meeting, knowing that everyone would be happy to repeat or further explain the information at a later time.

The meeting seemed relatively formal as the department members began the meeting sitting with their grade-level colleagues. When the meeting began the new teacher said only a few words; the day seemed designed to give him a sense of their community and continue their departmental work. Accordingly, the chair asked the department members to individually share their names and one thing that the new hire should know about the department. The chair called on Ceic first. Ceic shared her name again and stated that the school is rigorous. Following this introduction, a colleague said her important information was that Ceic isn't as "mean" as she appears. In my field notes, I recorded that many laughed, including Ceic. As an observer, I wasn't sure how to respond. For me, it was uncomfortable. Based upon our prior conversations, I knew that Ceic takes pride in her direct communication. In one conversation, for example, she explained that she is known for "calling out teachers" who might become complacent. This sense that Ceic is calling out teachers, of course, may be rooted in gender and geographic discourse. Ceic is a woman and teaching in Nebraska, a place known for valuing "politeness" in communication. But it also seemed from the department meeting that this kind of confrontation is valued. For example, another teacher shared during the meeting that this department is a place where teachers can't become complacent. Ceic's choice to communicate directly seem important for this context.

Our next conversation, though, helped me see from Ceic's perspective how the experience unfolded. She illuminated how this is a sincere tension she confronts. When we began this discussion, I shared that the meeting was an interesting place for me to see

some departmental dynamics. Immediately, Ceic shared, "Do you know, I never said anything, but I found that so offensive." When I repeated the statement as a question, "You found it offensive?" Ceic said unequivocally, "Absolutely." At that point in the conversation, I acknowledged my confusion about how to respond in this moment. Ceic elaborated, saying this colleague is "supposed to be my best friend. And she said, 'Ceic is not as scary as she seems to be.' I was so offended by that." Further elaborating, Ceic shared that this is "not the impression that [she] wanted someone new to get of [her]." She then explained the specific actions that she made to initiate a friendly relationship:

> When I saw him and met him, you might have been in the room. I'm like, "Hi, I'm Ceic. If you need anything, we're going to tell you a lot of stuff. Don't feel like you have to know it all. We'll tell you again." ...I was trying to be welcoming and friendly.

Actions such as these are important to Ceic because she actively reflects on the kinds of relationships she establishes with her colleagues. In our conversation, Ceic shared that she doesn't want to come off as unapproachable to new teachers. She explained that this has been a recent professional goal:

> I've been trying really, really hard to come across differently so people aren't as…scared of me. That my persona isn't authoritative, and scary, and mean, and all that kind of stuff. I don't know... I don't really know what the solution is to that.

This has been a challenging goal for Ceic because of the influence of her teaching context. Despite her intentional attempts to create amiable professional relationships with new teachers, she finds herself storied in different ways. She explained this tension

in the following way: "Because even if I try to …have a different approach with new people, the people that are still here that know me and are comfortable with me, still tell them, like, "You don't want mess with [Ceic]." … Why?... I just find that really weird." As a listener, the hardest part of the conversation came near then end of this discussion when Ceic described why her colleague's comment was especially upsetting in this context. She explained this conflict as follows:

> They all laughed and thought it was funny. I was just like, "That's not really
> funny. I'm trying—" because I told them, in a prior meeting, "I am trying really,
> really hard not to be so judgmental. I'm trying really hard to put a different
> persona to new people here."

Ceic's story illuminates the complexity in interpreting teaching and learning moments. School dynamics, as well as factors such as race, class, and gender shape these moments. Female teachers, for example, are often expected to be nurturers and "nice." And because the majority of her colleagues are white, whiteliness or a belief in the inherent good in institutional structures may also shape how Ceic is storied. Ceic's commitment to articulating areas for growth disrupts both of these expectations. We are never outside of these moments. While we shape our teaching contexts, we also are shaped and (at times) constrained by them. In this conversation, I shared with Ceic that this experience helped me question how my colleagues might describe me and how those descriptions influence the relationships we create and the experiences we have available for interpretation.

We can further see and learn from this tension by looking at an example of embodiment that emerged during a conversation with Phip. This conversation began

with Phip's exploration of the ways his embodiment might lead to suspicion from his community college students. He shared that as "a white, middle-aged Nebraska person" students "may be suspicions of [him] as a representative" of the institution. His students, many of whom enter this community from marginalized backgrounds, may initially see him a gatekeeper and unapproachable. While Phip works to create a persona that is approachable and caring, he realizes that the institution also "creates… something here of [him]." In this conversation, he explained that this tension has daily implications for teaching and learning:

> What does that have to do with the actual operation and teaching of the classroom? I think those students need to be able to ask questions, ask for help, use resources. I don't understand why, particularly developmental students, won't use resources unless you take them by the hand. It's not because they don't really want to, but there's something there that I don't understand that they're not using the institution for their own benefit fully. There's a disconnect.

Phip has learned that he needs to purposefully create learning experiences that promote trust, partly because his body signifies the institutional authority that many of his students from marginalized backgrounds may distrust. Consequently, students may not seek the support from him that would be academically advantageous. Over time, Phip has come to see storytelling as a way to break down barriers between himself and students. Phip shared his belief that when he tells stories the classroom begins to feel "a little bit more like home where people can share stories." One particular story Phip has shared to break down the barriers that might be constructed from his embodied authority is one about being beaten up on a bike path. He told me that "If I have something happen that makes

me vulnerable and subject to maybe some of the same influences in the same neighborhood where a student in that class lives…I think that brought us together in a way that I didn't expect."

As a teacher, I was moved by his explanation of his attempts to break down the barriers he believes his body creates. Unlike Phip, my body does not have these markers of authority. Race, class, and gender, in fact, are often initial barriers to my authority as a teacher. In our conversation, I shared this perspective with Phip:

> This is so fascinating to me. I was going to ask you about embodied teaching.
> For me, in my body, I've always felt that my body has been a barrier to authority.
> It's interesting to hear your perspective…[how your] authority… may be a barrier
> to [student] inquiry. You're making me think in interesting ways about a different
> side of that same coin and maybe how that's been affecting my teaching.

I go on to explain that I may take for granted how my embodiment—both markers of my body and my gendered performance—may facilitate student inquiry. Leaning in to this tension helps us see the experiences we may and may not be able to access for interpretation, which are important sources for growing our understanding of our pedagogical questions.

While Phip and I have different relationships to how embodiment influences our work in the classroom, we both agree upon the importance of vulnerability. Phip's bike path story serves as a purposeful attempt for him to show himself as vulnerable. I also shared in this conversation my choice to speak openly with my students about becoming a mother during the semester I was pregnant. While my pregnancy was obviously visible—a fact I could not hide—I made the purposeful choice to talk about this life

change in my course, one focused on linguistics and society. In a class that covered topics such as language acquisition, literacy, education, and the connections between language and power, it made sense for me to talk about these issues as a scholar, teacher, community member, and future parent. However, not everyone makes a similar choice. In conversation with Phip, I relayed another conversation to explore my choice:

> I was talking to another colleague about how she was pregnant a semester or two ago. She talked about [how] she didn't name that at all. She just became more and more visibly pregnant in the classroom. She said, "I just don't talk about those things." There's just this complete separation between the personal and what she thinks of herself in her teaching. For me, those are much more integrated. I feel like I couldn't leave that part of me outside of the classroom space. Being vulnerable is really important to my pedagogy, too.

I shared this story with Phip to explore the kinds of choices teachers make. While there are different challenges and risks we engage as a result of our embodiment, we both expressed a commitment to vulnerability.

Phip helped me see how this relationship also has consequences for the kinds of inquiries we pursue. He explained that in his role as a "developmental educator" working in a context that has given teachers "permission to be more relational"—to take students "by the hand"—he finds himself asking, "What are you not doing for students?" While he shared that he feels his courses give to students, he also asks himself what he is not willing to provide. He offered providing transportation, meals, and technology as examples of some of the things that he has provided. He wants to help his students have the resources to succeed, and he questions this relationship. He explained that another

question has emerged from this thinking: "Is there a violence in doing something [like] that [in a] relationship?" He wonders, for example, if these choices reinforce the students' dependency on the teacher.

> That's an important question about what can I do. Show them how to use resources, but they don't have the same resources as me. I am willing right now, as what I think is a radical pedagogy which is not new, but it's new to me and the way I feel I'm engaging it. It's not just a movie of a teacher. I'm looking for opportunities to see what else I can do and also exploring what that does to a relationship. I want to enable them to be successful and not necessarily learn that "I can't do this unless you're there."

In this portion of our conversation, Phip highlighted this tension again, expressing his desire to support students and examine the implications of his support. When he mentioned the fact that his career is not a teaching movie, I heard him pointing to the idea that he doesn't buy into nor want to participate in a heroic role. Instead, he wants to address inequity and examine how his actions are read by others. While he knows his intentions are good, he is also aware of the ways his institution and larger cultural frameworks for the role of teacher shape how his actions are interpreted, thereby influencing the actions he also takes and questions that he considers.

Together, these two conversations illuminate the tension between the professional self we aim to create and the self that is constructed by our teaching contexts. We shape and are shaped by our teaching contexts. This is the reason why it is so important to critically examining our teaching narratives. As Ritchie and Wilson remind us socialization by a teaching community happens subtly over time (70). Ceic and Phip, in

these conversations, showed their awareness of the ways their persona and embodiment shape the ways that they engage their teaching context. A learner's stance helps us, then, explore how these factors also influence the perceptions of teaching and learning that guide our inquiry processes.

We can learn from these examples as we consider how to enact a learner's stance. Their examples highlight the fact that our interpretations of teaching moments are always rooted in a context; our perception is not universal. While we may be aware of this dynamic, we may under-engage this tension in the development of teacher-inquiry. Our interpretations of teaching moments will be richer and more fruitful for teacher-inquiry when we better account for the ways our bodies, personas, and relationships are connected to the moments we believe are important for inquiry. This tension is not one to resolve; instead, it is one to account for so that we gain deeper understandings of our stories about teaching and learning and their significance to our inquiry processes. This may prompt us to collaborate with teachers who have personas, bodies, and relationships that are different from our own. Learning from and with teachers from diverse backgrounds enlarges the stories we have available for our growing understandings of teaching and learning and participation in teacher-inquiry. These collaborations can greatly influence the information we have available for both problem-posing and problem-solving.

Gain and Loss through Formal Education

As the prior tension shows, we grow our ability to interpret teaching moments when we learn to see situations with more complexity. Often, one tool for this process is formal education. It's important to note that the teachers in this study—ones recruited

because they were identified by their peers as teachers committed to their ongoing development—had completed graduate work. Maggie and Phip had completed their PhDs, and Daniel was in the process of earning his PhD. Ceic also had completed a master's degree. Education is clearly a tool for seeing. My earlier story with Phip about vulnerability, for example, was made possible by my graduate work in Women's and Gender studies. This field has given me language for naming factors such as embodiment. It's easily understood that education empowers us to see and name pieces of our interpretations, thereby providing richer problem-posing and problem-solving. The teachers in this project illuminate, however, the tension between what we feel we gain and lose in the process of formal education. More specifically, two conversations demonstrate how further education can shape our relationship to inquiry and our understanding of our roles as educators.

The first insight emerged from a conversation between myself and Maggie. Early in our work together, Maggie and I identified a theme that I named "moments of articulation." We had come to see the importance of moments when we had been asked to articulate our current understanding of our pedagogical questions; those moments had been important for helping us engage in problem-posing and problem-solving. In preparation for this conversation, then, Maggie and I reviewed pieces of writing we previously composed. In her preparation, Maggie focused mostly on responses that she had given to various audiences, including: public (a textbook she crafted), private (her personal journal), and scholarly (her dissertation). All of these responses stemmed from a moment when she articulated to one of her administrators why multimodal writing mattered. I took a different approach, looking instead for moments where I had to

wrestle with philosophical work, connecting my teaching beliefs and actions. I reviewed my teaching philosophy statement I wrote when I applied for my first high school teaching position, a moment of free-writing I composed during a particularly hard day of high school teaching, a reading response I prepared in preparation for a department meeting, my PhD application, my letter of application for the position of associate coordinator of my department's composition program, and a letter I composed to one of my state representatives about a proposal for revisions to the English language arts standards.

In this conversation, we noticed several points of connection, including the idea that writing had been a "life line" through our careers. In my field text, I noted that

it was clear that moving between the personal and public moments of articulation was important. We talked about the private writing, for example, as a way to talk ourselves up, to keep moving. We seemed, though, to have different responses to the role of status or authority and learning and its relationship to inquiry.

As my field text notes, we spent time exploring the way our experiences in graduate school impacted our relationship to inquiry.

The conversation began with an exploration into the idea of trust. Maggie shared how building trust with her students has been integral to pursuing her inquiry of multimodal writing. Building from this idea, I shared that trust has also been an important part of my process. I explained that I noticed in my writing a movement in the extent to which I trust myself to engage in inquiry. I acknowledged that my journey has, perhaps, not been typical—teaching in the collegiate context before the high school

context and then returning again. I shared, though, that in this movement between contexts my writing reveals a change:

> I noticed that I feel pretty confident moving into the high school experience, but I think that's just being kind of young and naïve. I mean not really having the experience to ask deeper questions. I speak in such—sort of authoritative terms during my high school teaching time, in really useful ways, I think…I don't know how to say this well, but it's like I trust that my questions are good, that I'm a professional and these questions matter, and I'm sharing my questions with different [stakeholders]—my boss, my colleagues. I'm advocating for addressing my questions. I have this inner trust that this is okay, but I lose it at grad school.

Maggie expressed surprise, and I continued.

> But it's not this clear good, bad thing. There just seems to be this relationship…as I'm trying to take on a disciplinary voice and trying that out…I'm able to, I think, advocate more effectively and more purposefully and I appreciate complexity more, but I also distrust myself a lot more, too.

Maggie wondered if this sense of erosion was related to my increasing awareness of the amount of scholarship that exists in my field. She also wondered if part of the confidence that I feel I've lost was a confidence necessary for being a high school teacher. She suggested:

> it was certainly the brashness that you needed to get into the high school classroom. I mean you need a lot of confidence…to get in there and teach this stuff. Maybe the grad school—I mean I'm always Pollyanna, I'm always putting a

better spin on it, but maybe the grad school gave you space, the PhD experience

gave you space to step back and not have to know everything.

In this conversation, I appreciated Maggie's willingness to wonder alongside me because

this tension has been an important part of my journey as a teacher-scholar. At this

moment in time, I wasn't able to name or pinpoint the exact cause of this tension. And I

didn't see it as something necessarily bad—just something that exists. I told Maggie,

"That's what I wondered because I was writing about the relationship between

performance and inquiry, like how they—they're moving. There's this relationship, but I

don't know yet what it is."

At this point in the conversation, I shared a story about my entrance into the work

of high school teaching, one that illuminates my complicated relationship with how

additional education has enabled and limited my inquiry. I explained that in one of my

orientation meetings for teaching composition, one of the district's leaders said, "Oh,

you're coming in with a Master's in composition. You already know all this stuff. You

don't need to [have this meeting]—you know what you're doing." I further explained that

I was really frustrated with this approach because I was new to high school teaching.

While I did have a base in Composition, working with high school students as a

classroom teacher was entirely new. Hindsight has helped me understand this

conversation better; I really did know a lot about composition pedagogy, but I resisted

that construction of me as already knowing. The position of expert, however, allowed me

to trust my questions about teaching and learning and value my interpretations. When I

began my doctoral work, I lost my professional standing. I was starting anew, as

someone with many steps before regaining that label of expert.

Maggie could easily understand this tension as someone who works within a tiered system. She explained that part of her motivation for getting a PhD was because she was "sick of feeling that [she] wasn't as good." While she describes her current status as weird— "What do you do with a non-tenure track lecturer who actually has a terminal degree in the field in which she's teaching?"—she appreciates her range of experience. In this conversation, she explained how her doctoral work has opened up her ability to inquire:

> Quite honestly, there is a difference when you take your PhD. It's a research degree, there's a lot of reading, there's a lot—I mean you know how it is. You do learn a lot. You experience a lot. It's really informed my teaching in, I think, really positive ways. The same faculty who I'm on their tier, the lecturers, some of whom haven't been to school while I was, I still have the utmost respect for their teaching and what they're doing in the classroom. I don't think it's maybe as reflective as I might think it should be now, but that's because I've been practicing a lot more really being a reflective practitioner, and the way that system works, where we're just labor and that's a tough system.

Her education, as we surely hope, has given her the space, tools, and mentorship to practice deep inquiry.

In a similar way, my graduate experience has enabled my process for becoming a teacher-scholar. I've gained access to disciplines and relationships that are integral to being a teacher-scholar. I am incredibly grateful for this life-shaping experience. However, it has not been without struggle and doubt at times. In hard moments, I've drawn from writers like bell hooks ("Close to Home") and Joy Castro ("Angles of

Vision"), women who have documented the tension when moving further inside higher

education. This tension between insider and outsider is a useful one for us to consider as

we think about how we create and revise our interpretations of teaching moments. We

can gain a clearer sense of our orientation toward problem-posing and problem-solving

by considering this tension. We can explore, for example, how and why we have

authority to engage as knowledge-makers.

While my journey, as described above, ultimately demonstrates a gain from

formal education, the tension emerges from acknowledging the loss that can also be a

part of educational gain. This topic of loss was one Daniel and I specifically explored.

We found it important to explore how increased knowledge—the kind that gives us

increased ability to see when interpreting teaching and learning moments—can also lead

writing teachers to leave the classroom for other careers or other roles as educators (i.e.

administration). Daniel explained that teachers, in his opinion, don't leave for the

reasons that people might assume, such as overworked schedules. Instead, it's "because

you get to a point where you need to be able to think about it." Daniel also shared a

conversation he had about this tension with two faculty members in his graduate

program:

> I did an independent study about social justice teaching, and one of the things that
>
> all three of us were debating, back and forth, is: What responsibility does a
>
> teacher who realizes these things have to stay in the high school classroom? I
>
> don't know. I mean, I don't think there's any good answer to that. I mean, to say
>
> that they should would be hypocritical of me. I mean, I'm looking at ways to do
>
> something else, too.

Daniel, at this point, in his career had applied to work in a position that would include responsibilities inside and outside of the classroom. He spoke, though, of some of the advice he had received from faculty members to join academia. He's been told, for example, "Hey, we need you—our field needs you—to do what we do, also." Daniel's experience in graduate school has opened doors that could lead him to leave the high school classroom. He noted that secondary schools encourage people to pursue advanced degrees through pay raises and professional praise. The end goal of this work may be framed as increased knowledge to support better teaching. We know, though, that the more we know, the more we understand how little we know. This experience also shifts our relationship to knowledge. Graduate school requires teachers to be knowledge-makers. This relationship to knowledge is one that can't be undone. While this advanced perception is an obvious tool for rich interpretations of teaching and learning, it also may increase the emotional demand of the work. We can see this tension through Brenda Miller Power's explanation of successful teaching:

> If a student asked me if she had what it took to be a great teacher, I wouldn't ask
> her if she loved kids. Working hard is important, but I wouldn't ask her about her
> commitment, either, or about her public-speaking abilities. I would ask, Do you
> like classroom incidents? Do you like looking closely at what goes on, minute by
> minute, in a classroom that works? Is it a pleasure for you to read about and
> observe fine teachers inspiring children's minds? Great teachers like seeing other
> teachers in action. They look for models, for others more experienced in specific
> tasks, in order to help themselves tackle those tasks. It's a lifelong search, and in

the end the work of such teachers endures through the lives of students they've

touched. (11)

Interpreting teaching moments is the work of great teaching, and advanced education

may shift our relationship to our inquiries in ways that feels like loss.

Know Thyself

In *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer argues that the "work to 'know thyself'

is neither selfish nor narcissistic. Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will

serve our students and our scholarship well. Good teaching requires self-knowledge: it

is a secret hidden in plain sight" (3). Examining our relationship with each of the

tensions described above is a way to gain self-knowledge that is particularly relevant for

enacting a learner's stance. Exploring each of these tensions calls upon us to draw from

and develop self-knowledge. It takes self-knowledge to understand if we are using our

interpretations to learn from or evaluate our teaching; to understand how our teaching

contexts shape our professional lives; and to understand our relationship to our own

process of formal education. As the teachers' experiences show, it may also take some

risk-taking and vulnerability to examine these facets of interpretation. A learner's stance,

though, enables us to see the value in taking these risks. Addressing our orientation

toward teacher-inquiry allows us to gain further agency over our inquiry processes and

expectations. In the next chapter, I continue this discussion by demonstrating how self-

knowledge is also important for learning from the stakeholder positions we inhabit. Early

in the chapter, I theorize the activity of negotiation to specifically address how we can

learn from the responsibilities associated with multiple educational roles. I argue paying

attention to how we negotiate these responsibilities is another way to enact a learner's

stance.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEGOTIATING STAKEHOLDER POSITIONS

Recently, I surprised myself by pondering a question that I couldn't have imagined asking just a few years earlier: "How important are the distinctions between English 150 and 151?" This is a question that I spent a good deal of time trying to address when I served as one of the associate coordinators of the composition program in my department. In this role, I collaborated with my associate coordinator to revise our program's teaching sourcebook for our "Rhetoric as Inquiry" course, English 150. This sourcebook helps teachers who are new in our department learn about the aims of the course and provides resources for planning, teaching, and assessing student work. We turned our attention to this revision because the recent cohorts of new instructors had been oriented to the "Rhetoric as Argument" course, English 151. The materials for the inquiry course, in other words, hadn't been revisited in a few years.

Working toward this purpose, we collected materials from our current instructors—syllabi and course assignments—to learn about the courses as they existed. I discovered that the two courses seemed to overlap, even in my own practice. While many of the course objectives are shared, the distinction between the two courses was less clear than our administrative team wanted to see. We saw value, in other words, in the ways two different approaches to studying rhetoric could enhance student learning. So my colleagues and I spent time revising the sourcebook and planning the teaching orientation workshop to make these distinctions and learning opportunities transparent.

This priority seemed really important to me as a program coordinator, and I was committed to making these distinctions clear in our materials and interactions with

teachers. I also made these distinctions a priority in my teaching of English 150, so that I could support the new instructors in the weekly mentor meetings I led. A few years later, though, as a lecturer in the program, I found myself revisiting the necessity and usefulness of these distinctions. What seemed so clear to me as an administrator and mentor for new teachers seemed much blurrier again as a composition teacher. My role as an administrator helped me concentrate on developing common learning experiences for first year writers, but my role as a teacher helped me focus on developing individual students' relationships with literacy.

Working to engage my first year students in the process of composing, I have found myself reaching them in any way possible—lately through a dual focus on argument and inquiry. As a writing teacher, it's been my experience that students have more comfort with the idea that writing is a form of persuasion; writing as a form of exploration is much harder for them to understand and value. This dual focus, then, allows me, as a teacher, to build from notions that are familiar. This conflict, nonetheless, has surprised me because I was committed to the initial revision, a moment when I thought that the distinction should define the courses. Stepping in and out of the administrative role, though, has altered my focus and sense of responsibility. As a teacher, I aim to create the best possible learning experiences for individuals and a community of learners; as a program coordinator, I aim to ensure students have common learning experiences across courses. This tension is not good or bad; instead, it is instructive and a place I can more deeply consider my purposes for writing instruction.

Teachers of writing who have served in multiple stakeholder positions—including mentorship and administrative—have no doubt experienced such negotiations. These

negotiations help us to see the learning situation in different ways. The different educational roles that we inhabit call our attention to different responsibilities, which leads us to see and/or frame our pedagogical questions in different ways. This possibility for multiple perspectives is a rich and important one. Working in multiple stakeholder positions can broaden a teacher's perspective, which provides important information for clarifying and complicating teacher-inquiry.

Writing teachers encounter these negotiations in a variety of ways. Secondary teachers may find that their understanding of teaching writing may be clarified and complicated by serving in formal leadership roles, such as a department chair or cooperating teacher for a pre-service teacher. District-wide or school wide service work may also enlarge teachers' understandings of the learning situations they confront in the secondary classroom. In my experience, for example, serving on my district's writing graduation exam leadership committee enlarged my perspective on my work as a composition teacher preparing students to take the writing exam. Before my work on the committee, I had a limited understanding of the advantages of the district's writing exam. As a classroom teacher, I primarily saw the exam as a restrictive way to look at student writing. Both the narrative and expository portions of the exam *seemed* to privilege instruction around formulaic writing. A student writing a five-paragraph essay, for example, could easily pass the expository section. As a classroom composition teacher, I wanted to help students use forms intentionally, meeting a self-directed purpose and audience. I did not want to encourage thoughtless use of forms. Working across the district, though, expanded my perspective. Similar to my work as a composition coordinator, I could see how the exam helped to ensure that students had an opportunity

to practice these forms. It ensured a common learning experience. I, of course, am still skeptical when teachers teach to the test, but working in these different roles helped me understand this nuance. It revealed another problem to confront, which is teachers teaching to the test.

In a similar way, college-level teachers of writing have the opportunity to see writing instruction from multiple perspectives. As in my earlier narrative, there are often opportunities to serve as program coordinators—either in graduate school or in a permanent position. Due to the presence of writing across the curriculum or writing in the disciplines initiatives, composition teachers can also learn about writing instruction across a variety of learning contexts. Drawing again from my own experience, I have been able to see the ways that faculty from disciplines outside of composition approach the work of writing instruction. As a project assistant for my institution's writing in the disciplines initiative, I learned about the ambivalence many faculty members feel when confronting writing instruction, particularly for the ways that writing instruction can decenter the teacher's authority through valuing the process. Hearing stories about faculty members' perceptions of and orientations toward writing instruction initiated helpful reflexive inquiry for me.

Both secondary and post-secondary teachers of writing may also find potential for teacher-learning as they work across the roles of writing teacher and graduate student. This role is particularly pronounced for GTAs who may, in the same day, perform the work of composition teacher and student. Experiencing instruction as students can help teachers notice their own teaching choices more clearly. A similar negotiation may

emerge when teachers draw from their experiences of learning to write in order to teach a process for learning to write.

Opportunity to learn from these negotiations abound. And in formal and informal ways we have come to see how these sometimes competing responsibilities can help us better see and understand our pedagogical questions. In this chapter, I argue that the activity of negotiating the responsibilities and perspectives we hold from our work in multiple stakeholder positions is an activity that can help us enact a learner's stance. Below, I present two specific ways we might learn from these negotiations. Drawing from the experiences of teachers in this study, I illustrate how these negotiations can help us see and study the tools or practices we use for teacher-inquiry and our purposes for engaging in teacher-inquiry. To showcase these possibilities, I begin my defining the activity of negotiation.

Negotiation and Teacher-Learning

Negotiation, as an activity, differs from the activities in chapters two and three because it involves work outside of classroom teaching. Developing goals for teacher development and exploring tensions involved in the activity of interpreting teaching and learning are specifically related to classroom teaching. This chapter, though, addresses how our work to meet responsibilities within and beyond our classrooms informs teacher-inquiry. These negotiations are particularly powerful because they connect to multiple stakeholder positions. I felt torn in my opening narrative because I cared deeply about fulfilling my responsibilities in *both* roles; I had a stake in both perspectives. A specific definition of negotiation, therefore, can help us better understand how this activity can facilitate teacher-learning.

The fluidity of the term "negotiation" is one that Dylan Dryer and Richard Haswell, the editors of CompPile.org, have addressed in their glossary for the site. In this glossary, "negotiation" is defined as a "process of considering all sides and trying to arrive at a position that will accommodate them." However, Dryer and Haswell acknowledge that this term sometimes means little more than "dealing with" or "experiencing." Conceptualizing negotiation as an activity of experiencing or confronting tensions can be a helpful definition: For example, as teachers negotiate multiple goals for teacher development, they can purposefully strengthen their problem-posing and problem-solving by challenging themselves to practice different aspects of the teacher-inquiry process. Similarly, paying attention to the tensions teachers face when interpreting teaching and learning moments can help teachers better understand how their inquiry relates to their local teaching contexts. In both instances, these activities sponsor important thinking for inquiry development. The movement, in other words, facilitates the learning.

As Daniel and I explicitly discussed our process of learning to engage in teacher-inquiry in our third meeting, we began to discuss the importance of negotiation. We couldn't pinpoint exactly how or why we have grown as inquirers. We know that we are reflective people, and we imagined that our experience in a variety of contexts— observing and practicing inquiry moves with others— have grown our ability to inquire. Throughout the conversation, Daniel and I spent time considering the ideal conditions for developing as inquirers, but I shared in my research note that I began wondering if–like writing ability—inquiry ability grows from participation in multiple contexts (i.e. mentoring, observation, written reflection, etc.) Rather than thinking of the ideal context

and situation (i.e. ones involving trust-filled working relationships with colleagues, mentors, or administrators), WTEs might be better served by thinking about how we can offer a range of experiences that will cumulatively grow a teacher's ability and desire to inquire into his or her teaching. I proposed that we might also think about the ways we can help teachers see how teaching the same course to different groups will offer new terrain. While GTAs, for example, may feel that they need to teach a particular course to gain a certain kind of teaching experience, we can help them see how the experiences they already have can serve as important sites for developing teacher-inquiry. Teacher-learning is possible, in other words, because the contexts provide different experiences that don't necessarily need to be resolved. In a research note to Daniel, I shared that this observation reminded me of LeAnn Carroll's work on college students' writing development. She argues the students in her longitudinal study "did not necessarily learn to write 'better,' but they did learn to write differently—to produce new, more complicated texts, addressing challenging topics with greater depth and complexity" (xii). They gained and refined these skills from participating in multiple rhetorical contexts. This particular conversation served as a turning point for me as a researcher, bringing my attention to the connections between learning to write and learning to inquiry, as well as the instructive power of negotiation.

Teacher-learning is different, though, when considering our work in different stakeholder positions. The negotiations are more than just experiencing tensions because we often need to make decisions in these roles. I argue that learning from these negotiations involves listening to them. The kind of activity I suggest here is akin to "rhetorical listening" (Ratcliffe). Rather than determining which role might address a

pedagogical question better, we can try to understand how and why these stakeholder positions call our attention to different aspects of our pedagogical questions.

Negotiation as a listening activity is incredibly important. While a learner's stance calls us to wrestle with these insights, our current working conditions can make such work challenging. The additional demands of administrative or mentorship roles can strain teachers' time, for example. Phip, in fact, described this challenge as a "crisis" in our final meeting as he reflected on his current inquiry development. In this meeting, Phip shared that his biggest challenge in developing his inquiry is finding time for teacher-inquiry while serving in an administrator role. He explained his situation in the following way:

> My inquiry challenge really is, right now, after you finish a doctoral program and you are sitting in kind of an administrative role, is…how do you keep the inquiry going, because I'm not—there's so much that I was inspired by and would like to revisit and the structure now that surrounded me that supported that work is just gone. The teachers, the fellow students, it's all those scaffolds are gone pretty much.

Phip went on to explain that if an administrator doesn't "keep working," he or she becomes "a technocrat," simply signing paperwork without engaging in "the stories of others and the voices of others." I appreciated the way Phip named this challenge: How can we use these stakeholder positions—ones that may include being mentors, cooperative supervising teachers, program coordinators, and department administrators— as ways to learn rather than just manage? How can we come to see the activity of

fulfilling our responsibilities in these roles as intellectual work that also contributes to our development as inquirers?

While we can gain rich insight and practice as an inquirer by moving across these contexts, institutional structures may not privilege these connections. As Phip notes, our work in these contexts can become technocratic. It is often the work of the teacher to make these connections. This issue is important because teacher leadership is often part teachers' developmental process. In secondary education, it's often an expectation that teachers will serve as cooperating teachers for pre-service teachers or mentors for new teachers. Faculty positions also require service. Composition positions in particular often require some form of administrative work, which may include administering the writing center, composition program, writing across the curriculum initiative, etc. While we may have ample practice examining what we learn from these intersections, I believe we have more to learn about the ways these examinations can also help us develop our understandings of teacher-inquiry. Below, I highlight two possibilities that emerged from my work with the teachers in this study.

Tools for Teacher-Inquiry

Mentorship is an important part of learning to teach and participate in teacher-inquiry because mentorship often facilitates increased perception. Ceic shared, for example, that a mentor was an important part of learning to become a good teacher. Without a mentor, Ceic believes that "some teachers would never learn how to ask certain questions. She explained, "you would never question because you didn't even know." A mentor, someone further along in their inquiry development, can help a teacher see possibilities and tools for teacher-inquiry. We know, too, that the process of

mentoring is reciprocal. When we mentor others, we have an opportunity to explain and interrogate why we hold particular pedagogical beliefs. We have the opportunity, in other words, to articulate and question our pedagogical choices. The teachers in this study, though, helped me see how these same negotiations can also help us articulate and question our tools for teacher-inquiry or the practices we draw upon to collect the information that fuels our inquiry processes.

More specifically, I argue that these negotiations can help us see why our tools are important to us. We can question if they have meaning because we have inherited them in some way—either through copying our mentors/colleagues or trying to replicate our own learning experiences—or if they have meaning because they purposefully enable teacher-inquiry. As mentors, we can see how copying these moves blindly, without interrogating them, doesn't sponsor inquiry development. As a student teaching cooperative teacher, for example, Daniel shared his hope that student teachers aren't copying his inquiry moves because "they think that's what they're supposed to do." He hopes, instead, that **"**it's actually a sincere effort." Copying, without testing or questioning, removes the teacher-learning. Our work as mentors, then, can help us see the tools or practices that we rely upon for teacher-inquiry and the extent to which we have examined their purposes. This investigation enacts a learner's stance because it calls upon teachers to account for the ways their teaching practices shape their inquiry processes.

So both as we mentor and are mentored, we can question the extent to which we are copying or examining the practices that enable our inquiry processes. One possibility for this work emerged for me during the course of this study. One of the practices that I

have utilized throughout my teaching career is a process for documenting my teaching.

This practice involves recording and saving a description of what occurs during each

class meeting. I compose these notes directly after meeting with my students. This is a

practice that began as copying. During the first semester teaching, one of my mentors

shared her practice of keeping all of her lesson plans and materials in a notebook. This

practice that has become central to the way I think about curricular design, in other

words, began as a way to organize teaching materials. Along the way, though, this

organization strategy became a place for me to keep a recording of the ways my lessons

unfold in real time. I explained in a conversation with Daniel that the lesson plans that I

create before meeting with my students are my rough drafts, and what I choose to keep in

my notebooks are the records of what actually transpires from my perspective. So after

each class meeting, I spend some time in my office writing notes about the key questions,

ideas, and activities that were a part of the lesson. This practice has been central for my

inquiry, as it has allowed me to pay better attention to both my problem-solving and

problem-posing. But it has also been central to my goal of collaboratively creating

curriculum with students. It has helped me enact my growing goal of seeing and

engaging students as our work unfolds in the class, rather than making us all stick to the

initial plans I create. Because I have made the purposeful choice to think of these lesson

plans as drafts in process, I have become more open to changing them in the moment, a

move that has been supported by my growing inquiry into the exploration of curriculum

as a creative, artistic process.

In my conversation with Daniel, though, he pushed my examination further. He

shared with me in this conversation that he appreciates this practice because it allows me

to document "the reality rather than [my] vision." He elaborated on the consequence of this idea by suggesting that "[m]aybe that's part of the problem sometimes, is that we, a lot of teachers are struck by the constant separation between their vision and the reality. Maybe because all they're ever documenting is the vision." In this moment of the conversation, the kind of conversation that is prevalent in mentoring contexts, I was struck by his observation; I had never thought about this practice in this particular way. I had never considered how my purposeful decision to note and attend to my reality is a move that sponsors sustainability. Daniel helped me see how this is "one of the reasons people eventually get burned out or disillusioned. Actually, that's what disillusioned means, right? Your illusions or your vision is taken away." Beyond sustainability, we also collaboratively identified that attention to the "reality" is a key practice for engaging students. For students, Daniel reminds us that "the teacher's vision doesn't matter...Well, it matters as an expression of where you're going, but once the class starts, it's what's happening...If you're hung up on what you think is happening and ignoring what is happening, you're bound for unhappiness."

This example illustrates examination of a tool for teacher-inquiry. Such examination respects the cumulative nature of learning teacher-inquiry and helps us learn from the different responsibilities we may encounter as we move among different educational roles. Whether we are mentoring or being mentored, we can ask ourselves whether or not we have tested and understood how our teaching practices help us see. In conversations with others, we can also begin to see other ways to understand these practices. In my work as an assistant for my university's writing in the disciplines program, for example, I have helped faculty from across campus consider the relationship

between their vision for student writing and the reality they see in student writing. While many faculty members begin their exploration into writing instruction with the notion that their students are somehow deficient as writers, close examination of their writing assignments prompts them to consider the classroom structures and supports that are available for students to develop as writers. These conversations compel faculty members to articulate their tools for seeing and making sense of student work, leading to questions such as: "How do you know students are deficient writers? Compared to what? What's at the heart of what students really need to be able to do as writers in your course? Why? How have you come to learn these conventions? Working across different roles, in other words, can help make the familiar in our teaching lives strange. When we are prompted to name how we arrive at our pedagogical questions, we can more clearly see the tools (i.e. lesson or assignment designs, course structures, field experiences, etc.) that we rely upon to drive our teacher-inquiry.

Purposes for Teacher-Inquiry

Negotiating stakeholder positions is an excellent catalyst for coming to see our work as more complex. The movement between these roles also helps teachers act as knowledge-makers. As we work to communicate our observations from one role to another, we are empowered to speak from authority about our teaching and/or administrative experience. Maggie expressed this empowerment and initiative to be a knowledge-maker when she described her role as a leader of technology in her department. She explained that her department has "always been really supportive, and they've always sort of had [her] defend why [she] would be doing something." Maggie shared that she didn't want to feel "way out in left field…with multi-modal writing or

writing with technology…because [she was] pulling everybody else along too…It's not always a comfortable position to be in." Though challenging, Maggie named this experience as "really empowering." This leadership position encouraged Maggie to attend conferences and dig deeper into her field's scholarship. She explained that it was also a "formative moment" because she realized "there wasn't some body of knowledge out there that [she] wasn't privy to that [she] was actually creating this kind of knowledge."

As we develop our sense of selves as knowledge-makers, we also come to see the different stakes that people have in relation to the work. I shared this with Phip as I described some embarrassment about the ways that I spoke about my work with stakeholders early in my career. I vividly remember one particular moment as a high school teacher when I tried explaining to my principal how our school's culture toward late work interfered with the goals of process based writing instruction. In this conversation, my principal acknowledged that he hadn't been a teacher of writing, but he also called upon me to acknowledge that I had never been a high school principal. He helped me see how his responsibilities—ones different than mine as a classroom teacher—were also important and the foundation for his commitments. This was a key learning moment for me. He was right. I wasn't yet able to move across those experiences in the way that I do in the earlier narrative.

Phip also shared that learning to see his work as public—rather than private—was not without growing pains. In one meeting, he described a public school meeting that was especially hard. In an email to Phip, I captured it in this way:

I also noticed moments when we spoke about teaching as a politicized act. While you spoke about your discomfort with your comments being used in a public debate about the high school's scheduling, you also said that you've become more invested in teaching as a political act: "I've also invested in the direction and am in a place where I feel like I can…contribute to a public debate on education."

Phip has come to see the productivity in negotiating his work as a teacher and a teacher-leader. Seeing teaching as contributing to work beyond our own classroom is an important part of sustaining inquiry. When we can learn from our teaching experiences and share insights or questions with community members—however we define the members—the inquiry's significance grows.

Therefore, learning how to communicate with a variety of stakeholders is part of developing teacher-inquiry. For example, it helps us see how a pedagogical question may need to be framed in multiple ways. Negotiating stakeholder positions can provide an important way to gain this insight. Our different responsibilities, as my opening narrative suggests, may prioritize different aspects of a pedagogical question. To enact a learner's stance, we can examine how we engage these different positions, which highlights our purposes for teacher-inquiry. We can consider, for example, if we view teacher-inquiry as a tool to defend something or a tool to advocate for something.

Maggie's experience is a central way to examine this idea. Maggie explained that her dissertation project began from a comment from her composition director about the legitimacy of multimodal writing. Naturally, this comment framed her argument in the early drafts of her dissertation. But through the process of writing and consulting with

her advisor, she came to the conclusion that this moment shouldn't frame her project. Maggie explained that this comment framed her contribution in a negative way. Through the revision process, Maggie determined that she didn't want her scholarship to "defend digital writing." Instead, she made an effort to assume the importance of multimodal writing. In making this decision, Maggie acknowledged that different institutions are in different places with their commitment to multimodal composition. Using her own institution as an example, she explained that she sees her work as tolerated rather than embraced: "Although several faculty do encourage and also assign this type of work, far more view it with skepticism or even concern, mostly because of perceived additional missions or tasks for the writing instructor." Maggie's insights from serving as a leader in her department, shape how she sees the purposes for her inquiry. The resistance she experiences influences her problem-posing and problem-solving.

Ultimately, though, Maggie expressed a commitment to using her scholarship as a place to advocate for the possibilities of multimodal writing, rather than defending them. In our conversation, Maggie quoted her writing to illustrate her new framing of the comment that prompted her scholarship:

> Then I threw in—I frequently remember the words of my WPA as we considered chapters and essentially the direction for our writing program. I thought [my WPA] had a very balanced—I mean she was very compassionate. She said, "When so many of our students struggle to write essays and when we as a program have committed ourselves to helping them improve in that skill, I have questions about the value of turning several weeks of the semester over to a different kind of composition. I'm not absolutely opposed to it, but let's have a

more program-wide discussion about this." She invited conversation, which we

had subsequently, and her—that comment and my response to it did open the door

to saying, "Where are we as a program? What are we valuing?"

Maggie went on to explain that this tension still exists, but they have turned a potential

conflict into an opportunity for inquiry. They are working as a program to consider these

perspectives, and Maggie is pleased that multimodal writing appears in the first year

writing textbook that she helped edit. In this example, we can see her clear commitment

to an advocacy approach. Her movement between the roles of scholar and teacher initiate

and support her commitment to advocacy. She wants to show that teachers don't

sacrifice time or mission when they teach multimodal writing. Teaching "multimodal

writing enhances other forms, what [students] know about traditional writing. We talk

about audience, and purpose, and style, and voice in ways that are really meaningful."

Maggie's journey illustrates how we can enact a learner's stance by considering how our

teacher-inquiry relates to a variety of stakeholders and serves defensive or advocacy

purposes.

Re-Seeing Teacher Development

Listening rhetorically to the responsibilities we hold in multiple stakeholder

positions challenges us to expand our understandings of these intersections and the

purposes for professional development. While the responsibilities embedded in these

roles are important, the person performing these responsibilities is also important. As

Palmer reminds us, we often fail to examine the connections between a person's life

history and their work as a teacher. "Who is the self that teaches?" is a question that

helps us explore "the inner resources that good teaching always requires" (8). This

recognition can help us expand our understandings of the purposes for professional development. As Jessica Gallo and Bailey Hermann point out

> [t]oo few professional development activities focus on the teacher as more than just a purveyor of knowledge to students. Those that do, however, offer teachers some very powerful and transformative experiences that change not only the teacher's day-to-day practice, but also change the teacher's perception of herself and her role in the classroom." (124)

Gallo and Hermann name the National Writing Project as an example of a transformative professional development model that serves students *and* teachers. Attending to how the teacher changes and is changed by professional development activities is an important layer when promoting a learner's stance. This view recognizes that teacher development ideally advances student and teacher learning. As we think about the interactions among educational roles, this expanded framework helps us see that leaning into these negotiations is a key way to cultivate a learner's stance. Just as teaching is intellectual work that requires ongoing teacher-learning, leadership responsibilities are also intellectual and dynamic, shaping how we see our teaching and leadership roles.

CONCLUSION

When we commit to a particular place, a certain element of choice is removed. We are free to dig in, and allow ourselves to be mentored by the life around us. We begin to see the world whole instead of fractured. Long-term strategies replace short-term gains. Routine opens the door to creativity.
–Terry Tempest Williams, *The Open Space of Democracy*

To cultivate a learner's stance for engagement in teacher-inquiry is to make a commitment to an intellectual place. In this place, a teacher sees herself as a knowledge-maker. Rather than applying already worked out understandings of teaching and learning, a teacher in this place sees the need for and responsibility to create and critically examine her pedagogical questions. The long-term goal is gaining a fuller understanding of what teacher-inquiry means to the teacher. Rather than simply focusing on inquiries at hand, the teacher engages in a parallel journey, one that allows her to examine how she understands and participates in teacher-inquiry. Any teacher can begin this work today because our everyday experiences are the material for developing our understandings of teacher-inquiry. This conclusion speaks to such possibilities within the context of teacher education.

Teacher education contexts for pre-service secondary English teachers may include methods courses and field experiences; for practicing secondary teachers or GTAs these contexts may include pedagogical seminars, orientation workshops, or mentoring groups. These sites tend to be institutionally recognized as sites for teacher training. Incorporating the pedagogical aim of cultivating a learner's stance, though, allows WTEs to foreground the necessity of ongoing teacher-learning. Within teacher education contexts, it can be helpful to consider a learner's stance as part of a future-focused pedagogy. Such pedagogies are characterized by creating a learning environment and experiences that sponsor future growth opportunities. They teach the

present and future learner. Similarly, my call for a learner's stance engages the present *and* future inquirer.

I focus specifically on teacher education contexts for multiple reasons. The most obvious reason is that beginning this journey in the teacher education process positions teacher candidates to act as change-agents throughout their careers in their local teaching contexts. Rob Simon recently illustrated this process in his longitudinal case study of Laura, a teacher candidate from his literacy methods course. Simon explains that Laura used the teacher-inquiry opportunities in her coursework to

> explore what it means to take an inquiry stance on students' concerns, build
>
> camaraderie with like-minded peers, and develop institutional critiques which in
>
> turn fed her pedagogy…These formative experiences prompted Laura to create
>
> inquiry-based collaborations with colleagues and students

throughout her career (57). With an expectation for teacher-inquiry and practice engaging in teacher-inquiry, the graduates of our programs can support a climate for teacher-inquiry, which supports their own inquiry development and the development of others.

As Simon's study highlights, the coursework already included in teacher education provides a useful context for cultivating a learner's stance. WTEs can craft learning experiences that necessitate teacher-inquiry, offering important inquiry practice. While it is important for all practicing teachers to cultivate a learner's stance, the formal assignments and structured field experiences that are already in place in teacher education can purposefully sponsor inquiry development. It is also helpful that the expectation for such work already exists, which is unlike expectations for professional development

beyond teacher education. Whether pre-service teachers are working toward their teacher certification, practicing teachers are working toward professional advancement, or GTAs are working toward graduate degrees, learners in these contexts expect to create assignments and projects that demonstrate their learning.

It is also important to note the controversy currently surrounding teacher education for pre-service teachers. Amid national conversations about the relevancy of formal teacher education, educational researchers are documenting the importance of these learning experiences on teachers' careers. For example, Ronfeldt et. al's recent analysis demonstrates, methods-related coursework and practice teaching contribute to teachers' sense of preparation and likeliness to stay in teaching. WTEs working in these contexts face calls for increased accountability, calls that, at times, undermine the aims of teacher education by underestimating the complexity of teaching and learning. Recently, for example, the Department of Education proposed creating a rating system for teacher preparation programs. The proposed ranking system would assign this rating based upon an analysis that connects program graduates with the standardized test scores of their students ("The Disappearing Act"). Such a system flattens the complexity of teaching and learning and fails to acknowledge the important role of teacher-inquiry. Teacher-inquiry helps us not only produce student results; it also helps us question the meaning of those results. It's difficult in our current evidence-driven culture to articulate the necessity of such work because teacher-inquiry asks teacher candidates to help students achieve and consider the meaning of that achievement. The second question is much harder and extremely important. Teacher education, therefore, is a vital space that must be protected and examined.

Here, then, I suggest two important ways WTEs might cultivate a learner's stance in teacher education contexts. First, I suggest that we can help teacher candidates develop an understanding of cultivating a learner's stance. Secondly, I believe we can use the activities discussed throughout this dissertation to help teacher candidates practice a learner's stance. These suggestions are purposefully not prescriptive. Each program has particular aims that are important for a local teaching context. There is no "right" way, in other words, to work toward this pedagogical aim. And many WTEs are likely already doing work in this area—due to our field's commitment to teacher-inquiry. My argument all along, though, has been that we should name and more purposefully sponsor this parallel journey. Because teacher-inquiry opportunities are prevalent in teacher education, the suggestions I describe below are intended to offer malleable structures that WTEs can integrate within their existing curriculum.

Developing Key Understandings

In chapter one, I introduced two of the foundational principles for cultivating a learner's stance: teachers need to see that 1) learning teacher-inquiry is a cumulative process and 2) teachers are knowledge-makers. These two beliefs provide the foundation for cultivating a learner's stance. Without these beliefs, in other words, a teacher will not see the need to engage in this parallel journey. It's possible for a teacher to value teacher-inquiry and not see the need to or benefit in developing as an inquirer. Teacher education is an ideal place, then, to develop these key understandings.

I label these two beliefs as understandings intentionally to highlight how we might purposefully teach toward these ends in teacher education coursework—either methods classes or graduate seminars. To explain this approach, I draw from Grant

Wiggins and Jay McTighe's transfer-oriented curricular framework, *Understanding by Design*. In this framework for designing curriculum, Wiggins and McTighe define an "understanding" as "the successful result of trying to understand" (43). Understanding, then, extends beyond simply having knowledge of something. Knowledge and skills are necessary parts of understanding, but they are not enough. "Understanding requires more: the ability to thoughtfully and actively 'do' the work with discernment, as well as the ability to justify and critique such 'doings'" (Wiggins and McTighe 41). Teaching for understanding is an important goal in a future-focused pedagogy because understandings endure. "To understand is to make sense of what one knows, to be able to know why it's so, and to have the ability to use it in various situations and contexts" (Wiggins and McTighe 353). This focus on application is important. The key understandings from chapter one gain meaning when teachers apply them to cultivate a learner's stance. Teaching toward understanding enables teacher candidates to study how, why, where, and when a teacher can develop teacher-inquiry.

Because learners must try to understand to gain an understanding, teacher education contexts provide an ideal space to wrestle with these concepts. WTEs can use assignments, instructional units, or entire courses to foster the development of these two key understandings. An important part of this process is ensuring that the learners participate in a meaning-making process or what Wiggins and McTighe call "uncovering." Wiggins and McTighe propose the term "uncoverage" to contrast with the idea of "coverage." Coverage, as defined by Wiggins and McTighe, is a teacher-led presentation of concepts. When "covering" a concept there is little room for learners' exploration or investigation of the concept. The teacher has already come to the

conclusions, and coverage is the action of sharing these conclusions. Uncoverage, on the other hand, is an active, meaning-making process.

This design concept is pretty easy to understand, but it suggests potentially challenging roles for WTEs and teacher candidates to assume. When learners are "uncovering" a concept, they know it is their job to grapple with the concept. When WTEs utilize an "uncovering" approach, they know it is their job to respect the learners' processes. WTEs can guide, for sure, but they shouldn't provide already determined answers to the concepts that they want teacher candidates to transfer. For example, I utilize an uncovering approach when helping pre-service teachers understand the different kinds of student-teacher relationships that are formed through written feedback. Rather than defining these relationship possibilities for students through a lecture (covering), I ask students to try on different response strategies each week when responding to their peers' writing. These response assignments allow teacher candidates to test their assumptions and raise important questions about the contextual nature of teaching. My goal is for these attempts at understanding to lead to an informed understanding about the relationship between teacher feedback and student-teacher relationships. In the case of developing teacher-inquiry, teachers utilizing "uncovering" can't simply share their own process for teacher-inquiry. Teacher candidates must explore these concepts for themselves.

To help teacher candidates wrestle with the idea that learning teacher-inquiry is a cumulative process, WTEs can integrate or utilize assignments that require leaners to reexamine teaching and learning experiences. For example, I ask teacher candidates to critically examine an important teaching or learning moment from their past or present

experiences as teachers or students. In this assignment—which serves as the cumulative

course project— teacher candidates engage in a specific writing process. They narrate

the experience, reflect upon that narration, reexamine scholarship that is relevant to their

interpretation of the moment, and then articulate the most important pedagogical beliefs

that are present in their interpretation of the moment. This assignment serves the purpose

of helping teacher candidates investigate scholarship and articulate their emerging

pedagogical beliefs, key programmatic objectives. But as we work toward this

assignment through smaller writing assignments all semester and workshop these pieces

in process, teacher candidates have the opportunity see and critique their frames for

inquiry. As students work with elements of narrative (plot, character, setting, etc.) in

their pieces, they become more aware of the ways they have framed and understood their

most important pedagogical questions. This provides the opportunity, then, to see how

they might revise their current framings. As they draft their projects, in other words, they

have the opportunity to revise their problem-posing and problem-solving. This happens

is a variety of ways. Sometimes students use this space to reexamine an important

moment from their own literacy history. Studying the narrative voice and perspective

that drives their pieces often allows students to see the perspective they have privileged.

This awareness, then, provides an opportunity for revision and a path for clearer problem-

posing. Students have also used this space to explore their work with secondary students.

Many of my students, for example, choose to write about a moment from the field

experience that accompanies the course. In these projects, I have observed students

defining their most important commitments and practices, as well as figuring out how

these commitments are related to one another. Students have successfully identified the

roots of the pedagogical problem they want to address as teachers and tensions that they will need to negotiate as they work through their problem-solving. Across all of the projects, students use narrative analysis to listen to student and scholarly voices and to account for their own voices. Through class discussion and small group work, the classroom community participates in meta-conversations about learning to inquire in and through experience.

These smaller assignments and group work, typical features of a methods course or pedagogy seminar, are also important ways teacher candidates develop an understanding of teachers as knowledge-makers. One significant way to help teacher candidates come to see themselves as knowledge makers is to structure a course's assigned reading around debates that surround the teaching of English. While WTEs and teacher education programs surely have particular beliefs and practices that they want to promote, we must also be mindful of the opportunities we do or do not provide for teacher candidates to examine their *own* pedagogical commitments. In my own teaching, I am deeply committed to promoting a process-based approach to the teaching of writing and asserting the importance of social justice pedagogy, and I want teacher candidates to share these commitments. But I also know that teacher candidates need to wrestle with rather than adopt these commitments. Consequently, I select course readings that help teacher candidates see and investigate these important debates. They read scholars arguing for different approaches and formulate their own informed position. Within these conversations, we pay attention to the ways each scholar frames the pedagogical problem or question and how that framing is related to the solutions that are articulated by the scholar. When we examine articles that discuss the role of film in the English

classroom, for example, we can see how these arguments wrestle with competing beliefs about student motivation. While some scholars rely upon external motivation—using film as a reward—others stress the importance of fostering students' intrinsic motivation by using film as a tool for learning. Conversations such as these can help teacher candidates expect to look for and interrogate the relationship between problem-posing and problem-solving when studying and applying scholarship to their teaching. They also have the opportunity to see how all practices have theoretical underpinnings, whether or not they are acknowledged. As teacher candidates place their own insights in relationship with the scholarship—in their work for the course or work with the students they teach—they practice making pedagogical knowledge. Other opportunities, such as undergraduate research or participation in local or national professional conferences, can additionally help teacher candidates grapple with their relationship to pedagogical knowledge.

Practicing Learning Activities

In the prior chapters, I argued developing goals for teacher development, exploring tensions involved in interpreting teaching moments, and negotiating stakeholder positions are activities that teachers can use to enact a learner's stance. Here I discuss how creating opportunities for these activities in teacher education courses allows teacher candidates to begin practicing a learner's stance. Again, WTEs can create opportunities for these activities in a variety of ways. It may also be the case that WTEs are already helping teacher candidates engage in these activities; we can now extend this work by additionally focusing on inquiry development. Below, I share a few ideas for each of the learning activities that were discussed throughout the dissertation. In

highlighting a few possibilities below, I hope to illustrate the flexibility and importance of this pedagogical aim.

The teachers in this study underscored the importance of creating self-defined goals for professional development. While teacher candidates, may be early in their teaching careers, they can begin to examine how different goals for professional development shape a teacher's approach to teacher-inquiry. The four goals presented in chapter two can be used as a starting point for these conversations. As teacher candidates identify their most important pedagogical questions, they can begin to articulate how their pursuit of these questions may shift under different goals for professional development. In both teaching my methods courses for secondary teachers and mentoring GTAs, for example, I meet teacher candidates who desire to craft individualized instruction while also supporting the learning for the classroom community. The four goals from this study can serve as a heuristic for examining—either formally or informally—their goals for attending to this question and how these goals will offer different kinds of practice engaging in problem-posing and problem-solving. As teacher candidates plan or begin to work toward addressing pedagogical questions such as this one, WTEs can make more explicit the ways that particular professional goals will help sharpen different teacher-inquiry abilities.

List-making may be a particularly helpful way to make this connection explicit. For example, teacher candidates can list the tasks they would assign themselves to work toward addressing their own pedagogical question. Next, teacher candidates can determine which professional development goal the task seems to serve. As Table 5.1 illustrates, this self-evaluation can help teacher candidates can see how they might need

or want to stretch themselves in other areas of inquiry practice. For practicing secondary

teachers and GTAs, teachers who may be asked to work toward professional goals

already determined by their institution, this exercise may enable them to see how these

expectations can contribute to their overall growth as an inquirer. This same explicit

discussion about developing goals for professional development can also be used in

group settings. As groups of teacher candidates reflect upon the questions they are

pursing and methods for addressing these questions, they can look for the places that may

be under-developed in their inquiry process.

Table 5.1: Developing Goals for Teacher Development

Goal	Questions for Categorizing Teacher-Learning Tasks	Inquiry Practice
Mastering Teaching	Does this task help me better understand the end-in-view? *Example:* Completing a close analysis of student work	Problem-Solving
Making an Impact	Does this task help me better understand the teaching and learning situation? *Example:* Observing students within or beyond the classroom.	Problem-Posing
Refining Pedagogy	Does this task help me better understand the nature of writing instruction? *Example:* Preparing a professional conference presentation.	Relationship between Problem-Posing and Problem-Solving
Sustaining an Engaged Teaching Life	Does this task help me better understand my relationship to my professional life? *Example:* Meeting a colleague for a conversation.	Relationship to Teacher-Inquiry

The teachers in this study also illustrated the importance of exploring tensions

involved in the work of interpretation. Each of these tensions—examining teaching;

constructing a professional self; and navigating formal education—are all related to how

we view and participate in our local teaching contexts. Each of these tensions shapes our

experiences in these teaching communities and therefore shapes the teaching stories that

are integral to our inquiries. In teacher education contexts, one of the most important

ways we can foster purposeful use of these tensions is to approach the classroom

community as a community of practice. Moving beyond the traditional teacher-student

classroom construction can help each member of the classroom participate as a colleague

in a teaching community. Making explicit how these negotiations can be like the

tensions teachers face in English departments offers teacher candidates practice exploring

these tensions for the purpose of cultivating a learner's stance.

For many WTEs, this pedagogical aim may easily build from learning experiences

that are already part of the course. One of my colleagues, for example, foregrounds the

work of developing leadership skills in her methods course for pre-service teachers.

Through self-evaluations, course reading, and reflective writings, teacher candidates in

her course study their leadership strengths and weaknesses as they become apparent

throughout their work in her course. This WTE is already asking students to pay

attention to how they are relating to their peers in the course. Cultivating a learner's

stance, though, can deepen this existing work by helping teacher candidates see how

these relationships additionally shape their experiences of teacher-inquiry. WTEs can

expand further upon this work by giving teacher candidates opportunities to learn with

one another. Through permanent reading or writing groups or observational projects,

students can interrogate these important tensions involved in interpretation.

Practicing colleagueship may also open opportunities for students to negotiate

multiple stakeholder positions. As students attend to their responsibilities as department

members in the classroom community, they may notice tension among other roles, such

as college student, employee, or caretaker. For example, in a recent section of one of my

methods courses, I challenged a pre-service teacher to explore the relationship between her role in our classroom community and her role as an alumnus of the high school where we were worked with high school students. This thinking seemed to be difficult for her because she felt a stronger membership with her high school community than her collegiate community. Her ethos as a teacher in our partnership with the high school students appeared to be built upon her felt sense of membership in the high school. This was an important opportunity, then, for her to consider how teaching is individual *and* community work. I believed she came to this understanding as her collaborations with her collegiate peers developed over the semester. I could observe her becoming a more intentional listener and contributor.

GTAs may be better positioned to practice this kind of negotiation, since they will often already have the full responsibility of teaching students. A GTA studying literature, for example, may feel torn between her belief that first year students need to study excellent published writers and her responsibility to keep student writing at the center of a composition course. Where such negotiations already exist, WTEs can cue teacher candidates to consider how these responsibilities shape their tools and purposes for teacher-inquiry.

For many teacher candidates, however, these negotiation opportunities will not yet be available. WTEs can use the teacher education context to illuminate the notion of stakeholders and help teacher candidates practice listening rhetorically across these perspectives. This thinking can be facilitated in a variety of ways. For example, recently in a curricular design course, I asked teacher candidates to create a presentation on a curricular debate that deserved consideration. To prepare for this project, teacher

candidates needed to complete research on the perspectives of multiple educational

stakeholders and compose an analysis paper that demonstrated their work to rhetorically

listen across these perspectives. The presentation challenged them to create an activity

that would help the class consider these multiple perspectives. One student successfully

created a role-playing activity where we acted out the different roles that he assigned to

us. As we debated the consequences of a school's use of technology from the

perspectives of high school students, school board members, parents, teachers, and more,

we were able to study our relationship with these kinds of negotiations. We, of course,

laughed quite a bit when we crafted humorous responses based upon our assumptions of

these responsibilities—the helicopter parent, the too stern principal, etc. But in our

debriefing conversations, we were able to study how and why we attend to the

responsibilities within other educational roles. We were able to notice the perspectives

we easily listen to and the ones that we need to better understand. Similar thinking can

be sponsored through interview projects or panel presentations from local community

members (curriculum directors, principals, teachers, etc.). The goal in these assignments

should be to listen carefully across these perspectives, thereby preparing teacher

candidates to do so in the future, too.

The Long Now

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued a learner's stance can help us rethink

the work that we're already doing as WTEs and teachers of writing. While calls for

teacher development can be perceived as calls for additional work, my definition of

teacher-inquiry asks writing teachers and teacher candidates to pay attention to the

pedagogical questions that they have already identified as important. Teachers and

teacher candidates are already engaging in problem-posing and problem-solving when they pose and pursue their pedagogical questions. Further, teachers and teacher candidates may already be engaging in the kinds of learning activities I outlined in chapters 2,3, and 4. Cultivating a learner's stance asks teachers and teacher candidates to pay attention differently to what they are already doing. Admittedly, teachers need intellectual space for this thinking. But it's important to note that this thinking supports their inquiry. The insights to be gained, in other words, feed back into the process of framing and addressing their pedagogical questions.

Addressing our perceptions of time might also help us come to see the value and necessity of cultivating a learner's stance.   As Frankie Condon has explained, we can come to see how our present work as teachers of writing is always part of the past and future. Focusing on the "Long Now," a term she borrows from Brian Enoc, we can pay attention to the present in a new way. According to Enoc, "'Now' is never just a moment. The Long Now is the recognition that the precise moment you're in grows out of the past and is a seed for the future. The longer your sense of Now, the more past and future it includes" (126). The Long Now helps us see how investing in a learner's stance acknowledges the past and works toward the future. Like most teachers, I am busy. I'm working to be an engaged family and community member in addition to my work as a teacher-scholar. So I am highly aware of the fact that there are only 24 hours in a day. The Long Now reminds all of us, though, that we are we are participants in a living field. We are a part of what it means to teach writing in this moment. When we grow our understandings of teacher-inquiry, we acknowledge the frames for inquiry that are already at work and strengthen them for future teacher-inquiry.

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