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ABSTRACT

Quiltmaking teachers are working in a non-credentialed environment where students choose to participate in classes and workshops as a leisure activity, selecting a form of nonformal learning to enrich their personal informal learning. These teachers have followed their own journey in quiltmaking and embarked on another journey to teach others. However, in pursuing their teaching careers, they spend significant amounts of time on the business of quilting and find their own quiltmaking impacted by the needs of their businesses. In their own quiltmaking though, they have a relationship with their materials through the act of creating knowledge in physical form which is as influenced by their materials as by their own prior knowledge.

The purpose of this study is to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn and develop their specialization in quiltmaking and to understand how these quiltmaking teachers learn to navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops, and shows in order to pursue their teaching careers. I used actor-network theory, recreation specializations, and communities of practice as theoretical frameworks. I focused on individuals teaching at least one quiltmaking class in the eight counties identified as Southcentral Pennsylvania during 2016. My data included 92 biographies of 65 of teachers and 14 semi-structured interviews, recruited from an initial list of more than 80 identified teachers.

Themes from qualitative content analysis of the biographies and constant comparative analysis of the semi-structured interviews fall broadly into three categories: the quilting journey, the business of teaching, and quilters’ relationship with their materials.

This study is at the intersection of adult education and leisure studies. It contributes to the learning on teaching in nonformal education, specifically in teaching in a non-credentialed leisure environment.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I have spent most of my life creating. Since I was barely in school, I have stitched, knit, crocheted, and sewed, while dabbling in many other crafts. I always return to fiber, switching between a cross-stitch piece, an afghan, or a hat as circumstances permit. I began quilting in the last 10 years or so, building on my knowledge of sewing and influenced by friends. Yet, despite working as a museum educator developing professional development programs for adult learners, I have only formally taught my hobby a handful of times. While active in the Embroiderers’ Guild of America for almost 15 years—before beginning my doctoral program!—and even serving as president of my chapter, I was not recruited by the program chair to teach programs. I only taught when I was organizing the year’s programs, and there was not someone else available to lead a specific program. Having served as president suggests that I was viewed as an integral part of the group, at its center organizationally, but I was apparently not viewed as a teacher, so perhaps not viewed as an expert. In this type of hobby group, are participation and expertise different? How are teachers chosen?

This chapter introduces an interpretive study of quiltmaking teachers who lead organized classes, conducted in Southcentral Pennsylvania, which examines the development of their quiltmaking expertise and teaching careers. I conceive of this as a two-step process - learning quiltmaking with sufficient expertise to teach someone else, and then being recognized as a teacher by the community—though I make no assumptions as to how quickly teaching follows learning.

This chapter provides an overview of literature on learning in quiltmaking, teaching nonformal education, and teaching quiltmaking. It continues with the problem statement,
research questions, theoretical frameworks, methodology, assumptions and limitations, and finally, concludes with definitions of terms used in this study.

**Background**

This study of quilting teachers falls at the intersection of adult education and leisure studies, in that it looks at individuals teaching learners who are voluntarily pursuing a hobby—in this case, quiltmaking. Within the pursuit of their hobby, quilters can choose various ways to learn, as will be explored briefly below and in more depth in Chapter 2. This study focuses on organized classes, which is only one way of learning. In this study, “class” will be used to represent any organized, in-person, group learning activity which requires an advanced registration and a monetary fee, in order to identify the activity as one which requires planning, intention, and commitment. Since quiltmaking is a hands-on activity, those who teach quiltmaking classes must also themselves quilt. However, they have changed their role in the community from one of participant-learner to teacher. They may be making at least part of their livelihood from what was previously a hobby.

**Learning in the Quiltmaking Community**

There were an estimated 7 to 10 million quilters in 2017, according to the Quilting in America™ survey (The Quilting Company, 2017), currently sponsored by The Quilting Company, a quiltmaking media publisher, and Quilts, Inc., a quilt trade show producer, with support from several other industry companies. This is a significant decrease from the estimated 16 million quilters in the 2014 survey (Creative Crafts Group, 2014), which was sponsored by Creative Crafts Group, a publisher, and Quilts, Inc., a quilt show and trade show producer. Even with the decrease, these quilters all learned to quilt, somehow, and many continue to learn as they develop new skills or try new techniques. There are a number of ways to learn to quilt: from a family member or friend, as part of a cultural community, on one’s own, or by taking a
Research suggests that most quilters learn as adults (Cerny, Eicher & DeLong, 1993; Crew & James, 1996; Davis, 1982; Dickie, 2003; King, 1997; Kucko, 2003; Langellier, 1991). Many use classes and workshops as a primary way to learn (Barry, 2012; Bristow, 2013; Davis, 1982; Dickie, 2003; Hall-Patton, 1989; King, 1997; Tracz, 2008b; Woods, 1993) though research has not explored why classes are so popular.

Classes are offered at quilt shops and quilt shows, and are also proliferating online. Moreover, quilt guilds hold workshops, as well as offer programs and lectures (Cerny, 1992; Cerny, Eicher & DeLong, 1993; Dickie, 2003; Stalp, 2007). Who teaches these classes? There is no generally recognized credentialing body, as there is in the formal education system, or recognized credentials, as there are in higher education and other informal learning communities such as the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (https://www.rscds.org/article/teaching-certificate-2).

Quiltmakers and quilting groups have been studied by academics, scattered throughout many disciplines, including adult education (Tracz, 2008b), anthropology (Griffis, 2005), folklore (Klassen, 2014), history (Rake, 2000), human development (Cheek & Piercy, 2004), sociology (Bristow, 2013; Hall-Patton, 2004; King, 1997; Stalp, 2007), occupational science (Dickey, 2003), and textile studies (Cerney, Eicher, & DeLong, 1993; Crews & James, 1996; Humphrey, 2010). This literature focuses in two areas: identification of the types of learning activities that occur in quilt guilds (Dickie, 2003) and the role of these activities in developing the participant’s self-identity as a quilter (Cerny, 1992; Cerny, Eicher & DeLong, 1993). Dickie (2003) identifies types of learning within a quilt guild, which include making a specific quilt, how to use tools, quilt types and history, aesthetics of quilts, general quilting skills, being a
member of the culture, identifying as a quilter, and challenging oneself. This learning can be accomplished through a variety of activities which can be individually-based or within a group, structured or more informal.

Two of Dickie’s learning areas relate specifically to developing one’s self-identity as a quiltmaker and also to becoming part of the quilting community. Cerny, Eicher, and DeLong (1993) also identify these two goals as a primary outcome of participation in quilt guild activities. Guild members become part of the community through Show & Tell at each meeting, a ritualized activity where members exhibit a completed project and talk about it (Cerny, Eicher & DeLong, 1993; Langellier, 1992). Through this sharing, participants receive recognition for their work from their peers, building both an identity as a quiltmaker and a sense of belonging to the group. By attending guild talks, retreats, and workshops, members learn about different aspects of quilting, but also discover which styles or techniques resonate with them, which also develops their identity as a quiltmaker.

Although some of these guild activities consist of informal sharing between peers, other activities are organized talks or workshops offered by a presenter or teacher. That teacher may be a member of the guild or may have traveled from a distance to teach. With individuals belonging to multiple guilds, easy communication between guilds and the promotional opportunities available through websites and blogs, guilds can share information about teachers. These teachers are not limited to only presenting programs and workshops at guilds. Quilt shops, quilt shows, retreats, and even cruises offer classes, though most research on learning in quilting has been located in guilds. By selecting these classes, quiltmakers are choosing an organized activity to support their own learning. Since these classes are outside the formal education system, they are an example of nonformal education.
Teaching in Nonformal Education

Nonformal education is defined as organized learning activities that take place outside of the formal education system (Taylor, 2012), which in the United States includes the primary, secondary and higher education systems. Rogers (2004) conceives of nonformal education as falling on a continuum of learner control between formal education, with little learner control, and participatory education, with complete learner control. Taylor (2012) argues that a significant amount of nonformal education occurs in public places such as museums, libraries, parks, and other cultural institutions which are also sites of individuals’ informal learning.

There have been studies of those who teach through tours or clinics in some of these otherwise informal learning environments (Grenier, 2009; Taylor, 2005, 2012). Museum docents learn through formal training by the museum, supplemented by informal and incidental learning on their own involving independent reading and research, as well as by observing other docents (Grenier, 2009). The clinic leaders at consumer education sites, such as Lowe’s and Home Depot do-it-yourself (DIY) clinics, are employees hired by the store for their prior, practical experience, so they often have little or no teaching experience prior to being assigned to teach the clinics (Taylor, 2005). Presenters rely on their personal experience and the attendees’ needs, rather than the corporately-prepared script. Taylor (2005) argues that these presenters develop their beliefs about teaching from their own experience with school, combined with the contextual factors surrounding presenting a drop-in clinic in the middle of a store.

Although quilting classes, museum tours, and DIY clinics would have some elements in common, specifically the visual nature of each and, ideally, a learner-centered focus, I would argue that there is a significant difference. Tours and clinics are marketed based on content, rather than the teacher. These educators are practicing under the auspices of a formal entity.
which either trains them or offers a suggested curriculum as part of an ongoing employment or volunteer relationship. In contrast, many quiltmaking classes and workshops hosted by a quilt guild or show are a one-time contractual arrangement with the teacher, often marketed through a teacher biography as well as the content. Through this information, participants are aware of the teacher’s own participation in quiltmaking and demonstrated expertise in the shared hobby, before signing up for the class or workshop.

**Teaching Quiltmaking**

In reviewing the literature on quiltmaking, only two studies (Schmitt, 2005; Tracz, 2008a) focus directly on quiltmaking teachers. Other studies (Barry, 2012; Langellier, 1991; Percy & Cheek, 2004; and Tracz, 2008b) address some aspect of teaching quiltmaking, such as types of teaching or who might be teaching. Tracz (2008a) and Schmitt (2005) both focus on quiltmaking teachers, but use different enough methods that it is difficult to find common themes, beyond the role of technology in developing or maintaining a teacher’s reputation.

Tracz (2008a) found that technology played a role in increasing the number of nominees for the Instructor of the Year award given by *Professional Quilter*, an industry publication. However, individuals who had teaching backgrounds in other subjects, prior to teaching quiltmaking, were more likely to win. The Instructor of the Year award may not be representative of teaching skill as, while anyone can nominate someone for the award, *Professional Quilter*’s selection committee uses a nominee-prepared dossier which does not include teaching observations or materials, to select the winner (Tracz, 2008a).

Schmitt (2005) interviewed four individuals who she identifies as art quilters who teach. Her participants were professional artists prior to teaching aspects of quiltmaking. She does not particularly delve into how they began teaching but does state, “each of the teachers with whom I
met added teaching to their occupation which, among other things, served to supplement their income” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 49) as artists. Three of her four participants identified their teaching niches—one is “sought after by students wishing to learn design” (p. 50); the second for the environment she creates to help students “loosen up, both artistically and emotionally” (p. 50); the third teaches a specific technique, about which she has also published a book. Schmitt’s most significant finding is that teaching—both the planning and administrative side and the actual travel—takes away from her participants’ time to create their own art. One participant specifically noted that repeatedly teaching the same material can also have an impact on the teacher’s creativity in their own work.

While Tracz (2008b) did not focus on quiltmaking teachers, she did learn what quiltmaking students participating in classes view as successful teacher behaviors through a quantitative survey. She found that the five most important instructor behaviors were “1. Explaining directions clearly, 2. Giving a visual demonstration, 3. Providing one to one help to participants, 4. Sharing a technique tip and 5. Creating a welcoming environment” (Tracz, 2008b, p. 87). Participants preferred to learn by watching a demonstration and then trying the technique themselves, though they wanted written materials to support the demonstrations.

Other work (Barry, 2012; Cheek & Piercy, 2004; Langellier, 1991) touches on peer teaching in quiltmaking communities, focusing on the social relationships involved. Cheek and Piercy’s (2004) research with Appalachian, Amish, and Mormon quilters found that, in these particular cultures, almost half of their participants were “involved in teaching and mentoring other quilters” (p. 333). These quilters, usually older, gained increased status and respect as well as developed new social networks teaching and interacting with other quilters. Barry (2012) found a variety of examples of informal teaching “within the [Tall Pines Quilt Guild]’s social
of education: a) the situated learning environment provided through the Guild events, b) peer teaching through narrative, c) mentoring, d) modeling, e) an ethic of responsibility to one another, and f) interpersonal relationships that are used as a resource between members.” (p. 92-93). Her research was sited in a quilt guild, with observations at monthly meetings, workshops, and open stitching events, but focused on the social learning, even in the workshop she attended. She observed participants advising each other on color choices, sharing tips and techniques, and other information as the need arose.

Likewise, Langellier (1991) also found that many quilters taught their peers, in more formal situations, at least in the late 1980s during her research. She writes

What becomes visible in the survey sample is the extent to which quilting is taught among quilting peers, a marker of accessibility to knowledge about quiltmaking. Although no quantitative item directly queried teaching, numerous quilters wrote that they teach quilting, especially within the local adult education programs, but also in quilters’ own homes, to children in schools, within the University of Maine Cooperative Extension programming, and as part of the Pine Tree Way, the PTQG teacher certification program whose teachers travel throughout the state (p. 43).

Thirty years later, the guild no longer runs a certification program. It currently lists members who will teach, but notes that ‘listing’ does not constitute an endorsement (http://www.mainequilts.org/maine_teachers.htm). Quiltmakers, therefore, appear to be very willing to share their knowledge with other quiltmakers in their own groups, and across the broader quilting community.

In summary, there is little study of those quiltmakers who teach through organized workshops and classes. For individuals to take a class or workshop, they have to sign up in
advance and pay a fee. This implies a level of commitment and interest well-beyond just asking a peer for help, which suggests that students believe that they will learn enough from the class, presumably from the teacher, to be an effective use of time and money. This study focuses on quiltmaking teachers, in part, because there is no credentialing system for quiltmaking teachers so anyone can, theoretically, become a quiltmaking teacher.

**Problem Statement**

Quiltmaking is a leisure activity in which individuals participate voluntarily. They choose their learning activities voluntarily. For quiltmaking teachers, there is no credentialing system to act as either a barrier, limiting those who can teach (Collins, 1977; Weeden, 2002), or an entry point for new teachers through a third-party verifying skills (Carter, 2005).

The National Quilting Association (NQA), which served as a national umbrella group for some quilt guilds for 46 years until it dissolved at the end of 2015, offered a Certified Teacher credential through application and assessment but with no training component (www.nqaquilts.org). The main benefit of certification appeared to be the ability to teach at NQA’s own quilt shows; there were only two NQA-certified teachers in Pennsylvania as of 2015. The Embroiderer’s Guild of America likewise offers an assessment-based Certified Teacher program, with quiltmaking as one of thirteen techniques for certification (www.egausa.org). The American Quilting Society, known for hosting some of the largest national quilt shows, does not offer any teacher certification programs (www.americanquilter.com). Several individuals offer certification to teach their proprietary tools or methods, such as Deb Tucker’s Studio 180 Design (www.studio180design.net) or Judy Niemeyer’s Quiltworx (www.quiltworx.com), as a way to extend their brands beyond the teaching capacity of the founder.
Quiltworx.com ventured into a new concept in our company to help answer a growing demand for our teaching, which involved Certifying Instructors for our teaching techniques and patterns…the program has been a tremendous success and has helped us reach so many shops and students we never would have been able to get to on our own! (http://www.quiltworx.com/instructors-us/).

However, Quiltworx also notes that individuals do not have to be certified to teach most of their patterns and methods. Consequently, with no overarching credentialing system, a quiltmaking teacher is anyone whom students are willing to pay for an organized class or workshop.

So, in this community which is entirely voluntary, how do individuals become teachers? How do they develop expertise in quiltmaking, when studies of other forms of leisure and recreation (Kuentzel & Heberlein 2006, 2008; Scott & Lee, 2010) suggest that few individuals truly specialize in one activity? How do they come to be recognized as teachers, if theoretically at least, anyone can become a teacher?

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn and develop their specialization in quiltmaking and 2) to understand how these quiltmaking teachers learn to navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops and shows in order to pursue their teaching career. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their learning journey to their areas of expertise?
2. How have quiltmaking teachers chosen to pursue their career?
3. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials?
Theoretical Frameworks

This study is informed by two theoretical frameworks, recreational specialization and communities of practice, and guided by an actor-network theory approach. Teaching quiltmaking is a sociomaterial activity, in that “the material is entangled in meaning, not assumed to be separate from it” (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuk, 2011, p. vi). The tools, fabric, patterns, technology and other objects involved in quiltmaking are as crucial to the development of knowledge as interactions with other people. Actor-network theory provides the broad understanding that the quiltmaking teacher’s knowledge is a network effect, or interaction, of the teacher and a variety of other animate and inanimate actors, such as all prior quilting projects, other teachers, students, tools, designs, materials, and learning resources. The recreational specialization framework examines skill development, activity, expertise, and changing participation in a leisure activity. Communities of practice are groups which share a common purpose, identity, and history of learning. Within the communities of practice model, the concept of legitimate peripheral participation explains the process by which a newcomer to the group moves from the fringes of the group to the center of the group (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In this case, that means the process of moving from learner to teacher. This section will explore each of these frameworks briefly, with an expanded discussion of each in Chapter 2.

Actor-Network Theory

Actor-network theory (ANT) proposes that knowledge is an effect created by the constant negotiations of connections within a group of entities which is usually conceived of as a network (Fenwick, et al., 2011). The network is heterogeneous, that is, made up of people, material objects, and depending on the context, other living, non-human entities (Law, 1992). In the case of quilters, knowledge is developed by a quilter creating projects—an interaction itself
between the quilter, fabric, a sewing machine or hand-needle, thread, directions, a teacher if the project is in a class context—as well as talking with other quilters; reading websites, blogs, books and magazines; watching YouTube videos or DVDs, online classes, and television shows; anyone who may have taught them in the past; and viewing other quilts. One of ANT’s primary concepts, symmetry, requires each of these entities be viewed having the same potential influence as any other entity within the network, rather than humans automatically having primacy over inanimate objects (Fenwick, et al., 2011). An individual’s expertise is therefore a network effect, as the product of interactions with other people and things.

Using an ANT approach to the study of quiltmaking, quiltmaking knowledge and skill is only created when it takes a material form (Law, 1992). It is created by the interconnections within the network. The connections are made through the act of translation, so named because as the entities negotiate their connection, they act upon each other, changing both. In the interaction between a quilter and piece of fabric, for example, the quilter is cutting and sewing the fabric, visibly changing its appearance. However, working with the fabric also changes the quilter, who may learn tricks about working with that specific kind of fabric or how to sew two triangles of the fabric together with precision, for example.

A network may disappear and be represented by the action which it affects, if the network is perceived to function as one entity, which is called punctualization (Law, 1992). While Law gives the example of the human body, which we often think of as a singular unit rather than a network of many other networks—the digestion system, the circulatory system, the nervous system, the skeleton—which function within their own system as well as interacting with each other. Law (1992) notes that punctualization can apply to any network which “can…be more or less taken for granted” (p. 385), or simplified. In the case of quiltmaking, a sewing machine can
be treated as a simplified entity to reduce complexity, though it is itself a network of machinery, power, thread, needle, and the conglomerations of people and machinery which made not only the particular machine but the history of people and companies which invented and improved the design and the systems which provide the power to operate it. If a researcher is studying the process of creating an object for the creator’s learning, it is convenient to just consider the sewing machine a single entity to analyze its role in the particular process being examined. One of the challenges of the ANT framework is establishing boundaries since each entity in the network being studied is itself an effect of other networks (Fenwick, et al., 2011).

By focusing on these connections and what can be negotiated at a very micro-level, an ANT approach explores the minutiae of learning to trace interactions between actors. In education research, this can mean following an item, such as a particular piece of paperwork, as it travels through a network of actors or asking a person to describe each action they take in a process (Fenwick, et al., 2011). The “focus is upon understanding what things and people do, not what they mean” (p. 123), which brings a very different lens than most qualitative research which focuses on the meaning of lived experience.

There are many variants of actor-network theory though, such that scholars using ANT do not consider it a theory, using the term “ANT” instead for convenience to refer to a group of tools and approaches (Fenwick, et al., 2011). After all, if ANT proposes that knowledge is an effect of an ongoing, constantly changing series of connections and interactions, then ANT itself can’t be static, as it is will have to adjust and change with every scholar using it, or every context studied with its framework.

Actor-network theory, which posits that knowledge is a network effect, that is the result of the interactions of all of the people and things an individual interacts with, therefore provides
a way to think about all of the different people, communities, projects, and prior learning which have created individual quiltmaking teachers as they exist at the time of the study. To examine the choices and opportunities which teachers utilized to create their knowledge and direct it towards developing enough expertise to teach others, the study also uses the recreation specialization framework which examines hobbyists’ participation in a specific activity over time.

**Recreation Specialization**

Bryan (1977, 1979) originally proposed that recreation participants could be classified based on equipment needed, skills used, and settings preferred, and then placed on a continuum of recreation behavior from novice to specialist. He postulated that participants moved through this continuum over time, that is, that all participants developed skills and became more specialized, the longer they participated in the activity. However, research has shown that progression to specialization is uncommon (Bryan, 2000; Scott & Godbey, 1994; Scott & Shafer, 2001a). Scott and Shafer (2001b) argue that research into specialization must acknowledge Bryan’s original conception of progression as a developmental process, that is that progression is “a process that entails a progression in how recreationists participate in and view activity over time” (p. 357). Scott and Shafer theorize that most recreation participants may be shifting to related activities rather than specializing.

Given that research has found that the progression trajectory is uncommon amongst a myriad of other leisure trajectories, Backlund and Kuentzel (2013) propose thinking of recreation specialization more broadly as a process of leisure investments rather than a continuum. They suggest that participants change their leisure investments which Backlund and Kuentzel categorize as diversification, limitations, routines, and life-course events, resulting in changing
leisure capital, over time. These changes can lead to progression, maintenance, or attrition within the recreation activity. This framework conceives of leisure capital based on Bourdieu’s (1986) conception of cultural capital which exists in three states—embodied, objectified, and institutional. Backlund and Kuentzel (2013) describe embodied capital as “the skills, resource preferences, and psychological commitment developed through participation” (p. 295). Objectified capital is the material and travel costs of participation while institutional capital is any training or certification which may be part of the activity.

Participants build or lose leisure capital through four types of leisure investment: leisure diversification, leisure limitations, leisure routines, and life-course events (Backlund & Kuentzel, 2013). Leisure diversification is participation in multiple activities. Leisure limitations may by physical, psychological, financial, geographic, or socioeconomic. Leisure routine is the ongoing role of leisure in the participant’s daily life. A life-course change can be related to marital status, family composition, employment, or health, among the many things that can impact a participant’s life. Changes in these leisure investments lead to changes in the participant’s leisure capital, which can change their participation trajectory.
For example, a quilter may have been deeply involved with quilling for a number of years, participating in a quilt guild and taking classes. Upon having a child, the quilter’s daily routine changes dramatically, reducing the amount of time available to quilt or attend guild meetings, leading to less participation in the hobby and a potential decrease in skills over time.

For quilters to become teachers, they have to have the expertise resulting from their specialization in quilting. However, other quilters also have to recognize them as experts. Legitimate periphery participation provides a framework to explore how individuals become recognized as part of their communities of practice.
Communities of Practice and Legitimate Peripheral Participation

The community of practice model emerged from studies of apprenticeships, where those new to the work begin with little knowledge, but then gradually gain knowledge, through mastering different tasks within the larger process. It is “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). The group agrees on a common purpose—or joint enterprise—that they all participate in, such as quilting. Participants are mutually engaged, so not just merely present but “included in what matters” (Wenger, 1998, p.74). Finally, the group must have a common understanding of their practice, a shared repertoire. This understanding includes how everyone does a task as well as what tools to use. The group’s shared repertoire of the practice can change over time, creating a learning history within the group (Wenger, 1998).

When individuals join the community of practice, they are on the edge of the community, on the periphery. In an apprenticeship context, they are novices with no knowledge of the trade. In a leisure context, new members may have extensive knowledge of the skill but are novices to the particular community’s shared repertoire and engagement. Members become more central to the community, moving from the periphery to the center, over time with participation. In an apprenticeship setting, this often means initially observing the practice of others, then taking on some aspects of the work, and then more skilled work (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In some communities, these levels are marked by gaining knowledge milestones which then allow formal participation in certain rituals of the practice (Merriam, Courtney, & Baumgartner, 2003).

Because communities of practice evolve in a variety of settings, people can be involved in multiple communities of practice simultaneously (Wenger, 1998). For example, in a workplace, an employee can be in a community of practice with others performing the same
function at their own company, but through union involvement or professional associations, also be in a community of practice with people doing the same job at other companies in the same geographic region or across the country. Hobby participants may belong to multiple groups. An individual who belongs to several quilt groups can connect those groups, expanding additional resources for learning, a position that Wenger identifies as a “broker” (Wenger, 1998). These various, interconnected communities can form a constellation of practice (Wenger, 1998) around the shared activity.

Given the sociomaterial nature of quilting, quilts serve as a “boundary object” (Wenger, 1998), which is an item multiple communities of practice recognize as a physical manifestation of their practice. A quilt is the sum of the quiltmaker’s knowledge at the time it was constructed. Other quilters will recognize that knowledge when they view the quilt.

These theoretical frameworks of actor-network theory, recreation specialization, and communities of practice will inform this qualitative study which will follow a basic interpretive research design.

**Overview of Research Design**

This study used a two-stage, basic qualitative study. Since the study explores quiltmaking teachers’ experiences, qualitative research, which is based on lived experiences, (Merriam, 2002) is an appropriate type of research. In particular, a basic qualitative study which focuses on participants’ experience is appropriate for an exploratory study such as this which seeks to identify and understand how and why quiltmaking teachers developed their expertise and then shared it through teaching. Data was collected in two stages.

In the first stage, I identified quilt guilds, quilt shops, and quilt shows in the eight counties considered Southcentral Pennsylvania: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin,
Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York. I selected the eight-county region of Southcentral Pennsylvania for several reasons. As a resident, I already had familiarity with the leisure quiltmaking community through my own experiences attending quilt shows and shopping at quilt stores. Consequently, I also knew that quiltmaking was popular in the region with at least two quilt shows offering classes, at least five quilt guilds, and many quilt shops. The also region includes Lancaster County, known for its Amish quilts since at least the 1970s (Schmucker, 2013), though the Amish communities’ greatest influence on leisure quiltmaking may be the availability of quality fabric.

From class and workshop listings for these venues, I identified individuals teaching during 2016 and collected biographies from the show’s or shop’s teacher listings. I then searched each teacher online for a teacher’s website and/or blog, collecting their biographies when available. I collected a total of 92 teacher biographies, finding 58 in shop and show teacher listings and the remaining 34 from individual websites or blogs. I then performed a qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2014) to identify themes in the biographies related to the research questions. Although the biographies appeared on websites or blogs, they did not contain images or links, other than a headshot or, in one case, images representing fabric collections which the teacher designed. Therefore, I did not perform any additional types of analysis on this data.

In the second stage, I recruited participants from this group of teachers, with a goal of three to four participants from each type of venue: quilt shop, quilt guild, quilt show, and any other type of venue. I sought maximal variation in the purposeful sample, and was able to interview one male teacher, one African-American teacher, one first-time teacher, one teacher
with a vendor certification, and one teacher associated with the Modern Quilt Guild which is thought to represent a younger-than-average demographic.

I used a total of fourteen interviews, which I recorded and transcribed. I analyzed the participant interviews, which were the main source of data as expected, using the constant comparative method of analysis. I coded interview transcripts using Nvivo for themes related to the research questions, looked for emerging themes, and returned to the data to reevaluate as needed. I grouped data which reveals similar ideas together to create themes (Creswell, 2013), in part connecting them to the literature and theory that informs the study, which Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe as “brainstorming about the data in order to identify meaning, then conceptualizing that meaning by assigning concepts to stand for what is being expressed” (p. 187). These themes, or categories, must “be exhaustive…be mutually exclusive…be as sensitive to the data as possible…be conceptually congruent” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 213). That is, each code should only fit into one category and must be supported by the data. There must be rich, thick description, drawn from the data, to support each category.

I provide a more thorough discussion of the research design, including a discussion of strategies for maintaining credibility and trustworthiness and issues surrounding informed consent, in Chapter 3.

**Significance**

This study has significance for both adult education and leisure studies. Although there have been studies of individuals who teach in public places which serve as sites of informal learning for participants, this research was based at museums, public parks, and other locations where the institution trained the teacher or provided a script. Individuals who teach at quilt shops may be in a similar situation to those leading a museum tour or presenting a home
improvement clinic, in that teaching may be part of an ongoing relationship with a particular quilt shop, those who teach at quilt guilds and shows are in a different situation. These venues hire teachers through a one-time contractual arrangement, so there is no ongoing relationship between teacher and venue. Without a credentialing system providing some form of third-party verification of teaching ability or expertise, individual teachers must demonstrate their expertise and ability. Therefore, this study provides an opportunity to examine a community where, theoretically, teaching is open to any interested individual. If there are neither barriers nor stepping stones through credentialing, who is able to become a teacher?

Since the leisure studies field has found that specialization itself is an unusual trajectory for recreation, this study provides an opportunity to understand the behaviors, characteristics, opportunities, and learning necessary to achieve sufficient specialization to be able to teach other participants. Since most studies of recreational specialization have been quantitative, those studies provide only a snapshot of participants’ level of specialization at the moment of the study. There has also been some debate about the best way to operationalize behavior and attitudes quantitatively (Tsaur & Liang, 2008). Therefore, this qualitative study will provide a way to understand how teachers have followed a path to specialization and identify the learning needed to achieve it.

Personally, this study is significant to me as I have participated in community and hobby groups and have been curious how certain individuals come to be recognized as teachers or leaders, while equally-skilled individuals are not. I am also fascinated by individuals’ stories about their lives, especially how they came to their current positions. This study gave me the opportunity to explore the lives of teachers in one particular hobby community to see how they understand their development into a teacher.
Assumptions

Several assumptions are made in this study:

1. Quiltmaking teachers are experts in the aspects of quiltmaking they teach.
2. Learners select quiltmaking classes, in part, based on knowing the identity of the teacher so that the teacher’s identity plays a role in their decision to take specific classes.
3. Teaching quiltmaking may only be one of the participants’ roles in the quilting community.
4. Quiltmaking originated as a hobby for study participants.
5. Both teachers and quilters self-define their quilting community, so it is unlikely that any two individuals will identify the same network of individuals, groups, stores, resources, and quilt shows as their quilting community.

Limitations and Strengths

All studies have limitations. This study acknowledges the following limitations:

- This study uses semi-structured interviews, so participants are recalling their transition from learner to teacher. This retrospective recall may impact factual details.
- As a qualitative study, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the participants.
- Participants were recruited from individuals who taught classes at quilt shows, shops and guilds in the Southcentral Pennsylvania region. Their perceived legitimacy as teachers may not extend beyond this region.
- Individuals who earn their entire income from the quilting community may be reluctant to participate, as they may feel they do not have time.
Despite these limitations, this study has several strengths. First, it explores participants’ learning within the context of a hobby and the factors which led the participants to specialize sufficiently to teach some aspect of quiltmaking professionally which quantitative studies have not been able to address. Second, because it is sited in a hobby community without teacher certification, it examines how individuals navigate a teaching career when there are neither barriers to entry nor stepping stones. Finally, it offers an opportunity to explore how the sociomaterial nature of an activity affects participation.

**Organization of the Study**

This chapter has been an introduction to this study of quiltmaking teachers. Chapter 2 explores literature related to the study while Chapter 3 explains the research methodology in detail. Chapter 4 reports findings from the content analysis of teacher biographies in quilt shop or show teacher listings or on individual teacher’s websites and blogs. Chapter 5 reports the findings of the qualitative analysis of the interviews. Finally, Chapter 6 synthesizes the findings in light of theoretical frameworks, along with offering implications for practice and further research.

**Definitions of Terms**

I may be using terms in a different way than commonly understood, so it is necessary to define some key terms used in this study:

- Quilting – while this technically refers to the process of stitching through the three layers of materials which make up the item, it is often used in the broader sense that the industry and hobbyists use to refer to the larger process, from selecting fabric through completing the item. I will limit its use to the technical meaning, using “quiltmaking” instead to refer to the broader community and activity.
- **Class** – any organized program which requires advanced registration and a monetary fee, used interchangeably with workshop. Workshops are usually one-time events while a class may have multiple sessions.

- **Quiltmaking teacher** – for the purpose of this study, a quiltmaking teacher is defined as someone who has taught classes in any aspect of the quilt construction process which is distinctive to quiltmaking, such as a piecing, applique, hand-quilting, or machine quilting.

- **Quilt shop** – a retail store which specializes in fabric, tools, patterns, and other resources necessary for quiltmaking, usually self-identified.

- **Quilt guild** – a formally organized group, with bylaws and annual dues. With the exception of Modern Quilt Guild chapters, quilt guilds are independent. That is, membership in a specific guild does not automatically include membership in a national organization.

- **Modern Quilt Guild** – the first Modern Quilt Guild chapter organized in 2009. The national organization formally affiliated chapters beginning in 2013, at which time self-identified MQG guilds had to decide whether to join the national organization or not. The MQG sees itself as a new quilting movement, distinct from “traditional” guilds, with a different design aesthetic (www.themodernquiltguild.com).

- **Informal learning** – learning which occurs outside any organized curriculum; it may be self-directed (intentional and aware), incidental (not intentional but aware), or tacit/socialization (unintentional and unaware) (Schugurensky, 2000).

- **Leisure** – leisure is “uncoerced, contextually framed activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both)” (Stebbins, 2012, p. 4)
• Nonformal Education – “when we step into a pre-existing learning programme but mould it to our own circumstances” (Rogers, 2004, p.11), or more generally, an organized activity outside the formal education system
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

An industry survey conducted in 2014 found that there were more than 16 million quilters in the United States (Creative Craft Groups, 2014). Each of these quilters learned quiltmaking at some time and is likely continually learning as they work with different fabrics, patterns, or techniques. Many quilters list classes and workshops as significant ways they learn but there has been little research on quiltmaking teachers, as will be discussed below. The purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to understand how quiltmaking teachers were able to develop their specialization in quiltmaking and 2) to understand how quiltmaking teachers navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops and shows in order to pursue their teaching career.

Introduction

The Quilters in America survey, for at least the last four surveys, classified quilters as beginning, intermediate and advanced—unfortunately, the survey instrument is not publicly available to know how these levels were defined. Unfortunately this data is not available for the 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003 surveys. As shown in Table 1, quilters at each skill level had an average age in their mid-60s. In both 2017 and 2014, the advanced quilters had an average of just over 26 years of experience, which mathematically suggests that these respondents learned to quilt at the youngest age, in their late 30s, well into adulthood. While the number of quilters appears to be decreasing over the time period covered by these surveys, this data appears consistent. Learning to quilt is, for the majority of quilters, an adult learning activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tr>
<td># quilters</td>
<td>7-10 million</td>
<td>16.4 million</td>
<td>21.3 million</td>
<td>27.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner Quilters</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6.9 yrs quilting</td>
<td>5 yrs quilting</td>
<td>4.5 yrs quilting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1 yrs quilting</td>
<td>64.1 yrs old</td>
<td>61 years old</td>
<td>57.8 yrs old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculated Age Started</td>
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<td>57.2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Quilters</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>17.4 yrs quilting</td>
<td>13.5 yrs quilting</td>
<td>11.8 yrs quilting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16.8 yrs quilting</td>
<td>65.1 yrs old</td>
<td>62.2 yrs old</td>
<td>59.4 yrs old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculated Age Started</td>
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<td>47.7</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Quilters</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26.2 yrs quilting</td>
<td>20.8 yrs quilting</td>
<td>18.3 yrs quilting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>26.6 yrs quilting</td>
<td>65.1 yrs old</td>
<td>62.2 yrs old</td>
<td>59.1 yrs old</td>
</tr>
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<td>38.9</td>
<td>41.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Summary of Quilting in America™ Survey Data (The Quilting Company, 2017; Creative Crafts Group, 2014, 2010; ckMedia, 2006;)

Quilting activities and goals vary. “The practice of quilting today can be described as existing along a spectrum from those who produce traditional quilts, to others producing nontraditional works but not adopting an artistic identity, to those who produce fiber art works or art quilts and who consider themselves professional artists” (Peterson, 2003, p. 480). This study focuses on the leisure end of this spectrum, not the art end of the spectrum. It will use the term “quilting” to be inclusive of the different techniques and processes involved. “Quilting” is often used as an overarching term, but it also refers specifically to the act of stitching through the three layers of materials which make a quilt—a top layer of fabric, an insulated layer often called batting, and a back layer of fabric—to secure the layers to each other. Fabric items which do not have all three layers are not quilts, but may be comforters, blankets, or coverlets. Therefore, using the term “quilting” as the Quilting in America survey does can be confusing.
The visible top layer of a quilt can be created multiple ways. Using a single piece of fabric creates a whole-cloth quilt, usually in order to highlight the design created during the quilting stage. Quilt tops may be pieced—these are constructed by sewing smaller pieces of fabric together in planned or improvised design, alternatively known as patchwork. Finally, the top may be constructed using applique, a technique in which designs cut from one fabric are stitched onto a ground fabric. Applique and piecing may be combined. Also, piecing, applique and quilting may be done by hand or by machine.

Quilt guilds (which are formally organized membership groups), quilt shows, and quilt shops each offer in-person classes to help quilters learn to quilt or to develop specific skills. Quiltmaking is a situated activity, in that a quilter must perform the activity to develop the knowledge. In order to teach quiltmaking, teachers must be able to make quilted items.

I conceptualize the development of a career as a quiltmaking teacher as a two-stage process. First, the teacher had to develop skill and expertise in quiltmaking. Then, something happened that led to the first opportunity to teach others in an organized event. Discovering this catalyst is at the core of this study. In part, identifying the catalyst can help reveal the interplay between learning and participation within a leisure community. What role does the teacher’s quiltmaking learning play in their becoming a teacher? What role does participation play? How do these interact? Does a quilter have to demonstrate her knowledge before she is recruited to teach? If so, how is this learning demonstrated? When there is no universally recognized teaching credential, what demonstrates one’s qualification to teach? Or, is it sometimes enough just to be known? What impact does teaching have on a teacher’s own practice, assuming that a teacher continues to participate as a quilter?
Therefore, the research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their learning journey to their areas of expertise?
2. How have quiltmaking teachers chosen to pursue their career?
3. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials?

**Significance of the Study**

One of the most interesting aspects of this study is that it is sited in a community which has no universally recognized teaching credential, as discussed briefly in Chapter 1 and in more depth below. In theory therefore, anyone can become a teacher. With no gatekeeper, does this open up teaching to a broader range of individuals, or does it limit who may teach because there is no third-party entity certifying excellence? Because this study is sited in a leisure community, voluntary certification by a relevant organization would be the most likely way of credentialing teachers. There is no health or safety concern to lead governmental agencies to require licensure to practice, and the financial rewards of teaching quiltmaking are likely too small to inspire the community itself to limit practitioners (Weeden, 2002). At the same time, there is no certification or similar mechanism to allow potential teachers to show that their skills have been deemed sufficient by a third-party (Carter, 2005). Therefore, this study provides an opportunity to see who becomes a teacher when there are neither visible restrictions nor stepping stones. The study will contribute to the literature on credentialing, which will be of interest to adult educators involved in training and development in human resources programs which may use certifications, and those in higher education that seeks to credential through academic degrees.

On a practical level, this study can help adult educators who coordinate programming in several ways. For those who recruit teachers for peer education, whether at a lifelong learning institute or a continuing education program, understanding the path that teachers have taken
within a leisure community can identify teachers who are recognized as successful educators. For those who may be in a position to encourage potential teachers, this study can provide some understanding of ways to support these individuals in their teaching development.

This study will also test Backlund and Kuentzel’s (2013) model of recreation specialization. As will be discussed below, Backlund and Kuentzel proposed this model in response to multiple findings that few individuals specialized in a specific form of recreation. However, the authors have no work forthcoming testing the model (Backlund, personal communication, 2014, November 3). As virtually all of the recreation specialization research has been conducted within outdoor contexts so this study will determine if the model is transferrable to an indoor activity.

Likewise, Lave and Wenger’s (1991; Wenger, 1998) legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice work emerged out of apprenticeship models and the workplace. This study, by contrast, examines how quilting teachers work within a multi-layer community of practice made up of individual quilt guilds, but also quilt shows and quilt shops, based around a leisure activity. Unlike an apprenticeship situation and workplaces, participation can be solely about learning the culture rather than developing skills. Participants may belong to multiple communities of practice simultaneously, all based around quilting, and may enter a new community well-versed in the skill so that the learning involved in participation is solely that of the community’s culture. Becoming central to the community may not be tied to being an expert at quilting, as pilot study participants described taking their turn as guild president. Therefore, leadership of the community may be about participation and shared responsibility, rather than as a result of mastery. This study of quilting teachers will hopefully illuminate
more about how communities of practice function when mastery does not determine centrality to the community.

**Organization of the Chapter**

Since quiltmaking is a situated, material activity—a quilter must make something to learn the skills necessary, usually using fabric—I will begin this chapter by providing background on actor-network theory (ANT) which informs this study. ANT argues that knowledge is created through the interactions of actors, which can be any combination of people and objects. As I conceive of a quiltmaking teacher’s development in two stages—developing a specialization in quiltmaking, or some aspect thereof, and then becoming a teacher to share that knowledge with others—I will next examine the literatures and framework related to learning quiltmaking and then those related to teaching quiltmaking.

I will begin with the literature on quiltmaking as an adult leisure activity, which looks at when people learned to quilt and why they quilt. Given that quiltmaking is a leisure activity, I use Backlund and Kuentzel’s (2013) model of recreation specialization as leisure capital—a theory from the leisure studies field—as one of the theoretical frameworks for this study to provide a lens through which to examine how quiltmaking teachers focused their leisure on quiltmaking. However, since this model has only been briefly proposed and not yet tested, I provide context by exploring the dimensions of specialization and the failure of the model of recreation specialization as progression. I will then review the literature on how people learn to quilt and that on teaching quiltmaking.

One of the most common ways individuals learn to quilt is to take classes and workshops at an interconnected mix of guilds, shops, and shows. Therefore, I introduce the communities of practice framework as a way to understand this network. These quiltmaking classes and
workshops are outside of the formal education system so I briefly discuss nonformal education. I then examine the existing literature on quiltmaking teachers and teaching quiltmaking.

Since the quiltmaking community does not use broadly-recognized teacher certifications, I will provide some background on the benefits and problems of certifications to analyze why a study of a credential-less community is of interest.

Finally, I will look at the intersections of these literatures to see how they, in combination, provide a background to understanding the development of quiltmaking teachers’ expertise as well as their ability to work across a dispersed network of smaller quiltmaking communities.

**Quiltmaking as a Sociomaterial Activity**

Quiltmaking is a sociomaterial activity in that, “the material is entangled in meaning, not assumed to be separate from it” (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuk, 2011, p. vi). Sociomaterial theories explore connections between people and things, or “how matter comes to matter in the social and personal mix” (Fenwick, et al., 2011, p. viii). These theories posit that knowledge emerges through these interconnections to take a concrete form. The tools, fabric, patterns, technology and other things involved in quiltmaking are as crucial in the development of knowledge as interactions with other people. Actor-network theory provides the broad understanding that the quiltmaking teacher’s own knowledge is a network effect of, or a product of the interaction between the teacher and a variety of other animate and inanimate actors, such as all prior quiltmaking projects, other teachers, students, tools, designs, materials, and learning resources.

**Actor-Network Theory**

Actor-network theory (ANT) proposes that knowledge is an effect created by the constant negotiations of connections within a group of entities which is usually conceived of as a network
(Fenwick, et al., 2011). The network is heterogeneous; that is, made up of people, material objects, and depending on the context, other living, non-human entities (Law, 1992). In the case of quilters, knowledge is developed through an individual constructing an object. It is, at minimum, an interaction between the quilter, fabric, a sewing machine or hand-needle, and thread. However, through the construction process, the quilter may also interact with project directions; a teacher, if the project is in a class context; other quilters; websites, blogs, books and magazines; YouTube videos or DVDs, online classes, and television shows; and other quilts. An individual’s knowledge is the product of these interactions with other people and things, usually referred to in ANT as a network.

Using an ANT approach to the study of quiltering means that quiltering knowledge and skills are only created by taking material form (Law, 1992) through the interconnections within the network. These connections are made through the act of translation, as the entities negotiate their connections; they act upon each other, changing both (Fenwick, et al., 2011). In the interaction between a quilter and piece of fabric, for example, the quilter is cutting and sewing the fabric, visibly changing its appearance. However, working with the fabric is also changing the quilter, who may learn tricks to working with that specific kind of fabric or how to sew two triangles of the fabric together with precision.

Translation has been conceived as having four pieces: problematization, interessement, enrollment, and mobilization, though Fenwick, et al., (2011) note that the result of two entities negotiating is unpredictable, so the process is not linear. Problematization is the initial state where an actor frames a problem such that others recognize it. During interessement, other actors become interested in the framed problem and the various entities negotiate potential connections in order to resolve the problem. Once connections are negotiated, the new actors
become part of the network to undertake the action. In mobilization, the network works together to create the desired effect (Fenwick, et al., 2011; Fox, 2000). In an example from a different leisure setting, Hitchings (2003) uses an ANT approach to examine the interactions between gardeners and plants. The gardeners have a vision for their gardens and so make decisions on which plants to incorporate, or enroll, to achieve this vision. The plants have their own goals, to remain alive and in the garden, which various types of plants achieve through different combinations of appearance, maintenance needs, and growth. The gardeners and plants interacted continually as the gardeners sought to achieve their visions, responding to the plants’ growth by moving, trimming, or removing individual plants such that there was an ever-changing network of entities creating the effect of the garden.

A network may be represented by the action which it effects, if the network can be perceived to function as one entity, which is called punctualization (Law, 1992). Law gives the example of the human body, which we often think of as a singular unit rather than a network of many other networks—the digestion system, the circulatory system, the nervous system, the skeleton, to name a few—which function within their own system as well as interacting with each other. Law notes that punctualization can apply to any network which “can…be more or less taken for granted” (1992, p. 385), or simplified. In the case of quilting, a sewing machine can be treated as a simplified entity to reduce complexity. The sewing is itself a network of machinery, power, thread, needle, and the conglomerations of people and machinery which made not only the particular machine but the history of people and companies which invented and improved the design and the systems which provide the power to operate it. If a researcher is studying the process of creating an object, focusing on the creator’s learning, it is convenient to just consider the sewing machine as a single entity to analyze its role in the
particular process being examined. One of the challenges of the ANT framework is establishing boundaries since each entity in the network being studied is itself an effect of other networks (Fenwick, et al., 2011; Strathern, 1996).

By focusing on these connections and what can be negotiated at a very micro-level, an ANT approach explores the minutiae of learning by tracing interactions between actors. In education research, this can mean following an item such as a particular piece of paperwork as it travels through a school bureaucracy or asking a person to describe each action they take in a process. The “focus is upon understanding what things and people do, not what they mean” (Fenwick, et al., 2011, p. 123), which brings a very different lens than most qualitative research that focuses on the meaning of lived experience.

Part of studying these interactions is seeing how power is exerted and how it may shift within the network (Fenwick, et al., 2011). Based on his reading of Foucault, Fox argues that power “is manifest only as it is used” (2000, p. 859) and therefore suggests that ANT can be used to analyze how power acts through the force relations within the network. He suggests that this ability to examine interactions and force makes ANT useful for studying situated learning, especially in Lave and Wenger’s (1991) communities of practice model, which will be discussed below, to see how an individual is brought in to the community and how the community’s practice changes over time.

There are many interpretations of actor-network theory and ways of using it—“there is no generic way to ‘apply’ actor-network theory and it lacks methodological prescription” (Jackson, 2015). Scholars using ANT do not consider it a theory, using the term “ANT” instead for convenience to refer to a group of tools and approaches (Fenwick, et al., 2011). In fact, Latour describes four problems with actor-network theory—“the word actor, the word network, the
word theory, and the hyphen!” (1999, p. 15). He describes ANT instead as “a very crude method to learn from the actors without imposing on them an *a priori* definition of their world-building capacities” (p.20). Likewise, Sayes states that “ANT furnishes us with the tools to *better* attend to the minute displacements, translations, practices, riots, processes, protests, arguments, expeditions, struggles, and swap-meets—no matter what the actors involved may look like” (2014, p. 145).

Latour (1999) argues that ANT is about movement, specifically tracing movement through associations or connections, which means identifying all of the entities involved. These associations are what have been dubbed “networks.” Since the theory’s use of “network” predates current technology, Latour, writing in 1999, felt that he had to clarify the use of the term to mean “the *summing up* of interactions through various kinds of devices, inscriptions, forms and forumulae” (1999, p. 17).

**Applicability to Quiltmaking**

One of the reasons ANT informs this study is its distinctive concept of symmetry. This concept requires each of the entities in a network be viewed as having the same potential influence as any other entity within the network, rather than humans automatically having primacy over inanimate objects (Fenwick, et al., 2011). Nonhumans, including inanimate objects, have agency, though this has a different meaning than in common usage. In ANT, an actor is “*any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference (Latour, 2005, p. 71). Agency then means simply making a difference, which Sayes describes as a “minimal conception of agency” (2014, p. 141). Having agency does not mean that inanimate objects can take initiative but that at the beginning of an ANT analysis, there has to be the presumption that nonhumans and humans can both make a difference in the interaction.
Nonhumans are themselves products of associations. As discussed above, while a sewing machine can be treated as a single entity through punctualization, it is really the product of previous network effects. Therefore, within an interaction (or association, to use Latour’s term), a nonhuman can represent actors from previous times and other places (Sayes, 2014). This is particularly interesting because it helps to think about the broad range of influences on a quiltmaking teacher’s learning. As informed by ANT, a quiltmaking teacher’s knowledge is the product of every project she has ever made, every workshop she has taught, and every person who taught her, somewhat ad infinitum, to whatever point where it is logical to cut the network for the purposes of the study.

In thinking about quiltmaking, ANT provides an approach to examine the minutiae of the learning process, which views a quilt as the quiltmaker’s knowledge. The quilted object is an effect of the ongoing, changing relationship between the quiltmaker, the fabrics, a sewing machine or hand needle at minimum. The network may also include a pattern, the quiltmaker’s imagination for choices of color and design, any material or time constraints, the purpose of the project, and her surroundings during the project. While the quiltmaker is changing the appearance of the fabric through cutting, sewing, quiltmaking, or otherwise manipulating it, the object is changing the quilter. As the quiltmaker assembles the project, each act changes her understanding of the process as she performs each step. The quilted object then is her knowledge in physical form at the time she completes it. She can’t represent her knowledge of quiltmaking except through a tangible product. Quiltmakers who write books or blogs are creating knowledge through the creation of a written object, even if it is a virtual object. A class represents the outcome of a series of interactions over time among the teacher, all the projects
she has made to create her own knowledge to date, her selection of content and planning, her portrayal of the class through communication to the host and potential students, and so on.

Actor-network theory which posits that knowledge is a network effect, the result of the interactions of all of the people and things with which an individual interacts, provides a way to think about all of the different people, communities, projects, and prior learning which have created individual quiltmaking teachers as they exist at the time of the study. Literature on quiltmaking provides some understanding of whose their students are.

**Quiltmaking as a Leisure Activity**

Although there is some academic discussion about whether quiltmaking lost popularity after World War II (Hall-Patton, 2004; Smucker, 2014), it increased in popularity after around 1970. However, even in communities where quiltmaking had been an economic necessity previously (Klassen, 2014), by the 1970s quiltmaking was a commodified leisure activity learned as an adult for many.

**The Quiltmaking ‘Revival’**

Quilt historians attribute the increase in popularity of quiltmaking in the late 1960s/early 1970s, to a confluence of events, though this appears to be based on observations at the time as oft-cited publications, such as Patsy and Myron Orlofsky’s *Quilts in America* (1992/1974) or the various products of state quilt documentation projects, do not themselves give specific evidence. There appears to be limited research to support either particular causes or the confluence of all of them. The most oft-cited causes for the increase in quiltmaking’s popularity include the recognition of quilts as art through a 1971 exhibit of Amish quilts at the Whitney Museum (Berlo, in Berlo & Crews, 2003; Peterson, 2003; Smucker, 2013), two smaller versions of which then traveled nationally through the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service
increased interest in folk crafts as part of 1960s and 1970s counter culture (Berlo, in Berlo and Crews, 2003; Hains, 1985; Wagovel, 1990), the approaching bicentennial of the United States (Berlo, in Berlo & Crews, 2003; Hains, 1985; Stalp, 2007); and the women’s movement (Hains, 1985; Stalp, 2007). Berlo briefly argues that each of these threads brought a different audience to appreciating quilts, writing:

All these currents swirled simultaneously, making waves in the world of art collections, in the world of studio artists, and in the world of art historians and scholars of Women’s Studies like me, a young Yale graduate student at the time. Most importantly, these waves eddied and crashed in the world of ordinary American women who chose this moment to celebrate their female artistic heritage by turning their creative energies to the making of quilts. They gave rise to an artistic and economic phenomenon of astonishing proportions that has continued unabated into the twenty-first century. (Berlo, in Berlo & Crews, 2003, p. 8).

Berlo highlight the various strands of quiltmaking in the late 1960s and 1970s as well as the dominance of women in the broader quiltmaking world. There does not appear to be a history documenting how these strands intertwined, or even an established description of why many consider this a revival. It may be possible to reconstruct the popularity of quiltmaking using the *Quilting in America* survey first conducted in 1991, there is no scholarly treatment of the increase in popularity in quiltmaking as hobby in the United States beginning in the 1970s.

Woods (1993) examines the contemporaneous quiltmaking revival in Canada. She reports that her participants, presumably in response to her questionnaire’s open-ended query “quilts are popular now because,” list the Whitney museum show, the Canadian centennial and U.S. bicentennial, and interest in country decorating. She notes that only ten respondents, of 276
completed questionnaires, named the women’s movement. In response to a separate question specifically about whether the women’s movement was influential on the quiltmaking revival, 35% said it was influential, 32% said no, and 32% said there was no relationship.

None of Woods’ participants cited these cultural trends—the Whitney show, the anniversaries, the women’s movement—as why they themselves first became interested in quiltmaking, although 9% did name media exposure (Woods, 1993). The most common reasons for a participant’s personal interest were families (32%), and then significantly less common, exposure from educational institutions (19%), extension of sewing experiences (17%), and through friends or community activities (16%). It is possible that the interest in the U.S. Bicentennial and Canadian Centennial could have led potential quilters to reconnect with their own family’s quiltmaking history. Rake (2000) offers an alternate explanation. In her study of quilters in Wayne County, Ohio, she found that those of her quilters who learned to quilt prior to World War II, generally as children, were finally able to pursue quiltmaking as a hobby, due to decreased family caretaking obligations, in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Utility to Leisure

While there is not a definitive study of why quiltmaking became more popular in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s, studies have shown that it did become a leisure activity pursued by adults, even in communities which previously undertook quiltmaking for utilitarian purposes. A study of quilters in Wayne County, Ohio (Rake, 2000), a region with a significant Mennonite population, and a study of quiltmaking in the Tennessee delta region (Klassen, 2014) each explore a transition from quiltmaking with a utilitarian purpose to quiltmaking as a leisure activity.
Rake (2000) interviewed sixty women who remember when they learned to quilt and analyzed their experiences, based on when the women learned to quilt, as summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of participants</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age when learned</td>
<td>10-15 (21)</td>
<td>Teens (7); 20s (7); 30s (3)</td>
<td>Teens (1); 20s (5); 30+ (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From whom</td>
<td>mothers</td>
<td>Mother-in-law or other female relative; church sewing group</td>
<td>50%+ from “classes, books and magazines, or kits” (p.206)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From what</td>
<td>Fabric scraps from making clothing</td>
<td>Fabrics purchased for quiltmaking; some scraps from making clothing, from own and other families</td>
<td>Fabric purchased for quiltmaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilting-related paid work?</td>
<td>Yes, both individuals and church groups</td>
<td>5 identify as professional quiltmakers; church groups provide quilting services; quilts used as fundraisers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of Rake’s (2000) findings on Wayne County, Ohio quiltmakers. Adapted from “In the old days, they used scraps”: Gender, leisure, commodification, and the mythology of quiltmaking, Wayne County, Ohio, 1915-1995 (doctoral dissertation). The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Rake found that as the 20th century progressed, quiltmaking became a leisure activity that women learned as adults. In contrast to those who learned to quilt during the 1910-1940 period, who were almost all young teens learning from their mothers, almost two-thirds of those who learned to quilt after 1970 were 30 years or older. These women utilized the growing business of the quiltmaking world to learn from either published books/magazines, commercially available kits, or classes from the growing number of quilt shops. Simultaneously, quiltmaking expanded as a business. In the 1940-1970 period, church groups and individuals began offering services, most frequently hand-quilting quilt tops that others had made. After 1970, some church groups
continued to offer hand-quilting services, but a burgeoning network of quilt shops also offered quilting services, especially after the development of the long-arm sewing machine, which allowed a large quilt to be machine-quilted in less than a day. Rake (2000) found that the five quilt businesses in Wayne County, at the time of her data collection in 1997, covered a range of quilt-related services—from selling fabric and/or quilting services to selling quilts, especially to tourists. She notes that these were not particularly profitable but “the businesses were started or remained in operation only because the owners enjoyed quiltmaking or associating with people who made and bought quilts” (Rake, 2000, p. 246), suggesting that even these businesses had a certain leisure component.

Rake (2000) also argues for the commodification of quilts and quiltmaking using the history of the Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale. The quilt auction became a highlight of the sale and an increasing percentage of the sale’s revenue. During the 1970s, the quilt auction generated 21 to 29% of the total income from the Relief Sale; in the 1980s, quilts provided from 28 to 39% of total income; and from 1990 to 1995, the quilt auction provided 32% to 41% of total sale income. While the number of quilts generally increased, the average price of large quilts increased more consistently, even adjusted for inflation to 1995 dollars. Smith (2011) found a similar trend in her study of the Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale, which covers northern Indiana and southern Michigan. The quilt auction has consistently been at least 30% of the total sales proceeds, but reached around 40% of total sales through the late 1990s and early 2000s. While quilt proceeds fell subsequently, they were still about 30% of total relief sale proceeds in 2010. Though the Michiana sale started in the late 1960s, by the mid-1970s, people were traveling to the sale specifically to purchase Mennonite quilts. Quilts were a commodity, part of a leisure activity that supported an industry.
Klassen (2014) studied the Tennessee delta region, in southwestern Tennessee, in the mid-20th century. She found that “quilt culture transitioned from a dominantly subsistence activity that marked economic group identity to a dominantly expressive activity that marked individual identity” (p. 302) as of the late 1950s. Earlier in the century, the region was dominated by large cotton farms, with a small-farm culture made up of “farm renters, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, small-farm owners, and rural wageworkers” (p. 1). Quiltmaking was an activity for adult women, as a form of household production in these households; “economic conditions had required such families to maximize self-sufficiency and minimize cash outlay” (p. 105), to provide warmth in houses heated by stoves. Klassen found that quilts were created in an improvisational style, based on what materials were available, that has come to be associated with African-American quilters due to the popularity of Gee’s Bends quilts which were first exhibited in 2002 and toured the United States. Klassen argues that this style is really tied to economics, not race, in that she found this style in both African-American and white households.

Economic changes in the 1940s and early 1950s led to a change in the Tennessee delta region from small-farm culture to more capitalist culture, in part as result of mechanization which decreased the need for farm labor as well as continued industrialization which provided other types of employment. Klassen (2014) argues that this change led to increased incomes and increased access to cash, allowing installation of central heat and purchase of commercially-produced blankets. After 1955, quilters in the region were more likely to be older women with adult children—both older women who changed the purpose of their quiltmaking and somewhat younger women who had never made utilitarian quilts. Quiltmaking groups served social purposes and quiltmaking took on a leisure role for women.
By the late 1960s and early 1970s, most individuals learned quiltmaking as an adult and pursued it as a leisure activity. Recreation specialization, a theoretical framework from leisure studies, offers a way to think about how individuals participate in and focus on a leisure activity.

**Recreation Specialization**

The recreation specialization framework, developed in the field of leisure studies, offers a theoretical framework to understand quiltmaking teachers’ expertise development. Bryan (1977) first proposed recreation specialization as a conceptual framework to help outdoor recreation managers, such as park managers, recognize that there is diversity within any group of activity participants. He viewed specialization as a developmental spectrum, that is, the longer an individual participated in an activity, the more skilled that individual would become. A number of studies (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006, 2008; Lee & Scott, 2004, 2006; Oh, Sorice, & Ditton, 2010; Schroeder, Fulton, Lawrence & Cords, 2013; Scott & Lee, 2010; Scott & Shafer, 2001) have shown that few individuals become more specialized with longer participation. Backlund and Kuentzel (2013) proposed a model of leisure capital to explain leisure change and specialization in response to these findings.

**Specialization and Leisure Capital**

Kuentzel started questioning the progression model in 2001, in a published response to Scott and Shafer’s foundational review that questioned recreation specialization as progression (Kuentzel, 2001; Scott & Shafer, 2001). If stability and decline are the more common trajectories for leisure activity, Kuentzel (2001) felt there needed to be a different model. Therefore, with Backlund, he proposes a model of leisure change which uses a capital metaphor instead of progression, looking at change in leisure participation through the lens of leisure investments (Backlund & Kuentzel, 2013).
This framework conceives of leisure capital based on Bourdieu’s (1986) conception of cultural capital which exists in three states: embodied, objectified, and institutional. Backlund and Kuentzel (2013) describe embodied capital as “the skills, resource preferences, and psychological commitment developed through participation” (p. 295). Objectified capital is the material and travel costs of participation while institutional capital is any training or certification which may be part of the activity.

Backlund and Kuentzel (2013) propose four categories of leisure investments - diversification, limitations, routines, and life-course events - resulting in changing leisure capital, over time. Changing any of these investments can lead to progression, maintenance or attrition within the recreation activity. Leisure diversification is participation in multiple activities. Leisure limitations may be physical, psychological, financial, geographic, or socioeconomic. Leisure routine is the ongoing role of leisure in the participant’s daily life. A life-course change can be related to marital status, family composition, employment, or health, among the many things that can impact a participant’s life. Changes in these leisure investments lead to changes in the participant’s leisure capital, which can change their participation trajectory, as shown in the figure below.
Backlund and Kuentzel hypothesize how these investments or disinvestments may occur. For example, they predict that less frequent participation may actually mean that those participants also participate in another activity, such as moving to another form of mountain bike riding as Shafer and Scott (2013) surmise. Likewise, participants may have or develop physical limitations than require a change in activity or be very comfortable with current participation so maintain that level rather than challenging themselves to develop new skills. Backlund and Kuentzel believe that routines likely lead to a maintenance pattern of participation. While previous studies found that life-course changes, other than marriage, did not predict participation changes, there also appears to be a general pattern of attrition, so Backlund and Kuentzel expect that changes over the lifetime will lead to changes in participation. As shown in the figure, a
decrease in participation may still lead to specialization. In order to understand how a decrease in participation may still lead to participation, it is necessary to examine how specialization has been defined as well as findings on the relationship between participation and specialization.

**Dimensions of Specialization**

Scott and Shafer (2001), in their foundational review which questioned the idea that individuals always became more specialized over time, found inconsistency in how progression was defined and, given the quantitative nature of much of the literature they reviewed, operationalized. Therefore, they offered a definition of what specialization meant: “We propose that progression can be understood in terms of (a) a focusing of behavior, (b) the acquiring of skills and knowledge, and (c) a tendency to become committed to the activity such that it becomes a central life interest” (2001, p. 326). So for quilters to become more specialized, they would have to focus onquilting, develop specific quilting skills, and make quilting their focal leisure activity. These three aspects of progression can best be understood by examining these three dimensions of specialization: behavior, skills and knowledge, and commitment.

**Focusing of Behavior.** Scott and Shafer defined the focusing of behavior to mean that individuals eliminate or curtail involvement in “competing” activities (2001, p. 326). However, this has often been quantified solely by participation in the focus activity, rather than by contrasting participation with other activities. Examples include the number of and total days of birding trips in the previous year (Lee & Scott, 2004, 2006; Scott & Lee, 2010), number of days saltwater fishing in the prior year (Oh, Sovice & Ditton, 2010); and average days per week bicycling and mountain biking (Shafer & Scott, 2013). Schroeder, et al. (2013) does consider preference by using two survey questions which ask about preferring waterfowl hunting “over
other leisure activities” (p. 225). Other researchers, however, measure preferences through indicators for commitment, which is discussed below.

Focusing of behavior is also sometimes quantified through measuring ownership of activity-specific equipment (Schroeder, Fulton, Lawrence, & Cordts, 2013; Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006, 2008), which is problematic. As Kuentzel and Heberlein (2006, 2008) recognize in their studies of saltwater anglers, owning a boat is expensive. They interpret this as a financial constraint to participation, so see selling a boat as a sign of being less involved in saltwater fishing, rather than perhaps a decision to focus on the fishing itself, rather than maintenance of equipment. Also, some leisure activities require an upfront investment in equipment so that spending on the hobby is tied to starting a hobby, rather than ongoing involvement (Bryan, 1977). Conversely, a hobby like quilting can have a range of financial costs, depending on the individual quilter’s choices. If someone decides to focus on hand-quilting, which just requires needle and thread, the startup costs will be lower than for someone who focuses on machine quilting so invests in a $5,000-or-more specialized sewing machine. Quantitative research cannot get at the nuances of these choices to determine what is truly a decision or reflective of financial constraints.

**Skills and knowledge.** Prior to Scott and Shafer (2001a), skill development and acquisition of knowledge had been measured through experience rather than expertise. Scott and Shafer (2001a) argue that individuals choose to learn, so that mere participation in an activity does not mean that individuals are learning related information. In one of their examples, birdwatchers may participate in bird walks but not seek to increase the number of birds they are able to recognize.
Examples of quantitative skill measurements include number of birds the participant can identify by sight or sound (Lee & Scott, 2004; 2006; Scott & Lee, 2010) and number of rod and reel combinations the participant owns or uses on a trip (Oh, Sorice & Ditton, 2010). Researchers also ask participants to self-report their level of skill in the activity (Lee & Scott, 2004, 2006; Scott & Lee, 2010; Schroeder, et al., 2013) or to compare it to others (Oh, Sorice & Ditton, 2010). If a particular activity is competitive, like mountain bike racing, participants can report their skill level as classified by the activity’s governing organization, which serves as an objective measure (Shafer & Scott, 2013).

As discussed above, measuring skill and knowledge through equipment usage is problematic because of the relationship to financial resources. Also, in some activities, there can be an inverse relationship between equipment and skill. Bryan (1977) describes experienced fly-fisherman as requiring less equipment than a beginning rod and reel fisherman.

For many activities, including quiltmaking, skill and knowledge are very difficult to measure. The activity is so broad that no one person can develop a high level of skill and knowledge in all techniques. For example, the Quilt Odyssey quilt show held in Hershey, Pennsylvania each July awards prizes in ten categories based on size, type, and construction technique of quilted object, and then from those entries also awards nine additional prizes, including three based on quilting method (www.quiltodyssey.com), recognizing the diversity of techniques within quiltmaking.

Commitment. Scott and Shafer (2001a) theorized two aspects of commitment: personal and behavioral. Personal commitment is tied to development of an identity associated with the activity or working to support the activity, such as recruiting new participants. They define behavioral commitment as “those expectations and costs that make withdrawal from the leisure
activity problematic” (Scott and Shafer, 2001a, p. 329). While this cost can be financial investment in equipment, it can also be an emotional cost through the loss of friendships developed while participating in the activity.

Personal commitment is frequently measured using Likert-scales to measure agreement with statements such as “other leisure activities don’t interest me as much as birding” (Lee & Scott, 2004, 2006) or “my favorite leisure activity is mountain biking” (Scott & Shafer, 2013). Behavior commitment is measured similarly, using statements such as “if I stopped [activity], I would probably lose touch with a lot of my friends” (Lee & Scott, 2004, 2006; Scott & Lee, 2010; Scott & Shafer, 2013) or “most of my friends are in some way connected with mountain biking” (Scott & Shafer, 2013). Due to the financial costs involved, another study used boat ownership as a measure of commitment (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006), which is problematic as someone with significant financial resources can purchase a boat without making a commitment to use the boat regularly.

**Indicators’ relationship to specialization.** Lee and Scott (2004) initially tested whether the three dimensions which Shafer and Scott (2001a) identified—behavior, skill and knowledge, and commitment—were distinct dimensions and, if so, how they might correlate. Using data from surveying a sample of members of the American Birding Association in 1997 and again in 2002, Lee and Scott found that the three dimensions are related but “not always iterative and mutually reinforcing” (2004, p. 257). They found that skill and knowledge better represented specialization than behavior and commitment.

More significantly, some research found that the three indicators do not correlate or correlate only moderately with each other (Lee & Scott, 2004, Oh, Sorice & Ditton, 2010). While each indicator correlates with specialization, the indicators do not change “in a uniform
manner” (Scott & Shafer, 2013, p. 361). An increase in commitment does not necessarily lead to an increase in skill. Likewise, a decrease in behavior does not necessarily mean a decrease in skill or commitment. For example, Schoreder, et al. (2013) found that there were a number of people who participated in waterfowl hunting for years but were not particularly committed to the activity. This leads to the larger question: while behavior, skills and knowledge, and commitment might correlate individually with recreation specialization, is recreation specialization a development process? Bryan (1977) theorized that, just by participating in an activity over time, individuals would become more specialized. Scott and Shafer (2001a) defined “more specialized” as focusing behavior on a particular activity, developing related skills and knowledge, and becoming more committed to the activity over time. Given that the research in this area is primarily quantitative using hundreds of participants, researchers cannot easily ask open-ended questions about participants’ changing involvement. Therefore, researchers use longitudinal research to look for change.

**Progression Towards Specialization**

Scott and Shafer (2001a) called for longitudinal research in order to test whether recreation specialization was a developmental process. Since 2001, there have been multiple lines of longitudinal research published, focused on birdwatchers (Lee & Scott, 2004, 2006; Scott & Lee, 2010), anglers (Oh, Sorice, & Ditton, 2010), and boaters (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006, 2008), as well as a study of lapsed and current waterfowl hunters (Schoreder, Fulton, Lawrence & Cordts, 2013). However, these studies are all quantitative, which means that they were comparing snapshots from different times. The analyses provide insight into whether progression towards specialization occurs, but can only offer hints as to how specialization actually develops and what it looks like.
Research generally found that progression is an uncommon path (Kuentzel & Heberlein 2006, 2008; Scott & Lee, 2010). Kuentzel and Heberlein (2006, 2008) surveyed one group of boaters in 1975, 1985, and 1997 and a second group in 1985 and 1997. Of the boaters surveyed in 1975, 47.3% stopped boating completely by 1997, which is fairly dramatic evidence against the notion of progression. Kuentzel and Heberlein (2008) therefore conclude “attrition appears to better characterize leisure participation over time than development and progression. The majority of people in the sample did not specialize because they had developed other leisure over time” (2008, p. 154). People moved on to other interests.

To try to understand why people became less involved or changed activities, several studies focused their analysis on life course changes (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2008; Scott & Lee, 2010). These studies ask if there were marriages, deaths, divorces, career changes, health changes, and development of other leisure interests in a designated time period. For boaters, life course disruptions did not have a major statistical effect on indicators of specialization with the exception of marriage (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2008). Kuentzel and Heberlein argue that any given life change can be positive or negative, depending on the individual. However, neither of their studies (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006, 2008) report the gender split of the participants.

Scott and Lee (2010) found similar results in birdwatchers in a sample which was about one-third female. While life course changes had little statistical effect overall, they did find small effects specifically from retirement, as well as from level of family support, which isn’t a life change though. The authors attribute some of the statistical insignificance to the fact that their research only covered a five-year period, with 20% or less of the sample reporting life changes.
Several studies found that participants who identified at a low level of involvement were more likely to maintain their involvement than those who had identified initially at a high level of involvement (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006, 2008; Oh, Sorice & Ditton, 2010; Schroeder, Fulton, Lawrence & Cordts, 2013). That is, those who were more casually involved in a given activity were more likely to continue that casual involvement than those who were deeply involved in the activity over time. It is certainly less time consuming to be only slightly involved in an activity, rather than deeply involved, so that any life changes that reduce time or money available for recreation might have less effect on the casual participant. With only quantitative data, researchers were limited to hypothesizing. Qualitative studies can provide an opportunity to deeply explore the experiences of a smaller sample, to explore the reasons behind changes in leisure activities—to see why and how some people do specialize in one activity and the impact of life changes on how this specialization develops, remains steady, or possibly declines.

Oh, Sorice and Ditton (2010) call for research to examine who progresses in a recreation activity, who drops out, and why. Schroeder, Fulton, Lawrence and Cordts (2013) examined this, in part, by surveying both current licensed waterfowl hunters and those who had had a license between 2000 and 2004, but not since. Their particular focus is on the role of identity in specialization to see if that might explain why individuals stopped participating. The authors theorized that people who self-identify as waterfowl hunters are more likely to specialize than those who do not develop that identity. They found that the more individuals identify as a waterfowl hunter, the more likely they are to report an increase in the dimensions of specialization. They also found individuals who did not identify as waterfowl hunters but continue to participate. Since this was a quantitative study, the authors could only theorize that these hunters are participating with family or friends and conclude that “identity formation and
specialization do not necessarily occur with prolonged participation in an activity” (Schroeder, Fulton, Lawrence & Cordts, 2013, p. 231).

While not a longitudinal study, Shafer and Scott (2013) complicated the idea of specialization by studying participants in mountain bike racing, which has objective standards of specialization based on racing performance, rather than relying on self-reporting or participation. They found that “indicators of specialization were related to progression through increased participation, but not in a uniform manner” (p. 361). Endurance, skill, and behavioral commitment were the best predictors of specialization, meaning time and effort invested. Interestingly, when asked about participation over the next 5 years, participants with high personal commitment envisioned shifting to other types of mountain biking which suggests staying involved broadly but substituting a different, related activity. Similar to Kuentzel’s and Hemerlein’s (2006) findings, 25% of the most advanced racers anticipate their participation would decline over the next 5 years, which Shafer and Scott interpret to mean opportunities become more limited for further progression once someone is at an advanced skill level. The possibility of substituting related activities does suggest that there are multiple trajectories, rather than a singular path moving along the progression spectrum, which Scott and Shafer (2001a) had theorized.

Backlund and Kuentzel’s (2013) model disconnects participation from specialization, but is not incongruent with multiple trajectories toward specialization. Using recreation specialization as a theoretical framework for a study of quiltmaking teachers provides an opportunity to apply this framework to a study with participants who have specialized in an activity. One of this study’s assumptions is that teachers have developed expertise, or specialized, in some aspect of quilmaking before teaching the skill to others. Part of
specialization is learning the activity. A number of studies have examined how quilters developed their skills.

**Learning Quiltmaking**

While quiltmaking was still taught during childhood in some cultures (Cheek & Piercy, 2004), it was not for many of those who have learned to quilt after 1970. Instead, they learned to quilt as adults (Cerny, Eicher, & DeLong, 1993; Crews & James, 1996; Davis, 1982; Dickie, 2003; King, 1997; Kucko, 2003; Langellier, 1991) like the “average” quilter in the 2014 Quilting in America industry survey. This doesn’t appear to have changed in more than 30 years of research sited in quilt guilds for those studies where the authors report specific data.

**Learning Quiltmaking as an Adult**

Multiple studies found that quilters learned to quilt as an adult. In 1982, Davis reported “most of us began to quilt at age 31 and have been quilting for 7 years or less” (Davis, 1982, p. 47). Langellier found that 89% of her Maine quilters learned as adults, with “more than a third after age fifty” (1991, p. 33). King (1997) reported that about 66% of participants were age 4 to 60—about one-third each 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 years old—with 9.5 years quiltmaking average, suggesting learning at age 30 or later. Likewise, surveyed members of Minnesota Quilters, Inc. had a median age between 46 and 55 years old, with a median of quiltmaking between 3 and 10 years (Cerny, Eicher, and DeLong, 1993). Dickie’s quilters “all [16] began quilting as adults” (2003, p. 122). Kucko (2003) found that the median age for her participants learning to quilt was between 40 to 49 years old. Two Canadian studies (Woods, 1993; Tracz, 2008b) found similar results. While 76% of the Canadian quilters Woods (1993) surveyed were 45 years or older, 83% had been quiltmaking for 15 years or less. Similarly, 69% of Tracz’s Nova Scotian quilters learned to quilt were over the age of 30 when they learned, while only
7.5% of the 107 participants reported learning when they were younger than 18. Crews and James (1996) used data from the Nebraska Quilt Project; for quilters after 1970, over a third learned when in their 20s while almost a third learned between ages 30 and 59.

**Ways of Learning**

Likewise, data on how quilters learned to quilt was consistent over 40 years of research. Hall-Patton (1989) found “Guild members demonstrate a dramatic shift to learning quiltmaking from classes and how-to books rather than from family or being self-taught…informal methods have been replaced by formal methods, and family members have been replaced by professionals as teachers.” (p. 76). Davis (1982) found that 42% learned from a class, 37% were self-taught, and 19% from a relative or friend. King’s (1997) participants identified courses by stores and books on quiltmaking. In her study of Virginia quilters, Dickie (2003) found that ten of her participants were self-taught, four learned through class, but three did learn some aspect of quiltmaking from their mothers. Again, Canadian studies found similar results. Quilters identified courses by quilters (32%), books (19%), evening courses (14%), and courses by stores (12%), which can be aggregated to about 58% identifying courses of some type (Woods, 1993). Tracz (2008b) reports that over 50% of her respondents indicated “classes, quilt shops, continuing education books, or self-taught as the methods for learning to quilt” (p. 53-54) but 11% said they learned from their mother or grandmother.

Kucko (2003) and Barry (2012) found similar methods of learning, though with different levels of influence. When asked who was the most influential for the participants’ learning, “self-taught” was the most frequent response, followed by the teacher of a class/workshop, and then a friend. In contrast, Barry’s participants identified a book and a family member in equal percentages, followed by workshop/class, guild, then friend tied with television show, and finally
self-taught. Based on the reported data, those who selected "self-taught" were not asked how they were self-taught so we do not definitively know whether they used resources such as books or videos or learned through experimentation or adapting related prior knowledge. Bristow confirms the trends of 40 years, stating that her participants learned from “classes, books, magazines, and friends” (Bristow, 2013, p.115).

Although not generalizable, it is possible that these results are specific to quilt guilds. The role of family may be greater in other forms of fiber-based handcrafts. Johnson and Wilson (2005) studied “handcrafters,” defining “handcraft” to include any technique “using implements such as sewing needles, crochet hooks, or knitting needles, and completed as lapwork” (p. 115). It is not clear if “all” means the 39 participants surveyed or just the 18 interviewed; Johnson and Wilson state that “these women were all able to identify how and when they began producing textile handcrafts. Each of their stories involved the influence of an elderly family member. A grandmother, great-aunt, or other relative would have the leisure time to spend with a young girl to teach her some technique – time that mothers seldom had to spare” (2005, p. 122) which also suggests that these participants learned these techniques as children. Comparing quiltmaking to other fiber-related techniques is beyond the scope of this study but would be an interesting avenue for further research.

Similarly, in using data from the Nebraska Quilt Project, Crews and James (1996) found that 37% of quilters after 1970 learned from a female relative and 29% were self-taught. Interestingly, 2%, or 8 participants, said they learned from a male relative. Given that this research was not based in a guild but rather within a quilt documentation project, it likely includes a broader range of quilters than those who belong to a hobby group. The guild-based
research may understate the role of female relatives in learning quiltmaking more broadly, though the data is consistent on learning as an adult.

Dickie (2003) examined the learning activities of a quilt guild as did Barry (2012), though Barry’s short-term study of one Texas guild is not as complex as Dickie’s year-long study of multiple guilds around Virginia. Dickie identified different types of learning activities within the guilds which she saw and learned about through her observations and interviews, organizing the activities on the basis of structure and whether it is an individual or group activity.

**Individual**

![Graph showing the axis of learning activities in quilt guilds](image)

*Internet quilting groups may engage in workshops during a specific time with all participants online

*Figure 2. Axis of learning activities in quilt guilds. Adapted from “The role of learning in quiltmaking” by V.A. Dickie, *Journal of Occupational Science, 10*(3), p. 123.*
Since Dickie published this chart in 2003, online options have expanded. How-to videos, sometimes called “instructables,” demonstrate techniques (Torrey, Churchill, & McDonalds, 2009). One male quilter, quoted in the Los Angeles Times, describes learning to quilt as “It’s not moms to daughters, it’s YouTube to whoever is interested” (Gelt, 2015, January 24). Bloggers and quilt shops offer online demonstration tutorials—for example, the Missouri Star Quilt Shop posts new tutorials regularly (www.quiltingtutorials.com)—and several companies, most notably Craftsy, offer online video-based classes. Craftsy listed 118 quiltmaking classes in early 2016 (http://www.craftsy.com/classes/quilting?_ct=sbqiiui-cuwqsquweho-ikr-dql-byda&_ctp=Sewing%20%26%20Quilting). Interestingly, in late 2017, Craftsy started selling popular classes as DVDs (https://www.craftsyhelp.com/hc/en-us/articles/115006639447-Are-Craftsy-Classes-Available-on-DVD), to be more accessible to those without an Internet connection.

These online video options often focus on techniques (Torrey, Churchill, & McDonalds, 2009), but Dickie (2003) found a broader range of areas of learning which she identified as: how to make a specific quilt, tools and how to use them, quilt types and history, aesthetics of quilts (color and pattern), how to make any quilt, how to be a member of the quiltmaking culture, identifying that one is a quilter, and how to stretch oneself. Learning how to make quilts and learning to use tools require hands-on experience, as quiltmaking is a sociomaterial activity as discussed above—the learner must perform the task to acquire the knowledge. The other forms of learning are situated within the quiltmaking culture but do not require hands-on quiltmaking experience.

If individuals are learning to be part of the quiltmaking culture, as well as the specific skills of quiltmaking, then they are becoming part of a community of practice. The communities
of practice model (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) provides a theoretical framework for understanding multiple groups and venues which are part of the broader quiltmaking culture that quiltmaking teachers must navigate as part of their teaching.

**Communities of Practice**

A community of practice arises around an activity that a group of people have in common, such as the case of insurance claims processors working in the same office for an insurance company (Wenger, 1998) or a leisure activity, such as upholstery (Colwell, 1997) where learners want to complete a project for their own home, rather than as a profession. A community of practice was originally defined as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 98).

**The Model**

There are three aspects of a group for it to be a community of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998), all of which are negotiated by the group itself. Joint enterprise means that the group has identified and defined a common activity. Mutual engagement is not just membership, but “being included in what matters” (p. 74). Finally, shared repertoire is the culture the group has developed, from ways of working to stories about the work to tools and routines.

Everyone is undertaking, together, the same task. The group has developed, over time, a similar approach to the task and similar understanding. While experts are sharing knowledge with novices, the group is learning together, such that “communities of practice can be thought of as shared histories of learning” (Wenger, 1998, p. 86). If the group is learning over time, the group and its shared practice are not static.
As originally theorized, change is characteristic of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Participants change when employees are hired, fired, promoted, or resign, as in the claims processing example (Wenger, 1998). In the case of hobby groups, new members join and some members leave for various reasons such as moving or changing life priorities. The change in composition alone can lead the community to evolve. Because “learning is the engine of practice, and practice is the history of that learning” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 117), a change in participants can lead to a change in the shared activity or the group’s understanding of the activity. In the case of a hobby group, for example, the specific interests of group members may change within the broad hobby. For example, a quilt guild’s interest and focus may shift from patchwork quilts to applique quilts while remaining broadly within quiltmaking.

Multiple Communities of Practice

Because communities of practice evolve in a variety of settings, people can be involved in multiple communities of practice simultaneously (Wenger, 1998). A worker can be in a community of practice with others performing the same function at their own company, but through union involvement or professional associations, also be in a community of practice with people doing the same job at other companies in the same geographic region or across the country. Hobby participants can belong to multiple groups. One pilot study participant, Lily, belonged to two formally-organized guilds, two informal quiltmaking groups, and a faith-based quilting group. Wenger (1998) would identify Lily as a “broker,” in that she belongs to multiple quilt groups so can connect those groups, expanding additional resources for learning a position.

In the case of the quiltmaker, she is also connected through a “boundary object” (Wenger, 1998) which multiple communities of practice recognize as a physical manifestation of their practice, in this case, quilts. A quiltmaker can take any quilt to multiple groups and it will be
recognized as demonstrating her expertise, the skills and techniques that are universally shared, and probably the investment of time and energy. In Wenger’s (1998) example of the claims processors, the object is the insurance claim itself which would be recognized within the processors’ community but also the community of their supervisors, the medical offices which complete the claims, and the customers of the insurance company, though each community interacts with the object differently. These various, connected communities can form a constellation of practice (Wenger, 1998).

While individuals can be part of multiple communities of practice at the same time or over time, they have to work their way into each group. The process by which an individual becomes involved in a specific community of practice has been described as “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

**Legitimate Peripheral Participation**

When someone joins a community of practice, they are a newcomer to the group. In the apprenticeship settings cited in some of the early situated cognition literature, newcomers would also be “novices” in the practice, in that they knew little or nothing of the work in which the community of practice was engaged. As a newcomer to the group, an individual has to learn the joint enterprise of the group and its shared repertoire, as well as become engaged in the group through participation. At the outset, the newcomer is on the periphery of the group and will move towards the center of the group through learning. The curriculum for the learner is the practice of the group itself, whether the newcomer is going to be a Vai and Gola tailor, a member of a Wiccan coven or a hobby quilter (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Merriam, Courtenay, & Baumgartner, 2003; Cerny, Eicher & DeLong, 1993). As newcomers learn the practice—which includes the skill and the culture—they gradually move from the periphery of the community
towards the center of the group. As originally conceived, “learning is not merely a condition for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). For quiltmakers who are part of a quilt guild, this may mean attending several guild meetings, then showing their work during the Show & Tell section of the meeting where members show completed work and talk about it. Over time, a quiltmaker may volunteer, or be recruited, to conduct a demonstration at a meeting or to serve as one of the guild officers. For the quiltmaking teachers in this study, membership in the community of practice may have meant teaching a demonstration for their own quilting groups, then being asked to teach for another quilting group.

In an apprenticeship scenario, this movement towards the center is formalized through the process of moving from apprentice to journeyman to master, as the member meets the craft’s defined knowledge goals for each level. In other workplace scenarios, recognition may not be formally acknowledged, but recognized by participants, such as when one claims processor is known in the office as the best person to answer questions (Wenger, 1998). In the study of Wiccans mentioned above, the process is formalized with set knowledge and rituals demarcating a newcomer’s movement into the community through different levels of initiation (Merriam, et al., 2003). For a newcomer to move in from the periphery, the community itself has to recognize the learner as a participant (Wenger, 1998).

Other Trajectories

One criticism of Lave and Wenger (1991) is that they originally only discussed this inward trajectory (Fuller, 2007; Jewson, 2007). Wenger (1998) elaborated, recognizing five trajectories: peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary, and outbound, noting that a trajectory “suggests not a path that can be foreseen or charted but a continuous motion – one that has a
momentum of its own in addition to a field of influences” (p. 154). An inbound trajectory is the one described initially as legitimate peripheral participation, in that newcomers on this trajectory are working their way to the center of the community. Conversely, an outbound trajectory takes a participant from the community—Wenger (1998) likens this to a child growing up, but in a leisure community it could mean someone becoming less active due to life changes such as aging or a growing family. Someone on a peripheral trajectory remains on the edges of the community “by choice or by necessity” (Wenger, 1998, p. 154) which in a leisure community might mean that someone is interested in the activity but limited in their involvement due to other constraints such as time, due to graduate school for example. Since the community’s practice evolves, people at the center may shift roles but stay in the center, which Wenger names an insider trajectory. Finally, those who serve as brokers, discussed above, may have boundary trajectories. That is, their role is to link various communities of practices rather than being central to a particular community. Wenger also recognizes that these trajectories can be “within and across communities of practice” (p. 154). Jewson (2007) suggests that these trajectories and participation more broadly can be better understood by thinking of a community as a social network.

Community as Network

By thinking of a community as a network, Jewson argues that researchers can examine “the configuration of interdependent relationships,” that is, the “relationships, bonds and interdependences between people, groups and institutions” (2007, p. 72) which links the community of practice model to network theory. It also reflects Lave and Wenger’s original definition of community of practice: “A community of practice is a set of relations among
persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” [italics added for emphasis] (1991, p. 98).

Networks are a collection of relationships among entities—people, organizations, neurons—or to describe it more academically, nodes connected by links (Mitchell, 2009). There are different types of networks with the component pieces referred to as “actors” or “nodes,” depending on the context or author. An egocentric network is based on one entry point, usually a person, and then follows that person’s connections, often called “alters”. In contrast, a complete network is a bounded system, such as a classroom or office, with all the links within that system (Heath, Fuller & Johnson, 2009). In either case, the network is made up of the connections between the different actors which interact within the system.

In network theory and network analysis, the focus is on the relationship between the actors. It is the unit of analysis for research. Whether describing the structure of a network or examining the meaning that actors place in the relationship, it is the relationship, not the actors, which is important (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The relationship provides value to the actors, though what this value is will depend upon the theoretical framework for the research. For a network of companies, value may be determined by financial connections in vendor-customer relationship. For a kinship network, the value may be emotional. For participants in a leisure group, the value may be knowledge or identity.

Within a network, actors are interdependent. The action of one affects others. The connections between actors may be strong or weak. Weak links, those which are transient or more casual, are more numerous—people, for example, cannot sustain strong, intense relationships with a large number of others but may casually know a much greater number of network (Csermely, 2006).
Given that the communities of practice model places learning in a social context, thinking of the community as a network suggests a focus on the transmission of information, knowledge, and skills between the individuals who create that context. For Jewson (2007), this adds several concepts to the understanding of communities of practice. He dubs those at the center of the network, or community, as stars who may be leaders and exercise power but recognizes that those on the periphery may have a different kind of influence, as “the primary point of contact with outsiders and members of other networks” (Jewson, 2007, p. 73). These connections to another network, or bridges, can carry new ideas or introduce new people into either network.

Thinking of a community as a network, that is a collection of relationships, broadens the idea of the “center” of the community to recognize that there can be subgroups of people within the community, different clusters which can form *cliques*. Several of these *cliques* can coexist at the center of the network, which Jewson argues gives “bridging points and connections that link the clusters may be particularly powerful and influential” (2007, p. 74). For example, within a quilt guild of 100-plus members, there are likely multiple subgroups of people who were friends before joining, have become friends through participating in retreats or other activities together, or connect because of a common interest in a specific technique.

If the community is conceived of as a network of connections, it is easier to recognize a variety of trajectories and possible roles. With one center in a community of practice, there is a single category of “expert” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Jewson argues that there can be multiple “old-timer” roles instead within a network, “as bridges, stars, isolates, mediator or gatekeepers” (2007, p. 77-78) allowing individuals to shift “as their careers develop down different routes and over time” (p. 78) and as these different roles are available. Stars are those who have many links within the network while isolates are those with few links within the network. He notes that
isolates may have power through connections to others outside the particular community’s network, similar to Wenger’s broker or boundary trajectory, which makes them bridges. Likewise, mediators may negotiate conflict within the network, between individuals or between cliques, for example.

Thinking of community as network therefore creates opportunities to examine the relationships within and between the communities, as well as to recognize that individuals may participate differently in each community. Another way to examine how individuals participate in multiple communities of practice is to examine the different aspects of participating in a leisure activity, through the concept of lines of practice (Azevedo 2011, 2013a, 2013b).

**Lines of practice**

Azevedo (2011) critiques Lave and Wenger’s (1991) conception of communities of participation and legitimate peripheral participation as not addressing the various ways that individuals participate in the community—“they do not address the specifics of individual variability in engaged forms of participation, short and long term. No two individuals pursue the same long-term trajectories in a practice, nor do they engage the practice the same way on a moment-by-moment basis” (p. 150). Viewing legitimate peripheral participation as a solely inward trajectory may be a product of Lave and Wenger’s focus on apprenticeships as an example of induction into a community of practice, where the end goal of the apprenticeship is to gain the skills to produce specific garments, deliver babies, or cut certain types of meat. However, in a leisure setting, individuals choose how and when they participate in the community or communities.

Azevedo addresses this gap with the concept of lines of practice, based on his research in a model rocket club and an amateur astronomy club (2011, 2013a, 2013b). A line of practice is
“a distinctive, recurrent pattern of long-term engagement in a person’s practice participation...[which] entails a set of closely interrelated activities that are defined by two structural elements: preferences and conditions of practice” (Azevedo, 2011, p.147).

Preferences are an individual’s choices—reading, design, launching, socializing. Conditions of practice are the “constraints and affordances,” (2011, p. 163), in effect the limitations of a particular location or site of practice. Different lines of practice are therefore created at the intersections of personal preferences, sites of practices, and conditions of practice which can lead to multiple lines of practice—“we see that at any point in time a person pursues multiple and simultaneous lines of practice” (Azevedo, 2013a, p. 490). Not unlike recreation specialization discussed above, individuals select those aspects of a hobby which most appeal to them and practice those aspects, within the larger community of interest and specific communities of practice.

**Applicability to the Quiltmaking Community**

Cerny, et al.’s (1993) study of the Minnesota Quilters, Inc. suggests that quilt guilds can be considered particular communities of practice. The group intentionally provides a variety of learning opportunities for its members so that they can determine their level and method of involvement, but “quiltmaking is the bridge by which the cultural knowledge of quilt traditions is imparted to an individual; it is a cultural expression that involves the individual in the collective experience, localized to a community of quilters” (p. 18). There is mutual engagement through the involvement of its members, joint enterprise in the hobby of quiltmaking, and a shared repertoire in the cultural knowledge of quiltmaking. The guild consciously structures its activities to allow members to determine their level of activity by attending meetings, workshops, retreats, and quilt shows as schedules and interest allow. Analyzing guild members’
statements, researchers found that members identified with this specific community of practice through participation in the activities (Cerny, et al., 1993).

Jewson’s (2007) conception of community as network appears to increase the applicability of the communities of practice model to groups formed around leisure activities by shifting the emphasis to the relationships within the community, as well as recognizing that a specific guild or club is itself sited within a larger world of those pursuing the same interest. Unlike an apprenticeship or other work situation, participation may not equal expertise in a hobby setting. How does one define “novice” for a community where a newcomer to the community is not necessarily a novice in the activity? While a new member of a guild needs to learn the culture of the particular guild, they may not necessarily need to learn the skills of the activity. Likewise, being at the center of the guild organizationally may not equate to mastery of skills. Three pilot study participants have served as presidents of their quilt guilds but did not describe it in terms of expertise but, in one case, as “eventually everyone has to be president at some point.” This therefore makes the movement from the periphery not about mastery of the shared enterprise’s skills, but participation, which suggests it is about mastery of the culture instead. That the focus is on participation, not learning as in an apprenticeship scenario, is emphasized by a participant in a study of a quilt guild in New Brunswick, Canada who notes “the guild doesn’t teach you how to quilt, it offers you teaching opportunities, learning opportunities” (Griffis, 2005, p. 92).

If mastery is about the culture, then how is the shared enterprise defined by the group? In a voluntary leisure activity, power may be expressed through determining who is welcome within the group and whether newcomers are allowed a role in decision-making for the group, that is, who is on the periphery and who is legitimate (Niewolny & Wilson, 2009). Those in the
center of the community may work to keep those on the periphery from participating fully. Alternatively, those on the periphery may be there by choice. Therefore, the idea that the community has a shared repertoire and joint enterprise is problematic, as it may only represent those in the center (Roberts, 2006). Since it is a voluntary association, if individuals do not feel welcome and included, they will just leave the group. By thinking of the community as a network, however, and recognizing different ways that individuals pursue the practice, the issue of power is less important as there is no single center and no one way to pursue the activity within a particular community of practice or across the broader community.

As discussed above, many quilters learn to quilt in organized classes and workshops offered by different venues within the broader quilting community. As organized learning opportunities outside the formal education system, these classes and workshops are forms of nonformal education.

**Nonformal Education and Teaching**

Nonformal education is defined as organized learning activities which take place outside of the formal education system (Taylor, 2012), which in the United States is the primary, secondary, and higher education systems. Taylor (2012) argues that a significant amount of nonformal education occurs in public places such as museums, libraries, parks, and other cultural institutions but that aspects of particular programs may make some of these programs more private and less accessible, such as admission fees or behind-the-scenes locations. This more accurately describes quilting workshops and classes.

There have been studies within adult education of those who teach, lead, or facilitate nonformal education activities (Grenier, 2009; Taylor, 2005, 2012). Museum docents gain expertise through formal training by the museum, supplemented by informal and incidental
learning on their own through independent reading and research, as well as by observing other docents (Grenier, 2009). The clinic leaders at consumer education sites, such as Lowe’s and Home Depot do-it-yourself (DIY) clinics, are hired as employees at the store for their prior, practical experience so have little or no teaching experience before being assigned to teach clinics. Presenters rely on their personal experience and the attendees’ needs, rather than the corporately-prepared script (Taylor, 2012). Taylor (2005) argues that these presenters develop their beliefs about teaching from their own experience with school, combined with the contextual factors surrounding presenting a drop-in clinic in the middle of a store, with most presenters having little or no prior teaching experience.

Taylor (2012) identifies a number of instructional approaches used by the nonformal educators he studied: visitor-centered approach, transmission-centered approach, encouraging questions approach, experiential approach, minimal expectations, planning driven by experience and expertise, and fun and good humor. Some of these likely apply to quiltmaking teachers, although the quiltmaking class’ more private context differs somewhat from the more public contexts that Taylor studied. The visitor-centered approach focuses on meeting the needs of those participating in the program, responding to learners’ questions, for example, even if they were asked by earlier participants in a drop-in clinic. The transmission-centered approach has a core of content which the museum guide or park naturalist prepared for the activity. In these settings, Taylor found that educators were also able to incorporate learners’ questions and interests—“It is a constructed presentation, at times a story, unique to each educator and constantly reconstructed based on the needs and interests of the learners” (Taylor, 2012, p. 51). Many educators encouraged questions as a way to both involve participants and to provide an opportunity to mold the program to meet the needs of the learners. DIY clinic facilitators often
incorporated hands-on activities within the overall presentation for an experiential approach, so that learners gained a sense of the skill needed for the project. However, many educators had minimal expectations of their audience, given the possibility that learners could walk away from the activity, and might have stumbled upon the event in the first place. However, the nonformal educators did plan for their program, often reviewing content as well as adapting it based on the presenter’s experience and personal expertise, such as the home improvement staff who ignore the prepared script in favor of their own knowledge. Finally, Taylor found that these nonformal educators incorporated fun and humor to keep the interest of their audiences throughout the activity.

While this work provides some understanding of how quiltmaking teachers, as nonformal educators, may approach their teaching, Taylor (2012) does not explore in-depth how his participants became nonformal educators. He notes that the presenters at the DIY clinics are employees, usually with a prior career in the relevant skilled trade (Taylor, 2005), but does not discuss the background of either museum docents or park naturalists or why particular store employees are selected to teach clinics. He argues that “society today is paying greater attention to lifelong learning…and much of this education is taking place outside the formal system. To understand this trend, the varying teaching contexts, and a means to improve practice, we need a clearer and more meaningful picture of nonformal education” (Taylor, 2012, p. 9). Taylor’s work addresses public contexts in nonformal education at cultural institutions, especially teaching beliefs and practice. It does not address how individuals come to teach in these contexts. The little literature available on quiltmaking teachers or teaching quiltmaking provides some background, but does not address this question either.
Quiltmaking Teachers and Teaching Quiltmaking

In reviewing the literature on quiltmaking, only two studies (Schmitt, 2005; Tracz, 2008a) focus directly on quiltmaking teachers. Other studies (Barry, 2012; Langellier, 1991; Piercy & Cheek, 2004; and Tracz, 2008b) address some aspect of teaching quiltmaking, such as types of teaching or who might be teaching.

Quiltmaking Teachers

Tracz (2008a) and Schmitt (2005) both focus on quiltmaking teachers but use different enough methods that it is difficult to find common themes, beyond the role of technology in developing or maintaining a teacher’s reputation which will be addressed below. Tracz (2008a) performed a qualitative analysis of the 178 nominees and winners of the Instructor of the Year award given by *Professional Quilter*, an industry publication, from 1995 through 2006. She found that technology played a role in increasing the number of nominees, as the nomination information became more widely available and as quiltmaking teachers increasingly used websites and blogs to communicate with potential students, though technology use did not appear to impact a nominee’s chance of winning. She found that individuals who had teaching backgrounds in other subjects, prior to teaching quiltmaking, were more likely to win. She argues, though the evidence presented is somewhat weak, that being a military wife increased the chances of being nominated as “several nominees and two winners” (Tracz, 2008a, p. 9) had moved around the country while their spouses served in the military. She identifies the nominees and winners as serving a brokering role between the quiltmaking community and the technology community, bringing technology into the quiltmaking community. She also explores the growth of tacit knowledge, the unwritten knowledge of any community, claiming that it took an average 2 years for the nominees to learn the tacit knowledge of the quiltmaking community as that was the average time between when individuals started quiltmaking and when they began teaching.
others. She notes that not all biographies included the date that the individual started
quiltmaking, but she included them in the calculation with a value of zero, as they likely did not
begin teaching before they began quiltmaking. Since she does not indicate how many cases this
applied to, it is possible that these null cases dramatically skewed the average lower. The
Instructor of the Year award also may not be representative of teaching skill. While anyone can
nominate someone for Instructor of the Year, *Professional Quilter’s* selection committee uses a
nominee-prepared dossier, which does not include teaching observations or materials, to select
the winner.

Schmitt (2005) interviewed four individuals who she identifies as art quilters who teach,
as well as a former teacher and another person Schmitt identifies as important to the art quilting
community. Her focus unfortunately strays to the history of the art quilting movement, so there
is limited information in response to her original goal of understanding why art quilt classes
offered at several Ohio venues fill quickly while the author’s own university textile/fiber art
classes do not. Her participants were professional artists prior to teaching aspects of
quiltmaking. She does not particularly delve into how they began teaching but does state “each
of the teachers with whom I spoke added teaching to their occupation which, among other things,
served to supplement their income” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 49) as artists. Three of her four
participants identified their teaching niches—one is “sought after by students wishing to learn
design” (p. 50); the second for the environment she creates to help students “loosen up, both
artistically and emotionally” (p. 50); the third teaches a specific technique, which she has also
published a book about. Schmitt’s most significant finding is that teaching—both the planning
and administrative side and the actual travel—takes away from her participants’ time to create
their own art. One participant specifically noted that repeatedly teaching the same material can also impact the teacher’s creativity in their own work.

While Tracz (2008b) did not focus on quiltmaking teachers, she did learn what quiltmaking students view as successful teacher behaviors. She surveyed 107 participants from ten quiltmaking workshops in a study of women’s learning in quilting workshops. She had permission from the workshops’ teachers for the research but did not study the teachers at all. She did survey her participants about what aspects of the teachers’ methods impacted their learning. She found that the five most important instructor behaviors were “1. Explaining directions clearly, 2. Giving a visual demonstration, 3. Providing one to one help to participants, 4. Sharing a technique tip and 5. Creating a welcoming environment” (Tracz, 2008b, p. 87). Participants preferred to learn by watching a demonstration and then trying the technique themselves, though they wanted written materials to support the demonstrations.

**Informal Peer Teaching**

Other work (Barry, 2012; Cheek & Piercy, 2004; Langellier, 1991) touches on peer teaching in quiltmaking communities, focusing on the social relationships involved. Cheek and Piercy’s (2004) research with Appalachian, Amish, and Mormon quiltmakers found that, in these particular cultures, almost half of their participants were “involved in teaching and mentoring other quilters” (p. 333). These quilters, usually older, gained increased status and respect as well as developed new social networks. Barry (2012) found a variety of informal teaching “within the [Tall Pines Quilt Guild]’s social forum of education are: a) the situated learning environment provided through the Guild events, b) peer teaching through narrative, c) mentoring, d) modeling, e) an ethic of responsibility to one another, and f) interpersonal relationships that are used as a resource between members.” (p. 92-93). Her research was sited in a quilt guild, with
observations at monthly meetings, workshops, and open stitching events but focused on the social learning, even in the workshop she attended. She observed participants advising each other on color choices, sharing tips and techniques, and other information as the need arose.

Likewise, Langellier (1991) also found that many quilters taught their peers, in more formal situations, at least in the late 1980s during her research. She writes

What becomes visible in the survey sample is the extent to which quilting is taught among quilting peers, a marker of accessibility to knowledge about quiltmaking.

Although no quantitative item directly queried teaching, numerous quilters wrote that they teach quilting, especially within the local adult education programs, but also in quilters’ own homes, to children in schools, within the University of Maine Cooperative Extension programming, and as part of the Pine Tree Way, the PTQG teacher certification program whose teachers travel throughout the state (p. 43).

The guild appears to no longer run a certification program. Its currently lists members who will teach but notes that it does not constitute an endorsement (http://www.mainequilts.org/maine_teachers.htm). Research across 30 years shows that quiltmakers appear to be very willing to share their knowledge with other quiltmakers, both in their own groups and in the broader quiltmaking community. However, there appears to have been little study of those quiltmakers who teach through organized workshops and classes. For individuals to take a class or workshop, they have to sign up in advance and pay a fee. This planning implies a level of commitment and interest well beyond just asking a peer for help, which suggests that students believe that they will learn enough from the class, presumably from the teacher, to make the investment of time and money. One of the purposes of this study is to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn to navigate the diffuse network of quilt shops, quilt
shows, quilt guilds, and other class venues to pursue their teaching career. The teachers must be presenting classes and workshops that potential students believe will be learning opportunities. This study focuses on quilting teachers, in part, because there is no credentialing system for quilting teachers so anyone can, theoretically, become a quilting teacher.

**Credentialing**

One piece of evidence which supports thinking of the quilting community as a network of communities of practice with no single center node is the fact that the quilting world appears to not use a system to certify teachers, as briefly discussed in Chapter 1. Certification is “the process by which a professional organization or an independent external agency recognizes the competence of individual practitioners” (Gilley & Galbraith, 1986). It can be a way for potential employers, clients or students to feel that an individual is competent because a third-party entity has validated that person’s skills (Carter, 2005; Gilley & Galbraith, 1986). Certification is one form of credentialing.

Credentialing, broadly defined, is a system which uses specific markers, such as academic degrees or certifications, to control specific professions. It has been used to define the medical profession, academia, and the legal profession, for example (Collins, 1979). Professions can also be defined by governmental licensure (Gilley & Galbraith, 1986; Weeden, 2002). The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Department of State currently lists twenty-nine different licensing boards and commissions, regulating professions as diverse as auctioneer examiners, nurses, Delaware River pilots, and car dealers (www.dos.pa.gov, 2015, November 29), most of which somehow connect to physical or financial well-being of the customer or patient. Credentialing driven by a profession itself through degrees, licensure, or certifications provides a way to control the number of practitioners and thereby potentially increase the financial benefit.
Different credentialing methods have different effects; Weeden (2002) found that voluntary certification had a weak effect on earnings in the occupations that she studied.

However, entities supporting certification in developing professions may argue that certification protects the client. Hernandez (2013) argues that certification and professional development is necessary for all dance teachers, but especially those operating private studios outside the purview of the K-12 or higher education system, in order to ensure appropriate training to prevent injuries to dance students. George (2013) finds that life coaches “expressed the belief that acquiring standardized credentialing would ultimately benefit clients” (p. 196) because it would establish their expertise as something more than just personal experience.

However, certification which establishes best practices for a field can do a disservice to the patient, client, or customer. Dieser (2005) argues that the Therapeutic Recreation Certification offered by the United States National Council for Therapeutic Recreation creates a “standardized framework of white Euro-North American individualism” (p. 61). At the time of his article, the Council was seeking to spread its certification internationally. Dieser argues that this could result in damage to patients from cultures which are less individually-based and instead promotes a certification model developed in Canada based in multiculturalism. Pollock (2015) finds a hierarchy of the many fitness-related certifications, with practitioners questioning whether a one-day or weekend training followed by a test will really benefit clients.

Certification does not always benefit the practitioner either. George (2013) argues that professionalization, such as the efforts of the life coaches she studied, can perpetuate social inequality rather than potentially opening up a profession—“I found that gender was a fundamental principle organizing the professionalization effort of life coaches” (p. 203). Does
the absence of a recognized certification broaden the ranks of teachers because there is no central gatekeeping entity or does it instead limit the ranks of teachers because there is no recognizable way into the field for anyone interested in teaching? Does it move gatekeeping from a central entity to there instead being many individual gatekeepers controlling access to each individual quiltmaking community?

Research on fitness experts (Pollock, 2015) and life coaches (George, 2013), both emerging fields which currently have many different certifications, may provide some insight into how quiltmaking teachers navigate the quiltmaking community. Pollock identified six strategies which individuals and publications use to establish credibility: “credentialing, name-dropping, “getting fit” success, commercial success, it’s science, and discrediting” (p. 92). Credentialing includes listing degrees and certifications, especially those from more recognized organizations. Name-dropping refers to identifying well-known individuals who are or have been clients or connections to well-known institutions. “Getting fit” references the individual’s own appearance as a model of success. Commercial success means owning a gym or creating a successful product, such as a DVD. The “it’s science” strategy involves citing scientific knowledge. Finally, discrediting was used primarily by magazines to challenge other experts’ advice.

Individual life coaches often use their own personal experiences to establish their credibility and expertise. George (2013) notes that she finds this similar to “a variety of other occupations where people have parlayed the skills and knowledge acquired from their involvement in serious leisure pursuit” (p.199), which may be the case for many quiltmaking teachers. The sociomaterial nature of quiltmaking, discussed above, means that quilts are a quiltmaker’s knowledge which must take physical form and may also act as a boundary object as
the teacher navigates quiltmaking communities, providing credibility as to quiltmaking expertise, though not teaching ability.

Summary

As of 2014, more than 16 million people in the United States were quilters. Industry research agrees with years of academic research to show that most of these quilters learned to quilt as adults. A significant portion of these learners said they learned through classes, though many are self-taught using books, videos, or other resources, or learned from a friend or relative. Yet, with this many adult learners using organized classes, little research has been done on the individuals teaching these classes. The theoretical frameworks of recreation specialization, specifically Backlund and Kuentzel’s (2013) model of leisure change, and communities of practice suggest both learning and participation play a role in developing quiltmaking expertise and navigating through the diffuse network of the quiltmaking community, perhaps practicing different aspects of quiltmaking in different communities.

This study will explore the interplay of learning and participation to discover how these quiltmaking teachers were able to develop a focus and expertise when many others do not. It will also explore how teachers work within and across the myriad inter-connected communities of practice that make up the quiltmaking community, teaching a craft hobby which requires production of a physical object to create knowledge where there is no recognized certification ostensibly ensuring teaching competence. This study provides a window to see if the quiltmaking community is open to any teacher who shows ability or if there are unseen barriers which limit access, which will provide a counterpoint to studies of fields which have enacted certifications ostensibly to demonstrate competence.
This chapter has reviewed the literature which informs this study. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology and research design.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

While much of adult learning occurs informally, learners may select a class or other organized activity to support their individual learning (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). This study assumes these classes are taught by experts in the techniques being taught. Research in leisure studies suggests that specialization is uncommon, however. Potential quiltmaking teachers presumably have to develop expertise within at least some aspect of quiltmaking, as well as be recognized for that expertise by their particular community of practice, in order to become a teacher.

The purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn and develop their specialization in quiltmaking and 2) to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn to navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops, and shows in order to pursue their teaching career. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their learning journey to their areas of expertise?
2. How have quiltmaking teachers chosen to pursue their career?
3. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials?

In this chapter, I explain the research design for this basic interpretive study. First, I explore the nature of qualitative research, then specifically the design of a basic interpretive study and my background as the researcher. I then discuss the participant selection, data collection and data analysis methods. Finally, I propose methods for ensuring the study’s verification and trustworthiness.
Qualitative Research

Qualitative research examines the lived experience of participants (Merriam, 2002). Based in an interpretivist paradigm, it assumes that knowledge is socially created through experience. Therefore, since individuals have their own experiences and create their own knowledge, there can be multiple realities. Qualitative research explores “how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 15) By exploring spoken or written words, images, documents, or items created by the subject, researchers develop an understanding of the explicit, implicit or even tacit meanings that the subject has of a given experience or topic. Because meaning and knowledge are created, there is no one right answer or one right experience. Researchers examine the nuances of the individual experience as data, which also means that the research findings cannot always be generalized to a larger group than the one studied. Qualitative research deeply engages in the study of the particular, rather than striving to understand a general principle applicable to many (Patton, 2015). This approach is in contrast to quantitative researchers who come out of a positivist tradition which seeks to find the only answer, the right answer, to any question (Merriam, 2009) and claim generalizability through sample sizes and other measures.

Because “qualitative inquiry, which focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 2), the researcher is the primary data collection method (Merriam, 2002). In the most common data collection methods, the researcher conducts interviews, makes observations, and collects documents (Merriam, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015) rather than using impersonal, standardized surveys as a quantitative study might.
Qualitative research then uses an inductive process to bring out the meanings and understanding of the topic under study (Merriam, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). Researchers use forms of analysis that identify themes or patterns in the data which the researcher can continue to explore as during continued data collection, to “build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively deriving postulates or hypotheses to be tested (as in positivist research)” (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). It is sometimes important to begin analysis while still collecting data so that emerging themes can be explored with additional data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

In describing qualitative findings, researchers use rich description—detailed evidence from the data—to describe the context and to support the findings. This description supports the findings, using the words of a participant from an interview or observations of an activity (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research is appropriate to this study because I am seeking to understand quiltmaking teachers’ experiences and choices which will be unique to each individual. My hope is to gain understanding of how and why my participants became teachers, primarily to explore how this happens in a community where, in theory, anyone can become a teacher.

**Basic Interpretive Studies**

This study is a basic interpretive study, utilizing interviews of quiltmaking teachers and augmented by a content analysis of quiltmaking teacher’s biographies, as published in class promotional materials or on the teachers’ personal blogs. A basic interpretive study is the most common type of qualitative research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The goal of a basic qualitative study is to identify and understand the meanings created by participants around the study’s subject (Merriam, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).
Patton (2015) considers basic interpretive studies, which he calls generic qualitative inquiry, to be based in pragmatism in order “to seek practical and useful answers that can solve, or at least provide direction in addressing concrete problems” (p. 152). Pragmatism, as a philosophical system, focuses on experience, outcomes, and shared beliefs (Patton, 2015). It links theory and practice, emphasizing that “reality…is to be revealed and experienced” (McCaslin, 2008, p. 672) so that truth is what currently works in this reality. Consequently, a basic qualitative inquiry is often focused on understanding how something currently works (Patton, 2015).

To accomplish this, researchers select participants who will yield rich information related to the topic, a purposeful sample (Patton, 2015). The study focuses on the particular—an individual’s experience in a specific context at a specific time (Merriam, 2002). Although there are several methods of purposeful sampling, participants must meet the study’s overall criteria for selection to increase the likelihood of collecting useful data. As discussed below, this study therefore selected participants who are currently teaching quiltmaking classes or workshops.

A basic interpretive study is an appropriate methodology for this project both because it focuses on individual teachers’ experiences but also because it is exploratory, looking at a topic which has little research available. There is little understanding of how individuals successfully specialize and then become recognized as teachers by their communities of practice. While many studies, spanning more than 30 years, have identified classes and workshops as some of the most important methods which quilters use to learn (Barry, 2012; Davis, 1982; Dickie, 2003; Hall-Patton, 1989; King, 1997; Kucko, 2003; Tracz, 2008; Woods, 1993) there appear to be few studies of those teaching these classes or workshops (Schmitt, 2005; Tracz, 2008a). A
basic interpretive study, a methodology focused on understanding how something works, is appropriate.

**Background of the Researcher**

One of the core features of qualitative research is that the researcher is the instrument, unlike quantitative research which often uses surveys or questionnaires (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In qualitative data collection, especially interviews, participants interact with the researcher rather than a piece of paper or screen. The researcher has to recognize her positionality during the research phase and disclose it as part of the findings (Cresswell, 2009). Because a qualitative researcher interprets data during the analysis, rather than a computer program crunching numbers, the researcher has to acknowledge her own positionality as it could affect analysis.

I am a White, middle-age, straight woman from a New England cultural background. My maternal family has a tradition of women’s handwork but recent generations have not quilted. Our few family quilts date from the Depression and my great-grandmothers, who were retired farm wives at that point. My mother has sewn throughout her life, from participation in 4-H as a girl through a career as a home economics teacher and into retirement, but she does not quilt. I knew my maternal grandmother in her retirement, when she crocheted afghans and lace. She had a sewing machine but focused any sewing on mending and alterations at that point in her life. I consider myself a dabbler in quiltmaking but identify primarily as a needleworker. I enjoy the piecing phase of quiltmaking, alternately described as patchwork, but not the quilting phase itself. I have taken several classes in different quiltmaking techniques and quilt projects, as well as many classes or workshops in other needlework and fiber techniques.
As someone who has taken a mix of classes in different fiber and needlework techniques, I am fascinated by the commonalities and differences in teacher style as well as variances which appear to be tied to the particular technique. Teaching students who are scattered around a large room at sewing machines appears to require a different approach than teaching a group of students bunched together in a small room with knitting needles. Teachers develop instructional methods for approaching the hands-on learning required to master any of these techniques. My cultural background and past experiences likely affect my preferences as a learner, which are influenced by how I have learned successfully in my own life.

As a social historian in my early post-secondary education, I am always intrigued by individuals’ stories and life experiences. As a museum educator who may have to recruit program presenters from assorted leisure communities, I seek to understand how these communities work and how they recognize excellence. As a past program chair for several leisure communities a decade ago, including a needlework guild, I want to understand how teachers navigate interconnected communities as well as maintain their own practice. These factors inform my interest in quiltmaking teachers’ stories of how they learned to quilt and how they began teaching. How have some individuals begun teaching just a few years after first learning quiltmaking, while others quilted for decades before starting to teach? How do the assorted variables affecting participation, as identified in the recreation specialization literature—age, life stage, family responsibilities, income, gender—interact in these individuals’ lives to allow them to develop sufficient expertise to teach? How have they become known as teachers—what is effort on their part, perhaps using technology as Tracz (2008a) suggests, versus luck and opportunity? What has brought these teachers to a career that brings them to teaching some aspect of quiltmaking in Southcentral Pennsylvania?
Participant Selection

I identified individuals who were teaching quiltmaking classes—defined in this study as organized events requiring a fee and advanced registration—at any venue in the eight-county region of Southcentral Pennsylvania during calendar year 2016 to locate potential participants. I searched online for quilt guilds, quilt shops, and quilt shows to identify potential venues and then determined which of these venues listed classes and identified teachers. Although I estimated there to be about seven quilt guilds, eight to ten quilt shops, and two large quilt shows, I was able to identify classes and teachers at three quilt shows, five quilt guilds, and seven quilt shops through online searches and some personal contact with quilt guilds at the Gathering of the Guilds in February 2016. The list of classes and teachers is certainly not exhaustive, but I identified more than 200 individual classes and 80 individual teachers teaching classes predominantly in January through July 2016. This time frame included the two major quilt shows in the region and I did not expect the quilt shops to change their teaching roster significantly in the latter part of the year, so the few additions would likely be fall speakers at quilt guilds. I reached out to several quilt shops during visits to those stores if they offered classes but did not identify teachers. I was contacted by one teacher from one of these stores, but after I had completed data collection.

While identifying teachers, I collected biographical materials that were available. These included teacher biographies from all three quilt shows and two quilt shops which publish biographies on their websites. I searched for personal websites or blogs for all 80 identified teachers and found 34 personal sites with biographies which I used for the content analysis phase discussed below.
I then recruited interview participants from the list of 80 teachers, striving to have participants from each type of venue—quilt guilds, quilt shops, and quilt shows—in hopes of representing those who taught nationally, regionally, or locally.

The interview selection criteria were therefore an individual who is:

- Adult 18 or older
- Teaching or scheduled to teach at least one class at a quilt guild, quilt shop, quilt show or other venue in the selected geographic area during 2016 which involved
- Teaching either a technique distinctive to quiltmaking or the construction of a quilted item.

Selecting participants from those teaching quiltmaking classes in this region ensured that these individuals are thought of as teachers by some portion of the region’s quilters, be it a guild program chair, a quilt shop owner, or a quilt show organizer. Within this purposefully identified pool of potential participants, I had to accept convenience sampling, that is, interviewees were those teachers who were willing and able to participate, though the goal was to achieve maximal variation within the identified pool in hopes of encountering a wide variety of experiences. Cresswell (2013) notes that “when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives – an ideal in qualitative research” (p. 157). Though quilting is dominated by women, there are nationally-known male teachers, so I was quite happy when one local guild had a male teacher who agreed to be interviewed. Likewise, since prior research has shown that the average quilter is middle-aged, to achieve maximal variation, I found an individual who taught at a quilt shop but had served as an officer at one of the local Modern Quilt Guild chapters which appear to attract a younger demographic. I was also able to include a teacher who is
African-American. I had been concerned about finding a non-White participant when I discovered that the African American Quilter Gathering in Harrisburg does not offer workshops and, while one of the quilt shops includes a biography for a Hmong quilter, she was not teaching during the study’s focus period. I also had one participant who is a Certified Instructor for one company.

I conducted 15 interviews, however I did not include one interview in my data analysis. It was my only Skype interview and I had recording issues, so since I had saturation, I did not use this data. I had estimated 12 to 15, but the necessary number of participants is whatever number is necessary “to answer the question posed at the beginning of the study” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 101). This is generally defined as reaching saturation, that is, additional information provides no new information, only redundant information (Patton, 2015). I felt that I was reaching saturation after about 12 interviews, but the two additional interviews helped with maximal variation.

The 14 recorded interviews ranged from 35 minutes to 114 minutes, with both the median and mean of 65 minutes. I conducted five interviews at the participant’s home or studio, one interview at my home, five interviews at a quilt shop or retreat center and the remaining three interviews in other public spaces.

In full disclosure, before or during data collection, I was a student in classes taught by six of participants—Ann, Betsy, Bob, Claire, Emily, and Jane—and Maggie was a student alongside me in one class. I did no data collection during classes as it was not part of my research design and I was focused on my role as a student. Kate is a personal friend. However, analysis is based solely on interviews and does not include any information which I may have gleaned through following a teacher on social media or through personal contact.
**Data Collection**

There are two types of data collection which overlapped: the collection of auto/biographies of quiltmaking teachers and semi-structured interviews with participants. While identifying venues which hold quiltmaking classes and, where possible, the corresponding teachers, I collected any biographies provided as part of the class listings or other promotional materials. It turned out to be difficult to find biographies through quilt guilds—if the guild listed speakers on their websites at all, they rarely included biographical information. This data was presumably included in the guild newsletters for members only, as is the case with my own quilt guild. I also searched for blogs, websites, or other written materials created by the identified teachers and collected any autobiographical statements found within these sources.

These documents, whether included as part of promoting a class or as part of a quiltmaking teacher’s blog “give us a snapshot into what the author thinks is important, that is, their personal perspective” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 166). By including teacher biographies which are included in class announcements, this gave some insight into how the teachers are portrayed to potential students, especially those biographies included on quilt show websites. Word count variance and word choice did give some sense if quilt show and shop biographies were generated by the teacher; supplied by the teacher but edited by the class organizer; or written by the organizer, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The biographies also supplied factual, background information for those teachers who become interview participants.

From the pool of teachers identified, I recruited participants for semi-structured interviews, generally through email contact. I was able to recruit two through a personal request at a quilt shop. A semi-structured interview is guided by prepared questions but follows topics or thoughts which arise during the interview, with exact wording and order of questions evolving in
reaction to the participant’s answers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This format allows for new ideas and themes to emerge during the interview. This was appropriate to this study as it is exploring participants’ experience in developing their own quiltmaking skills as well as their individual experiences. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The study was conducted under the auspices of Penn State’s Institutional Review Board. Even though IRB determined that the study was exempt, I provided participants with informed consent information prior to interviews. They were offered the opportunity to select their own pseudonym; all individuals will remain anonymous unless they prefer otherwise. Participants were also told how data is secured.

**Data Analysis**

Data must be analyzed in order to be useful - “data analysis is the process used to answer your research question(s)” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 202). This study used two forms of data analysis, content analysis of the teacher biographies and constant comparative analysis of the interviews.

**Content analysis**

The teacher biographies were collected from quilt show listings, quilt shop teacher or staff listings, and individual teachers’ biographies as included on their websites or blogs. Teacher blogs and online class listings are forms of media, which Berger (2014) defines as “a means of delivering messages, information, and text to audiences” (p. 350). Media content analysis is often quantitative but McNamara (2006) argues that this can substitute quantity for intensity rather than exploring meaning. Media content analysis should therefore also include other analysis methods (Hansen, 1998 as quoted in McNamanara, 2006; Herring, 2010; McNamara 2006). While I considered using multiple forms of analysis if needed, the
biographies were straight text documents, though sometimes accompanied by a headshot or a listing of publications, awards, fabric collections, and the like.

The text data collected was analyzed using qualitative content analysis (QCA). This method provided a flexible, systematic way to reduce the data, “focus[ing] on selected aspects of meaning, namely those aspects that relate to the overall research question” (Schreier, 2014, p. 170). In conducting QCA, the researcher develops specific categories and subcategories based either on the theoretical framework or a selection of the data. Once this coding frame is created, all of the data is analyzed, but only for these meanings and ideas.

The researcher then uses the theoretical framework and rationale to select data for analysis. In this case, since the study examines the careers of quiltmaking teachers presenting classes, the data was the class announcements and teacher auto/biographies as included in the class promotional materials and/or on teachers’ blogs. I used an inductive category development that examined a sampling of the data from ten biographies, collected from a mix of show and shop teacher biographies as well as from teachers’ own sites, to generate the main categories and subcategories as well as to identify the structural elements of the auto/biographies. This sampling reflected “the full diversity of data sources” (Schreier, 2014, p. 175) which meant a mix of class promotional materials and teachers’ websites /blogs.

Schreier (2014) advocates for creating main categories based on concepts, but then subcategories based on the data sample. The researcher creates categories using “theory, prior research, everyday knowledge, logic” (Schreier, 2014, p. 176). Then, the researcher reads the selected data samples to identify concepts relevant to the categories; if an existing subcategory does not cover the concept, then the researcher creates a new subcategory. This process continues through the data sample until no additional concepts are identified. The researcher
then reviews the categories and subcategories, combining overlapping categories until the coding frame is completed (MacNamara, 2006; Mayring, 2000; Schreier, 2014).

I read the ten samples, highlighting data which was relevant to the research questions, which I then mind-mapped to identify categories and subcategories. I used these to create the coding frame which is included in Appendix B.

Once the coding frame was established and defined, I divided the collected data units of analysis, which I determined to be the individual teacher biography. A quilt show teacher listing which had 18 teacher biographies contained 18 units of analysis. While Schreier (2014) recommends using a thematic criterion for qualitative content analysis, which usually means segmenting the data when the topic changes, I decided that it made more sense to use the individual biography since this study focuses on quiltmaking teachers’ experiences. I tested the coding frame by coding several biographies, at which point I combined several categories and split others.

After the trial phase was successfully completed and the coding frame finalized, I coded all of the text data collected teacher auto/biographies. The biographies themselves did not contain other forms of data, other than the headshots mentioned above and, in one case, photos of fabric collections which the teacher designed. Therefore, despite 34 of the 92 biographies appearing on websites and blogs, the data did not include images or links, so I did not use any other forms of analysis.

Qualitative content analysis was appropriate for this data as it is was used to identify common pathways to teaching for quiltmaking teachers and ways teachers are navigating their communities of practice. Reducing the data using QCA identified descriptions of these pathways
and methods, while analysis of the interview data will open up the meanings of these experiences to participants.

**Constant Comparative Analysis**

In contrast, the participant interviews were the main source of data and were analyzed using the constant comparative method of analysis as a way to open up this data. This meant coding interview transcripts for themes related to the research questions, looking for emerging themes, and returning to the data to reevaluate it if needed. As described by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) “coding is nothing more than assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (p. 199).

I loaded interview transcripts into Nvivo 11, a software program supporting qualitative analysis, for coding. I coded data which reveals similar ideas together to create themes (Creswell, 2013), or “nodes” in Nvivo’s terminology, in part connecting them to the literature and theory that informs the study which Strauss and Corbin (2008) describe as “brainstorming about the data in order to identify meaning, then conceptualizing that meaning by assigning concepts to stand for what is being expressed” (p. 187). These themes, or categories, must “be exhaustive…be mutually exclusive…be as sensitive to the data as possible…be conceptually congruent” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 213). That is, codes should each only fit into one category and must be supported by the data. There must be rich, thick description, drawn from the data, to support each category.

I made note of themes informally throughout the interview process so that if surprising themes emerged, I could pursue these themes in upcoming interviews. Baptiste (2001) warns: “It is advisable that analysts do not get too wedded to their initial hunches and working hypotheses. Such premature commitment often leads the analyst to ignore important new insights and
relationships that may greatly enrich her developing story or theory” ([p. 11]). For example, I follow a particular national quilting teacher through her blog and on Facebook. She appears to use these two methods as well as a website rich with tutorials and free patterns, as well as a free annual mystery quilt project and periodic webcam sessions, as a way to develop a following in the quilting world that will take her classes and purchase her books. This is just one teacher so I could assume that these are the methods all national teachers use. Local or regional teachers may have completely different strategies as well.

During the coding process, I created themes and subthemes as they emerged from the data. I returned to the interview transcripts to recode data which I had identified as “design process” as this proved to be too broad a category. During recoding, I developed six subcategories for data which were agency; block or pattern; fabric; impact of tools on social; relationship to recipient; and tools. After coding transcripts to generate initial themes, I used the data from each theme to analyze the themes most related to the research questions to more fully identify themes and subthemes. During this process, I realized that I did not have data from the interviews which really addressed one of my initial research questions, “how do quiltmaking teachers represent their expertise to potential students,” but the broad design process category had generated several themes which fit nicely with the Actor-Network Theory framework. I therefore generated a new research question, “how do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials.”

I proposed two primary data analysis methods for this study: qualitative content analysis for the biographies, and the constant comparative method for interviews and other data which may emerge. Data did not emerge during the study which suggested another form of analysis.
Verifying and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research does not seek to be replicable or generalizable. Instead, it seeks to be credible, consistent, confirmable, and trustworthy. Because qualitative research is based in constructivism—“one of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 242)—there is not one right answer. Consequently, another researcher is unlikely to find participants with identical experiences which they have come to understand in the same way as this study’s participants.

Credibility

Credibility means that the research findings match reality as it is perceived, especially by participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study used member checks and triangulation to achieve validity, as well as the peer examination inherent in a dissertation. To conduct member checks, I shared emergent findings with participants for their comment and offered interview transcripts (Merriam, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). One participant, Betsy, responded to the emergent findings by writing “it is amazing to me to know so many of us started the same way.”

Triangulation means using multiple sources of data, multiple methods of data collection, or multiple people analyzing the data, in order to ensure that no one source or viewpoint colors the interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, I sought to use purposeful sampling with maximal variation to find participants with different teaching experiences, such as local teaching at quilt shops, regional teaching at guilds, and national teaching at shows to have multiple sources of interview data. While I approached multiple individuals, convenience ultimately determined which particular individuals agreed to participate, especially for nationally-known teachers. The information from the teacher biographies found on blogs, class listings, or other sources provided an additional type of data.
Confirmability and Dependability

Confirmability means that others viewing the researcher’s data would come to similar conclusions. It may better be described as consistency that is “the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 251). In addition to triangulation discussed above, I maintained an audit trail through a research journal (Merriam, 2002). I noted reflections after interviews, thoughts and ideas during data analysis, and other interactions with the data in order to document the research process to create “a detailed account of how the study was conducted and how the data were analyzed” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 253).

Dependability means that the research is reliable. The study’s procedures are clear, transparent, and understandable. This study achieves dependability through maintenance of an audit trail, clear, detailed description of research methods, and the use of triangulation as described above.

Transferability

Qualitative researchers regularly offer disclaimers that their research cannot be generalized, as it explores lived experiences of individuals rather than seeking a single truth applicable to all people, as positivist researchers do. As Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explain, “a single case or a small, nonrandom, purposeful sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p. 254). Instead, qualitative research seeks to be transferable, that is, if there is a similar situation, the learning from one study might be applied to the new situation. In the case of this study, I want the findings to be transferable to another leisure setting, such as knitting or woodworking, which focuses on making physical objects where learners take classes from non-credentialed teachers.
To achieve transferability, this study used purposeful sampling, described in the participant selection above, as well as using thick, rich description in reporting the findings. This approach means presenting evidence for the findings “in the form of quotes from participant interviews, field notes, and documents” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 257). This allows readers to determine if there is sufficient evidence for the findings as well as evaluate if the findings would relate to another context.

This chapter has explained the proposed methodology for this study of quiltmaking teachers, including purpose, research questions, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and means of achieving validity and reliability. The next chapter will describe the findings of the qualitative content analysis of teacher biographies.
CHAPTER FOUR

QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Fabric Designer. Competitive Quilter. Author. Product Designer. Respected Expert. Corporate Ambassador. Quiltmaking teachers have many roles in the quiltmaking community, in addition to their teaching, which they use to highlight their relationship and value to respected companies and venues in the quiltmaking industry. As discussed previously in Chapter 3, I identified individuals who were teaching a class or workshop in the eight counties of Southcentral Pennsylvania in 2016. While identifying individual teachers, I collected their biographies when available, from either the host venues’ websites or subsequently from teachers’ personal websites/blogs. I conducted qualitative content analysis on a total of 92 biographies of 65 individuals. Fifty-eight biographies appeared on quilt show or quilt store websites. The remaining 34 biographies appeared on the individual teacher’s website or blog.

I analyzed these biographies to address the purposes of this study through a broader group of individuals than feasible or necessary to interview. In order to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn and develop their specialization in quiltmaking and how these quiltmaking teachers learn to navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops, and shows in order to pursue their teaching careers, I use three research questions:

1. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their learning journey to their areas of expertise?
2. How have quiltmaking teachers chosen to pursue their career?
3. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials?

In this chapter, I discuss the main themes to emerge from the qualitative content analysis. First, I discuss my sources, focusing on the quilt show and quilt shop websites which include multiple biographies and examine the values of the show organizers and shop owners as revealed
in the biographies. Next, I examine the role of sewing as an entry point to quiltmaking, especially in the context of childhood sewing and being taught by family. Finally and for the majority of this chapter, I explore how quiltmaking teachers represent their varying roles within the quiltmaking industry and the relationships which teachers highlight to show their connections to industry giants. Some of these relationships are contractual while others instead provide outside validation of the teachers’ work through a company-specific certification.

I begin with a discussion of biographical sources.

Sources

As mentioned above and discussed in-depth in Chapter 3, I conducted a qualitative content analysis on a total of 92 biographies of quiltmaking teachers in Southcentral Pennsylvania in 2016. There was significant overlap or outright duplication from personal websites into quilt show biographies, so while the unit of analysis was the biography, the discussion will generally use the individual. Not surprisingly, those teachers originally identified through a national or regional quilt show, and therefore presumably more active on the teaching circuit, were more likely to have a personal website/blog and consequently a second biography.

Biography Sources

Approximately two-thirds of the biographies were from three quilt shows and two quilt shops, with the remaining one-third on personal websites/blogs.

AQS QuiltWeek® Lancaster is one of the shows organized by the American Quilters’ Society, owned by Schroeder Publishing, held in March annually for at least the last 5 years (www.aqs.com). In 2016, AQS held eight QuiltWeek® events (www.aqsblog.com/come-to-quiltweek-2016-in-florida-and-7-more) around the country. The juried quilt show is open to international entries. Teachers are generally nationally-known. In 2016, there were fifteen
biographies, but I excluded one who was teaching techniques which were not distinctive to quiltmaking. I attended one day of the show but did not take any classes.

Quilt Odyssey is a privately-owned regional show, held in Hershey, Pennsylvania on the last weekend in July (www.quiltodyssey.com). The juried show is open to international entries. Teachers are generally nationally-known, with some regional-only teachers. In 2016, there were twenty teacher biographies but I excluded two who were presenting programs but not teaching hands-on classes. I attended the 2016 show and a lunch event, and volunteered for one shift with “white gloves,” those who can show the backs of quilts or highlight details for attendees since visitors can not touch the quilts.

Celebration of Quilts is a biennial quilt show sponsored by the York Quilters Guild, my own guild (http://www.celebrationofquilts.com). While there have been demonstrations as part of the show previously, the guild offered classes for the first time in 2016, which was made possible by a venue change. The show featured two teachers from outside the guild and then six guild members also taught classes. One of the outside teachers was contracted by the guild while the other teacher appears to have been contracted by a vendor. The vendor sells domestic and long-arm sewing machines. While registration was handled by the show, classes were held in the vendor’s area on its machines. I did take one class at the 2016 show on hand-piecing and hand-quilting, but was not involved in any planning for the show. My volunteer assignments were as one of the “white gloves” and helping take down quilts at the end of the show. I did enter one quilt for judging but did not win an award.

Old Country Store is a quilt and gift shop located in Intercourse, in Lancaster County (www.theoldcountrystore.com). The current owners have owned the store for several years. They sell fabric and finished quilts and offer classes in an adjacent classroom space. At the tie of
data collection, Old Country Store’s website had biographies for eighteen teachers on their website, but I excluded two who were not teaching hands-on quiltmaking. I have not attended instructional classes at Old Country Store but have attended open stitching days when they occur on Saturdays.

Simply Stashing is a quilt shop located in Littlestown, west of Gettysburg (www.simplystashing.com). At the time of data collection, it had biographies for three individuals who teach classes at the shop as part of the six staff biographies.

Please refer to Appendix B for a list of teachers from each source as well as the biographies sourced from individuals’ websites and blogs.

In providing information about their teachers, several of these sources prioritize the teacher’s relationship to the venue as well as revealing the values of the organization or owner.

**Relationship between Venue, Teacher, and Venue’s Values**

While I do not have confirmation, looking at the ranges in word counts, as well as comparing biographies from a show with biographies from individuals’ websites, it appears that AQS tightly edits biographies while York Quilt Guild barely edits biographies at all. Old Country Store appears to provide a designated script or else edits biographies for consistency, while Quilt Odyssey rewrites individuals’ biographies, adding editorial comments. Venues reveal their priorities through these changes.

Old Country Store is independent and locally-owned, so it is probably not surprising that it appears to value its teachers’ relationships with their families and local communities. Eleven of the fifteen teachers mention their families with a twelfth teacher mentioning her dog. Six of the teachers mention being involved with a faith community in some capacity. These comments suggest that the shop owners consider these important connections to mention to potential
students. Old Country Store is located in Lancaster County, where the historical role of the Amish may create a broader culture that values faith and family.

The York Quilters Guild teacher biographies appear to have had little editing, suggesting that the teachers were able to control the content, as especially evidenced by guest teacher Karen Kay Buckley’s biography which duplicates the biography on her personal website verbatim. Five of the six guild members highlighted their membership in the guild, with Carol Blevins’ biography noting that she “is one of the founders of the York Quilters Guild” while Shelia Arnold is a “founding mother” (www.celebrationofquilts.com/workshop-instructors.html). The sixth member, Pat Matthews, instead highlights the twice-monthly charity quilting group she hosts for the guild and lists the local charities to which they donate their work. These teachers appear to see their role in the guild as important information for their potential students, drawing credibility from the guild association, in addition to using their history as quiltmakers.

The biographies for teachers at the Quilt Odyssey show are, for most teachers, excerpted from the teacher’s personal website biography. It is evident by some changes from first-person to third person and direct comparison, that the quilt show organizers did some editing. Most notably, the show organizers have added references which establish an ongoing relationship between the show and the teacher. For example, Norma Campbell “returns to us for her 16th year” and it is “Mimi’s 16th year with us” (www.quiltodyssey.com). Likewise, in Margaret Solomon Gunn’s biography, the organizers have added “we at Quilt Odyssey have been blessed with her quilts in our shows and Margaret has almost always received top honors for her work.” This personalization is also evident in biographies for some teachers who do not appear to have a personal website biography. The Quilt Odyssey organizers include in Cindy Bender’s biography this parenthetical phrase, “And I give her a thumbs up as an organized and discerning teacher
who makes any class fill with laughter and delight as we learn!” They also welcome Sue Troyan, beginning her biography with “We are delighted to have Sue back with us this year!” These comments suggest that the Quilt Odyssey organizers are using biographies to show which teachers are part of the ongoing community of this regional show, in addition to utilizing the teachers’ prepared biographies which highlight their roles in the quilting industry. Whether the show wants to gain credibility from its ongoing relationship with well-known teachers, values building a community over time, or both, is unclear.

Many of these biographies from shows and stores, in addition to those from individuals’ websites/blogs, highlight the role of sewing as the beginning of their quiltmaking journey.

**The Role of Family and Sewing in the Quiltmaking Journey**

More than a third of the quiltmaking teachers speak to a previous background in sewing, often as the first sentence of their biographies, and many mention being taught by female family members as children. The connection to sewing is not surprising as the core mechanics of quiltmaking and other forms of sewing—whether garment construction or home décor—are the same. All connect two pieces of fabric using thread and a needle, whether by hand or machine.

Teachers who sewed first seem to form two clusters, those who learned as children and those who learned as teenagers. While Andrea Schnur and Donna Sheffer say they have been sewing as long as they can remember, Donna Lynn Thomas may have been the youngest to learn as she “has been sewing since the age of four” (www.donnalynnthomasquilter.com). Sarah O’Sullivan has “been sewing since childhood” (www.celebrationofquilts.com/workshop-instructors.html) and Sandy Fitzpatrick “began sewing at an early age” (www.hissyfitzdesigns.com).
In contrast, several learned to sew as youth or teenagers, with Shelia Arnold and Mary Alice Fyock both mentioning learning through their participation in 4-H. Only Sherry Musselman mentioned learning in home economics class in high school. None of these suggest a family connection. The teachers who sewed in childhood represent the spectrum of teachers, from first-time teachers to those who teach occasionally to those who teach nationally.

Many quiltmaking teachers were taught to sew by their mothers or other female relatives. Margaret Solomon Gunn says “my mother first taught me to embroider, and then to make clothing and pillows” (www.mainelyquiltsoflove.com). Marti Michell “was taught to sew by her mother” (www.quiltodyssey.com). Patti Laird’s mother “was a professional seamstress, and she taught me to sew at a young age” (www.sleepingcatcreations.com) while Mary Jane Miller “learned her sewing skills from her mother and sister” (https://theoldcountrystore.com/classes/teachers). Old Country Store teacher Carol Martin’s biography reports “Carol’s mother taught her how to sew her own clothing” though her “earliest memories of quilts involve playing under the quilt frame while her Grandma was quilting” (https://theoldcountrystore.com/classes/teachers). In other cases, a family member triggered an interest in sewing or quilting. Almyra Webb’s grandmother bought her a sewing machine when she was 12, leading her to begin sewing, while Sara Breton’s mother “gave me the quilting bug when she bought me my first sewing machine” (www.simplystashing.com/about-us.html). Karen Sievert blamed her sister, saying she “began her quiltmaking journey in 1997 when her sister dragged her into a quilt shop” (www.quiltodyssey.com). Sewing or quiltmaking was presumably something that these relatives enjoyed who then shared their love with these individuals who would become quiltmaking teachers.
While many teachers were influenced to sew by older family members, some teachers were inspired to begin quilting, whether they had sewed previously or not, by changes in life related to their children. Three teachers mention their sons, though only one is in reference to the birth of a son. Norma Campbell made her first quilt for her son while Helen Choma started quilting “when her son asked her to make one for him” (www.facebook.com/pg/helenquiltcottage). Mimi Dietrich made her first quilt “in 1975 for my Jon when he was born” (mimidietrich.com). This supports the role of handmade gifts in building relationships as seen in literature (Johnson & Wilson, 2005), whether in anticipation of a new relationship with a child or to strengthen an existing relationship.

For other teachers, life changes tied to growing older and having more time available lead to quiltmaking. Cheryl See does mention that she took her first quilting class “after her daughters were grown” while her fellow Old Country Store teacher Almyra Webb began exploring home embroidery and then quilting “when the children grew up” (https://theoldcountrystore.com/classes/teachers). Their colleague Sherry Musselman mentions learning to hand-quilt while in nursing school but then says “after retiring from nursing, Sherry returned to her first love of sewing and finally learned to quilt” (https://theoldcountrystore.com/classes/teachers) so it is unclear if she only dabbled in hand-quilting briefly or thinks of it differently from other aspects of quiltmaking.

While about a third of the quiltmaking teachers highlight their quilting origin stories, almost every teacher uses their biography to show their varied roles in the quilting industry and community, especially by noting associations to respected brands.
Roles in the Quilting Industry and Credibility through Association

For most of the teachers, participation in the quilting community means participation in the national/international quilting industry. This participation is shown by illustrating the different roles an individual plays, such as pattern designer, fabric designer, or author, especially by naming the different shows, companies, and publications with which the teacher has relationships. To introduce these various roles, I created a network map based on Karen Kay Buckley’s biography. I used the biography in the York Quilt Guild’s 2016 Celebration of Quilts show website but it is identical to the biography on Buckley’s website.

Figure 3. Network map of Karen Kay Buckley’s biography, Celebration of Quilts, York Quilt Guild, 2016.
As the Buckley example illustrates, one teacher can have many different roles, and multiple relationships while fulfilling one role. In many cases, a teacher biography is also listing of their books, fabric lines, and favorite teaching venues. All of these highlight the teachers’ roles and interconnectedness in the quilting industry’s network and the sources of their income.

**Quilt Designer**

Making quilts which successfully compete on the quilt show circuit does not automatically mean that a quilting teacher also writes and sells quilt designs for those or other quilts. Those who do design patterns may self-publish their patterns or may work with publishers of books and magazines.

Thirteen of the teachers in some way discuss self-publishing their patterns. Norma Campbell designs the patterns she teaches, writing “I now enjoy designing and producing patterns that are used in most of my classes” (normacampbellquilts.wix.com) on her personal website. Linda Hahn has her own line, “marketed under the name Frog Hollow Designs” (www.froghollowdesigns.com). Some are using technology to sell patterns through their own websites, rather than having to work through a distributor to reach quilt shops. John Kubinec expects “many of the magazine patterns will soon be available as PDF downloads in my store on this website” (www.bigrigquilting.com). Patti Laird similarly refers to “my original quilt patterns, which I sell directly on my Patterns page” (www.sleepingcatcreations.com) on her website. While Kubinec discusses patterns which were published in a magazine first, the others teachers who are self-publishing are selling designs based on their personal brands.

Many other teachers instead list magazines where their patterns have been published, presumably to demonstrate that these publishers found their work worthy. Michele Scott’s AQS Lancaster biography reads “Michele’s quilt designs have been published in a variety of major
publications including *American Quilter*, *McCall’s Quilting*, and Fons and Porter’s *Love of Quilting*” (www.quiltweek.com/instructors/Lancaster-instructors/#mg_ld_39831) Linda Hahn’s extensive biography on her personal site lists seven different publications as well as publishing relationships with AQS. Kimberly Einmo’s personal website similarly lists a number of quilting magazines in which her work has appeared. Michele Scott augments the list of publications mentioned in her biography with a list of all her published designs by publication, issue, and design name to ensure that potential students—and shoppers—can find them. In contrast, Michelle Renee Hiatt’s Quilt Odyssey biography includes her role as “the designer for Modern 180, a modern pattern division of Deb Tucker’s Studio 180 Design,” (www.quiltodyssey.com) though her personal website also lists three magazine publications, presumably because she was teaching a Modern 180 design at the show.

With the rise of computerized longarm quilting machines, quilting teachers have another design opportunity. Some teachers who are best known for teaching quilting using a longarm machine also design patterns for these machines, known as pantographs. Lisa Calle’s personal website biography includes both the number of pantographs she has available and where they are sold,

In 2005, Lisa’s first paper pantographs were being sold through Willow Leaf Studio, one of the first online pantograph stores. Since that time her portfolio of both paper and digital blocks, borders, fills and sets have grown to 100’s of choices available through a variety of online outlets including her own website, Urban Elementz, Digitechpatterns, Quilts Complete, and others” (www.lisacalle.com/meet-lisa/).

Teachers can create and sell designs therefore for quilt tops or for the quilting itself, the final stage of the quiltmaking process. Some teachers gather patterns together into books or use them
to teach techniques. While some teachers self-publish and sell patterns directly, self-publishing does not appear to have become prevalent for quiltmaking books.

**Published Author**

Many more quilting teachers discuss the books they have authored than individual patterns they’ve published. While some, like Donna Lynn Thomas and Carolyn Foster, have self-published at least one book, Gyleen Fitzgerald self-publishes through her own publishing imprint FPI Publishing which has allowed her to publish her non-quilting writings as well. As with their other roles in the quilting industry, some teachers mention only that they are published or the number of books they have authored, while other teachers include lists of title or sales figures. A number of teachers mention the publishers of their books.

Mimi Dietrich both includes the number of books she’s written but highlights specific titles that she is either proud of or is a favorite:

I’ve written 17 quilting books. I’m most proud of the first one – *Happy Endings* written in 1988. It’s still in print and that’s a long life for a quilting book. In all, my books have sold over half a million copies. My favorites are the applique books – especially the Baltimore ones. The one that has touched the hearts of many quilters is *Pink Ribbon Quilts: A Book Because of Breast Cancer*. And there’s *Mimi Dietrich’s Favorite Applique Quilts* – nicknamed Mimi’s Greatest Hits! But an author’s most treasured book is usually the latest – so take a look at *A Quilter’s Diary*” (www.mimidietrich.com)

It should be noted that this biography, from her website, is out of date as *A Quilter’s Diary* was published in 2008 and she has authored or revised at least three books since then.
Karen Kay Buckley’s biography lists books she’s authored but also highlights her publishers, “I entered into a publishing contract with the American Quilter’s Society…I worked with Rodale Press…My most recent project has been working with C&T Publishing” (www.celebrationofquilts.com/workshop-instructors.html), making sure readers know she is valued by leading publishers. Donna Lynn Thomas, on her personal website, is “the author of 14 titles with Martingale…and one with Kansas City Star,” (www.donnalynnthomasquilter.com) overwhelming readers with the quantity of her books. In contrast, Cheryl Almgren Taylor’s personal website biography includes the joy of a new author, “I submitted my patterns to Martingale & Company and was surprised and delighted when my proposal was accepted” (www.atimetosewquilts.com).

Sarah Fielke’s AQS Lancaster biography, echoing her personal website biography, claims significance for her work, “her six best-selling quilt books have sold over 100,000 copies worldwide and have been translated into five languages. Her first book, Material Obsession, is widely described as having been at the forefront of the Modern Quilt movement and is a staple in many quilters’ libraries” (www.quiltweek.com/instructors/Lancaster-instructors/#mg_ld_39831). She unabashedly stakes her claim to significance, rather than relying on readers to interpret it on their own.

While the American Quilters Society is most frequently mentioned, not surprising since it sponsors the quilt show in Lancaster which included fourteen of the teachers, other publishers mentioned in biographies include Rodale Press, C&T Publishing, The Taunton Press, New Holland, That Patchwork Place, Landauer Publishing, Search Press, Kansas City Star, and Martingale & Company. The publishing arm of the quilting industry is changing, as is most publishing, and Kansas City Star became an imprint of C&T Publishing in 2015.
The American Quilters Society announced in July 2016 that it would no longer publish books and offered authors the opportunity to buy remaining copies of their books at a discount as well as the publishing rights (Glassberg, 2016). Owning the rights will allow authors to use a print on demand service, for example, to keep their books in print, especially those which teachers use in their classes. It does mean that teachers will have to assume all of the administrative work and expense of publishing. AQS’s ceasing publishing books is a new development at the time of data collection, so teachers still touted their publishing relationship with AQS. AQS does have a significant place in the quilt show circuit, including classes, so it will be interesting to see how teacher biographies change over time to reflect this.

**Fabric Designer**

Some teachers also design fabric, not just quilts. While Mimi Dietrich wrote two books based on quilts in the Smithsonian, she also designed fabric “based on a quilt in the Baltimore Museum of Art” (www.mimidietrich.com). Sarah Fielke “has designed fabrics for Lecien, Japan, Spotlight and Windham Fabrics” (www.sarahfielke.com). Jo Morton’s Quilt Odyssey biography notes that she first worked with Andover Fabrics while Michele Scott’s “greatest passion is designing fabrics for Northcott Silk. Her 10th collection, A is for Alligator, can be found on shelves now across the country” (www.piecefulquilter.com/bio.html). As with her list of publications, awards, and exhibitions which follow her biography, she includes images of all her fabric lines on her personal website. Given that fabric lines are only produced once, it would be difficult for someone to purchase many of these fabric lines, which shows that Scott is emphasizing the depth of her relationships with the fabric company. Teachers highlighting their
fabric design work shows they have yet another role in the quiltmaking industry and are valued by these companies.

Certified Teacher

Even in discussing their teaching work, teachers highlight their associations within the industry network. They highlight certifications from companies and associations, which suggest outside validation of teaching skills.

Some teachers hold a teaching certification from a company, which usually means that the teacher can teach using proprietary materials. Barbara Dahlberg’s personal website says “she has completed training with Sulky of America and is a Certified Sulky Teacher” (www.barbarasartquilts.com). Sulky produces a variety of products but is best known for threads used in the quilting or for decorative embroidery. Likewise, several designers have extended their teaching reach by certifying individuals to teach their patterns and techniques. Cheryl Hank, a teacher at Old Country Store in Intercourse, PA, is a certified Quilt in a Day instructor, which is Eleanor Burns’ trademarked technique. Likewise, Michelle Renee Hiatt is a certified Studio 180 Design Instructor, which is from Deb Tucker’s Studio 180, known for its specialty rulers and the related techniques and patterns. Andrea Schnur is a Certified Instructor for Judy Niemeyer at Quiltworx. Interestingly, Quiltworx notes that “while you do not need to be Certified to teach almost all our patterns” (www.quiltworx.com/instructors-us), its website does list advantages to being a certified teacher. For the teachers, the Quiltworx site lists contact information for its certified instructors which provides another marketing outlet. Having a vendor-specific certification, like an association certification, provides third-party validation of the teacher to potential students.
Two teachers, Linda Hahn and Donna Lynn Thomas, hold a teacher certification from the National Quilting Association (NQA). Unfortunately, the NQA dissolved in 2015 so information about this certification and its requirements is no longer available online. Interestingly, those who held a Judges Certification from NQA created a new organization, the National Association of Certified Quilt Judges, upon the dissolution of NQA. The certified teachers have not, suggesting that perhaps the teacher certification was not perceived as valuable enough for its recipients to find a way to continue supporting a mechanism for certification.

One of the teachers, Carolyn Forster, resides in England. Her biographies both note that she holds a “City and Guilds in Patchwork and Quilting.” City & Guilds describes itself as “the UK’s leading provider of vocational qualifications” with centers in 100 countries (www.cityandguilds.com). The Patchwork & Quilting qualification is one specialty within the Design and Craft diploma. It is interesting that this is still considered a vocational qualification in the UK while in the United States quilting is now generally considered a leisure activity.

Other teachers list awards to provide outside validation of their work. Karen Kay Buckley and Linda Hahn both mention that they received teaching awards. Linda Hahn reports that she was nominated three times for Professional Quilter magazine’s Teacher of the Year Award. Karen Kay Buckley received this award in 1997. Professional Quilter magazine was founded in 1983 as a resource for quilting professionals. Online research suggests that the last Teacher of the Year award was made in 2011. The magazine was sold, possibly in 2013 when the new owner reincorporated as the International Association of Creative Arts Professionals, broadening beyond just quilters (http://www.creativeartsprofessional.com/about-iapq.php). While anyone could nominate a teacher for this award, nominees then had completed a
questionnaire, which did not include teaching observations. The magazine staff then selected the winner (Tracz, 2008a) so it is difficult to evaluate the rigor and associated value of the award.

Linda Hahn states that she received the National Quilting Association Certified Teacher of the Year Award in 2009. As mentioned above, the NQA dissolved in 2015 so the criteria for this award is not available. However, Hahn still maintains the information in her biography a year later, suggesting that Hahn values the award.

**Valued Teacher**

While some teachers emphasize their breadth of teaching experience, others highlight teaching venues to again emphasize that these shows or shops value the teachers’ expertise. Since it was beyond the scope of this project to interview quilt shop and show owners about their teacher selection process, it is not possible to know if the shops and shows value the teachers’ abilities or name recognition.

Some teachers just describe the types of venues where they teach. Patti Laird says “I have since taught at several quilt guilds and teach at local quilt shops” (www.sleepingcatcreations.com) whereas Shannon Page, on her blog biography addresses the types of quilt guilds where she teaches with “she speaks at Modern and traditional guilds…” (www.pressandpin.com). In this context, a “traditional” guild means any quilt guild not associated with the Modern Quilt Guild (MQG). The MQG originated in 2009 through a Flickr group but quickly developed into in-person groups which felt affinity for the MQG’s design aesthetic. It is only in the last 2 to 3 years that MQG has incorporated and required local chapters to officially affiliate and pay dues to the national organization. Interestingly, Almyra Webb’s biography as a teacher at Old Country Store notes “Almyra has taught classes in North Carolina, Tennessee and local shops in the Lancaster area,”
(https://theoldcountrystore.com/classes/teachers). Her biography does not name any of the local shops which might be competitors to Old Country Store if they are still in business.

Webb’s biography is like a number of biographies that do not identify specific venues but instead emphasize the geographic breadth of the teacher’s travels. On her personal website and in her AQS Lancaster biography, Katie Pasquini Masopust demonstrates her apparent world-wide popularity, with her personal website saying “she travels the world presenting her contemporary quilting theories and techniques to classes; not only in North America, but in Europe, the Far East, Australia and New Zealand” (www.katiepm.com). Potential students perhaps are to be excited that they do not need to travel so far to learn from her.

Other teachers name specific shows where they teach. Sarah Fielke, an Australian teacher, writes on her personal website “her largest following is in the USA where she travels at least once a year to attend Quilt Market and to teach for the American Quilting Society, Quiltcon and Sisters Outdoor Show, to name a few” (www.sarahfielke.com). Likewise, Michelle Renee Hiatt’s personal website reports “Michelle teaches at Vermont Quilt Festival, Hershey Quilt Odyssey, MAQ-Mid-Appalachian, and American Quilt Society’s Quilt Weeks across the country” (www.sewonthego.net). These mentions demonstrate that the teachers feel that these shows will be well-known to their potential students, by reputation if not through personal experience.

A number of teachers may name specific shows but also list where they teach online. Michele Scott’s website biography includes both “Michele is also an instructor on AQS’s iquilt” and “check out her new YouTube channel” (www.piecefulquilter.com). Kimberly Einmo is even more specific, listing the courses she has taught on Craftsy.com on her personal website, “Kimberly has hosted seven very popular online courses on Craftsy.com, including the 2015
Summer BOM [Block of the Month], Magical Blocks: Out of the Box, Magical Jelly Roll Quilts, Chain of Stars Mystery Quilt, and Amazing Applique” (www.kimberlyeinmo.com). All five classes are still active on Craftsy, and therefore available for student purchase as of April, 2018 (https://www.craftsy.com/search?query=einmo).

Lisa Calle highlights that teachers may offer a class in multiple formats. On her personal website, she notes the popularity of her DVD Divide and Design and that “this is also being taught at shows, QNNtv and Iquilt” (https://www.lisahalle.com/meet-lisa/). Potential students therefore have multiple options to take a class from her.

Some teachers highlight venues outside the quilting industry. Norma Campbell’s biography on the Quilt Odyssey website notes that “besides numerous guilds, quilt shops, and Belle Grove Plantation, she regularly teaches for Anne Arundel Community College in their continuing education program” (normacampbellquilts.wix.com). Likewise, Patsy Hartnett’s York Quilters Guild show biography reports that “she worked for many years as the quilt teacher for Penn State Extension in Adams County, The YWCA and Gettysburg Elder Hostel. Some of her favorite work has been with the children of the various school districts and introducing them to the art of the quilt” (www.celebrationofquilts.com/workshop-instructors.html). These are exceptions to the predominante practice of teachers’ biographies discussing the only venues within the quilting industry where they teach but their mention suggests that these particular teachers value these venues.

**Corporate Ambassadors**

Several teachers identify affiliations with vendors that are related to the machinery of the quilting industry. Several teachers are BERNINA ambassadors, including Lisa Calle, Linda Hahn, and John Kubiniec. BERNINA is a sewing machine manufacturer based in Switzerland.
John Kubiniec’s biography for the York Quilt Guild show notes that he “served as a tester for the new BERNINA LongArm product line” (www.bigrigquilting.com). Margaret Solomon Gunn’s personal website says “you might see my face in ads for Handi Quilter,” (www.mainleyquiltsloflove.com) a company which produces longarm sewing machines, while Karen Marchetti represents another longarm sewing machine company, “Karen is proud to represent Gammill Quilting Systems as one of their Quilting Artists” (www.creativelongarmquilting.com). With these associations, teachers show that they believe that potential students value the opinion of the corporations.

While not official ambassadors, several teachers’ biographies include their use of BERNINA machines. This is particularly interesting as they all teach at Old Country Store which does not sell BERNINA sewing machines, it has a relationship with another store that supplies BERNINAs for its classroom. Karen Boyd’s biography for Old Country Store says “Eventually Karen got her first BERNINA and wondered how she had been able to sew anything without it” (http://theoldcountrystore.com/teachers/). Other Old Country Store teachers whose biographies mention BERNINA include Carol Landis, Lois Zimmerman, and store owner Jan Mast. It’s possible that teachers are showing their commitment to quiltmaking through their love of a popular brand of sewing machine or seeking to connect with potential students through love of a particular brand.

Respected Expert

A number of teachers mention appearances on quilting-related television, radio, and online media outlets. Without viewing each segment, it is not possible to determine whether the appearance is a teaching segment, promoting a book, promoting a tool, or in some other role in the quilting industry. Again, some teachers just broadly mention their appearances while others
specify the content or even the episode number. Gyleen Fitzgerald, in both her biographies, says “She has appeared on The Quilt Show and Lifetime TV promoting a contemporary spirit in traditional quiltmaking” (www.colourfulstitches.com; www.quiltweek.com/instructors/Lancaster-instructors/#mg_ld_39831). Kimberly Einmo’s personal site says “She has appeared on television and radio programs such as American Quilts Creatively and Pat Sloan’s American Quilting and Patchwork Radio Show” (www.kimberlyeinmo.com). Two of the teachers mention a year, with Linda Hahn’s site saying “Linda was a guest on Quilting Arts Television – Series 1400 which was aired in late 2014” (www.froghollowdesigns.com) while Cheryl See was a “guest on The Quilt Show in 2014” (www.cherylsee.com).

Mimi Dietrich, on her personal website, is the only teacher who discusses the content of her appearances. She writes “I taped two TV show for Simply Quilts. One of them was about quilts from my book Quilts from the Smithsonian that were adapted from quilts in the museum collection. The other one was titled Artful Applique and was taped in my living room” (www.mimidietrich.com). Jo Morton’s Quilt Odyssey and personal websites both name the specific episodes she’s appeared in, “You’ve seen her in April 2000 on episode #603 of ‘Simply Quilts’ with Alexa Anderson. Jo was featured on two episodes of ‘Love of Quilting’ with Fons & Porter #1408 (Cinnamon Stars) and #1805 (Triangle Roundup), these programs air on PBS. In August 2010, she was featured on episode #808 for ‘The Quilt Show,’ an online subscription quilt channel” (www.quiltodyssey.com). This is another case of using an association with companies in the quilting industry to highlight teachers’ connections. The online shows are also an opportunity for students to preview a teacher if the students have a membership to The Quilt Show or access Pat Sloane’s show through podcasts.
In highlighting their role as respected experts, as well as their roles as quilt designers, fabric designers, authors, corporate ambassadors, and teachers, quiltmaking teachers both illustrate their varied roles in the quiltmaking industry and show how they are valued by various entities in that industry network.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I explored themes that emerged from a qualitative content analysis of teacher biographies found on quilt show and quilt shop websites as well as on teachers’ personal websites or blogs. These themes included 1) the values of teaching venues and 2) demonstrating roles and relationships within the quiltmaking industry and community, to show that the teacher is valued by others.

Chapter 5 will discuss the themes that emerged through semi-structured interviews with fourteen individuals who taught quiltmaking classes or workshops in Southcentral Pennsylvania during 2016.
CHAPTER 5
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

This chapter presents qualitative themes based on fourteen semi-structured interviews, which I conducted with individuals who taught at least one quiltmaking class or workshop in the eight counties of Southcentral Pennsylvania during 2016. With these interviews, I sought to address the purposes of this study—to understand how quiltmaking teachers were able to develop their specialization in quiltmaking and to understand how these quiltmaking teachers navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops, and shows in order to pursue their teaching career. To address this, I use three research questions:

1. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their learning journey to their areas of expertise?
2. How have quiltmaking teachers chosen to pursue their career?
3. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials?

In this chapter, I introduce the participants in my study, presenting demographic information and short biographies. I then address the themes that emerged during the interviews regarding participants’ journeys as quilters and teachers, including the role of sewing or crafting during childhood, life events as triggers, the impact of teaching on their own quiltmaking practice, and, finally, teaching philosophies.

I next address the themes which emerged surrounding their choices navigating the diffuse network of quilt guilds, quilt shops, and the larger quilting industry as they are teaching in a non-certified environment with little formal structure and support but tacit expectations based on teaching venues. These themes include the challenge of balancing the time required for the business aspect of teaching with quiltmaking practice, making choices in teaching, the role of opportunity, and the impact of choices on income.
Finally, I explore how participants discussed their tools and materials. These themes include the role of changing technology on practice, the agency of fabric, and the impact of technology on the in-person social aspects of quiltmaking.

I begin with an introduction to my fourteen interview participants.

### Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age (estimate)</th>
<th>Gender/Race</th>
<th>Started Quiltmaking</th>
<th>Started Teaching</th>
<th>Teaching Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>Late 1980s</td>
<td>Mid 1970s</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy</td>
<td>Late 60s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retired from teaching for pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>Mid 50s</td>
<td>Male/White</td>
<td>~2000</td>
<td>Early 2000s</td>
<td>Regional+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Mid 60s</td>
<td>Female/African-American</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td></td>
<td>National+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Late 50s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>~2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shop-only (owner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shop-only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>~2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1st time teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Early/mid 50s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shop-only (owner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Late 60s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Early 1980s</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>~2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shop-only (owner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>Early/mid 30s</td>
<td>Female/White</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. List of participants.

Participants are identified by pseudonyms; two participants did elect to use their given first names. Demographic information does not show the range of these teachers’ experiences, especially given the reality that, like the broader quiltmaking community, eleven of the fourteen teachers I interviewed were White females; likewise, eleven of the fourteen teachers are in their 50s or older. The short biographies below cannot fully represent their lived experiences but offer
some context to their interviews. Unless otherwise noted, participants live in Southcentral Pennsylvania. The selection criteria required that participants teach in Southcentral Pennsylvania’s eight-county region, an area where quiltmaking is extremely popular. At the time of my interview, three of my participants lived in states adjacent to Pennsylvania but travel to teach in Pennsylvania when contracted to do so. Teachers define where they will travel, as will be discussed below.

**Ann**

Ann is retired from a career in the court system. She began quiltmaking when her daughter was in middle school and started taking classes once her daughter was in high school. She began teaching at a local quilt shop after she retired from her job. She mainly teaches in the Cumberland Valley, along the I-81 corridor from Virginia to Pennsylvania, focusing on patchwork projects. She also makes and sells wall-hangings and quilts at annual festival, where judges select the top twenty-four bed quilts to be auctioned, adding a competitive element to what is otherwise a quilt sale.

**Betsy**

Betsy is retired from teaching quiltmaking for pay. She began teaching, both in the formal education system and in adult education settings, while living abroad with her husband in the early 1970s. Once back in the United States in the mid 1970s, she focused on raising their children but also worked and taught in a local quilt store. She also taught quiltmaking in a variety of adult education settings, for quilt guilds throughout the region, and as a volunteer at local school activities. She left the quilt store approximately 15 years ago when she had to take on additional caregiving responsibilities for a parent. She identifies most as a teacher, wanting to learn new things in order to teach them, “I would go out of my way to learn new things so that I
could share them.” She continues to learn, creating an annual learning plan for herself with a singular focus, which has included juggling, tailoring a perfectly fitted shirt, knitting, and, most recently, basket making. Betsy especially likes teaching hand-piecing patchwork and hand-quilting, emphasizing that hand-piecing is a quick and inexpensive way to start quiltmaking.

**Bob**

Bob currently balances his quiltmaking teaching career with a part-time job as a church musician, which has been his career for more than 20 years. At the time of my interview, he was working on building his teaching practice, in conjunction with the publication of his first book, following a move to a new area within the past several years. He competed in the McCall’s quilting design star contest a number of years ago, making it to the finalist round, which provided introduction to the quilting industry. He focuses on teaching curved piecing, a specific patchwork technique, and machine quilting. He is also an ambassador for a company that produces both domestic and longarm sewing machines. Bob lives in another mid-Atlantic state.

**Claire**

Claire is a nationally-known teacher who focuses on piecing patchwork, using her own line of rulers and templates. Her company includes her teaching, a publishing subsidiary for her books, and a tool production subsidiary. She is a retired engineer, working for the federal government for more than 30 years. She started establishing her teaching career about 5 years before her retirement, with the goal of fully replacing her salary with income from the quiltmaking community by the time she retired, despite having a pension. At the time of my interview, she was preparing for her first international teaching commitment. Her teaching career has also led her to do motivational speaking and becoming a certified life coach. Claire lives in another mid-Atlantic state.
Emily

Emily owns a quilt shop in Southcentral Pennsylvania, which she opened around 2000. She intended to establish a business within the health care industry, continuing in her previous career field, when she returned from working abroad for 8 years. However, the economics of her specialty were not favorable but she saw an opportunity in the region for a quilt shop. Her shop also sells domestic sewing machines and offers a longarm quilting service. In late 2015, she revamped her shop’s class offerings to include a mix of lectures and workshops, with options to focus on clothing construction, quiltmaking, or home decor.

Helen

Helen is retired from a career as an adult education administrator for a community college system. She teaches a wide variety of quiltmaking techniques at a local quilt shop. She has entered quilts in her county fair and had one quilt juried into a regional quilt show, but she has stopped participating in her local quilt guild’s challenges as she discovered that her success was keeping other members from participating.

Jane

Jane is a quilt artist, making her income from selling baby quilts, quilted wall-hangings, hand-dyed fabric, and other fabric items at a local artisan co-op as well as selling quilts at selected art shows. She studied printmaking in her undergraduate and graduate coursework but transitioned to fiber arts, originally weaving and then quilts as something which she could more easily pursue out of her home. She started teaching in the last 4 years as a less physically-demanding activity than selling at art shows, though she continues to sell at her favorite show. She has only begun to enter quilt shows in recent years and joined her local quilt guild, after a lifetime of being enmeshed in the art community. Jane lives in a state adjacent to Pennsylvania.
Kate

Kate is a dentist and life-long sewer who began quiltmaking in high school in the late 1980s. She officially taught her first workshop at a quilt guild show in 2016, though she has done demos for the quilt guild and taught programs for her previous needlework guilds. At the time of our interview, she was president of her quilt guild.

Linda

Linda is a regional teacher, teaching a monthly class at her local quilt shop and regularly at a regional quilt retreat, but she also offers trunk shows and workshops to guilds in the region. She operated a small business from her home while raising her children. At the time of my interview, she was debating whether to step back from traveling to teach but was also developing a new trunk show program. She takes pride in making several iterations of each quilt she designs, to help students envision the project in different colorways as well as to make sure her self-published patterns are accurate.

Maggie

Maggie owns a quilt shop in the region which she purchased approximately 3 years ago. While operating under different names and owners, there has been a quilt shop in that location for more than 35 years. The shop offers classes and longarm quilting services. In recent years, she has developed monthly clubs for table runners, applique, and embroidery and more recently, began offering lectures on different aspects of quiltmaking. Maggie had a career in production and quality control until she was laid off as a result of a corporate buyout.

Natalie

Natalie is an internationally-known quilting teacher and an inductee into the Quilters Hall of Fame. She has taught quiltmaking since the early 1980s, publishing multiple books including
working with the Smithsonian Institute on two books. She teaches a year-long class at a local quilt shop. She has two classes on Craftsy, with more than 30,000 students enrolled in her class on finishing quilts. At the time of our interview, she was trying to decide whether to slow down her teaching schedule further. Natalie lives in another mid-Atlantic state.

Pam

Pam is dedicating 2017 to building her teaching career. While she has been a crafter throughout her life, she began focusing on quilting in the last 6 years, after a divorce. She still works part-time at the family business, which had been her full-time career during her marriage. She is a certified instructor for a pattern company, so can teach its technique and designs. She teaches at quilt guilds regionally and is also developing her own retreats, where participants can work on the pattern of their choice. This approach is unusual as most project-based retreats are for a specific project so that all participants are working on the same thing. Pam has bought a cabin and hopes to open her own retreat house.

Ruth

Ruth works full-time in her professional career, but also owns and operates a social-benefit LLC focused on domestic skills and creative reuse. She is from a Mennonite family with a quiltmaking tradition, joking that she grew up under her grandmother’s quilt frame. She has offered quiltmaking workshops as a group activity and hosts open sew events at her business, which is also currently making baby quilts for a local nonprofit as a charity project. She focuses on teaching sewing skills, both to help students make custom clothes and to creatively reuse existing clothing into new garments. She is not connected to the local quiltmaking community. In early 2018, she dissolved her LLC.
Sara

Sara identifies herself as a maker and a creative. She holds a MFA in photography but started quiltmaking in 2009 while in graduate school. She decided not to pursue an academic career after teaching as part of her MFA work. Her subsequent career has been arts-related. She currently works for a publisher, acting as a liaison with the artists whose work is being published. She previously worked at a yarn shop, including teaching classes, and sold her own knitting patterns on Etsy. She was making quilts on consignment but recently shut down her website so that she could focus on her own quiltmaking. She is a past officer of a local Modern Quilt Guild.

To show the identified interconnections between the participants, I created a network map of participants, shows/guilds where they taught, and other organizations that were mentioned by at least three participants. This map does not include every organization, company, or other teacher that participants mentioned.

It is immediately obvious that Ruth is not connected into the wider network of leisure quilting in the region. Quiltmaking is only one of the things she teaches at her studio. She hosts open nights where individuals can work on projects of their choice, including quiltmaking, as a leisure activity. However, she does not participate in any of the guilds and, since her studio is her sideline and not her fulltime job, she does not have time to teach anywhere else.

Similarly, there is a mini-network of Sara’s connections. She identifies as an artist and developed a presentation on use of color in quiltmaking, from her art background. At the time, her Modern Quilt Guild chapter met at the Old Country Store, so she was recruited to teach by the store.
Figure 4. Network map of participants
York Quilters Guild is central to the network because it is the guild I belong to, so served as my entrée with many teachers who had taught at the guild. I only made connections between teachers where one teacher mentioned the other by name during the interview. I placed a dotted line between Linda and Pam, based on Linda’s description of a friend which sounded like Pam but was not definitive. In the case of Maggie and Helen, when I recruited Maggie, she volunteered to contact Helen and we scheduled their interviews back-to-back at Maggie’s shop.

As an informational aside, MAQ is Mid-Appalachian Quilters, a workshop-based retreat held annually at Mount St. Mary’s College in Emmetsburg, Maryland. Because it was outside my study’s geographic area, I did not use it as a source for my study. However, because it is so close geographically, it is common for regionally-known teachers to offer classes there.

All of these participants were eager to discuss their quiltmaking journey. As disclosed in Chapter 3, before or during the time period when I was researching and writing this dissertation, I took classes with six of my participants. All analysis is based solely on interviews; I did no data collection during the classes.

The Quiltmaking Journey

Teachers expected to be asked how they started quiltmaking but additional themes emerged about their quiltmaking journeys. These themes were:

- The role of family in teachers’ becoming quilters, as almost all participants sited their quilting journey in childhood sewing or crafting, often identifying specific family members with whom they participated.
- The role of life events in participants moving into quilting from other crafts or shifting to teach quilting.
- The impact of teaching on their own quilting practices.
Teachers’ philosophies of teaching.

I will begin by discussing teachers’ roots in childhood sewing and crafting.

**Sewing and Crafting in Childhood**

Almost all the participants described sewing or crafting as part of their childhood, often alongside or with a member of their family, as the beginning of their quiltmaking journey.

**Quiltmaking as evolution of sewing in childhood.** Helen, Emily, Claire, Kate, and Maggie all talked about sewing since childhood. Emily joked that she “was born with a needle in her hand” and was attending sewing classes with her mother as a child. She noted that sometimes her mother was the teacher and other times, the learner but also “we went off to lots of sewing seminars and things so that always fueled my passion for sewing,” which suggests that Emily herself was also the learner at some time in her childhood. Her experience highlights finding the balance between lessons and experimentation, that is, between formal learning and informal learning. She described this as “probably the best thing about learning to sew with mom was that she gave me the basic skills and then let me experiment,” contrasting it with what she sees in some of her own customers who describe their approach to teaching their daughters and granddaughters as “they’re making friends with their seam ripper quickly.” This makes learning a question for technical perfection, which Emily notes would have frustrated her and driven her away from sewing. Seeing this has likely influenced Emily’s own teaching approach which focuses on finding ways for even beginning students to be successful, through the structure of her shop’s classes with a menu of basic skills classes that then lead to specialized technique classes. She has also developed techniques which she incorporates into her designs, such as freezer paper templates to be ironed onto fabric to ensure accurate cutting, which lead quiltmakers to good results.
Claire didn’t describe how she learned to sew but her path also suggests informal learning through experimentation. She received a sewing machine when she completed 6th grade and began making her own clothing. She went on to make clothing for others and then, “by 10th grade, I’m making a serious income doing design work.” Design is experimentation, so she presumably was learning by doing, trying ideas and fabrics, to see what worked.

Kate started hand-sewing at age 5 or 6, but wasn’t allowed to use her mother’s sewing machine that young. She would hand-sew a seam and her mother would then sew it on the machine. This suggests learning informally in an apprentice-like fashion, likely with her mother demonstrating before Kate tried it, which was likely how Maggie learned as well, when she was taught to sew by a neighbor.

Only Helen described learning to sew as a child in a formal setting. She started sewing at age 7, when her mother sent her to a local girls’ club for lessons, citing a lack of patience. Helen continued her lessons for 7 years, including learning tailoring skills. Based on Helen’s age, she was taking classes 50 to 60 years ago, so probably in the early 1960s. If she ended her lessons at age 14, she was probably able to continue learning sewing through high school home economics classes, though she did not mention it.

Ruth was the only participant who specifically talked about growing up with quilting and did not mention other crafts. She described herself as “growing up under my grandma’s quilt frame,” which was set up with a quilt each winter. Ruth’s grandmother was raised Old Order Mennonite and was active with Mennonite relief efforts as Ruth was growing up. These activities included sewing or quilting a variety of items for the Mennonite Relief Committee. Her grandmother would also work on a local fundraiser each year held at a community event, with individuals paying small amounts to include a family member’s name on the quilt which
would then be auctioned after it was completed. Ruth accompanied her grandmother to quilting bees, describing gatherings as a way for her grandmother and her friends to make the relief work more social. She would have been introduced to quiltmaking tacitly at first, being around women who were participating in projects, and then likely taught informally as she was deemed old enough. For example, Betsy started helping her mother with the quilting stage of a project at age 12, having been around her mother and aunt who quilted during her early childhood, but it was one of several craft activities for her.

**Quiltmaking as an evolution of crafting.** While some teachers describe sewing in childhood, a number of other teachers describe pursuing a variety of crafts while growing up, again usually alongside a family member. While Betsy was sewing and making her clothing in high school, she also knew how to crochet. She taught herself to knit from a book at age 10, at her mother’s instigation while recovering from a broken leg. Betsy did start helping with quilting at age 12 but did not learn patchwork until her early 20s. As mentioned above, Betsy continues her explicitly self-directed learning still, by picking a learning goal for each year which has varied from juggling to basket weaving to specific quiltmaking techniques.

Bob said “we were always making and doing things,” listing most of the popular crafts of the 1970s and early 1980s: woodworking, making candles, macramé, needlepoint on plastic canvas, and ceramics. He also tried crochet and did both embroidery and cross-stich. Pam described her family as “artistic,” naming different family members and the individual craft hobbies. She pursued a variety of crafts in her childhood, crafting with her children, and continues to participate in crafting with her adult daughter. Sara summarized her early life as “I’ve been crafting forever,” usually with her mother. These experiences describe informal learning as a family, moving through a variety of techniques and materials.
While almost all of the participants were involved with fabric and other crafts in childhood, they did not necessarily start quilting as children or even young adults. Several participants described life events as triggers for becoming a quiltmaker or becoming a teacher.

**The Role of Life Events in Becoming a Quiltmaker and a Teacher**

A number of teachers cited life events as the impetus to either begin quiltmaking or to become a quiltmaking teacher.

**Life events leading to quiltmaking.** Though Ruth grew up around her grandmother’s quiltmaking, she made her first quilt in her early 20s for her first baby. Natalie also made her first quilt while pregnant with her first child, alongside two colleagues from her job at a fabric store and sewing studio. Linda had made her first quilt when her children were young but made her second quilt 20 years later for her daughter’s wedding, which led her to become immersed in quiltmaking. Helen made her first quilt at the behest of her 10-year-old son, after years of sewing her children’s clothes. These quilts celebrated relationships, especially significant moments.

For others, life events gave participants more time, which they filled with quiltmaking. Claire began quiltmaking as a newly married woman settling in a new community, because there was a quilt shop that she could walk to if the household’s one car was not available. Pam started quiltmaking once her children were grown, when she became an empty nester. While Ann had started quiltmaking when her daughter was in middle school, she began taking classes once her daughter moved into high school. Ann is the only one who did not discuss sewing as a hobby prior to quiltmaking, though this may just not have come up in her interview as she did say that she owned a domestic sewing machine prior to starting quiltmaking.
Sara, Bob, and Jane were each deeply focused on another craft when life events led them to shift to quiltmaking. Sara began quiltmaking when she was in graduate school working on an MFA in photography. She had also worked in a yarn shop, teaching knitting and designing patterns—income from her designs and kit sales on Etsy helped pay for her rent during graduate school. However, carpal tunnel syndrome drove her away from knitting and she became disillusioned with teaching photography in an academic environment. Quiltmaking provided the opportunity to continue using a creative process and making physical objects.

Bob was studying pottery and working as a studio assistant but his small New York City apartment was not conducive to pursuing pottery professionally. He was intrigued by quiltmaking, even owning a sewing machine for several years, so finally started taking classes. He went on to purchase a longarm machine and develop a clientele for longarm quilting. Similarly, Jane had moved from printmaking, in which she was pursuing a graduate degree, to weaving, in part due to the realities of living in New York City with a growing family, but then shifted to quiltmaking years later after she started sewing with weaving scraps but then realized she could work with commercially-produced fabric.

**Life events leading to teaching.** Not surprisingly, some participants began teaching when life events made more time available. Ann began teaching after retirement from a professional career. Claire began teaching 5 years before retirement, as part of a plan to have a fully developed business by the time she retired from her engineering career. While Maggie had been teaching within her small quiltmaking group, she began formally teaching after being laid off from her manufacturing job and bought a quilt shop. Pam decided to pursue her certified instructor status, which she’d investigated previously, after her divorce. Jane began teaching in
her mid-60s when she started cutting back on vending at art shows due to the physical demands of participating.

While these life events triggered participants’ willingness to teach, the mechanics of how they began teaching varied and will be discussed below as part of the opportunity theme.

**The Impact of Teaching on Practice**

When we discussed changing practice, the theme that emerged was a focus on the impact of teaching on their own quiltmaking practice, rather than participants’ evolution as quiltmakers. While teachers can, in theory, design anything they would like to teach, in reality they are constrained by the venues in which they teach. Quilt shops may offer multi-session classes or clubs. For example, Natalie teaches a year-long monthly applique class while Linda leads a monthly club with a new project each month; Natalie and Linda design the monthly lessons which dominates their quiltmaking time. Maggie’s shop offers several monthly clubs; the patchwork table runner club is based on a published book, not in-house designs, meaning Maggie or another teacher has to test the designs before teaching students. However, at quilt guilds and quilt shows, the predominant format is the one-day stand-alone class or workshop. Teachers often develop a menu of workshops which they can then offer to guilds, shows, and sometimes quilt shops. Claire summarizes it well:

> Once you’re in the game, it is rare to have the opportunity to make a quilt just for me. So every quilt…every vision…starts with ‘is this sellable? Is it teachable?…Can it be done in a one-day workshop,…if it can’t, that means it’s gotta be destined for a book only.

To design quilts with the intent to then teach in a class or sell as a pattern or publish as part of a book affects teachers’ own practice of quiltmaking, by placing limitations on their creativity. These limitations may be in the time available to make quilts for themselves or others, in design
complexity so that the quilt can be taught in the time available, or to only making others’ designs in order to teach a published pattern.

**Designing for teaching.** Natalie designs specifically for teaching. That is, she determines what she wants to teach and then designs a block or quilt that uses the techniques she wants to teach, a basic backwards-design curriculum planning method. She describes her design process, “I guess the process for me is probably like ‘okay, this is what I want to teach or write about’…so what kind of a visual can I have that goes with it?...What would be easy for people to do?” If she wants to teach students how to applique stems, she designs a block with stems. Currently, a significant piece of her teaching is a year-long class so she has students for a long period of time, with a month between classes to complete their work. Natalie’s quilts are solely for teaching, “I use them either to take to a class as samples or for a lecture, and, um, I don’t make quilts for other people.” Natalie has been teaching the year-long class since 1989 or 1990, which has been hosted at three different quilt shops to date.

Ann designs her quilts as she desires but will stop with a design if she realizes it is too complex to teach: “I think I want to teach something but I don’t know how I’m going to explain it so that when they leave the class, and then I kind of drop it right there…..” For example, as her own quiltmaking practice developed, she started incorporating pieced borders onto her quilts, which are patchwork strips, rather than just using a solid strip of one fabric. However, she has not yet found a way to teach this style of border as a class because students would not only need to have a quilt top completed to the point of borders, but every student would end up bringing a different quilt top. Each quilt top can easily need a different style of pieced border or, even if they could use the same border, each quilt may be a different size which would then involve significant mathematical calculations to make a patchwork border fit that particular size quilt.
Consequently, this isn’t currently a teachable technique for a group class because she would need to spend so much time working with each individual student to determine the most effective design and plan it, the class would likely have to be too small to be financially viable. Instead, she usually teaches block-based projects, so that in a one of her day-long workshops, students may learn two different patchwork blocks. Ann then provides directions with fabric yardages needed to make enough blocks for a specific size quilt, but students can choose whether to just make a small table runner or to make the bed-sized quilt of their choice. This allows students self-direction, to determine how much time to invest in a given project, depending on their personal interests. If students discover they don’t like a particular block but don’t want an unfinished project, they can make a table runner or table topper with the blocks completed during class. If they really enjoy the project, they can make a quilt of whatever size they choose. Students can then balance their leisure and their learning as they choose.

Linda also designs the quilts she teaches, but she makes a point of constructing each quilt design multiple times to show how it looks with different color combinations or types of fabric. While she teaches one-time workshops for quilt guilds and shows, she also teaches a monthly class at her local quilt shop, for which she designs a new project each month. While she creates these projects in different color schemes, she adds a limitation that the quilt needs to photograph well so that she can promote the pattern or workshop online—“I try to do three or four, to give them different colorways…and that takes some of the joy out of it because when you have to think about ‘eww, this isn’t gonna look good on, online. I love it but it’s not gonna photograph well.” Linda’s strategy of creating a design in multiple colors helps her marketing. Ann reported that a quilt guild was having trouble enrolling people in her upcoming workshop because the guild members did not like the fabric that Ann had used in her sample; Ann was
surprised that they could not imagine the quilt in other colors, whereas Linda provides options to encourage students to enroll but also to think creatively about their own color choices so that a project meets their personal preferences.

Pam has a similar approach, in providing color and fabric options for students through her own work. She became a certified instructor through a pattern company because she loves that designer’s paper-pieced quilts. However, this means that she is only teaching those quilts and may therefore make the same design multiple times using different fabrics. At the time of our interview at her retreat, she knew a box of fabric had arrived from a fabric designer with complementary fabric to make two quilts. Pam had not decided which quilts she was making, but they would use patterns from the designer who certified her. Subsequently posting the finished quilts online, through her own social media and the pattern designer’s website, while tagging the fabric designer, will give her potential students some ideas of what they might choose to do.

**Designing for publication.** Claire designs in series, as a way of producing enough designs to be published in a book together. Claire attributes her preference for series to her personality, but it is also an effective strategy for producing a book:

I work in series. And it seems now that my designs come in clusters because of that obsessive-compulsive [aspect of her personality]. I get an idea and I’m like I can’t stop sketching it. I keep seeing variations…most of my books are…concept books. They have a theme…you go with that journey with me as these quilts evolve.

Bob also took this approach with his book, offering different ways of using the same quilt block design, which he attributes to the success of one original quilt pattern, “I did the quilt, the Drunkards Path block, the red and white one for McCall’s that kind of got into that with playing
around with that,” until he had enough quilts for a book. He’s now experimenting with another quilt block, to see if he’s inspired to create enough projects for the next book.

**Testing others’ designs.** Not all quiltmaking teachers design original projects. For those teachers such as Maggie and Helen, who both teach only at Maggie’s shop, their personal quiltmaking time can be limited by the need to make projects as store samples to push sales of particular patterns or to test published patterns that they want to teach as classes. Helen described this work as “maybe you’re prepping something for a class…or you’re teaching yourself a skill and shortcuts of that skill that you can impart to others in a class.” At the time of my interview, she was preparing to teach a project which is inspired by stained glass, complete with leading created with black fabric. Even though it was possible to purchase the “leading,” she learned how to create her own in order to share it with students. In testing these designs for their suitability for teaching, Maggie and Helen are limiting their own quiltmaking but are also learning new skills in order to teach them to students.

Similarly, Betsy taught at a quilt shop for a number of years which she felt limited her work to making samples which would appeal to customers, saying “when you make samples and people are going to take your classes and this is when country was real popular….it was a very limited kind of color palette that appealed to a lot of people.” She described it as needing to be “commercial,” to create samples that would draw potential students in to classes. This limitation ultimately contributed to her leaving teaching.

**Escaping teaching’s limitations on practice.** Betsy’s solution to these limitations was to stop teaching at the quilt shop, though this was a decision made in tandem with increased family caregiving needs. She notes “I don’t have to please anybody else and so it just gotta lot of joy to it now” which lead to her being able to develop her own quiltmaking as she pleased, “when I
stopped teaching, um, I was able to evolve in a way that pleased me and I, I enjoy.” She was also able to pursue other learning opportunities, outside of quiltmaking.

Ann continues to teach but has found a way to compensate for the limitations on her quiltmaking by also making items for sale at an annual show, though that has its own limitations in that the show only accepts wall-hangings and bed quilts. Ann makes round table toppers but modifies them to appear as wall-hangings in order to meet the show’s rules. With her bed quilt entry, she is competing to be one of the top twenty-four quilts, which will then be auctioned, rather than sold at a flat rate. This outlet gives her a place to generate income but not be limited to projects that can be taught in one day—“That’s my outlet because then I can experiment. I can make things that I have no use for….So I sell my things up there and then I can buy more fabric.” She escapes the limitations placed by teaching by also selling her work, which provides a space to explore her own interests.

Teaching quiltmaking impacts teachers’ own practice by placing limitations on the quilts they design and make. In creating or choosing the quilt designs and techniques they teach, teachers are also revealing their teaching philosophy, which was generally to make quiltmaking and learning a positive experience for students.

*Making Quiltmaking a Positive Experience*

Another theme within the quiltmaking journey was teachers’ desire to make learning quiltmaking a positive experience for their students, which seems like it should be a given in a primarily leisure activity. However, teachers’ discussions of their approaches to teaching suggest that this is not necessarily the case for all teachers. Three subthemes emerged: 1) teaching in a way that sets up the student for success, 2) encouraging students to be creative, and 3) encouraging students to not obsess over technical perfection.
Setting the student up for success. Linda, Natalie, Emily, and Maggie each described ways that they approach their teaching in order to ensure that students will be successful in their quiltmaking.

When we discussed Linda’s approach to her trunk shows, which are a common lecture format for quilt guilds where speakers discuss their work and illustrate it with quilts, Linda described her approach as “I want people to be able to do what they’re seeing.” That is, she tries to describe her process, including tips based on failures, so that those attending her lecture can learn from her experiences in a concrete way and apply this new learning. She doesn’t show her work solely for inspiration, describing her own frustration with a presenter who couldn’t or wouldn’t discuss her process:

I said “how did you, how did you plan your design?” She was like insulted that I would ask. She would not answer the question and I, to me that’s, why are you showing your quilt? Maybe I’m never going to do something like that, but, you know, how does your mind work? That’s what I like to know.

Natalie designs her classes and writes her books in a way that makes it approachable for beginners, saying “I found that people needed a place to start.” She has simplified some of the complex historic appliques she loves in order that those just learning can complete an applique project that fits within the historic tradition she teaches but can be completed. After one design that required hundreds of identical berries to complete the full quilt, she realized that this was overwhelming to the student so never taught it again.

Emily and Maggie select techniques and patterns that are friendly to beginners. For example, Emily has developed a technique using freezer paper to help students cut accurately so that they do not have trouble when sewing pieces together. She acknowledges the challenge in
this, saying “Find the technique that makes the new sewer as successful as somebody with a lot of experience and that is not easy to do.” Likewise, Maggie uses the guideline “…you want something basic and simple where they’re gonna succeed” when selecting patterns to use in beginner-level classes. As teachers, they find ways to balance their learning goals with student success. This is especially important given that quiltmaking is a leisure activity. Students are taking classes to pursue their own learning goals. They can choose to walk out of a class as well as share good and bad experiences with potential students.

Encouraging students to be creative. Other teachers focus on freeing students from their self-imposed limits. Claire works to teach techniques that will allow students to focus beyond the technical aspects of quiltmaking. She describes her most recent book as providing blueprints rather than patterns, so that students can work within a framework but customize it as much or little as they want. In this particular case, students decide how complex or simple each patchwork unit will be, as long as it finishes to the size described in the blueprint. She wants to “…teach you techniques that will empower you to realize your own dreams.” Similarly, Bob organizes his workshops to teach a technique but then offers choices of how to use the technique to make a project as he’s “trying to get them to think for themselves in design.” He did note that some students feel overwhelmed by having three or four choices of workshop project.

In addition to using her trunk shows to help students succeed, Linda includes tips and techniques as a way to inspire participants rather than as a way to sell her patterns. She says “I want to inspire people to be creative. Not mimic what I do.” Jane wants her students to go beyond the mimicry of following a pattern, “I care about having the people that want to have permission to play have permission to play.” These teachers emphasize students’ developing their own artistic sense, rather than reproducing the teacher’s own quilts.
As discussed above, some teachers make the same quilt multiple times, using different fabrics, to inspire students to imagine the design in their own fabrics. Whether it is using different fabrics, providing a framework, or providing encouragement, these teachers are effectively giving a safety net to encourage students to trust themselves to be creative and try something new.

**Discouraging a quest for perfection, unless competing.** An additional subtheme was teachers balancing their approach between discouraging students from focusing on technical perfection, but also being willing to critique student work and share their expertise for students who are preparing to compete in quilt shows.

Jane, Ann, and Claire each discussed their efforts to discourage students from focusing on perfection. Ann emphasized the role of mistakes in learning, describing an encounter with a student where she had to say “...you’re here to learn. It’s not going to be perfect.” Jane’s approaches this as giving permission——“I want to give them permission to not make perfect quilts,” so that students feel comfortable focusing on other aspects of their work, whether it’s design or experimentation. Claire focuses on encouraging students to complete their quilts rather than focusing on perfection to the detriment of completion, “I have a saying that if the quilt we’re making will not be the quilt that will drape your casket, then I suggest we just get it done.” Ann similarly asks students to think about the role of their quilts, emphasizing that if they are not entering it in a national-level show, it doesn’t need to be perfect.

Conversely, both Ann and Claire noted that they can help their students who are competing to improve their technical skills. Ann said, “As a teacher, I need to point out where I could help you” in sharing an anecdote of a student who was perfectly happy even though her work was not well done. Likewise, Claire noted “I know how to help you win [a Best of Show
but not everybody wants that level,” highlighting the contrast in goals that students may have.

Emily described her experience with the downsides of a quest for perfection:

The best thing about learning to sew with mom was that she gave me the basic skills and then let me experiment so I never had that, like what we see in the shop a lot of times we see grandmas who will say “oh I’m teaching my daughter how to sew or granddaughter how to sew or quilt and they’re making friends with their seam ripper quickly” and I think [saying sarcastically] “oh, that must be really fun,” I don’t think I would have continued sewing if that was the method that I was taught.

Perfection has a time and place in quiltmaking, but should not be the goal for all quilters, in the opinion of many of these participants. They work to recognize their students’ goals and needs for the day, pushing students to embrace the enjoyment and pleasure of quiltmaking unless the student has other goals.

Quiltmaking teachers provide an example for others teaching in nonformal learning, especially in leisure environments. These teachers embed their learning goals in projects that students can complete successfully, and not be frustrated. They create a class project structure that gives students room to experiment but not be overwhelmed. And, they emphasize the pleasure of learning and discourage perfection, unless there is a reason for the student to strive for perfection.

With a quilting journey that has led to teaching, participants are then faced with constant choices as they navigate a teaching career spread across the network of shops, shows, and guilds.
The Business of Teaching: Constant Choices

An overwhelming topic in my interviews was the amount of behind-the-scenes work required to support a teaching career within the quiltmaking community. In working outside a formal education structure, most quiltmaking teachers relying on one-time teaching commitments to fill their teaching schedule. Even those teaching consistently at a quilt shop likely have to negotiate specific classes and teaching dates. Consequently, quiltmaking teachers spend significant time supporting their career. Teachers identified the administrative work of running a business, the variety of choices involved in developing and sustaining a teaching career, and the product development needed to be able to teach at all, as well as to generate an income, as significant behind-the-scenes issues. In each of these actions, the teachers are constantly making choices. Teachers discussed the choices they have made about pursuing their careers, especially regarding where they teach and the amount of travel they are willing to take in order to teach. While teachers described making intentional choices in developing, or slowing down their teaching, there also appeared to be a tension between choices and the idea of a “big break” as a way of becoming better known regionally or, especially, nationally.

The Need for Communications, Marketing, and Business Skills

Based on my personal observation and the participant interviews, there appear to be two intersecting networks within the quiltmaking world, the leisure quiltmaking community of quilt guilds and the profit-driven industry of companies producing fabric, threads, tools, and any decoration or notion imaginable as well as publishing books and patterns. The leisure quiltmaking community seems to be more diffuse, though there are certainly individuals who belong to multiple quilt guilds or have friends in quilt guilds in other areas. This study does not examine the quiltmaking industry, though two participants own quilt shops, but the industry
certainly was present in teachers’ discussions of their careers, products, and opportunities. However, these hobby and commercial networks connect through quilt shows, some of which are organized by for-profit enterprises, and through quiltmaking teachers who may write books, design fabrics, design patterns for promotion of fabric lines, or serve as ambassadors for various companies as well as teaching. Moving within and between these networks takes a significant portion of quiltmaking teachers’ time, to communicate with the existing network and to market themselves as an important part of the network. It also requires extensive skills unrelated to quiltmaking.

Teachers discussed all the administrative work that they had to do to develop and maintain their careers. This included emails soliciting and managing teaching engagements and developing and maintaining websites or other social media for promotion and direct sales. Linda highlighted the variety of tasks and time involved: “I’m always making class samples, and writing patterns, and doing my website and emailing people. People don’t understand…how much time behind the scenes it takes. You don’t just make a quilt and then go out and teach it” (Linda). Bob talked about the need to revamp his blog into a more functional website, so that he would be able to sell his forthcoming book as well as patterns which he hoped to self-publish. Of course, selling anything through their websites means that teachers also have to find time to fulfill those orders.

Claire offered a free mystery quilt to her Facebook followers as a promotion for a book she was developing: “I was trying to market the book.” It ended up going viral with more than a thousand quilters from all over the world asking to join the closed Facebook group, bringing her to the attention of more quilters and leading to a special exhibit of a selection of the quilts that participants made at the Houston International Quilt Festival. Houston is one of the premier
quilt shows in the United States, held in conjunction with the fall industry quilt market hosted by the show’s parent company, Quilts, Inc. While Claire talked about this as an unexpected opportunity, even if it hadn’t been, she still had to create the quilt and write instructions which did not reveal the final quilt design until the last step, and then post them to Facebook and monitor questions, all as promotion for her book, meaning that any income wouldn’t accrue until the book’s publication.

Pam is developing and running retreats, which are multi-day experiences where participants can focus on their quiltmaking, rather than relying solely on teaching engagements with guilds, shops, and shows. Because she is organizing the retreats, rather than teaching a retreat for a quilt guild or store, she has to handle all aspects from promotions to taking registrations and payments as well as coordinating lodging. As she describes it, “they all go through me…they book everything through me. All the contact is through me.” At the end of the retreat, Pam will write a check to the retreat center. It is not surprising that the two teachers who own quilt shops, Emily and Maggie, both have business backgrounds from their prior careers. However, Claire and Linda also emphasized how helpful it was to their teaching careers to have previous business experience. Claire said:

And then as a working engineer, everything I needed for the current career I’m managing, was laid there…I had to handle budgets…if I can defend to Congress, I can certainly handle a group of quilters….that got me in the mode to be able to do lectures freely…I also had to train the war-fighter on how to use the equipment. That got me into teaching, ‘cause I was doing it. I had to write up manuals for the equipment I designed. That got me into pattern-writing. So everything I needed to succeed as a quilter on the
circuit was laid and practiced for thirty-three years working for the United States government.

Claire was able to directly transfer skills from her engineering career to her teaching career. Linda reported that she had always had a small business while she was raising her children and that it would have been difficult to jump into her teaching career without it. They explicitly cited prior learning as crucial to their success in managing all of the administrative aspects of teaching.

Conversely, Helen’s appreciation of NOT having to do all the administrative tasks highlights the level of detail needed to be a successful teacher. She teaches at a quilt shop but is not the owner. She is retired from a career developing and managing adult continuing education activities for a county community college system, so is quite cognizant of the work involved in presenting classes. She is the only participant teaching regularly who does not have to undertake these tasks, because she is teaching only at one shop: “I’m teaching so all the administrative stuff, the advertising, the shop and marketing, the…everything is done, ordering of everything is done by the shop and I come in and, with my outline, I do my thing and…that’s very nice…it’s the opposite of what I did before.” She is able to focus solely on preparing for teaching, by testing patterns and learning new techniques to share with her students, because she does not have to manage the administration and marketing tasks.

Some teaching venues create additional marketing work for teachers in that a number of quilt shows pay teachers solely per student in the class, with teachers paying their own travel expenses. Consequently, in order to maximize revenue, teachers have to teach as many class slots as possible as well as try to promote their classes in the time leading up to the show in order to attract students in addition to any marketing the show itself may do. The first time Natalie taught at the Houston show, “I thought, ‘hmm, then I think it would be fun to have as many
people as we could have,’ so instead of 20, I had 35 and I swore I would never do it again. I thought I was gonna go out of my mind…” so she started placing hard limits on her classes’ sizes, whether at shows, shops, or guilds. Bob said “to make any money, you have to have stuff to sell, product to sell, and you have to be teaching all the time and you have to get your classes to have people in them.” He cited teaching at a well-known show where he barely made enough teaching to cover his travel expenses.

All of the administrative, business-related work is on top of the work necessary to teach any given class or workshop. Natalie described it as:

If I’m teaching somewhere, that stuff is organized a couple weeks in advanced. I can’t, I decide that morning what clothes I’m gonna wear but it’s like, you know, I have enough papers, I have enough handouts, I have enough needles, I have enough, you know, thread. I have enough of everything I’m supposed to have and when somebody throws a monkey wrench into that, it’s tough.

This assumes that the class or workshop is already developed, of course.

Managing all these tasks, with all the other skills teachers need to develop to do them, cuts into the time available to actually design and make quilts to then teach. In addition to all the strictly administrative tasks teachers have to manage, they also spend time behind-the-scenes developing their products. The most obvious products are the programs they present and the classes they teach, but several of the teachers discussed the broader range of products needed to make a living.

The Need for Products

Bob summarizes the teachers’ dilemma nicely: “You gotta have the classes to teach, and then you have to have the product that you produce or is produced for you that you then take
with you and sell. And…[that] takes organization.” Bob and Linda both talked about the fact that teachers don’t make their money from teaching, but rather from selling products at teaching engagements, especially selling books. Linda has not published a book as a contract fell through when the 2008 recession was evolving; she’s decided not to pursue a book contract or to self-publish a book but admits that she would if she were younger. She does however self-publish patterns.

Bob published a book in 2016 with one of the major quilt book publishers. His book retails for $24.95; he makes $1.25 in royalties per copy sold. However, if he buys the books wholesale from the publisher for $12.50 and then sells them at teaching and speaking engagements, he also makes the $12.50 markup to retail. His book wasn’t yet available during one lecturing and teaching commitment in 2016; he said “I probably could have sold most everybody in that workshop a book and probably some people at the guild I could have sold books.” In contrast, Claire created her own publishing company to produce her books and patterns, after being repeatedly turned down with her first book, which had evolved out of a block of the month program she designed for her local guild. She has published eight books to date. She invested $40,000 to start up her publishing arm but has complete control, though also complete responsibility for managing all the steps of publication.

Ann develops her own patterns for her workshops. One of her challenges is that she doesn’t have desktop-publishing skills so feels that she’s not efficient in creating her patterns: My stuff is kind of all made up and I have to rinky-dink on my computer and I’m not a computer geek…I’ve got to figure out how am I gonna put this in writing,…my little diagrams, and I mean, I draw them on graph paper, then I photograph them, and I mean…it’s so bizarre the way I go but they’re my homemade patterns.
She does not sell her patterns; they are solely instructions for her workshops. Linda does self-publish and sell her patterns, both at teaching engagements and through her website.

Natalie noted that with changes in the publishing industry, quilt books do not stay in print the way they did when she first started out in the 1970s. Her first book, on finishing quilts, was reprinted more than twenty times, most recently in 2013, when an e-book version was also published. Her experience, however, shows the pressure to be developing new ideas constantly. After her first book was published, “the publisher at Quilt Market that year put her hand, I can remember she put her hand on my shoulder and said ‘so, [Natalie], what are you gonna do next?’” and I’m thinking…”oh, this was it, there’s no ‘next’.” While Claire has complete control over her publishing, she feels the same pressure from the industry and students: “You want more from me? I don’t know if I have more. This, this could be it, and the pressure already ‘what’s next, what’s next, what’s next, what’s next.’” This pressure to have the next thing, whether pattern, lecture, trunk show, or book in development, adds to teachers’ constant choices about their careers.

Making Choices

Quiltmaking teachers who are working “the circuit,” as Claire describes it, make choices with every teaching engagement they pursue or accept. They are deciding how much to teach, where to teach, what to teach, and how long to pursue their teaching careers.

To teach or not? At the time of my interviews, four of the participants felt they were at pivot points in their careers, where they were deciding whether and how to continue. Both Natalie and Linda were struggling with whether to keep teaching as they aged, though Natalie has been trying to limit her teaching for the last 5 or 6 years. She is cutting back further on travel and trying to only teach locally and continue teaching online. Linda was debating retiring from
teaching though concurrently developing a new trunk show lecture to take out to quilt guilds, which shows her indecision. Much of her quiltmaking is specifically about teaching:

I’m debating whether to stop…I know I’m a teacher and that’s the hardest thing about saying I might just retire, because when I make a quilt, I love the process. I love thinking through the process, explaining the process, I love teaching the process. And am I gonna give that up? I don’t, I don’t know. So I’m in a real quandary.

In contrast, despite being one of the oldest participants interviewed, Jane is increasing her teaching because it is less physically onerous than selling at art shows which has been one of her primary venues as a fiber artist. The suitcases that Natalie describes as getting heavy are lighter than the 2,500 pounds of inventory and booth supplies that one of Jane’s friends estimated she moved to each art show. In contrast, with the publication of his book, Bob is trying to figure out if he can teach enough to be a viable career alongside his part-time church musician career.

These four participants articulated being at decision points with their careers; participants in general described a variety of choices they had to make as they pursued their teaching careers. **To travel or not?** One recurring theme is about traveling to teach. Betsy remembers deciding not to travel when she was most active teaching:

“I know at one point I deliberately thought, I made a decisions…I had kids at home and, um, I really like my kids, and traveling wasn’t something I was real keen on. So I made a deliberate decision that I would be as big a fish as I could in this small pond and that worked out okay…I think I had the innovation and the skill set to go bigger but I didn’t have the desire.”

She limited her teaching career geographically but she also mentioned teaching venues that other teachers did not, including schools, Elderhostel, and Cooperative Extension. This suggests she
was able to use the time she saved by not traveling to connect deeply in her local community rather than broadly cross the quiltmaking community.

Natalie is trying to cut back on her traveling to focus teaching more locally, specifically mentioning the physical toil of traveling to teach. “I am getting to a place where the suitcases are too heavy and don’t like riding planes anymore so it’s like, for the past, I bet for the past 5 or 6 years, I’ve tried to, um, tried to get out of this.” She continues to teach her year-long applique class as well as at one regional show, and currently has two classes active on Craftsy. These classes were created several years ago so she currently only has to monitor students’ questions online several times a week which she can do from home.

**How much to teach?** In tandem with choosing how far to travel, teachers each have to decide how much to teach. Time, travel, and income, which will be discussed below, are interconnected. Ann, though she’s found a creative outlet through selling some of her work, still wants to balance her own quiltmaking with the designs she does for classes, “I have to satisfy myself too and sometimes…in order for it to be a class, it has to get too simple and if I see something that’s a little more challenging...then I want to go for it...it’s just how much time you want to spend teaching and learning.” Helen only teaches at one quilt shop as a way of balancing her teaching, her quiltmaking, and the rest of her life. She describes her decision as “I’m pretty carefully choosing...a certain amount of time to quilting...because you can be pulled in so many directions that you don’t have time to do what you want to do.”

Bob is building his teaching career. With the publication of his first book and building local connections after relocating several hundred miles in recent years, he is also developing his next project and continuing his job as a part-time church musician. He has a goal, “[What] I would like to do is be out once a month if I could on the decent couple-day teaching thing to
bring in some serious money and then…be here…the other part of the time working on some things” so that he has a next project ready to go, either when interest in his new book wanes or he needs some variety. Pam is likewise building her teaching business. Even though she’s been a certified instructor for a pattern company for several years, she hadn’t made the commitment to her teaching career. She said “So I don’t know what’s gonna happen but this is what I did decide…that I was going to dedicate this year of my life to building this business,” but did not define her goal for the business.

Where to teach? Decisions about time commitments and travel intersect with the approaches of various teaching venues, leading to explicit decisions about where to teach. Pam is concentrating on developing her retreat series because she prefers small groups for multiple days, “the way I teach is I don’t want to teach any more than 6 or 7 students. I like my small groups. I get to know them. I get to build relationships with them” rather than teach a larger group for one day. Pam’s teaching fee is incorporated into the cost of the retreat, along with accommodation fees. Many quilt shows, as mentioned above, pay per student which led Natalie to plan too large a class for her first teaching stint at one venue. Bob felt like he had to teach or sell all the time to even cover his travel expenses to a quilt show. He said, “I was looking at that and I was going ‘this is crazy, I’m not doing this’.” Consequently, Bob is currently focusing on teaching at quilt guilds and shops which instead pay teachers a flat rate, with travel if applicable, no matter the number of attendees at the program or class. He moved several years ago but has continued this approach by focusing on teaching at a local quilt shop in his new home as well as at guilds. He did teach at a quilt show in Southcentral Pennsylvania in 2016, as well as at a guild, but he was brought in to teach by one of the vendors, not by the quilt show organizers.
These decisions also highlight the diffuseness of the networks around quiltmaking. Jane has been enmeshed in a network of art shows, first as a weaver and in recent years as a quilter, but is having to develop connections to quilt guilds in order to teach. She only recently joined her local quilt guild and has been entering quilt shows. Likewise, Bob has connections in the quilting industry from when he competed in the McCall’s design contest, which lead to him designing quilts for fabric manufacturers and publishing patterns in national publications. However, he also has had to build his network of contacts in quilt guilds—he sent a series of emails out to each of the quilt guilds in Pennsylvania introducing himself. He also had to develop connections to local quilt shops to seek out teaching venues. At the time of our interview, he’d visited a number of local shops and taught at several but was focusing on one shop which sold sewing machines from the manufacturer for which he is an ambassador. Through his company contacts, he can reach out to stores that sell that particular brand. As a brand ambassador, he has credibility with those shops.

Interestingly, although teachers talked about choices they had made during their teaching careers, there seemed to also be a tension with having opportunities, a “big break,” whether this was something a teacher really wanted or not.

**Opportunity**

Participants framed opportunity both as something to prepare for and to take advantage of, or to choose not to, rather than something that a teacher creates. It feels like participants think opportunity means an event that takes a teacher up a level to a larger stage, to be better known, and possibly make more money. In talking about several nationally-known teachers, Linda explained “you have to have a big break…but then you gotta go with it…I just don’t have
the interest.” In her case, she turned down or did not pursue opportunities that would have brought her into new networks of quiltmakers in other parts of the country. She said:

I had two offers from people who said…‘we’re connected with the Road to California show and… I can get you in as a teacher’ and I didn’t act on it…I was asked to go to Alaska to teach…that was a break that I guess I could have had…I don’t want to go that far away.

She did not pursue these opportunities because they would have required more travel than she wanted but sounded regretful when describing them to me.

Linda feels that a teacher has to have a big break to make it nationally, but recognizes that the teacher then has to invest a lot of time and effort in maximizing the opportunity. Claire is more proactive, planning and working to be ready for an opportunity when it arises—“seizing the opportunity that exists, the crack is already there in the door, all I gotta do is go through” and “that was usually my plan. I’m like ‘okay, prep yourself, be prepared,’ so when the door opens, you can take action.” One opportunity evolved from her Facebook-based mystery quilt that went viral as discussed above. The mystery quilt ended up leading to an exhibit of selected participants’ work at two quilt shows. Claire describes what happened: “my first curated special exhibit and it went to Houston and Chicago, not because I had this vision of doing a special exhibit. I had an idea to write a book. Gave out something free. And people hopped on it and it became so much grander than I ever envisioned.” She seized the opportunity for expansion that her mystery quilt’s popularity provided.

Claire also talked about the downside of opportunity. She created a ruler and patterns that would help quiltmakers use their scraps effectively which led to her being a guest on an online quilt show. The show is hosted by two nationally-known quiltmaking teachers and, rather
than being broadcast, it is available online to subscribers. Once Claire appeared on the show, sales of her ruler skyrocketed, which led to her being swamped with orders to fulfill. Friends from outside her quiltmaking life helped her catch up and deal with the unexpected success. Claire felt that some of her quiltmaking friends abandoned her due to her success.

You can’t say “I don’t want that level of success. I don’t want that mountain top.” I lost friends over that, you know, people, there was a before and afterpivot point and you go “wow, I thought friendship was based on more than that” because, I, it was up until that moment and then I realized that that moment defined some people’s friendship with me.

The implication was that her now-former friends could not be happy for her but were jealous of Claire’s new role in the quiltmaking world. She also had to adjust her own sense of where she fit into the implied hierarchy of quiltmaking teachers when she found herself teaching alongside some of the people she admired as well as being in a position to email them for advice. Claire’s movement into this circle appeared to threaten others who may now see her as competition.

Natalie describes her opportunities as being in the right place at the right time, especially publishing her first book. The second publisher she approached, after talking with an acquaintance who had publishing success, immediately accepted her book proposal. Her quiltmaking teaching career started in the 1980s, before social media, so she made many contacts through phone conversations and the industry Quilt Market. She was offered the chance to work on a book with the Smithsonian by a publisher who knew her work and was able to take advantage of it because she only lived an hour from Washington, DC. Ultimately, she co-authored two books based on quilts from the Smithsonian’s collection which were published in the mid-1990s.
With men such a small percentage of quiltmakers, Bob feels like some male quiltmakers have been offered opportunities in the quilting industry solely because they are male. However, they still have to deliver high-quality work because the industry is focused on making money.

At the same time, Bob has felt at a disadvantage by being male:

So there’s, …this kind of crazy thing…you feel like the…kind of the animal in the zoo, people looking through the window…and…“oh, wow there’s a guy who’s talking, we got to see what this weird creature is.”

He was interested in pursuing an opportunity to work for a longarm machine manufacturer at quilt shows but was discouraged by the reality that he wouldn’t be a cost-effective choice as the only male staff member when the vendor saved money by having staff share hotel rooms at shows.

On a small scale, opportunity led some participants to teaching quiltmaking. Linda and Ann both specifically mentioned being asked if they were interested in teaching by quilt shop owners who admired their work. Sara had volunteered to do a presentation for her guild, which a shop owner saw and then recruited her to use the presentation as a basis for a class. Betsy was encouraged by her own quiltmaking teacher, when a new quilt shop was opening nearby, as Betsy’s teacher was not interested in working at the shop or teaching there.

Choices and opportunities both influence and are influenced by the role that income from the quiltmaking community plays in a teacher’s household.

**Income or Lack Thereof**

The role that a quiltmaking teachers’ income plays in their household can drive their engagement in the quiltmaking community. At the time of my interviews, only Jane relied solely on income derived from quiltmaking. All the other participants had another income stream,
either theirs or a partner/spouse’s, currently or during the height of their teaching careers. Consequently, this financial security does give them freedom to decide how to pursue their teaching careers.

**Income from Diversification.** Only Claire and Jane work full-time in the quiltmaking community. Jane is embedded in the art community, making most of her income from the quilts and fiber-related items she sells at art shows and the local co-op that she helped found. She sells quilts, quilted sayings, baby quilts, hand-dyed fabric, scarves, and other fiber items. She only started teaching quiltmaking, specifically several of her own patterns and techniques, in recent years. She is still building her connections in the leisure quiltmaking community by joining the local quilt guild, entering quilt shows, and reaching out to other quilt guilds. She has been able to use her teaching commitments to develop future opportunities. For example, when she was speaking at the quilt guild in York, someone attended from a Lancaster guild and started conversations about Jane speaking to that guild.

Claire started her teaching career and business about 5 years before retiring from her government engineering career, though she started teaching locally about 10 years before retirement. She has her federal pension as a safety net but was earning as much from her quiltmaking enterprises as her government salary about 3 years before she retired. She does not rely solely on teaching but diversified with subsidiaries to publish her books and produce the specialty rulers she designs. While we did not discuss its contributions to her income, she is also a certified life coach and motivational speaker. Similarly, a number of nationally-known quiltmaking teachers publish books but some have also created specialty tools, or other products, as a way of building their businesses. Some of these teacher-designers have developed certified
instructor programs for their patterns, like the one that Pam completed, or their specialty tools as a way of expanding the reach of their businesses, though Claire has not.

**Income from Store Ownership.** Emily and Maggie teach at the quilt shops they own. Maggie is not earning income from the shop yet, as she purchased an existing shop about 3 years ago so is still paying off the purchase as well as investing in the business. She hopes to be able to take a salary in 2019. Emily has owned her shop since 2000 but still reports that the shop’s contribution to their household income varies year to year. Each has diversified beyond fabric and related quilting items. Maggie noted that the longarm quilting services that she offers significantly improve the shop’s income stream. Emily started selling domestic sewing machines several years after opening and has added additional brands over the years as another income stream, as well as offering both quilting services and rental of time on the store’s longarm machine. Both Maggie and Emily revamped their shop class offerings in the last 2 years or so and both now offer lecture-style programs in addition to project and technique-based classes, which is a surprise as quilting is a hands-on activity.

**Quiltmaking Income as “Extra.”** Even though well-known and well-regarded nationally, as indicated by her induction into the Quilters Hall of Fame, Natalie reported that her income from the quiltmaking community paid for extras. Her quiltmaking income paid for parochial school tuition for her children; her spouse worked for a university which reduced tuition costs, but her income paid for room, board, and other costs.

Betsy thought that her income from teaching and working in the local quilt shop probably only covered the cost of groceries for her family of four. As discussed above, she made a conscious choice to teach regionally, rather than to have national aspirations. Likewise, Linda discussed not pursuing several teaching opportunities on the West Coast which would have
introduced her to new audiences and noted that if she were younger, she might try to publish a book. From her descriptions, it appears that her quiltmaking income supports her participation as a quiltmaker, which likely then affected her decision about time-consuming traveling.

**Trying to Build Income.** At the time of my interviews, both Bob and Pam were focused on building their incomes from the quiltmaking community. Bob has a part-time job within his long-time career; while he has another income in the household, he noted that money was tight. He felt that if he could have a 2-day teaching commitment once a month, presumably in tandem with sales of his book to participants, it would provide enough income while still leaving time to develop his next book or program. Pam has the safety net of a part-time job in the family business, but aspires to earn her income from the quiltmaking community. She reported that she’s invested $25,000 to $30,000 to date, which likely includes the prerequisite for certification regarding number of classes with other certified instructors and number of quilts completed as well as travel to the certification training itself. It is unlikely that this includes the cabin she’s purchased in hopes of developing a retreat center of her own.

In contrast, Sara is focusing on quiltmaking as a hobby that provides relaxation from her full-time job so is not earning much at this time. However, she considers herself to have been lucky to have been selling on Etsy at the right time so was able to pay her rent with sales of her knitting patterns and kits when she was in graduate school.

Pursuing a career teaching quiltmaking requires many skills beyond quiltmaking, especially when seeking to make a living. Claire and Linda discussed the role their prior knowledge from earlier careers played in pursuing their current careers. Ann discussed the absence of a skill and its impact on her perception of her materials. Teaching outside a formal structure in a nonformal learning environment, requires skills in marketing and product
development, as well as basic business skills, which may require teachers to become learners in order to gain these skills. Investing in these skills is another choice to make as a teacher balances cost and time to develop these skills with their choices about teaching venues, teaching schedules, and overall teaching commitment.

Although the business and choices of a teaching career were the dominant theme of interviews, participants did discuss their relationship with their materials.

**Quiltmaking Teachers’ Relationship with Their Materials**

When viewed through the lens of Actor-Network Theory, quiltmaking is a sociomaterial activity in that knowledge only exists when it takes material form, emerging from connections between people and things. A quilt is the quiltmaker’s knowledge, resulting from the interactions of the maker, fabric, thread, a sewing machine or hand-needle, the pattern or the maker’s imagination, and all the maker’s previous quiltmaking experiences. In discussing their quiltmaking practice, teachers also revealed their relationships with the tools and materials they used.

**Changing Technology Invigorating Practice**

Linda and Kate both specifically mentioned their surprise at the new techniques and technologies which they discovered when they returned to quiltmaking after a break. Linda made her first quilt in 1976 and did not make her second quilt until 1996. Kate had made several quilts as a teenager but, except for a sorority project, did not continue quiltmaking during college and dental school due to time constraints, returning to quiltmaking in the late 1990s. In the intervening years, quiltmaking had been revolutionized by the development of the rotary cutter and acrylic rulers which made cutting fabric for patchwork a much simpler and quicker process, allowing quilters to spend less time on preparation and more time actually making patchwork. Linda said:
I got out my cardboard and my scissors and…was gonna do it the way I did the first one. And then I realized there were rotary cutters and…when I realized how much easier and more accurate quilting had gotten, I was hooked.

Both Linda and Kate became much more involved in quiltmaking upon their return.

Ann showed the difference technology made in a quilter’s thinking when discussing her early quilting, which was also before rotary cutters:

We had to draw our block on graph paper first and then make our templates, out of mylar, draw all around them, draw on the seam allowance and then piece them together by hand. Everything went together really well and…so I continue quilting, I finally got into some machine piecing and…I’m making lots of practice pieces before I got to the big quilt because I figured, you know, two maybe three in a lifetime so I better get it right.

Now she makes many quilts each year, more than the two she expected to make in her lifetime when she started.

Kate discussed another technological change in her quiltmaking, as she purchased an Accuquilt die-cut system. These systems allow quilters to quickly cut fabric, with several layers of fabric going through the cutter at a time. The dies can cut detailed shapes such as leaves or flowers for applique, or quickly cut large numbers of simple shapes for complex patchwork patterns. By changing the technology she used, Kate was able to maintain her quiltmaking despite working full-time and having two young children. She focused on what parts of the quiltmaking process she enjoyed and looked for ways to reduce the time involved in the parts she didn’t enjoy. She also found that her patchwork piecing improved after switching to the die cutter, as it cut her fabric with precision.
Maggie likewise discussed changing technologies, as she has switched from hand-quilting her work to using a long-arm machine which allows for significantly faster completion. This acquisition overlapped with her purchase of a quilt shop so it hasn’t changed her level of involvement in quiltmaking. However, it has added another income stream as the shop now offers quilting services to customers.

Both Betsy and Sara switched back to handwork from using sewing machines for their quilting. Betsy returned to hand-quilting as part of reclaiming her preferences after retiring from teaching quiltmaking for pay. Similarly, Sara stepped back from selling quilts or taking commissions, working on hand-piecing quilts and focusing on her quiltmaking as a leisure activity. For these two participants, less technology means relaxing and greater enjoyment of their quiltmaking.

Changing technology—generally but not exclusively by adding it—has invigorated practice for participants. In terms of ANT, this is a changing of the entities within the network which includes the quiltermaker. For Ann, this has meant creating more quilts. For Kate, who values precision, it has meant “better” quilts in that she feels like her work is more technically adept. For Linda, the change to rotary cutters led to a new hobby and, ultimately, a teaching career. The network effects of a change in equipment included changes in the quiltermaker herself, which supports ANT’s concept of symmetry, which requires that each entity in a network be viewed as having the same potential influence within the network, rather than humans having primacy.

**Fabric Has Agency**

Teachers, especially those who begin their design process with fabric rather than a block design, demonstrated that fabric has agency when discussing their processes. Betsy illustrates this when describing a snowflake quilt she made: “I’m the first one to tell you I was really
surprised how that snowflake went together cause it’s not what I planned or not what I saw in my head.” Her design evolved as she constructed the quilt, as she consciously discovered what she was doing, “I just appliqued things that I liked and then I realized I was working…with units” [emphasis added]. Maggie described fabric as speaking—"it just said ‘Disappearing Nine Patch’ to me,” when sharing the inspiration for a quilt she had just completed, referring to a common quilt design.

Starting with the fabric. The fabric guides the quilt design for some teachers. Both Emily and Kate described starting with the fabric and then creating designs that maximize the visual potential of the fabric. Emily stated “let the fabric do the work for you.” To that end, she will design a quilt that highlights unique features of the fabric, such as a quilt with wide stripes to use a fabric with a particularly tall design element. Similarly, though she works with existing block patterns, Kate also lets the fabric drive her design, noting “I start with the fabric and say ‘what can I do with this?’”

Responding to the fabric. Pam and Bob describe responding to the fabric. At the time of her interview, Pam was waiting for two boxes of fabric from a fabric designer. Pam is certified as an instructor by one particular quilt designer, so only makes quilt patterns from that designer, but she still uses the fabric to inspire her work. She describes quiltmaking as the “challenge of taking the fabric and beginning and not knowing where it’s going to go.” Bob describes having the opposite reaction to a particular fabric collection sent by a company for him to design with, saying “another batch came through and looked, going like [sighs] ‘no’.”…was like I couldn’t figure out what to do.” Both respond to the fabric, in positive and negative ways.
Therefore, like changing equipment in the section above, fabric is an actor in the network when quiltmaking is viewed through Actor-Network Theory, part of the negotiations between all of the entities in the network and influencing the quiltmaker.

Technology Changing the Social Activity of Quiltmaking

One of the most common images of quiltmaking is the quilting bee, where a group of women gather to share the work of quilting a quilt top while visiting and sharing news. However, quiltmaking has become a less social activity as technology has changed. While domestic sewing machines have been used to make patchwork quilt tops for more than 100 years, using a sewing machine to complete the quilting stage of construction has only become popular in the last 40 to 50 years. While quiltmakers have been able to hire individuals to hand-quilt their projects for decades if they did not want to do the quilting themselves, as seen in Rake’s (2000) research on Ohio quilters, with the introduction of the longarm sewing machine for home use in 1980s, quiltmakers could quickly complete a quilt. While quiltmakers had been able to use their domestic sewing machine to machine quilt even in the 1800s, with the longarm machine individuals can quickly quilt their own quilts in a day or “quilt by check,” hiring specialist quilters, either working from home or through a quilt shop, to quilt for them.

Machine quilting came to be accepted over time and dominate due to convenience. For example, in the 2018 AQS Lancaster quilt show, prizes were awarded for large quilts in three categories: hand quilting, stationary machined quilted, and movable machine quilted (http://www.quiltweek.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2018-Complete-Contest-Rules.pdf). Similarly, the 2018 Quilt Odyssey contest distinguishes between hand quilting, machine quilting, and domestic sewing machine quilting (https://www.quiltodyssey.com/?page_id=2). With the
use of domestic sewing machines to make patchwork and either domestic sewing machines or longarms to quilt, quiltmaking with others as a social activity now occurs in classes or at retreats.

As a fiber generalist and a history museum professional, the idea of technology changing the social aspects of quiltmaking was intriguing. As discussed in Chapter 2, I am a quilter but I also knit, crochet, and stitch needlework. When I joined a quilt guild during my doctoral coursework, after 15 years of belonging to a needlework guild, I was surprised by the number of people who knit during a quilt guild meeting—out of a group of at least fifty attendees, there are sometimes ten people knitting. Speakers are usually presenting trunk shows of their quilts, with technique discussions and actual quiltmaking only occurring in workshops, classes, and retreats. Betsy explained this in the case of her guild—only handwork is possible at a guild meeting due to noise, but the lighting is so bad in the meeting room that few people can see well enough to hand-piece, so they knit instead. In the case of quilting guilds, individuals do not gather to make quilts but rather to talk about quiltmaking.

Ann highlighted the social aspect of classes by describing a conversation with a student, originally in the context of finding the right level of support for students. While Ann offered technical instruction to help the student improve her work, the student was content with her imperfection, saying “I’m here to have fun and it’s good enough for me. I’m enjoying the day.” The student chose the class in part to be social. In the case of classes, individuals are able to be social while pursuing quiltmaking, but the physical needs of their sewing machines may dictate the space and amount of interaction.

**Conclusion.**

This chapter describes the findings from the qualitative interviews that highlight quiltmaking teachers’ own quiltmaking journeys, their choices in navigating their careers, and
their relationship to their materials. The next chapter will integrate the qualitative content analysis findings presented in the previous chapter and the qualitative findings in this chapter with the literature for significance and implications for practice and further research.
CHAPTER 6

INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter integrates the findings from the qualitative analysis of participant interviews and the qualitative content analysis of quiltmaking teachers’ biographies. It then puts these in context with the study’s theoretical frameworks and adult education literature. The purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to understand how quiltmaking teachers learn and develop their specialization in quiltmaking and 2) to understand how these quiltmaking teachers learn to navigate a diffuse network of quilting guilds, shops, and shows in order to pursue their teaching careers. To accomplish this, I use three research questions:

1. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their learning journey to their areas of expertise?
2. How have quiltmaking teachers chosen to pursue their career?
3. How do quiltmaking teachers describe their relationship with their materials?

I will address each of these questions through my findings as well as the implications for the related theoretical framework, and then discuss the implications for adult learning and leisure. Finally, I will address the limitations of the study and make suggestions for future research.

The Quiltmaking Journey and Recreation Specialization

Teacher biographies often begin with an origin story of teacher’s beginnings as a quiltmaker. These stories supported the deeper stories which participants revealed in interviews. Both interviews and biographies provide insight into the role of family and of life changes in quiltmaking journeys, which offers implications for the recreational specialization framework.
The Role of Family and Life Changes

One of the most significant themes in both the teachers’ biographies and participant interviews was the importance of family and life changes in teachers’ quiltmaking journey. Many teachers discussed learning to sew informally from a family member in childhood. Some teachers may not have learned to quilt in childhood but grew up around a grandmother’s quilting frame. Family may not have taught teachers directly, but introduced the teachers to sewing and quiltmaking or made it possible through the gift of a sewing machine or a first visit to a quilt shop.

Some teachers did not begin their quiltmaking journey with childhood sewing but, instead, by participation in crafting more broadly with their families. Bob, for example, talked about his family trying out a variety of crafts as each was popular in the 1970s, a pattern he continued as an adult until he settled into quiltmaking. Likewise, Sara talked about crafting with her mother as she grew up. Interestingly, only a few of the teacher biographies discussed childhood crafting, focusing on childhood sewing instead.

Teacher biographies did mention life changes leading to learning quiltmaking, but it was a much larger theme in the participant interviews, likely because there was more time to explore this idea than in the limited space of a biography. Interview participants also discussed the life changes that brought them into teaching quiltmaking, as well as the changes that are leading several to cut back on their teaching commitments. For example, Claire began teaching quiltmaking in the 5 years before her retirement from her engineering career, as preparation for a second full-time career. While Ann was able take quiltmaking classes when her daughter was more independent as a teenager, Ann didn’t begin teaching until she retired from her career. In contrast, Betsy scaled back her teaching career when her elderly father needed more assistance.
Aging has lead Natalie to scale back traveling to teach, while Jane is increasing her teaching load as she approaches age 70 because it is less demanding than selling her work at fine art and craft shows.

Limitations brought Bob and Sara to quiltmaking after concentrating on other crafts as aspiring professionals. Bob was exploring pottery as an alternative to his church music career but it wasn’t feasible given his living space in New York City and the cost of studio space, so he finally followed up on his interest in learning quiltmaking. Sara had worked in a knitting store and even designed and sold patterns, but carpal tunnel made it too painful to continue. Likewise, she completed a MFA in photography but decided she did not want to pursue teaching in the formal environment of academia, turning to quiltmaking as a focal hobby.

**Implications for Recreation Specialization**

Backlund and Kuentzel (2013) propose a leisure capital model for changes in recreation participation, identifying leisure diversification, leisure limitations, leisure routine, and life-course events as types of leisure capital. They suggest that any of these can result in the increase, decrease, or maintenance of specialization in an activity. The findings of this study support several of these types of leisure capital.

The most evident support is for life-course events affecting participation and specialization. Many quiltmaking teachers began learning quiltmaking as a result of life events, whether it was commemorating a milestone, such as a birth of a baby or an upcoming wedding, or an event creating more available leisure time, such as a divorce or something a bit more subtle, such as a child becoming more independent. Life-course events also triggered the transition to teaching, commonly retirement from a full-time position unrelated to quiltmaking. Jane provides an example of aging as a life-course event which leads to her increasing her
teaching activities and decreasing her participation in art shows. Betsy and Natalie provide examples of life-course events decreasing participation in teaching but maintaining a specialization in quiltmaking. Bob and Sara came to quiltmaking after limitations affected their specialization in other crafts.

That so many quiltmaking teachers—both interview participants and biography subjects—transition from sewing to quiltmaking provides support for Shafer and Scott’s (2013) model of leisure participants staying within a broad activity but shifting to a related specialization. Emily would argue that quiltmaking is a subspecialty of sewing—she offers classes at her store which are foundational to quiltmaking, garment construction, and home décor as skill builders students should take before focusing in on one of the three subspecialties. Both interview participants and teacher biographies suggest that most see sewing and quiltmaking as distinct hobbies. A number of teachers describe their previous sewing as making doll clothes or garments for themselves. Given that the basic action of attaching two pieces of fabric together with thread using a needle are the same, this is likely a philosophical discussion. Whether quiltmaking is distinct from sewing or not, moving from garment construction to quiltmaking is certainly a shift between related activities, as is Shafer and Scott’s (2013) discussion of shifting between mountain biking and road racing.

Scott and Shafer’s (2001) foundational review of recreational specialization proposed three criteria for specialization: focusing of behavior, acquiring skills and knowledge, and making the activity a central life interest. By these criteria, all the interview participants and many of the biography subjects specialize in quiltmaking. Given that longitudinal research on recreational specialization generally finds that progression towards specialization is uncommon (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2006, 2008; Scott & Lee, 2010), this suggests a relationship between
teaching and specialization. Not all those who specialize in quiltmaking teach, but those who do teach are committed to quiltmaking.

The definition of “central life interest” needs further study, however. While quiltmaking is a central life interest for most interview participants and biography subjects, it is not to the exclusion of other interests. For example, Linda Hahn’s biography includes that she is also a certified Zumba instructor, in addition to being a nationally-known quiltmaking teacher. Interview participant Claire is one of only two participants who make a full-time living from the quiltmaking community, but she also is a motivational speaker and certified life coach. At the time of her interview, Linda was debating whether to retire from teaching, despite simultaneously developing a new trunk show to tour, in part because she has many other activities which she enjoys that can consume her time, including playing golf.

This also raises a question about the intersection of recreation specialization and the serious leisure theoretical frameworks. One of serious leisure’s constructs is the idea of “devotee,” which is defined as someone earning money from the activity which has heretofore been serious leisure (Stebbins, 2013). I will discuss the idea of teaching as a devotee work below in the implications for future research section. However, given that there are teachers for whom quiltmaking is a central life interest but they also are involved in other activities, this raises the question of the transition from leisure activity to profession. For those who have turned their quiltmaking hobby into a job through teaching and related activities such as writing books, does another activity take over the leisure role? Or, even if someone is earning a significant portion of their income from related activities, is quiltmaking still leisure? Despite Claire’s statement that “once you’re in the game, it is rare I have the opportunity to make a quilt just for me,” are teachers still able to use their quiltmaking itself as leisure with related activities
as work? Or, is it possible to specialize in an activity to the point that it is no longer recreation so that teachers have to learn or develop another activity to fill that role? If so, how do they learn the new leisure activity?

**Pursuing a Career in the Quiltmaking World and Communities of Practice**

An overwhelming commonality between the teacher biographies and participant interview is this creation of quiltmaking products, most commonly through a contract with a company in the quilting industry. The relationships in the industry and leisure networks have implications for the Communities of Practice framework.

Wenger (1998) originally defined a community of practice as a group which has three aspects: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. The group negotiates each of these, defining within itself the common activity, determining who is part of the group and creating the culture of the group, which also means that these can change over time with changing group composition. Newcomers to the group can gradually learn the mores of the group and move into more central positions, a process described as legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This process can utilize formal steps as an apprenticeship does, or be based on informal and tacit learning, which would be more likely in a hobby group with voluntary participation.

This study also uses Jewson’s (2007) conception of a community as a network, explicitly connecting Lave and Wenger’s formulation, “a community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time” (1991, p. 98), to network theory. This allows for exploring learning and participation trajectories beyond legitimate peripheral participation’s inward trajectory, given that individuals participating voluntarily may choose to be only loosely
engage or may opt to work themselves out from the center of a group over time, among other ways of engagement.

**Relationships and Roles in the Quiltmaking World**

In their biographies, quiltmaking teachers highlight their relationships with companies and organizations, whether as author-publisher, teacher-venue, designer-fabric company, or ambassador-company. Teachers appear to use these relationships to enhance their own credibility with potential students, showing that they are valued by these companies. In the process, however, teachers identify the products they create as part of the quilting industry and quiltmaking world. They create books, tools, fabric lines, and individual patterns.

As noted by teachers who were interviewed, teachers learned that they need to create products to diversify their income streams from the quilting community as well as meet student expectations. Participants must have items to sell at their classes and workshops (and in the vendor halls at shows, if selling during class isn’t permitted). The pattern or book can be required for class or an add-on purchase for attendees. Acting as the retailer, in person or through their own website, generates significantly more income for teachers than royalties from the publisher. Some teachers learn how to take on the publishing or production roles themselves, as seen in Claire’s experience with her own publishing company and own tool company. Likewise, Karen Kay Buckley creates her own tools and DVDs, as discussed in her biography. This creates more work for them but also gives them complete control, rather than licensing the use of their name.

It also brings up how we think of being a node in a network. A node is an actor in the network (Mitchell, 2009) but what this means will vary with the level of network analysis. Within an individual guild, each member is a node, with a variety of connections between the
members. When examining the larger quiltmaking community, guilds, shops, and shows can be considered nodes for learning. Participants Emily and Maggie own quilt shops which are nodes, as they are physical destinations for quilters in their respective geographic areas and sites of learning through nonformal learning with classes and informal learning through conversations. Maggie talked about customers assuming that, because they worked in the shop, she and her staff were experts so seek knowledge and advice from them. Somewhat conversely, Emily talked about the research and learning she and her staff undertake in order to be experts and to be confident in their knowledge about the products they sell. This then allows them to be able to explain why they sell a particular style rotary cutter or pins, for example, as part of their customers’ informal learning. Though not a bricks-and-mortar shop owner, Claire has effectively become a node for learning with her publishing company and her tool company that complement and support her teaching, and workshops she offers online or in-person.

Other participants work the network instead, like Bob who is brand ambassador for one of the sewing machine companies. This relationship gives him contact information, and therefore access, to the shops that sell that particular brand of machine, using the network created by the brand for sales to provide entrée to offer classes. Pam seems to be trying to do both, using the network created by the company that certified her by being listed as a certified instructor on the company’s website to connect with potential students, but also organizes her own retreats. I interviewed Pam towards the end of her first multi-day retreat, physically hosted by an existing retreat center, but she spoke about having bought a cabin that she wants to turn into her own retreat center. She’s using her certification’s network to become a node for quilters’ nonformal learning.
These various roles and relationships, and how they may change, have implications for the communities of practice theoretical framework.

**Implications for Communities of Practice**

The experiences of quiltmaking teachers as they navigate the quiltmaking world—the intersecting and overlapping industry and leisure network of quilting shops, shows, guilds, and companies—have implications for Azevedo’s lines of practice model as well as Jewson’s view of communities of practice as networks.

**Lines of practice.** Based on his research with model rocket clubs and amateur astronomers, Azevedo (2011, 2013a, 2013b) critiques Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation as not representing all the possible trajectories within a community. He argues that individuals participate in related but separate communities of practice in different ways, such as interpreting astronomy for the public at a starviewing event while focusing on observation at a members-only viewing event. The intersections of personal preferences, sites of practice, and conditions of practice lead to multiple lines of practice. Individuals may learn related skills in order to participate in these different variations, for example, learning to communicate complex astronomical concepts in language accessible to the general public.

The experiences of quiltmaking teachers shows that teachers participate in different parts of the broad quilting community of practice in different ways, with their own lines of practice, supporting this model as it is applied to a different hobby. Individuals can participate as teachers, authors, quilt designers, competitive quilters, fabric designers, brand ambassadors, guild leaders, or even just be event participants or attendees. While quiltmaking is at the heart of each of these ways of participating, teachers also require additional skills for each role. Claire and Linda both talked about using skills from previous jobs—Claire as a federal employee and
Linda as a small business owner—to succeed in their quiltmaking careers. In contrast, Ann commented about how patched together she felt her patterns were, using hand-drawn diagrams, which she could change if she learned to use design software.

The teachers in this study also perform multiple lines of practice simultaneously in a single community of practice, using different skills they have learned, either formally or informally. For example, Quilt Odyssey had Margaret Solomon Gunn’s biography because Gunn was teaching at the 2016 event. However, within the biography, Quilt Odyssey referenced that Gunn competed in their show and often won ribbons. In 2016, Gunn’s work was also featured in a special exhibit at Quilt Odyssey, so she performed three lines of practice simultaneously: teacher, competitor, and featured quiltmaker. Likewise, interview participant Kate taught at her guild show and entered several quilts for judging, while also serving as guild president during the year of the show. While Gunn’s quiltmaking skills were foremost in her roles as competitor and featured exhibitor, she needed other skills to teach. Kate needed teaching and quiltmaking skills, but also leadership and organizational skills to serve as guild president. Kate discussed learning to teach informally through presenting programs while a member of an Embroiderers Guild of America chapter, as well as offering formal demonstrations at her quilting guild and informal demonstrations during quilt guild retreat. These gave her confidence and skills to offer to teach a class for the first time at her guild show when the organizers were seeking teachers.

These different ways of participating can also change over time, which affects what skills teachers continue to use. Betsy no longer teaches for pay, but stays central to her guild as the retreat coordinator and continues making her own quilts for pleasure. Helen attends her quilt guild but will no longer compete in guild challenges, after hearing that her success was
discouraging others from participating. They each put a priority on their maintaining their quiltmaking skills with less need for other skills such as designing for a guild challenge. They are also two examples of changing roles not necessarily removing someone from being at the center of a particular community of practice, which also has implications for Jewson’s (2007) conception of communities of practice as a social network.

Networks. The findings of this study support using Jewson’s (2007) conception of communities of practices as social networks. In a leisure setting where participation is voluntary, viewing community as a network means focusing on the relationships in and between groups, which does hearken back to Lave and Wenger’s original definition of a community as a set of relations (1991). As seen in the biographies, teachers highlight their relationships with various industry companies or media as part of discussing their own varied roles in the quiltmaking community and industry. Bob and Pam both access the network created by their connections to a specific company to develop opportunities for teaching. In contrast, Linda appeared to wonder if she’d missed her “big break” in that she had not taken advantage of an offer to connect her with the organizers for Road to California, another nationally-known quilt show with classes.

Relationships are primary in the network, creating other relationships across the industry and leisure communities, rather than focusing on specific individual communities. Even some of the entities that might be considered a community of practice, such as an individual quilt show or shop, highlighted their long relationships with teachers.

Framing the overlapping industry and leisure communities as social networks does open the question of what constitutes a network node in this context. This study looks at individuals who teach quiltmaking classes at quilt shops, shows, and guilds, on the assumption that each of these entities acts as a node for learning quiltmaking. Only quilt shops have a physical location,
through quilt shows and guilds usually have a regular location and a predictable schedule for gathering. However, can an individual be a network node? Does virtual presence create this same sort of gathering space for learning? Can Claire be thought of as a node? She teaches at a variety of guilds and shows, but quilters go to her for books and tools and watched her on a national quilting show. She hosts online workshops and classes, including the online mystery quilt that went viral and ultimately became a special exhibit. At the time of her interview, Pam was completing the first retreat that she’d organized and mentioned having purchased a cabin, in hopes of opening her own retreat center. Would a physical presence make her a node for learning? Is being a “star” in Jewson’s model—being in the center of a community and having lots of relationships—the same as being a node?

Jewson (2007) identifies several roles that can exist at the center of a particular social network, or community, that allow for “old-timers” to remain in the center even as their roles change. Betsy stepped back from teaching to focus on her own quiltmaking as well as concentrate on family responsibilities. While she is no longer paid for teaching, she still is at the center of her guild as one of the long-time members and retains an organizational role as retreat coordinator, available for a mediator role if needed and respected as one of the guild’s founding mothers. Similarly, Natalie has been working to scale back her traveling as she ages, but her induction into the Quilters Hall of Fame suggests that she is revered as someone central to the quiltmaking world, a star in that she has many links in the networks, built over her career. Other participants, and the teachers whose biographies are included in this study, highlight their relationships to individuals and entities in their own networks and the larger quiltmaking network to achieve their individual goals within the network. Their individual networks are not
just people and entities, but also things, however – the materials they utilized in their quiltmaking.

**Quiltmaker’s Relationship to Materials and Implications for Actor-Network Theory**

While teacher biographies do not discuss their materials directly, the fact that so many teachers highlight their roles as authors, fabric designers, tool designers, and pattern designers suggests that these teachers see the materials they create as important to other quilters. These teachers, through the items they create, want to be part of the networks whose effects are quilts, when we use actor-network theory to view quiltmaking.

When viewed through the lens of actor-network theory, quiltmaking is a sociomaterial activity in that knowledge only exists when it takes material form, emerging from connections between people and things. A quilt is the quilter’s knowledge, resulting from the interactions of the maker, fabric, thread, a sewing machine or hand-needle, the pattern or the maker’s imagination, and all the maker’s previous quiltmaking experiences.

Any individual quilter will likely see only individual items, such as fabric, but understanding actor-network theory’s concept of punctualization, the fabric is indeed its own network effect. Punctualization means recognizing a network as a singular entity, such as a sewing machine. The machine itself is a product of a network. Comparably, a piece of fabric is the network effect of the fabric designer, the machines that print the design, the machines that weave the fabric, the company and people that grow the cotton, and all of the people involved at each step of the process.

As seen in participant interviews, the fabric also has agency, in that it plays a role in the network that creates a quilt as a network effect (Law, 1992). In the instance of quilters who are most commonly using only 100% cotton fabric, participants generally describe fabric’s
agency in terms of its visual appearance rather than any other properties of the fabric. Teachers, as they create their own quilts, focus on the fabric and respond to it as they select particular fabrics to use in a quilt. For example, Kate instinctively disliked an annual shop-hop’s quilt one year, but she was able to analyze her dislike and link it to the particular green fabric included in the quilt, based on her personal color sense and prior knowledge about color. She replaced the green fabric with another color inspired by the quilt’s print fabric and created a quilt that won a ribbon at her guild’s show.

In terms of actor-network theory, this suggests that its concept of symmetry can be applied to fabric and quiltmaking. With symmetry, each entity in a network has the same potential influence; humans do not have primacy over inanimate objects at the beginning of analysis (Fenwick, et al., 2011). Interview participants sometimes found it difficult to talk about their design processes—Pam, for example, said “I have no process” and couldn’t articulate how she selected fabrics for her quilts. For future research, it may be more useful for the interviewer to ask participants to select one of their quilts and then talk the interviewer through the design and construction of that particular quilt. This may be able to reveal all the components of the network which led to the creation of the quilt—designer if applicable, fabric, inspiration, purpose, resources used for specific techniques, prior knowledge and so on. The quilt is knowledge so discussing it with the maker can reveal the full network, and lead beyond it to the broader social network, past and present, that contributed to that learning.

**Implications for Disciplines and Practice**

One of the core inspirations for this study is the question of who becomes a teacher in a community where there is no universally-recognized certification. This study specifically focuses on individuals who are teaching in nonformal spaces, in a leisure setting, but where
students have planned and committed in advance, unlike the more casual, mostly drop-in locations of DIY stores and museums. This study therefore adds to adult education’s understanding of credentialing, or rather the lack thereof, and of teaching in nonformal education.

**Credentialing**

Credentialing usually exists to limit entry, whether driven by those within a profession to control practitioners’ revenue or by outside regulators to address safety concerns (Collins, 1979; George, 2013; Pollock, 2015; Weeden, 2002). In quiltmaking, there are no life-threatening safety concerns to inspire credentialing—though it is possible to be injured, for example, by cutting a finger with a rotary cutter. Quilt shops, shows, and guilds are subject to regulation as businesses or nonprofits, not because of their connections to the quiltmaking community. An individual may choose to pursue a vendor-specific certification however. The quiltmaking community is fluid enough that certification or other corporate affiliation opens marketing doors, rather than creating work opportunities.

While the quiltmaking community has a variety of certifications, with the closing of the National Quilting Association, these credentials are created by the quilting industry from companies who want to reach farther into the community for potential customers but control the quality of those speaking on their behalf. Therefore these credentials can control quality, but for a small number of quiltmaking teachers. In the reality of the quiltmaking community, anyone who wants to become a teacher, and is willing to put in the work, can try. However, in such an open network without barriers to entry, almost none of this study’s participants were able to make a living from their quiltmaking activities, similar to Weeden’s (2002) finding that voluntary certification has a weak effect on earnings.
Voluntary certification’s value is determined by demand for that certification. Quiltmaking certifications offered by industry vendors are similar to certifications offered by information technology vendors. Wierschem, Shang and Johnson note that software certifications were “initially developed to provide product specific technical expertise” (2010, p. 90). Having individuals certified in a specific product meant that vendors knew those individuals had a certain level of familiarity with the product so would be easier for the company to work with. Similarly, quilting industry vendors certify individuals who have received training and show a minimum level of competency with that vendor’s tools, machines, patterns, or techniques, as seen with Pam’s certification. She had to complete a certain number of quilts using the vendor’s patterns, take classes with already certified teachers, and attend training directly with the vendor. With her certification, the vendor can rely on Pam to teach their designs and techniques so can expand the vendor’s business beyond its own direct staff capacity for teaching.

However, as noted above, voluntary certification’s value is in the demand. This study focused on quiltmaking teachers, not students. Future research can explore students’ perspectives on how they select teachers, including the role that certification plays. From this study, it appears that teachers gain advantages in marketing through their association with or certification by a vendor. It is unlikely that teachers gain a financial benefit, that is can command a higher price for their workshops and lectures solely from association with a vendor as participants discussed quilt shows having set fees per class or per student.

Research on the influence of certifications suggests that over time, there has come to be some financial advantage to holding voluntary certifications but that the role of certifications in recruitment and wages is complicated. Albert found “strong and positive association between
holding a certification and early career income” (2017, p. 139) using aggregate cohort data which covered a broad range of occupations and relied on participants’ self-reporting of holding certifications. Xu and Trimble, focusing on certificate programs offered by community colleges in two states, found that some certificates had an impact on earnings but that if individuals were using certification to move to a new field, their income might not change but “certificates may nonetheless lead to increased probably of employment” (2016, p.272). The key is still employer demand for certification. Wierschem, Zhang, and Johnson (2010) found directors of university information technology departments did not particularly value certifications when recruiting employees. Interestingly, Bartlett, Horwitz, Ipe, and Liu (2005) found that while the majority of the HR executives at large firms with IT departments which they surveyed considered industry-sponsored credentials in recruitment, once hired, less than have require employees to maintain their credentials. So potential employees may value gaining a certification in the hopes of being more employable, it is ultimately dependent on the value employers place on the certification.

The quiltmaking community is so fluid and open to anyone willing to teach and invest the work on the business side, that certification may make the teacher distinctive but does not necessarily increase their income, if shows especially do not make any distinction when setting payment rates.

The most interesting finding of this study relating to certification is the need for certification to address all the related skills. Having the quiltmaking and teaching skills wasn’t sufficient for a successful career as a quiltmaking teacher. Several teachers talked about the importance of having business skills and knowledge, learned in a previous career or learned informally, recognizing that their teaching career and related products are a business. This was reiterated by the quilt shop owners, though business owners are expected to have business skills.
Therefore, those in adult education designing a certification program or working with individuals seeking certification need to also think about what related skills might be necessary for success. Makers and teachers need business skills, not just skills in their particular craft or content area. The openness of the quiltmaking community welcomes those who can quilt to also teach, but it seems that those who succeed have additional skills.

This fluidity in the quiltmaking community, tied to learners’ participation as a leisure activity, has implications for teaching in the nonformal environment of classes and workshops.

**Teaching in Nonformal Education**

The quiltmaking classes taught by participants in this study are a leisure activity for participants. Students decide to register and pay for a class for their own individual reasons. They have selected an organized activity to meet their own, informal learning goals. Taylor (2012) identified a number of teaching approaches which nonformal educators use, based on his research at museums, parks, and large DIY stores. Teachers in this study combined several of Taylor’s instructional approaches.

Given quiltmaking’s sociomaterial nature, where knowledge does not exist until it takes material form, both Maggie and Emily discussed offering lectures as part of their stores’ class offerings. They described talks where the teacher conveyed information without necessarily any hands-on opportunities. Emily calls these “skill-builders,” designed to convey a base of information for students to then use as they move forward with their classes in one of her store’s focus areas: quiltmaking, home décor, or garment construction. In the days before my interview, she gave an hour-and-a-half lecture on pinning, which surprised even her as she developed the talk. This is an example of Taylor’s (2012) transmission-centered approach, with its focus on conveying information.
Most quiltmaking classes use the experiential approach Taylor identified, with students making something since quiltmaking is hands-on and the only way to learn is to do. These classes also have to incorporate some amount of information transmission for the teacher to provide instruction. However, participants most described their teaching experiences as using a visitor-centered approach, which Taylor summarizes as “the idea of connecting with learner’s needs and interests” (2012, p. 48). The challenge for the participants was to find the balance of their own goals for the day and their students’ goals, given that the teachers were hired to teach a particular project and/or techniques but since this nonformal learning activity is leisure for the students, so they may have goals that do not prioritize learning.

Participants described different overarching goals for their teaching, though it could be argued they share a common thread of wanting their students to relax. Some teachers want to help their students be more creative. Others try to discourage students from seeking perfection. Instead, they want their students to relax and enjoy the process of quiltmaking while still learning something new.

Teachers recognize that students have different goals for the day. Claire shared her experience as a competitive quilter, with Best of Show ribbons to validate her judgement, but she emphasizes to students that there is no reason to invest that level of energy into most projects. Ann likewise wants students to learn something but had a student who, while presumably still learning the day’s techniques, prioritized having a relaxing day working on a quilt.

Bob described the challenge of trying to balance the amount of prescription with the amount of freedom in a class. He wants students do use the techniques he’s teaching to make the project they want, with several options based on the workshop’s length, but some students want less choice, to be told what project to make. Natalie learned that her students had a boredom
threshold if the full quilt required a lot of the same element—in this case, small round appliqued berries—so designed future teaching quilts differently.

None of the participants talked about providing pre-assembled kits, in fact several specifically talked about students selecting their own fabrics. For example, Claire specifically said that she didn’t care where students bought their fabrics. However, this freedom was also too much for some students. Ann had challenges with a quilt workshop achieving its necessary enrollment because the potential students didn’t like the fabric she’d used for her sample and could not imagine the quilt in different fabrics. The same issue leads Linda to make three to five of the same quilt in different colors and styles of fabrics, to inspire students.

Quiltmaking teachers, therefore, as individuals working in nonformal environments in a leisure setting, walk a balancing act between providing enough structure to make the class useful but giving students enough freedom that it still feels like leisure. They try to remove the pressures of perfectionism so that students can relax and learn. To accomplish this, within the structure of teaching a specific project or technique, they have to juggle between multiple teaching approaches which Taylor (2012) identified.

Adult educators working in nonformal settings, or working with those who teach in nonformal settings, must remember that their students’ reasons for participation may include learning goals, but do not always. Participation in a class or workshop may be a way for the student to meet a self-directed learning goal. For example, I took a workshop on making half-square triangles in summer 2017 because I intensely disliked this particular patchwork component so hoped that the class would help me find a technique that I could enjoy and succeed with. At other times, students’ goals may not be specifically related to learning. I’m registered for a class in July 2018 solely for the teacher, who is someone I admire. While I can guess what
I will learn, that is not my top priority as I could probably learn the same information from continuing to read her blog and watch her tutorials. Adult educators have to continue to meet there students where they are, balancing the learning goals for the class with the realization that those may not be the students’ goals, especially if participation is leisure for the students.

**Conclusion**

In concluding this study, I highlight its limitations as well as implications for further research, and then offer some final thoughts on my journey through my doctoral education and this study.

**Limitations**

As significant limitation to this study is that while I met my goal for maximal variation and reached saturation, I don’t feel that the interview participants were as diverse as I would have liked. Quilt guilds were not a useful source for identifying teachers, as few had current websites listing their programs. Not all guilds offer workshops. In particular, the African American Quilt Guild of Harrisburg meets for full-day sewing days and business meetings. It would be interesting to know if this then increases the informal teaching between members, and if not offering workshops is a logistical choice or cultural choice. Also, my active full-time teachers were older; the teacher biographies show that there are full-time teachers who are younger which would provide insight into balancing family and a traveling teacher career. These younger teachers have tools and options—blogs, video tutorials, online teaching platforms—that were not available to Betsy and Natalie when they were balancing teaching with child care.

With information from quilt guilds not being as plentiful as I had hoped, given the number of guilds in the study area, I therefore had to rely more on quilt shows to identify teachers, which likely biased the teacher biographies towards individuals who are or aspire to
teach on the national circuit. This may have limited the types of information available in the biographies.

By focusing on individuals who are already teaching, even if for the first time, I already limited the study to those who had the resources to at least try teaching quiltmaking. These resources include the time to be involved in a larger community of quiltmakers, the emotional resources to build connections with others in order to either be recruited to teach or welcomed upon volunteering, the time to prepare to teach, and the financial resources to invest in preparing to teach. Consequently, this limits the study to those who have leisure time, through their own or their families’ economic resources. It also limits interview participants to those that also felt they had time to be interviewed.

This study is specifically sited in the leisure quiltmaking community of quilt guilds, shows, and shops which offer quiltmaking classes and workshops, which are forms of nonformal education. The study therefore does not address teaching quiltmaking within cultural communities which may rely on informal learning instead or the informal and tacit learning which likely occur within any gathering of quiltmakers.

**Implications for Further Research**

One of the strongest implications for further research is the finding that, even for those who were deeply enmeshed in teaching quiltmaking, quiltmaking teachers’ income is not a sufficient income unless they diversify the sources through multiple streams such as publishing, writing, developing tools, or making commercial quilts for sale. Therefore, I would like to recode my data using the serious leisure theoretical framework. Stebbins defines serious leisure as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial, interesting, and fulfilling for the participant to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and
expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (Stebbins, 2012, p. 69). His current model groups serious leisure and devotee work as serious pursuits, which are leisure activities in which the participant commits to ongoing pursuit of the activity. Devotee work is serious leisure which produces income. To quote Stebbins, “some amateurs become professionals, some hobbyists become small business people, some volunteers become organizational employees” (2012, p. 13). However, teaching is not one of the subcategories. The data in this study suggests that individuals can earn money from teaching quiltmaking but that it remains a leisure activity.

Yoder (1997) coined the term “commodity-intensive serious leisure” to describe activities which specific goods and services to pursue. He describes those who supply these goods and services as commodity agents. Quiltmaking teachers may fill both the role of teacher and of commodity agent, selecting the materials students need for the class and often selling them directly to students. As seen in this study, to build their income, teachers need to pursue both of these roles. While quiltmaking can be pursued inexpensively if an individual chooses hand-piecing, English paper piecing, applique, or another form which does not require a machine, it can be quite expensive if a quilter selects other methods, techniques, and materials. So in quiltmaking and other similar activities, how do the industry and leisure networks interact and intersect?

Similarly, if an individual does turn a leisure activity into a profession, how does that impact their leisure? Do they still pursue the leisure activity? Do they spend their leisure time pursuing a different aspect of the activity than they teach? Do they shift their leisure time to a completely new activity?
Finally, as suggested in Chapter 5 and above in discussions of actor-network theory, another avenue for research is the effect of changing technology on the social aspects of quiltmaking. I do not have a background in the history of technology, so there may already be research addressing some aspects of this. However, technology seems to be simultaneously decreasing and increasing the social interaction around quiltmaking. With so many quiltmakers using sewing machines, the spatial relationships of quiltmaking together are certainly different than when quiltmakers might gather around a frame to finish a quilt together. For many, being together has to occur in a space where there is room for machines and enough time to justify transport and set up, as seen in quilt guild all-day or multi-day retreats. Socialization while actively piecing may be limited to one’s tablemate, as is my experience, though socialization around the subject and topic occurs throughout the event when participants may visit each other to view their individual projects. Is the availability (and cost) of technology contributing to the decrease in the number of quiltmakers as seen in the Quiltmaking in America survey?

Is changing quiltmaking technology, and its cost, driving fiber-oriented individuals to other crafts? Literature looking at DIY culture, craftivism, and fiber-related community engagement generally doesn’t mention quiltmaking, focusing on more portable crafts, especially knitting (Batic & Brush, 2011; Black, 2017; Cox & Minahan, 2015; Gajjala, 2015; Hosegood, 2009; Robertson & Vinebaum, 2016). While the Quilting in America survey infographic had a sidebar focused on quiltmakers younger than 45, it didn’t show what percentage of quiltmakers fall into this demographic. This demographic was well-educated and affluent, with 68% having at least a college degree and an annual household income of almost $100,000 (The Quilting Company, 2017). How does the perceived relationship of quiltmakers to their materials—that a
fancy sewing machine is a core necessity for participation—impact interest in learning quiltmaking versus another fiber-related craft?

At the same time, quilters can socialize more in virtual spaces using technology and may choose to participate in quilt block exchanges with individuals around the world. This is another type of network and community, though like a quilt guild, participants are likely communicating about quiltmaking rather than participating together. Online communities open up opportunities for informal learning for those who may not have access to in-person communities due to geography, family commitments, financial resources, physical access, or personal preferences. Participants may learn very different approaches to quiltmaking by encountering individuals who learned in a different cultural tradition that uses other techniques. This creates the opportunity for adult education to explore how online resources intersect with hands-on learning, which is beginning to be explored in other fields.

As discussed above, a path for exploring quilters’ relationships with their materials is to work with individual quilters to explore their processes in making individual quilts. Perhaps by focusing on an individual project, a quilter may be able to verbalize the decision-making process of choosing a pattern and fabric, revealing more of the network which led to the creation of the quilt.

Final Thoughts

I selected this topic during my first semester of doctoral coursework, when I decided that I did not want to pursue a topic related to my professional career in history museum administration and education. I had been involved in various fiber-related hobbies since I was young—I still have what I believe to be my first needlepoint and first embroidery, which I made when I was 6, and I learned to knit for the second time when I was in 3rd grade—and had
belonged to an Embroiderers Guild of America chapter for 16 years when I began my doctoral journey. I had often wondered, sometimes through conversations with my mother, about who became recognized as an expert, teacher, or leader in the various organizations we were involved in as leisure activities. I won’t claim that this study gave me all the answers, but it certainly gave me the opportunity to see how a number of individuals pursued their journeys as teachers.

I saw persistence and determination, and most especially, joy. Every interview included laughter. Every interview brought out the love of learning, of creative expression using textiles, and of sharing these with their students. I end with a challenge issued by Claire: “You don’t have to jump to my box but stand on the edge of yours and defy it.”
# APPENDIX A

## Coding Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Where the biography is from?</td>
<td>Old Country Store</td>
<td>Website name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Teacher’s name</td>
<td>Teacher’s name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Is there a headshot?</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog/website link</td>
<td>Is there a link?</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When started sewing?</td>
<td>Does the bio include?</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Year started sewing</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Year given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time</td>
<td>Number of years ago started</td>
<td>20 years ago</td>
<td>Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Does the bio include?</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Year started quilting</td>
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<td>Year given</td>
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<td>Number of years ago started</td>
<td>20 years ago</td>
<td>Quote</td>
</tr>
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<td>Reason given for starting</td>
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<td>Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural tradition</td>
<td>Ethnic/community referenced</td>
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<td>Segue from sewing</td>
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<td>How Learned</td>
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<td>“Family” or specific relative referenced</td>
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<td>Specifically says self-taught</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>When started teaching</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Year started teaching</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>Length of time</td>
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<td>Quote length of time</td>
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<td>Where teaches</td>
<td>General of specific reference</td>
<td>Cruises, Old Country Store</td>
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<td>Prior/related experience</td>
<td>Description of other career, training</td>
<td>Degree in art education, elementary teacher</td>
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<td>Category</td>
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<td>Type of quiltmaking teaches</td>
<td>Description of classes known for</td>
<td>English paper piecing</td>
<td>Quote</td>
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<td>Style of teaching</td>
<td>References to teaching personality</td>
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<td>Quote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product/publication</td>
<td>Teacher has created/sells something</td>
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<td>Quote</td>
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<td>Tools</td>
<td>Item used in quiltmaking</td>
<td>Tucker Trimmer, log cabin ruler</td>
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<td>Patterns</td>
<td>Designed pattern for making a specific quilt</td>
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<td>Books</td>
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<td>Association with identified company</td>
<td>Bio gives name of company/store</td>
<td>American Quilting Society</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Teacher designs patterns/fabrics</td>
<td>Merry &amp; Bright line for Moda</td>
<td>Quote</td>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Teacher has published books with company</td>
<td>C&amp;T Publishing</td>
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<td>“ambassador”</td>
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<td>Ambassador for BERNINA</td>
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<td>Certification</td>
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<td>Niemeyer certified instructor</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher identifies venues</td>
<td>Hinkletown Sewing</td>
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<td>Relationship to host venue</td>
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<td>Member of York Quilters Guild</td>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>Family described</td>
<td>Husband and three children</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX B

Teacher Biography Sources

American Quilter’s Society

www.quiltweek.com/instructors/Lancaster-instructors/#mg_ld_39831

Sarah Fielke
Gyleen Fitzgerald
Sandy Fitzpatrick
Joan Ford
Carolyn Forster
Phyllis Twigg Hatcher
Teresa Justice
Karen Marchetti
Katie Pasquini Masopust
Sue Nickels
Delphine Ren-Miller
Michele Scott
Cheryl See
Mary Smallegan

Celebration of Quilts (York Quilters Guild)

www.celebrationofquilts.com/workshop-instructors.html

Sheila Arnold
Carol Blevins
Karen Kay Buckley
Patsy Hartnett
John Kubiniec
Pat Matthews
Sarah O’Sullivan
Donna Sheffer

Old Country Store

https://theoldcountrystore.com/classes/teachers

Jody Beck
Karen Boyd
Doreen Brannan
Mary Alice Fyock
Donna Groff
Ruth Ann Gingrich
Cheryl Hank
Carol Landis
Carol Martin
Jan Mast
Mary Jane Miller
Christine Morgan
Sherry Musselman
Almyra Webb
Houa Yang
Lois Zimmerman

Simply Stashing

www.simplystashing.com/about-us.html

Sara Breton
Helen Choma
Deb Curtis

Quilt Odyssey

www.quiltodyssey.com

Charlotte Angotti
Cindy Bender
Lisa Calle
Norma Campbell
Mimi Dietrich
Kimberly Einmo
Margaret Solomon Gunn
Linda Hahn
Michelle Renee Hiatt
Marti Michell
Jo Morton
Betty Neff
Mary Nielsen
Andrea Schnur
Karen Sievert
Georgia Stone Stull
Donna Lynn Thomas
Sue Troyan
### Individual Blogs/Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Website Link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angotti, Charlotte</td>
<td><a href="http://www.quiltmakersstudio.com">www.quiltmakersstudio.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calle, Lisa</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lisahcalle.com">www.lisahcalle.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campbell, Norma</td>
<td>normacampbellquilts.wix.com</td>
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<td>Choma, Helen</td>
<td><a href="http://www.facebook.com/pg/helenquiltcottage/">www.facebook.com/pg/helenquiltcottage/</a></td>
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<td>Dahlberg, Barbara</td>
<td><a href="http://www.barbarasartquilts.com">www.barbarasartquilts.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietrich, Mimi</td>
<td>mimidietrich.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Einmo, Kimberlay</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kimberleyeinmo.com">www.kimberleyeinmo.com</a></td>
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<td>Fielke, Sarah</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sarahfielke.com">www.sarahfielke.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald, Gyleen</td>
<td><a href="http://www.colourfulstitches.com">www.colourfulstitches.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzpatrick, Sandy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hissyfitzdesigns.com">www.hissyfitzdesigns.com</a></td>
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<td>Ford, Joan</td>
<td>hummingbird-highway.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forster, Carolyn</td>
<td><a href="http://carolynforster.co.uk">http://carolynforster.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gunn, Margaret Solomon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mainelyquiltsoflove.com">www.mainelyquiltsoflove.com</a></td>
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<td>Hahn, Linda</td>
<td><a href="http://www.froghollowdesigns.com">www.froghollowdesigns.com</a></td>
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<td>Hiatt, Michelle Renee</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sewontheogo.net">www.sewontheogo.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hibshman, Nancy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.piecebypiecequiltshop.com">www.piecebypiecequiltshop.com</a></td>
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<td>Hughes, Joyce</td>
<td><a href="http://www.joycehughesorginals.com">www.joycehughesorginals.com</a></td>
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<td>Kubiniec, John</td>
<td>bigrigquilting.com</td>
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<td>Laird, Patti</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sleepingcatcreations.com">www.sleepingcatcreations.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marchetti, Karen</td>
<td><a href="http://www.creativelongarmquilting.com">www.creativelongarmquilting.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Masopust, Katie Pasquini</td>
<td><a href="http://www.katipm.com">www.katipm.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michell, Marti</td>
<td><a href="http://www.frommarti.com">www.frommarti.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Morton, Jo</td>
<td>jomortonquilts.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neff, Betty</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bettyneff.com">www.bettyneff.com</a></td>
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<td>Nickels, Sue</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sue-nickels.com">www.sue-nickels.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Page, Shannon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pressandpin.com">www.pressandpin.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Schnur, Andrea</td>
<td><a href="https://quiltsensation.myshopify.com">https://quiltsensation.myshopify.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott, Michele</td>
<td><a href="http://www.piecefulquilter.com">www.piecefulquilter.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>See, Cheryl</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cseesquilts.com">www.cseesquilts.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sievert, Karen</td>
<td>theniftyneedle.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smallegan, Mary</td>
<td><a href="http://www.customquiltsunlimited.com">www.customquiltsunlimited.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor, Cheryl Almgren</td>
<td><a href="http://www.atimetosewquilts.com">www.atimetosewquilts.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas, Donna Lynn</td>
<td><a href="http://www.donnalynnthomasquilter.com">www.donnalynnthomasquilter.com</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Berlo, J.P. & P. C. Crews (Eds.), *Wild by design: Two hundred years of innovation and artistry in American quilts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with the International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.


Rake, V.S. (2000). “In the old days, they used scraps”: Gender, leisure, commodification, and the mythology of quiltmaking, Wayne County, Ohio, 1915-1995 (doctoral dissertation). The Ohio State University, Columbus.


Vita

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Interim Executive Director 2001
Assistant to the Director 1995 – 1998